

A Broken Web: Improved Interagency Collaboration is Needed for D.C.'s Crossover Youth

May 28, 2024

A report by the Council for Court Excellence for the Office of the D.C. Auditor.



Audit Team
The Council for Court Excellence



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www.dcauditor.org

A Broken Web: Improved Interagency Collaboration is Needed for D.C.'s Crossover Youth

While considerable attention has been focused recently on illegal behavior by young people in D.C., little is known about the life experiences and circumstances of these youth. One characteristic that many justice-involved young people are known to share is involvement in the child welfare system due to abuse and neglect; they are known as “crossover youth.” This report by The Council for Court Excellence for ODCA focuses on how effectively the District is serving this vulnerable population and recommends reforms to the audited agencies’ systems to improve outcomes for young people in the District who are, or who are at risk of becoming, crossover youth.

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ODCA recommends that the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS):

- 1 Provide requested data on the full population of crossover youth so that the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) can comply with its mandate to collect, analyze, and report on the population of crossover youth in D.C. on an annual basis.
- 2 Each include priorities focused on crossover youth identification, coordination, and programming in future strategic plans.
- 3 Improve communication, collaboration, and data sharing between each other and with other agencies.

93

Crossover youth at end of FY22, identified through court data

8

Crossover youth identified in FY23 by CFSA and DYRS

49%

Justice-involved D.C. high school youth who had a history of neglect

8%

DYRS and CFSA case management staff who said they had received any training toward understanding and/or serving crossover youth

68%

DYRS and CFSA case management staff who said they were unaware of any specific protocol for a crossover youth’s case



Office of the District of Columbia Auditor



May 28, 2024

The Hon. Muriel E. Bowser
Mayor of the District of Columbia
The John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

The Hon. Phil Mendelson, Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
The John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser and Chairman Mendelson:

I am pleased to present this comprehensive and community-informed report prepared for the Office of the D.C. Auditor (ODCA) by the Council for Court Excellence (CCE), **A Broken Web: Improved Interagency Collaboration is Needed for DC's Crossover Youth**. The title refers to the young people who have been involved with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, a vulnerable population also at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.

ODCA commissioned CCE to research and report on how effectively the District of Columbia is serving crossover youth today, and the report focuses on two key agencies, the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), DC's child welfare agency, and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) which serves youth who have engaged in serious delinquent behavior. The report concludes that the District lacks a unified approach to addressing the needs of these vulnerable youth, details promising approaches to serving crossover youth, and recommends the kind of coordination and programming that can be successful in improving young lives.

In written comments included in the report DYRS Director Sam Abed and CFSA Director Robert Matthews concurred with the need to develop a more comprehensive and shared definition of crossover youth, noting, "Our goal is to develop a comprehensive crossover initiative that will benefit the children and families that we serve."

This report marks a continued public-private partnership between ODCA and CCE, a non-profit, non-partisan civic organization that has focused on justice in the Washington metropolitan area for four decades. CCE's methodology brings together District and federal officials with a wide range of representatives in the legal, business, and social services community who volunteer their time to produce research and recommendations that assist policymakers in serving the District's residents.

In addition to thanking the Council for Court Excellence, ODCA extends its appreciation to Directors Abed and Matthews and their respective teams for their assistance and cooperation as well as their stated commitments to addressing this important report's findings and recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'n'.

Kathleen Patterson
Auditor of the District of Columbia

cc: Councilmembers

MAY 28, 2024

A Broken Web: Improved Interagency Collaboration is Needed for D.C.'s Crossover Youth

A report on the Council for Court Excellence's audit of DYRS's and CFSA's approach to addressing the needs of Crossover Youth in D.C.

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Executive Summary

While considerable attention has been focused recently on illegal behavior by young people in D.C., little is known about the life experiences and circumstances of these youth. One characteristic that many justice-involved young people are known to share is involvement in the child welfare system due to abuse and neglect. Young people who have been or are involved with both the child welfare and delinquency (often called juvenile or youth justice) systems are referred to as *crossover youth*.

The Office of the D.C. Auditor (ODCA) commissioned the Council for Court Excellence (CCE), a non-profit organization focused on justice system improvement in D.C., to investigate and report on how effectively the District of Columbia serves crossover youth. Although these young people are likely to have had interactions with many different governmental entities, this audit focuses on two key District agencies: Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), D.C.'s child welfare agency; and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), the District agency to which youth who have engaged in serious delinquent behavior are committed. Below is a summary of the full audit report. The full report includes additional data tables and visualizations and other information; citations and methodology for all analyses; and recommendations on ways the audited agencies can reform their systems to improve outcomes for young people in the District who are, or who are at risk of becoming, crossover youth.

CROSSOVER YOUTH OVERVIEW

Youth enter the child welfare system when there is a substantiated report that they have been maltreated – that is, they had their basic needs neglected and/or were physically, sexually or psychologically abused by a parent or guardian. Young people are in the delinquency system when they have been arrested for behavior considered illegal generally or for a “status offense” – that is, something not permitted for people under the age of 18, such as being truant from school. Child development experts have found that the trauma of being maltreated plays a key role in youth crossing over to the delinquency system. They have identified about a dozen key Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that can have negative impacts, including greater risk of justice involvement; five ACEs involve childhood abuse and neglect. Research has found that the more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely they are to engage in serious delinquent behavior.¹

There is no national data on crossover youth. However, researchers estimate about 30% of youth involved in the child welfare system become involved in the delinquency system, and several jurisdictions have reported that about two-thirds of youth involved in their delinquency systems had been involved in their child welfare systems. A number of social factors can also impact involvement in either or both systems; for example, living in poverty is correlated with both increased risk of abuse and neglect and involvement in the delinquency system.² Youth in the child welfare system are more likely than non-foster care youth to experience school discipline issues and poor academic performance and be chronically absent, all of which are correlated with youth becoming

justice involved.³ Youth in foster care are also at higher risk for crossing over as they may have law enforcement called for behavior that would not be considered delinquent in a family home.⁴

CROSSOVER YOUTH IN D.C.

Because the District has a uniquely organized legal system, multiple D.C. and federal entities besides the two that are the focus of the audit have involvement with crossover youth and will be referred to in this report. These include: *Metropolitan Police Department* (MPD), the primary law enforcement agency for the District; *Office of the Attorney General* (OAG), an independent agency that handles all abuse and neglect litigation on behalf of CFSA and is the chief juvenile prosecutor for D.C.; *D.C. Superior Court*, a federally controlled local court with a Family Court branch that receives and processes both juvenile delinquency and child abuse and neglect cases; *Court Social Services Division* (CSSD), a federal agency that assesses youth who are newly arrested and serves as the District’s youth probation agency; *Office of the Ombudsperson for Children* (OFC), an independent D.C. agency responsible for collecting and reporting on data on crossover youth; and the *Criminal Justice Coordinating Council* (CJCC), an independent D.C. agency that conducts research and analysis and facilitates interagency collaboration and information sharing.

The statute creating OFC defines a crossover youth as a person 21 years of age or younger who is or was involved with or is otherwise known to CFSA, and has a current or closed delinquency case filed by the OAG or another jurisdiction.⁵ For this audit, CCE restricted its definition to a person 21 years of age or younger who is or was the subject of a substantiated case of abuse or neglect and who is or was the subject of a delinquency petition in D.C. Young people involved in both systems at the same time are referred to as “dual-jacketed” youth both generally and in this report.

8 Number of crossover youth reported in FY 2023
OFC report (all dual-jacketed DYRS & CFSA)

93 Number of crossover youth with open
delinquency and/or neglect cases on 9/20/2022

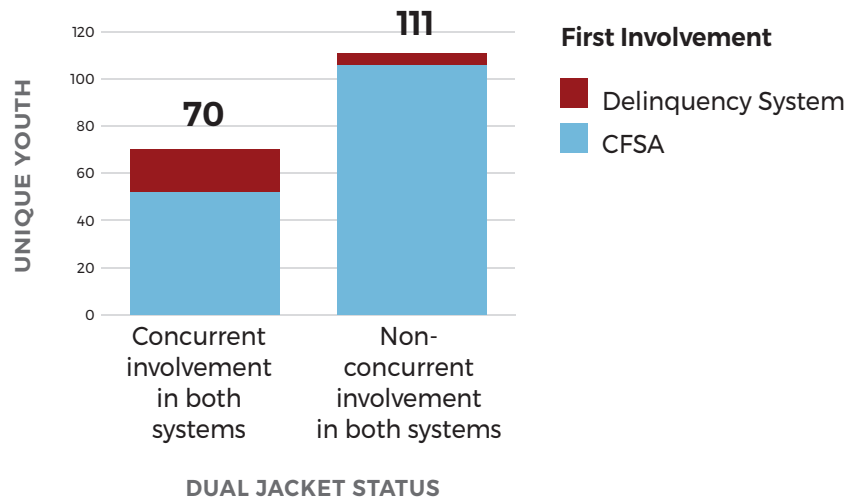
CCE determined that there is no official data currently available on the full population of crossover youth in D.C. In response to audit data requests, as well as in their reporting to OFC, CFSA and DYRS provided the number of dual-jacketed youth with active cases with both agencies at specific points in time. The most recent data provided to the OFC from the two audited agencies reported that, at the end of December 2023, there were eight dual-jacketed youth. No data was reported on crossover youth who had a current case in one system and a closed case in the other.

To supplement this limited data, CCE analyzed existing public reports and data sources, requested and received information from CFSA, DYRS and the D.C. Superior Court, and spoke with former crossover youth and adults who worked with or cared for them.

Regarding information in published reports, a 2020 study by CJCC points to the number of crossover youth in D.C. being higher than agency numbers reported to OFC. Among the high schoolers

in the study's sample, 49% of justice-involved youth had a history of neglect compared to 18.9% of youth who were not justice-involved. Additionally, 19.2% of justice-involved youth in the CJCC study group had a history of abuse, compared to 6.2% of youth who were not justice-involved. Additionally, a 2020 report by the Child Fatality Review Committee identified a child's involvement in the child welfare and delinquency involvement as the two primary risk factors in becoming a victim of homicide.

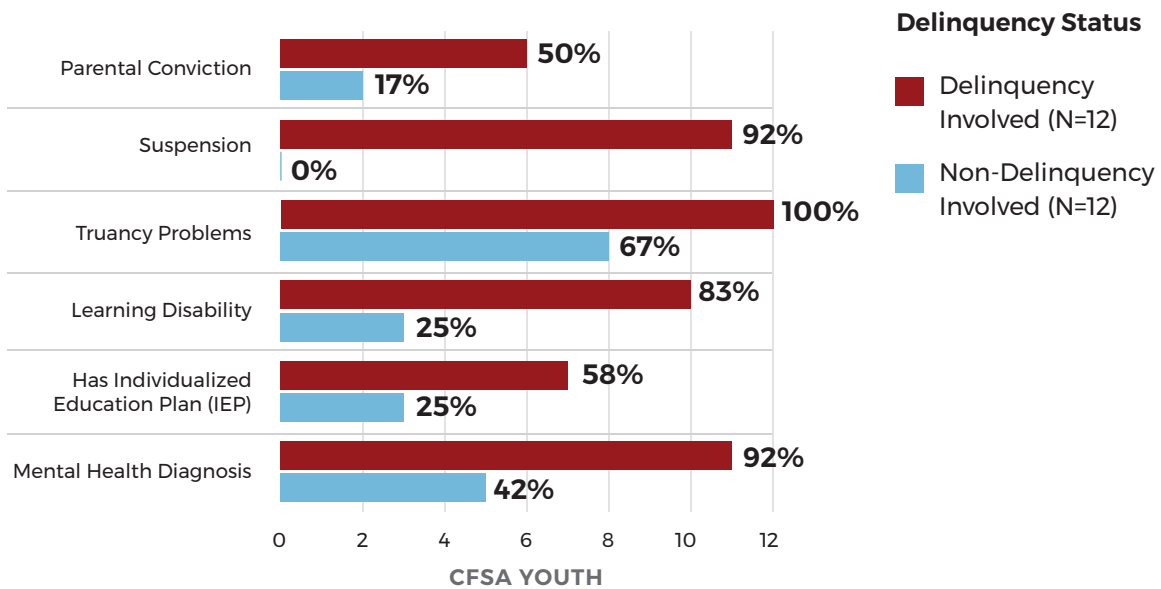
Crossover Youth by Dual-Jacket Status, First System Involvement, 2018-2022



Source: CCE analysis of D.C. Superior Court Data, 2018-2022.

CCE analyzed Superior Court records of youth with active delinquency cases from 2018 through 2022 whose families also had substantiated abuse or neglect cases at any point. On September 30, 2022, there were 93 unique crossover youth, 13 of which were dual-jacketed. Overall, CCE found there were 181 different crossover youth with an active delinquency case and current or past CFSA case during the audit period, of which 111 were not concurrent – that is, they were crossover youth but not dual-jacketed. Court records identified all but 10 crossover youth as being Black; this finding is unsurprising, as Black children in D.C. are over-represented in both the child welfare and delinquency systems.

Experiences of CFSA Youth by Delinquency Involvement



Source: CCE analysis of 24 CFSA cases of youth over age 10

CCE also analyzed case files provided confidentially by DYRS and CFSA. Among the 24 CFSA case files reviewed, half were identified as crossover youth. As the chart at right shows, crossover youth were more likely than CFSA involved youth without delinquency involvement to have school issues, diagnoses of a mental health issue or learning disability, and justice-involved parents.

DYRS files reviewed by CCE included 25 cases randomly selected from those identified in court data as being crossover youth – that is, having an open DYRS case and an open or closed CFSA case. CCE analyzed the DYRS cases according to the formal measures for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and found that two in three had an ACEs score of four or higher out of 11; the most common ACEs were neglect, having a household member with a mental illness, and having a household member who was a problem drinker or used street drugs.

“It seems like the child turns twelve and suddenly everything is blamed on the child.”

– Quote from focus group of professionals working with crossover youth

CCE also conducted focus groups and interviews with young adults who had been crossover youth and caregivers and professionals working with crossover youth, to hear first-hand about their experiences. Some of the findings include: crossover youth can require a high level of services, which caregivers and systems aren’t always able to provide; the lack of interagency coordination and information sharing can lead to negative outcomes for youth, including being put in harm’s way; when maltreated youth reach their teens, the impact of past abuse and neglect is often forgotten and youth are blamed for behavior tied to this earlier maltreatment; and crossover youth placed in

foster care or with a delinquency case in another jurisdiction face interstate challenges that can push them deeper into the system. Some programs, such as the Credible Messenger program, were identified as valuable in providing positive adult connections.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION.

Consistent with the scope of the D.C. Auditor’s authority, this report’s findings and recommendations focus primarily on two District agencies—CFSA and DYRS—but also notes the role of other critical actors, and recommends coordination between DYRS, CFSA, and other D.C. and federal agencies, as well as the state of Maryland, where half of D.C. youth in foster care are placed. This report makes five top-line findings, each of which includes specific recommendations for law, policy, or practice changes, along with relevant supportive commentary and evidence. The key findings are:

1. CFSA and DYRS fail to utilize a definition of “crossover youth” consistent with D.C. Code and, therefore, fail to identify the full population of crossover youth.
2. Neither CFSA nor DYRS (a) identifies crossover youth as statutorily defined in any guiding documents, data management systems, policies or practices; or (b) recognizes that crossover youth have unique needs requiring specialized case management and programming.
3. There is insufficient communication, collaboration, and data-sharing among agencies regarding crossover youth in D.C.
4. CFSA and DYRS should develop and utilize evidence-based protocols, policies, programs, and services specific to crossover youth and for preventing crossover.
5. CFSA and DYRS have some well-regarded and promising programs that offer opportunities for positive childhood experiences, but gaps have been identified in serving youth with acute behavioral health issues; more information is needed to understand the overall capacity and effectiveness of existing programs and what additional services are required to adequately address the needs of crossover youth.

In short, the fundamental finding of the audit is that the District lacks a unified approach to addressing the needs of these vulnerable young people. To the extent that the audited agencies are communicating about and coordinating services for crossover youth, it is only for the subset who simultaneously are committed to DYRS and have an open CFSA case. As a result, D.C. leaders are unable to accurately identify the number and traits of crossover youth in our community, to coordinate the services being offered or supervision being provided, to target specialized programming for these youth, and provide resources for their families and caregivers. Better coordination and programming by D.C.’s key youth-serving agencies, relevant federal partners, and states where crossover youth live or have active delinquency cases, would help these young people thrive. And by identifying and addressing those risk factors for crossover, the District can help agencies, families and caregivers prevent future delinquent behavior and involvement with the justice system.

CFSA, DYRS, and the District as a whole have a real opportunity to lead in the creation of a system that truly supports crossover youth – helping improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable young people and their families and making our community safer overall. To turn this opportunity in reality, however, will require a robust, sustained and strategic focus on these youth both now and in the years ahead.

Introduction

This report, commissioned by the Office of the D.C. Auditor (ODCA), examines how effectively the District of Columbia (the District) serves a unique and vulnerable population of children, referred to in this report and nationally as “crossover youth.” These are youth who have experienced abuse and/or neglect and who have engaged in delinquent behavior. As a result, they have been involved in the child welfare and the youth justice systems, “crossing over” from one system to the other. This audit looks at how the distinct challenges of identifying and serving crossover youth in the District are being addressed by two D.C. agencies: the Child and Family Services Agency, the District’s child welfare agency; and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, the District’s key youth justice supervision and custody agency.⁶

To provide context for the findings and recommendations in this report, Section 1 outlines what makes a child a crossover youth, and why they are particularly vulnerable and in need of specialized services. Section 2 provides an overview of the audited agencies and the other local and federal government entities that regularly interact with crossover youth in D.C.. Section 3 presents data on crossover youth in D.C. Section 4 provides our high-level findings and recommendations for steps the District should take to improve identification of and service provision to crossover youth and those at high risk of crossing over.

In developing these findings and recommendations, CCE conducted best-practice research, legal review and analysis, and quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Qualitative data included information gathered directly from young adults who had been crossover youth in the District, as well as from caregivers, agency staff, and other professionals with first-hand knowledge of their issues. Appendix B details CCE’s methodology.

While there are no quick fixes, this report’s practicable recommendations provide a path forward to improving the lives of youth and the health and safety of the District as a whole.

Section 1:

Crossover Youth Confront Unique Challenges that Require Targeted and Coordinated Responses.

To put the District’s current response to crossover youth in context, it is important to understand the scope of this issue nationally, including what research has shown are the needs of crossover youth and responses that improve outcomes both for them and for public safety.

An estimated one in seven children in the U.S. experienced abuse or neglect in 2022.⁷ The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines abuse and neglect as “any act or series of acts of *commission* or *omission* by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.”⁸ Acts of *commission* include physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, while acts of *omission* include failure to provide basic needs (including physical, emotional, health and educational needs) or adequate supervision, or to protect from actual or potential harm, including exposure to dangerous environments.⁹ The CDC defines “maltreatment” as encompassing both child neglect and abuse, which is the definition of the term that will be used throughout this report.¹⁰

When children in the U.S. are found to be victims of maltreatment they may enter their state’s child welfare system. These children are often removed from their homes and placed in the foster care system while attempts are made to address the household’s underlying issues, with the goal of reuniting them with their families. In 2022, more than 600,000 children were in the U.S. public foster care system.¹¹

THE ADVERSE EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPACTS.

Youth in the child welfare system have disproportionately experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) relative to youth not in foster care.¹² ACEs are traumatic childhood events that can have lasting negative impacts; those with the most serious harmful consequences have been identified and included in an ACEs score.¹³ Given that five of the most commonly identified ACEs are forms of child abuse and neglect, it is not surprising for youth in the child welfare system – whose purpose is to serve maltreated children – to have high ACEs scores.¹⁴ Additionally, children placed in foster care are also more likely to experience other ACEs like having parents who are divorced/separated, died, or are incarcerated; being exposed to violence; and living in a household with people with substance use and mental health disorders.¹⁵

Research has found that maltreatment and other ACEs put youth at “increased risk for negative physical, developmental, and mental health outcomes.”¹⁶ These experiences can have detrimental

effects on a child's growth and progression into adulthood and can be especially pronounced in children within the foster care system.¹⁷ Having a score of 4 or more ACEs is a tipping point for a number of negative outcomes, many of which continue into adulthood; these include increased risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, cancer, substance use disorder and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, and suicidal ideation and attempts.¹⁸ Additionally, the more ACEs a child experiences, the greater the likelihood of their chronically engaging in serious and violent behavior and developing a substance use disorder.¹⁹

MALTREATMENT IS A RISK-FACTOR FOR DELINQUENCY SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT.

A growing body of research shows that youth in the child welfare system are more likely to become involved in the delinquency (often referred to as “juvenile justice”) system.²⁰

While there is no known or estimated national rate of crossover youth, studies in different jurisdictions show that youth who are involved in either the child welfare system or the juvenile justice system are disproportionately likely to be involved in the other. Some of these findings include:

- About 30% of youth in the child welfare system become involved in the delinquency system.²¹
- Compared with children who have not experienced maltreatment, youth with one or more substantiated cases of maltreatment had a 47% higher rate of delinquency.²²
- Multiple jurisdictions have found that about two in three youth in their delinquency systems had been involved in their child welfare systems.²³
- A study of youth in foster care in three Midwestern states found that half of those who had been placed out of their home by the child welfare system were arrested at least once while under 18.²⁴

Experts in child development point to several reasons for the disproportionate delinquency system involvement of youth with child welfare system histories, many of which involve the psychological and physical trauma associated with being abused and neglected. While not exhaustive, some of the pathways by which maltreatment-related trauma can contribute to delinquent behavior are described below.

- Maltreated children who are in foster care can develop attachment disorders, which can affect their ability to form the type of positive relationships that are a protective factor against delinquency.²⁵
- The trauma of childhood abuse can lead children to develop maladaptive coping disorders which can lead to delinquency. In girls, this is often manifested as “internalizing” behaviors that include depression, anxiety, and substance use; boys tend toward “externalizing” behaviors such as aggression, bullying and hostility.²⁶ Internalizing behavior in girls and externalizing behavior in boys increase the risk of engaging in illegal behavior.²⁷
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) occurs in many children who have experienced physical abuse. Several studies suggest that as many as two in three youth in foster care had experienced one

or more TBIs.²⁸ Having a TBI during childhood can affect the development of the brain in ways that impede self-regulation and decision-making, leading to impulsivity and risk-taking; TBIs also can increase tendencies towards aggressive behavior and can cause communications deficits that could affect interactions with law enforcement.²⁹ A meta-analysis of studies on TBI and youth in the youth justice system indicates that about 30% of justice-involved youth had a TBI, and that youth with a TBI were over three times as likely to be in the delinquency system as those without.³⁰

- Common policing and correctional practices like pat downs and searches can be triggering for youth who have been physically abused, and being yelled at by correctional staff can cause youth to relive past emotional abuse. “[S]uch practices vividly reawaken painful feelings of being powerless, worthless, fearful, and alone.”³¹ One study showed that “the more frequent[ly] a youth was exposed to abuse during incarceration, the more likely they were to report ... criminal involvement post release.”³²
- The impacts of abuse and neglect on brain development may lead youth to behave in ways to which untrained and unaware law enforcement officers, correctional staff, and other adults do not know how to respond. For example, one symptom of post-traumatic stress is hyper-vigilance, often characterized as “fight or flight” responses; this may cause behavior—such as fighting—that can result in further discipline and re-traumatization.³³

In addition to the impacts of maltreatment itself, data shows that youth in the child welfare system are more likely to have other characteristics associated with involvement with the justice system:

- Living in poverty is correlated with both increased risk of abuse and neglect and involvement in the delinquency system.³⁴
- Children from communities of color are over-represented in both the delinquency system and in foster care for complex reasons that include both systemic racism and historical trauma; additionally, abuse and neglect of White children may be under-reported, as research suggests that “child protection and police departments are most aggressive and most active often overlap” in communities of color.³⁵
- Youth in the child welfare system are more likely than non-foster care youth to experience school discipline issues and poor academic performance and be chronically absent, all of which are correlated with youth who become justice-involved.³⁶
- Youth in foster care may have law enforcement called for behavior that would not be considered delinquent in a family home, causing them to become a crossover youth.³⁷

EVIDENCE SUPPORTS TREATING CROSSOVER YOUTH AS A SPECIAL POPULATION

If crossover youth were no different from those children in either just the delinquency or just the child welfare system, there would be no need to identify them and treat them as a special population. However, research has shown that crossover youth are more likely than those not involved in both systems to have worse personal outcomes such as educational, vocational, and behavioral health challenges, and they are more likely to re-offend than non-crossover youth.³⁸

There is growing evidence that affirmatively addressing the needs of crossover youth and those at risk of crossing over from the child welfare to delinquency system reaps positive results. Jurisdictions that have targeted interventions and created practices and policies specific to crossover youth have seen improved youth outcomes across multiple dimensions, including reduced recidivism.³⁹ Recent studies have shown that for youth within the delinquency system with high ACEs scores, having more cumulative positive childhood experiences (PCEs) significantly reduces both rearrests and reconvictions.⁴⁰ PCEs include involvement in school or recreational activities; positive relationships with teachers, coaches and other adults; and having people in the community willing to help and discourage getting into trouble.⁴¹ Enabling youth to engage in such positive activities is one effective and relatively inexpensive way child welfare and juvenile justice systems and communities can improve outcomes for crossover youth.⁴²

Treating crossover youth as a population requiring specialized and coordinated treatment across multiple systems has gained recognition by the National Institute of Justice, which identified a Georgetown University-established framework specific to crossover youth as a promising practice for reducing recidivism.⁴³ Specifically, Georgetown's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform has a Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) that seeks to minimize the involvement of crossover youth in the juvenile justice system by improving communication and coordination between professionals in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, providing more individualized interventions to youth, and increasing family engagement in the process.⁴⁴

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University has demonstrated that implementing these CYPM principles can reduce recidivism overall, as well as in the seriousness of any subsequent offenses, and increase time to re-offense for youth who do recidivate.⁴⁵ Other improvements for youth in these jurisdictions include improved educational, behavioral health and family reunification/placement outcomes and increased engagement in pro-social activities.⁴⁶ Communities that have engaged multiple systems in addressing the needs of crossover youth through this model include neighboring jurisdictions such as Prince George's and Montgomery counties in Maryland and Alexandria, Virginia.

A review of the CYPM suggests that its components—such as early identification of crossover youth, collaborative approaches to charging that takes into account the youth's situation and background and coordinated cross-systems case management and ongoing assessment—can be applied independent of participating in any specific iteration of the model.⁴⁷

For all these reasons, crossover youth should receive distinct and targeted consideration, analysis, coordination, and care. However, a 2021 forum on crossover youth raised concerns that this is not currently happening in the District and was one impetus for this audit.⁴⁸

Section 2:

The Agencies that Serve Crossover Youth in D.C.

Given the District’s uniquely organized legal system, it is important to understand the statutory authorities and processes of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), and the other local and federal agencies that interact with maltreated and justice-involved youth. Without a doubt, it is challenging to single out and evaluate the roles and responsibilities of D.C.’s Executive Branch agencies in isolation from their federal partners in carrying out the local legal system. Nevertheless, CFSA and DYRS are the two key D.C. agencies whose roles, independently and in collaboration with others, are central for youth who are or who are at risk of becoming crossover youth. For those reasons, they were specifically selected, under the authority of ODCA, to be evaluated in this audit.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE D.C. CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

While a number of District agencies work together to address the needs of children, CFSA is the D.C. agency responsible for both protecting and supporting child victims and those at risk of abuse and neglect, as well as assisting their families.⁴⁹

In the District, the definitions of “child,” “abuse,” and “neglect” are surprisingly complicated. For the purposes of the child maltreatment system, the D.C. Code defines a “child” as “an individual who is under 18 years of age.”⁵⁰ Youth who have not reached permanency (that is, family reunification, adoption, or guardianship) can remain in foster care until age 21.⁵¹ The statutory definitions of “abuse” and “neglect” are somewhat circular: under D.C. law, a “neglected child” is one “who has been abandoned or abused by his or her parent, guardian, or custodian, or whose parent, guardian, or custodian has failed to make reasonable efforts to prevent the infliction of abuse upon the child.”⁵² The term “abused” means: “(i) infliction of physical or mental injury upon a child; (ii) sexual abuse or exploitation of a child; or (iii) negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child.”⁵³ Like the CDC, CFSA uses “maltreatment” as a broad catch-all term that functions “as a substitute for ‘abuse and/or neglect’” to describe its scope of work.⁵⁴

In the years following the establishment of home rule, the District’s child welfare function went through several organizational iterations. In 2001, the D.C. Council created CFSA as an independent cabinet-level agency whose director reports to the Mayor.⁵⁵ Making CFSA a cabinet-level agency was one step taken in response to a 1989 class action lawsuit that exposed deficiencies in D.C.’s child welfare system; this litigation resulted in the agency’s remaining under federal court supervision until 2021 as it worked to remedy the problems raised.⁵⁶ The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 CFSA budget is \$220.6 million, with 825 full time equivalents (FTEs) in personnel.⁵⁷

ABOUT CFSA

CFSA has four primary functions, as outlined on its website and in other documents. First, it receives, screens and investigates reports of maltreatment. There are several ways by which CFSA receives reports of child abuse or neglect. A wide variety of professionals are mandatory reporters, who are people legally required to contact CFSA or the police if they are aware or have reasonable cause to believe that children they know in their professional capacity have been or are at risk of being maltreated.⁵⁸ CFSA also receives calls of suspected abuse or neglect to its Hotline (202-671-7233), which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; mandatory reporters can use this line, as can any other individuals, such as friends, neighbors, or family members. In FY 2023, most Hotline calls received were from schools and childcare providers.⁵⁹ The Hotline staff sends reports on calls that are “screened in” for appropriateness to Child Protective Services (CPS), a division within CFSA, so that its staff and contractors can conduct investigations. Receipt of a report of “suspected child abuse or neglect” triggers CFSA’s legal obligation to “conduct a thorough investigation.”⁶⁰

Second, CFSA provides case management and assistance to families and youth. When CPS determines a report of suspected abuse or neglect to be “substantiated,” staff from CFSA or a private organization under contract with CFSA step in to keep children safe and to work with their families. The social workers develop case plans and connect families to a range of services that will help them overcome problems and change behaviors that endanger their children. CFSA also provides a range of services for children in their care, including behavioral health treatment.⁶¹

Third, CFSA provides out-of-home care for youth. When the home presents too great a threat to child safety, CFSA can remove children with the Family Court’s authorization. In some cases, relatives may be able to take the children. In other cases, CFSA recruits, trains, and licenses foster parents and contracts with child-placing agencies to find foster parent placements.

Finally, CFSA re-establishes permanent homes for youth. Among CFSA’s diverse goals is to stabilize families and provide the services and supports needed for children to be reunified with their families. When that is not possible, CFSA will seek safe, stable, and permanent alternative environments for the children; these may be with relatives, through a guardianship, or through adoption.⁶²

Much of CFSA’s work is outsourced to vendors for a variety of services, including investigators employed by private organizations, group homes, health and treatment providers, and community-based organizations. A review of payment vouchers for calendar year 2023 shows at least 14 service providers listed in the D.C. contracting database received \$200,000 or more in payments from CFSA.⁶³

CFSA also interfaces with many other D.C. agencies to provide needed services for CFSA youth and families. Some of its active government partners include:

- **Department of Behavioral Health**, which provides intensive therapeutic interventions for CFSA youth and their families.⁶⁴
- **Department of Health Care Finance**, which provides Medicaid enrollment of qualified youth who formerly were in foster care and who reside in the District.⁶⁵

- **D.C. Office of Attorney General**, which has a Child Protection Section within its **Family Services Division** that handles child abuse and neglect litigation on CFSA’s behalf in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia (Superior Court). Division attorneys also advise CFSA social workers and staff members on compliance with local and federal law.⁶⁶
- The **Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)** and the **District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)** work with CFSA to ensure children with special education needs who are in the foster care system and placed outside D.C. receive needed educational services. DCPS, on behalf of OSSE, maintains records of District foster youth attending school in Prince George’s County, Maryland.⁶⁷ Additionally, the Office for Students in the Care of D.C. (SCDC) is charged with the development of “programs, strategies and policies that guide the implementation of the District’s policies and programs to improve educational and workforce outcomes for students in the care of the District of Columbia.”⁶⁸ This includes students in the child welfare, youth justice and criminal justice systems.
- **Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS)**, the youth justice agency discussed in the next section of this report, works with CFSA when youth in the child welfare system are also involved in the delinquency system.⁶⁹
- **Other justice system agencies.** CFSA may engage with the Superior Court’s **Court Social Services Division (CSSD)**, a federal entity that assesses youth when they are arrested and supervises them when they are on probation. When youth in its care are charged with crimes as adults, CFSA may engage with the **D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC)** and the federal entities **Pretrial Services Agency (PSA)** and **Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA)**, which is responsible for adult community supervision.⁷⁰
- **Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC)**, which was established in 2021 as an independent office tasked with “improving outcomes for children involved with, or otherwise known to the Child and Family Services Agency.” OFC has the authority to receive complaints and review requests to reconsider complaints dismissed by CFSA, as well as investigate systemic concerns related to children in CFSA’s care.⁷¹ OFC also is mandated to produce annual reports covering a range of topics, including the number, demographics, and other relevant characteristics of D.C.’s crossover youth; data, metrics, trend analyses, and other information relevant to their outcomes; and an assessment of interagency communication and coordination regarding crossover youth.⁷²

A SNAPSHOT OF CFSA-INVOLVED YOUTH.

Data regarding youth involved with CFSA—defined here as a child who is being served outside of their home, or a child’s family being served in their own home—is publicly available on an online dashboard.⁷³ Below is key data extracted from the CFSA dashboard for FY 2023 or from the agency’s most recent annual report:⁷⁴

- **Substantiated cases.** Of the 20,246 calls to the Hotline in FY 2023, 3,902 were accepted for investigation; of these, 880 cases—less than one in 20 calls—were determined to be substantiated.

- **Type of CFSA involvement.** In the last quarter of FY 2023, 554 youth from 390 families were in foster care. An additional 1,343 children from 501 families were served by CFSA in their homes. Only 1 in 5 youth were in kinship care, which is when children live in the home of a relative, at the close of FY 2023.⁷⁵ As shown in Table 1, the number of children and families involved in CFSA, both in foster care and in home, has been decreasing, although allegations of abuse and neglect rose in FY 2023.

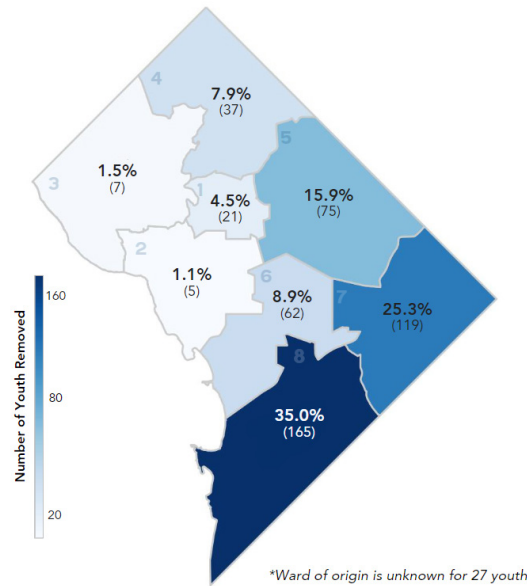
**CFSA Cases of Alleged and Substantiated Child Abuse and Neglect and
Number of Children in Foster Care, Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023**

	Hotline Calls	Substantiated cases	Youth in foster care
FY2022	16,899	863	535
FY2023	20,246	808	498

Source: cfsadashboard.dc.gov, retrieved 2/13/2024.

- **Demographics.** On the last day of FY 2023, over half of youth in foster care were from Wards 7 and 8, even though only about a third (34%) of the District’s children live there.⁷⁶ (See Figure 1.) Slightly over half (54%) of children in foster care at the end of FY 2023 identified or were categorized as girls. For those whose race was identified, at the end of FY 2023 81% of CFSA-involved youth were Black, 15% were Hispanic/Latino, 1% were white, and the remainder were another race or their race was not recorded.⁷⁷ By comparison, D.C.’s overall youth population is 52% Black, 24% white, and 18% Hispanic/Latino.⁷⁸
- **Placement location.** As of December 2023, over half of foster placements were outside the District, with 47% of youth being placed in Maryland, 2% placed in Virginia, and 2% placed elsewhere.⁷⁹

Figure 1. D.C. Children in Foster Care by Ward from Which They Were Removed (Sept. 2023).



Source: [Placement of Children in Foster Care, | cfsadashboard \(dc.gov\)](https://cfsadashboard.dc.gov), retrieved 2/13/2024.

- **Length of stay.** Most (51%) youth exiting foster care in 2022 had lengths of stay of over two years, with four in ten in care for four years or longer. Of youth in foster care, 30% had disruptions to their placement, which CFSA describes as “situations where a provider is unwilling or unable to care for a child, the provider cannot meet the child’s behavioral or medical needs, or the child was moved from the placement as a result of the provider’s contract ending.” Among these children, there were over two displacements on average during the year.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE D.C. DELINQUENCY SYSTEM.

In D.C., a person under the age of 18 is generally defined to be a “child” and, except as noted below, if charged with a criminal offense will have their case heard in the Family Division of the Superior Court.⁸⁰

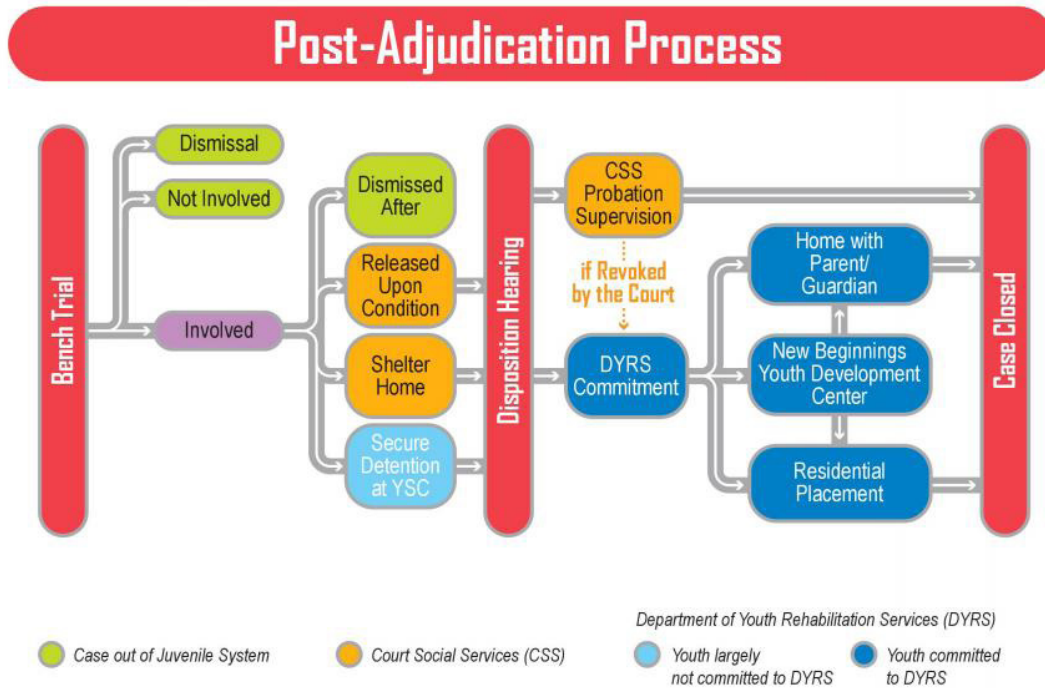
The D.C. Code makes clear that the purpose of having separate delinquency proceedings is “[to] treat children as children, while protecting the needs of communities and victims alike.”⁸¹ When a youth is arrested in D.C., several governmental entities become involved in their case and can make decisions affecting how their case is handled.

- The **Metropolitan Police Department** (MPD), part of the D.C. government, can take youth they arrest to the Juvenile Processing Center (JPC) at the Youth Services Center (YSC), a secure 98-bed facility operated by DYRS in Northeast D.C., for case processing.⁸² MPD can also dismiss a youth, sending them back to their family or caretaker, or divert a youth to the Alternatives to the Court Experience program, which assesses young people and connects them and their families with services to address those needs. While this diversion program is voluntary, not participating may result in prosecution.⁸³

- The **Court Social Services Division** (CSSD), a division of D.C. Superior Court (a federal entity), screens youth at YSC both for health issues and to determine whether they should be detained at YSC until their court hearing the next day or be released to their parent or guardian.⁸⁴ CSSD also will recommend whether to dismiss or move forward with the delinquency case. CSSD has jurisdiction over youth from time of arrest until their case outcome is determined, and it also supervises youth placed on probation.
- **D.C. Office of Attorney General** (OAG), an independent D.C. agency responsible for handling criminal offenses by juveniles (“persons under the age of 18”), makes the final determination whether to file a petition of delinquency in Family Court. The OAG also can divert an arrested youth to the Alternatives to the Court Experience diversion program instead of charging them. The OAG also handles “status” violations, which are offenses that only a juvenile can commit (for example, truancy and running away).⁸⁵ The OAG can file a petition to have a youth with status violations considered a “Persons in Need of Supervision” (PINS), which can result in the youth being supervised by CSSD or DYRS.⁸⁶
- **D.C. Superior Court** hears both adult and delinquency cases. Delinquency cases are heard in the Family Division of the Superior Court, generally referred to as Family Court. Youth with a delinquency case can also have a neglect case active in Family Court and be involved with CFSA.

At the initial court appearance, the Family Court judge will decide whether a youth should be released to their family or caretaker or be further detained at YSC. Youth can be detained only if “it appears that detention is required to protect the person or property of others, or to secure the child’s presence at the next court hearing” and “the judge or magistrate judge must also have probable cause to believe that the child committed the offense.”⁸⁷ Youth can also be held in a shelter house while awaiting their case’s outcome if there are no other options available to keep the youth safe.⁸⁸ If the case proceeds to a fact-finding hearing (the adjudication phase) and the Court finds the youth to have been involved in a delinquent act, it will conduct additional proceedings (the disposition phase) to determine where, and under whose supervision, the youth should be placed. (See Figure 2.)⁸⁹

Figure 2. Post-Adjudication Process for Youth in the D.C. Delinquency System.



Source: D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. <https://dyrs.dc.gov/page/post-adjudication-process>.

This can include being placed on probation under CSSD supervision or committed to DYRS custody. A youth can plead “involved”—the youth court version of pleading guilty—after which the judge will determine how the case will be disposed. As noted above, youth will be charged for most illegal actions as children and their cases will be handled in the Family Court. However, 16- and 17-year olds charged with burglary, rape, armed robbery or murder can have their case directly filed in adult court by the federal prosecutor, and the cases of youth aged 15 and older can be transferred to the adult criminal system; in these cases youth are no longer considered a “child” in D.C. for criminal legal purposes, and their cases proceed through the adult legal system rather than the delinquency system. In that situation, the youth may come in contact with the Pretrial Services Agency (PSA), a federal agency that gathers information on newly arrested individuals and recommends whether they should be detained while awaiting resolution of their case; Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), a federal agency responsible for adult community supervision, and the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), to which youth who are sentenced for a year or more are transferred.⁹⁰

ABOUT DYRS

Although there are multiple federal and local entities that may have supervisory or custodial responsibilities for youth adjudicated to be delinquent in D.C., the only one under the authority of the District of Columbia government is DYRS. This audit therefore focuses on examining DYRS’s

performance in relation to crossover youth. Like CFSA, DYRS has its origins in a long-running class action lawsuit.⁹¹ The parties agreed to a consent order, which set forth numerous requirements designed to remedy the deficiencies outlined in the lawsuit and assigned a court monitor to oversee compliance. The creation of DYRS in 2005 as a cabinet-level agency reporting to the Mayor was one aspect of the remedies; court supervision did not end until late 2020.⁹²

The statute establishing DYRS states that it “shall lead the reform of the District’s juvenile justice system by coordinating the collaborative efforts of government agencies, contracted providers, labor, and community leaders to:

1. Improve the security, supervision, and rehabilitation services provided to committed and detained juvenile offenders and Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS).
2. Develop and maintain a holistic, family-oriented approach to the provision of youth services that emphasizes youth and parental responsibility to reduce juvenile crime, delinquency, and recidivism.
3. Develop and maintain state-of-the-art service programs, delivery systems, and facilities that will transform the District’s juvenile justice system into a national model.⁹³

The Family Court can commit youth to DYRS for either a specific or an indeterminate period, but under no circumstances can the commitment go past the youth’s 21st birthday.⁹⁴ Upon commitment, DYRS becomes the agency responsible for all decisions regarding the youth’s placement and rehabilitation plans, but it will give substantial weight to the Court’s recommended treatment and supervision plans.⁹⁵ DYRS has a variety of placement options including the youth’s residence, subject to electronic third-party monitoring; D.C. group homes, where youth can attend the local school, participate in programming, and maintain contact with their families; out of state residential placements; and New Beginnings Youth Development Center, a secure 60-bed facility in Laurel, Maryland, designed to house male youth whom DYRS has determined are not appropriate for a less secure environment.^{96, 97}

Youth committed to DYRS receive a variety of services, including education, behavioral health, case planning, and coordination. Youth are assessed using a variety of instruments to help ensure their case planning and programming are in line with their needs. DYRS employs a Positive Youth Justice model, which incorporates concepts of positive youth development and focuses on building on each youth’s particular strengths. The Maya Angelou Charter School, a private nonprofit organization, provides educational services to youth at New Beginnings.

DYRS’s FY 2024 annual budget is \$87.3 million; this includes 532 FTEs.⁹⁸ The annual cost of housing in DYRS’s highest security facility, New Beginnings, is \$130,702 per youth.⁹⁹ Like CFSA, DYRS partners with a variety of entities to provide services for committed youth, ranging from the charter school at New Beginnings, to treatment providers, to community-based organizations that provide Credible Messengers (discussed in more detail below) and other programming for youth. In calendar year 2023, DYRS made payments of \$200,000 or more to at least 13 contracted organizations.¹⁰⁰

A SNAPSHOT OF DELINQUENCY-INVOLVED YOUTH.

Data regarding justice-involved youth in D.C. comes from a wide array of sources and is not a single, consistent data set. DYRS does not have a data dashboard parallel to CFSA's. However, D.C. Courts publish some data annually and DYRS provided CCE with some delinquency data for FY 2023. The following information paints a picture of the youth who have recently interacted with the local delinquency system.

- **Petitions Filed.** The total number of new juvenile complaints in 2022 was 1,022, a 25% increase from 2021 but still fewer than the pre-pandemic (2019) total of 1,198.¹⁰¹ In 2022, 83% of all delinquency complaints resulted in a formal petition being filed by OAG.
- **Adjudications.** Most youth adjudicated delinquent in D.C. will be placed on probation; in its 2022 report to Congress, CSSD reported that it “supervised approximately 450–460 pre- and post-disposition juveniles and status offenders daily. Youth under CSSD’s supervision represented approximately 70–75% of all youth involved in the District’s juvenile justice system.”¹⁰²
- **DYRS commitments.** At the end of FY 2023, DYRS was supervising a total of 131 youth. There were 51 youth in New Beginnings and 30 in community placements, with the remainder at other types of residential placements or the Youth Service Center. Over the course of 2023, the total number of unique individuals served by DYRS was 183. In terms of case severity, 69% of all youth committed to DYRS and 63% of those placed in New Beginnings in FY2023 were adjudicated delinquent for a felony offense.
- **Demographics.**
 - » The median age of a youth petitioned in Family Court in 2022 was 16.¹⁰³
 - » In 2022, three out of four newly committed DYRS youth were aged 16 or older. Of the DYRS population served in FY 2023, 158 (86%) were Black non-Hispanic males, 16 (9%) were Black non-Hispanic females, and 6 (3%) were Hispanic males. There was one youth identified as each of the following: Hispanic female; White male; and other, non-Hispanic male.¹⁰⁴
 - » Black youth have made up at least 90% of the newly committed DYRS population in all years from 2018 to 2023.
- **Behavioral health care.** In September 2023, about 10% of youth in the care of DYRS were receiving mental health treatment; DYRS reported none receiving substance use disorder treatment.¹⁰⁵
- **Length of stay.** For youth released in FY 2023, the average lengths of stay were 294 days at New Beginnings; 72 days at the Youth Services Center; and 126 days on community placement.¹⁰⁶
- **Location of placement.** In FY 2022, about 12% of committed youth were placed in out-of-state facilities, and 42% were placed in the community.¹⁰⁷
- **Recidivism.** As of the end of September 2023, about one in five (21%) committed youth had been re-arrested. This is a decline from FYs 2020 to 2022, when one in three committed youth were re-arrested annually.¹⁰⁸

Section 3:

What Is Known About Crossover Youth in D.C.

There is no single source of public data related to crossover youth in the District.

In order to collect information for fiscal years 2018-2022 for this audit, CCE first went to the two D.C. agencies responsible for the ongoing case management and active supervision of crossover youth—CFSA and DYRS. As a preliminary inquiry, CCE requested that CFSA and DYRS each provide the number of crossover youth, simply defined as those who have experienced both systems at any point before the age of 22, in their care as of April 2022.

“Remember, no one speaks for these youth in the system. They have no voice. The data can be used to speak for them to try to get the best possible programs and results.”

—Joseph P. Ryan, Ph.D., University of Michigan School of Social Work

Neither agency provided comprehensive data on youth who met the statutory definition of crossover youth; rather, their responses appeared to primarily reflect youth who were dual-jacketed (having concurrently open cases in both the neglect and delinquency systems). CFSA indicated that four youth in the agency’s care in April 2022 were concurrently committed to DYRS, with seven concurrently involved with CSSD (generally, on probation). CFSA provided no data on youth in its care who had non-concurrent involvement in the delinquency system, or youth who had prior CFSA contact who later were committed to DYRS or were otherwise involved in the delinquency system.

In its response, DYRS indicated that in April 2022, five youth were currently involved in CFSA, and two youth in its care who had been dual-jacketed had their involvement with CFSA end during their commitment to DYRS. DYRS provided no data on youth committed to DYRS who were involved in CFSA prior to their DYRS commitment.

As neither D.C. agency had the data on hand to provide an accurate picture of crossover youth in the District, CCE turned to other research methods and data sources to understand as much as possible about the size and traits of this population. Those methods included:

- Requesting and analyzing additional statistical data from DYRS and CFSA.
- Requesting and analyzing statistical data from the Superior Court’s Strategic Management Division, which manages all court records including those of the Family Court.
- Reviewing DYRS and CFSA case files of specific youth and coding information found in those files to identify potential prevalence trends.
- Conducting surveys of agency staff.

- Reviewing locally- or nationally-published studies and governmental reports to see if D.C. had ever been the subject of a crossover youth analysis or if any other available data was directly relevant to understanding the scope or traits of crossover youth in the District.

A summary of what could be determined from those sources about the D.C. population of crossover youth follows in this section.

D.C. SUPERIOR COURT RECORDS SHOW MANY MORE CROSSOVER YOUTH THAN AUDITED AGENCY DATA SUGGESTS.

Under D.C. law, adjudications of both maltreatment cases and delinquency cases occur in the Family Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, or Family Court. Thus, the Superior Court has a record of all youth who have had delinquency and neglect cases in its court system. Many details are preserved digitally, including case types, party names, key dates of filings or closure, and case resolutions, among others. For maltreatment cases, court data also notes if a youth's family is involved in the neglect system; for example, if a case was opened because of a call made about abuse or neglect of a sibling, the case files would reference all the children involved.

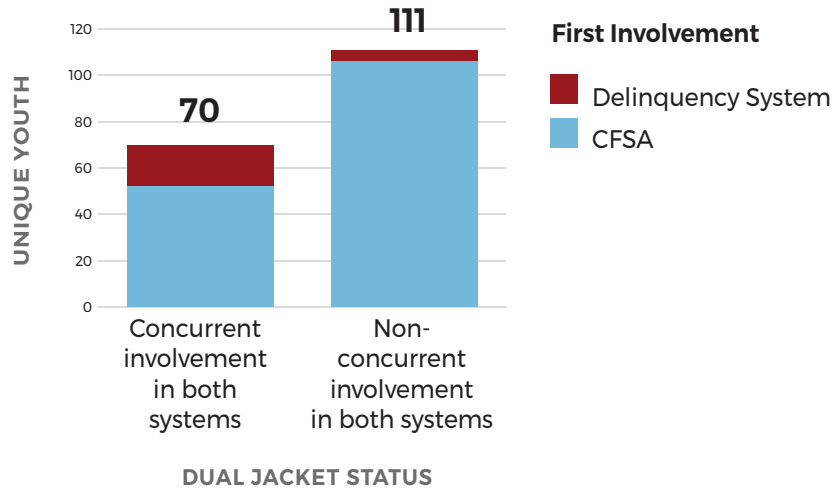
In 2023 CCE made a formal request to Superior Court for data about its cases where a youth had a delinquency case and they or their family had a child welfare case (where the youth is listed as either the primary or the sibling) during the audit period (2018-2022). Following the issuance of an Administrative Order, the Superior Court Strategic Management Division provided data to CCE in September 2023 for all delinquency cases opened beginning in calendar year 2018 involving a youth who (or whose family) had been the subject of a substantiated child welfare case.

Ideally, CCE would have been able to examine a much longer period of time to identify cases where a neglect case might have been open four or more years earlier than the delinquency involvement. Such data access and analysis would have allowed CCE to employ a more inclusive definition of crossover youth. However, in recognition that ODCA could not compel data from Superior Court and such information was being provided as a courtesy for this audit, CCE believed this was a reasonable and helpful initial data set. Even with these limitations, the data allowed CCE to draw improved estimates about crossover youth rates in D.C. as compared to what the audited agencies were able to provide.

CCE analyzed the Superior Court data provided to see how many youth had involvement in the delinquency system and a child welfare matter opened; this included both concurrent and non-concurrent involvement within the audit period (2018-2022). Additionally, CCE looked at the outcomes of the delinquency cases, including whether the youth were committed to DYRS or placed on CSSD probation.

CCE researchers found that there were 181 unique crossover youth whose cases were heard at Superior Court between 2018 and 2022; all but ten were identified in court case records as being African American. (See Figure 3.) Seventy youth had at least one period in which they were dual-jacketed, and 111 had non-concurrent involvement in both systems. About nine in ten (87%) crossover youth in the data set had their first system involvement with CFSA.

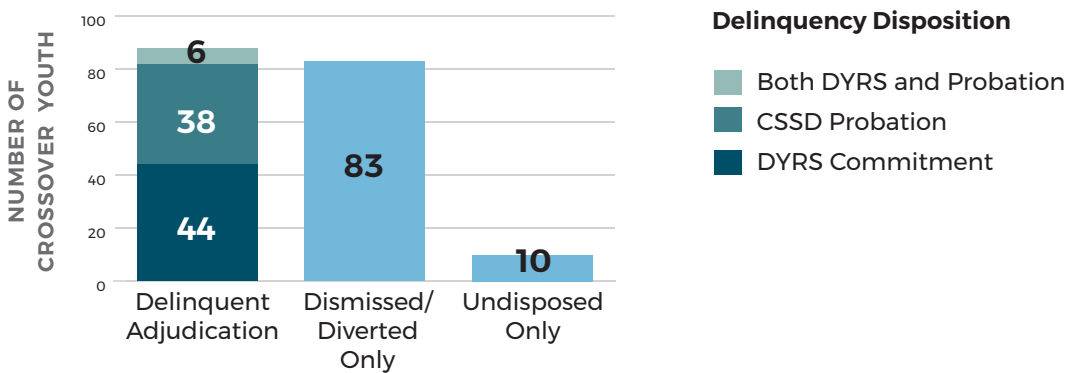
Figure 3. Crossover Youth by Dual-Jacket Status, First System Involvement, 2018–2022.



Source: CCE analysis of D.C. Superior Court Data, 2018–2022.

CCE also disaggregated the disposition of delinquency cases with which crossover youth were involved. (See Figure 4.) From 2018 to 2022, 50 crossover youth were committed to DYRS at some point, while 40 were at some point on probation; of these, six youth were committed to DYRS and on probation during this time and could have had additional cases that were dismissed or diverted.

Figure 4. Count of Crossover Youth, 2018 –2022, Disaggregated by Type of Delinquency Case.



Source: CCE analysis of D.C. Superior Court data.

About half of the 118 crossover youth had no period of DYRS commitment or CSSD probation, only a delinquency case that was dismissed or diverted or that was still undisposed. Among the crossover youth who were either put on probation or committed to DYRS, 36 previously had a case diverted or dismissed; these dismissals and diversions might have been opportunities to assess whether the youths and their caregivers needed additional support or services.

CCE also analyzed a “snapshot” of crossover youth with an active delinquency and/or neglect case at the end of the audit period, September 30, 2022. (See Table 2.) A total of 93 crossover youths had an open case on that date. Of those, 80 were not dual-jacketed, while 13 were dual-jacketed, of whom three were committed to DYRS. This aligns with the number (3) provided by CFSA and DYRS to the OFC for the second quarter of FY 2023 and is similar to the April 2022 data provided by the agencies to CCE as part of the audit (4 per CFSA, 5 per DYRS). Put another way, **there were seven times as many crossover youths overall as there were just dual-jacketed youth.**

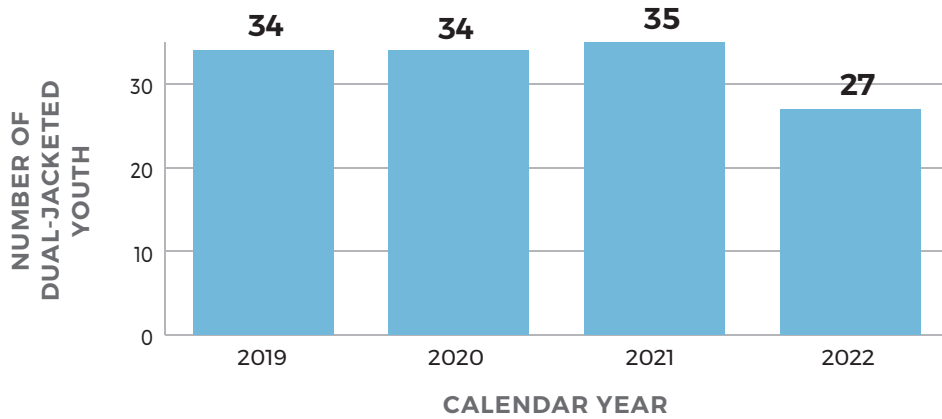
Table 2. Count of Dual-Jacketed Youth in D.C., by Year.

Crossover Youth with Open Delinquency and/or Neglect Cases on September 30, 2022

Crossover Youth, 9/30/2022	Total	Open DYRS Commitment	Open CSSD Probation	Open Undisposed only
Total Crossover Youth w/open delinquency and/or neglect cases	93			
Open Neglect, Closed Delinquency	34			
Total Open Delinquency	59	19	13	12
Open Delinquency, Closed Neglect	46	16	11	3
Dual-jacketed (Open Delinquency & Open Neglect)	13	3	2	9

Because cases can be opened or closed throughout a year, CCE looked at the total number of youth who were dual-jacketed for any length of time during each year from 2019 to 2022. This analysis showed that on average there were 33 youth who, at some point during the year, were concurrently involved with both the child welfare and delinquency system. (See Figure 5.) This is about 2½ times the number of youths who are dual-jacketed on a given day. While there could be a number of explanations for this difference between the number of dual-jacketed youth throughout a year versus at any given time, CCE looked at whether there were instances where an existing CFSA case was closed while a delinquency case was open. CCE found 24 such instances: CFSA closed 12 cases during a period when the youth was committed to DYRS, and another 12 cases closed during a period when the youth was on probation.

Figure 5. Count of Dual-Jacketed Youth in D.C., by Year.



Source: CCE analysis of D.C. Superior Court Data.

CJCC'S 2020 STUDY INDICATED IN D.C. MALTREATED YOUTH WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE JUSTICE-INVOLVED.

The D.C. Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) facilitates information sharing and collaboration, conducts research and analysis, and provides training and technical assistance on behalf of its District and federal member agencies.¹⁰⁹ In 2020, CJCC released a report entitled, *A Study of the Root Causes of Juvenile Justice Involvement*, which examined administrative data on a random sample of youth ages 10-17, enrolled in grades 6-12 in public schools in the District during the 2016-2017 school.¹¹⁰ It compared demographics, ACEs, and outcomes between youth that did not have juvenile justice system involvement with those that did (i.e. were arrested or petitioned/charged the following year).

Among youth in the sample, 4.2% became justice-involved in the study period; these youth had significantly higher rates of child maltreatment than those who were not justice-involved.¹¹¹ (See Table 3.) Compared to youth who did not experience maltreatment, youth with a history of abuse were 1.33 times as likely, and those with a history of neglect were 1.25 times as likely, to become justice-involved.

**Table 3. Prevalence of Reported Maltreatment Among
Random Sample of D.C. School Children, 2016-17 School Year.**

	Justice-Involved	Not Justice-Involved
Removed from Home	11.2%	3.4%
Reported Abuse	19.2%	6.2%
Reported Neglect	49.1%	18.9%

Source: Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for the District of Columbia, https://cjcc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cjcc/CJCC%20Root%20Cause%20Analysis%20Report_Compressed.pdf "A Study of the Root Causes of Juvenile Justice System Involvement."

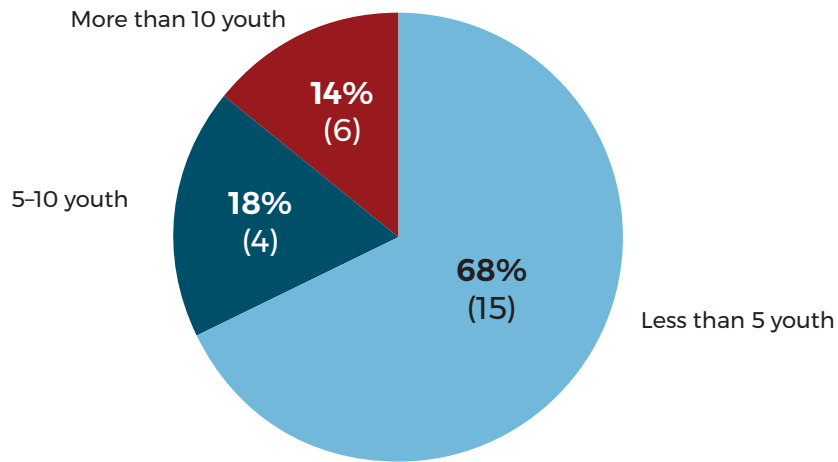
While these findings show that youth who were justice-involved were much more likely to have had cases of reported abuse and/or neglect or who had been put in foster care, CJCC’s study was neither designed nor able to provide a total estimated number of crossover youth in the District. However, it does provide evidence that being involved in the child welfare system is a risk factor for delinquency involvement in D.C, which is consistent with national data.

AGENCY STAFF ESTIMATES

As an additional data collection method, CCE coordinated with CFSA and DYRS to distribute a questionnaire to agency staff with case management responsibilities in March 2023. The survey’s definition of “crossover youth” was “youth who have, at any point under the age of 18, made contact with a juvenile delinquency agency (i.e. arrested by a law enforcement agency, detained or held at a DYRS facility, received a petition in court – even if no papered) and the child welfare system (subject to a CFSA investigation).”

Of the 25 completed surveys, about a third (32%) of respondents indicated that five (5) or more youths on their caseload met the definition of a crossover youth. (See Figure 6.) When asked how they learned someone on their caseload was a crossover youth, respondents indicated this was through a variety of channels, many of which were informal. The extent to which these respondents’ caseloads are representative of all agency caseloads is unknown, but it suggests that the front-line agency staff believes the rate of crossover youth to be significantly higher than the number of agency-wide dual-jacketed youth reported by either agency.

Figure 6. DYRS and CFSA Staff Survey Responses to Question: “How many youth on your caseload meet the definition of a crossover youth in average year?”



Source: CCE analysis of online questionnaires completed by DYRS and CFSA employees with case management responsibilities.

AGENCY CASE FILE REVIEW

To gain a better understanding of youth involved in the child welfare system, CCE requested and received from CFSA 24 randomly-selected case files of youth who had an open case during the audit period and were aged 12 and older; the sample included youth with a diversity of case types, such as foster care, in-home cases, etc. Additionally, from among DYRS’s delinquency files open during the audit period, CCE randomly chose 24 where the youth had an open or closed case with CFSA. DYRS provided access to the agency’s FAMCare case management system for a limited time for the audit team to conduct the review. The extent to which the DYRS or CFSA cases are representative of all cases is unknown.

CFSA CASE FILE REVIEW

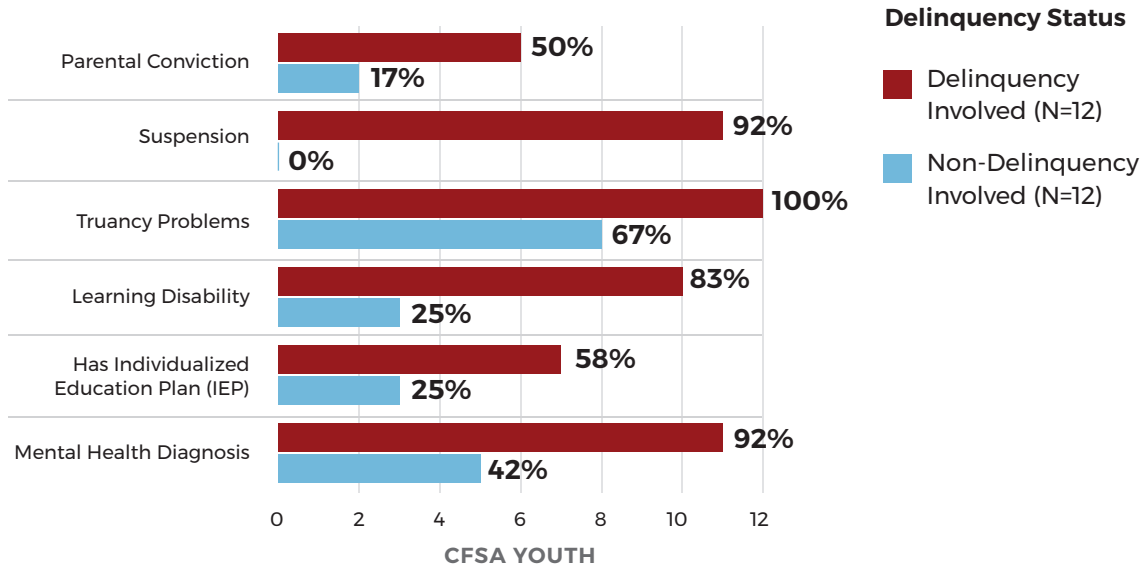
CCE manually coded all data collected from the cases files, using a standardized instrument for file review. While neither agency’s case files had a designated standardized field that was being utilized to indicate whether the child was or had been in the care of the other, this information was often found in narrative form in the file.

Among the 24 CFSA cases reviewed, 12 indicated that the youth had been arrested at some point, and ten noted the youth was in DYRS custody. While the sample size was small, the rate of justice-system involvement among these cases is consistent with the national rates cited in Section 1 of this report.

CCE’s case file reviews of CFSA youth showed that there were notable differences between youth who were and were not involved in the delinquency system. Crossover youth were more likely to

have had a parent with justice system involvement, a mental health diagnosis, a learning disability, and multiple school issues. (See Figure 7.) They also on average had more foster care placements (4.1 versus 2.8) and schools attended (5.6 versus 3.5), even though the average length of their cases was slightly lower. Among the ten youth in DYRS custody, all had truancy issues; eight had learning issues; and eight had been suspended.

Figure 7. Experiences of CFSA Youth by Delinquency Involvement.



Source: CCE analysis of 24 CFSA cases of youth over age 10 in different placement situations, randomly chosen by CFSA staff.

DYRS CASE FILE REVIEW

As mentioned above, all of the 25 DYRS case files that were examined and coded as part of this audit were of youth who had previously been or were currently involved with CFSA. CCE staff sought to learn more about the circumstances of crossover youth in the delinquency system, including identifying ACEs the youth had experienced and any other insights that might be gleaned from the direct work-product of case managers and social workers.

CCE reviewed the case notes in the files to analyze references to any ACEs among the youth whose files were provided. The abuse, neglect and other trauma suffered by the youth was often graphically described in the files, and many cases include exposure to violence in the home, incarceration and death of parents, abuse and neglect stemming from parental behavioral health issues, sexual trafficking and housing instability, including homelessness. The information below represents data coded from the files documenting the youths’ experiences, either from caseworker comments, assessment results when included, or statements from the youth themselves. Some experiences the case manager may not have known about or noted.

Among the most frequently mentioned ACEs in the DYRS youth case files was having a household member with a mental illness or substance use disorder, with over two-thirds of youth indicating a parent or other person in the home having behavioral health issues. (See Table 4.) This was followed by having a household member incarcerated (48%) and being exposed to community violence (44%).

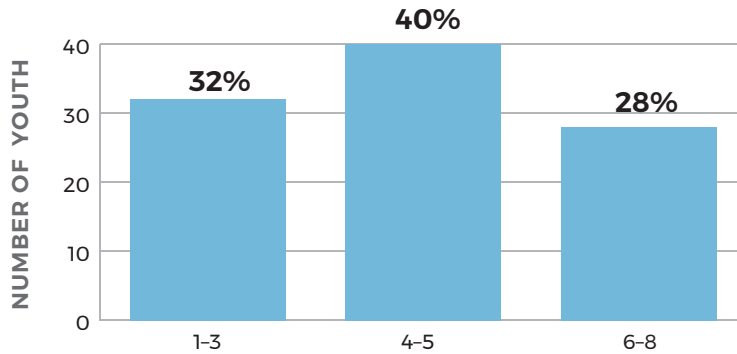
Table 4

Adverse Childhood Experiences Among Crossover Youth with Active DYRS Cases	DYRS youth (out of 25) with this experience noted in file
Household member with a mental illness	17
Household with a problem drinker or someone who used street drugs	17
Neglect	17
Household member who was incarcerated	13
Seeing or hearing someone physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot	12
Physical abuse	11
Intimate partner violence in the household	7
Parental separation or divorce	7
Emotional abuse	5
Child felt or was told they weren't loved/wanted	4
Sexual Abuse	3

Source: CCE analysis of 25 DYRS case files of youth with active or closed CFSA cases.

Of the 25 DYRS crossover youth cases reviewed, 68% had an ACEs score of four or higher based on the information present in those files. (See Figure 8.) Over a fourth (28%) had an ACEs score of 6, 7 or 8 out of 11. As noted earlier, an ACE score of four or higher is associated with significant negative impacts, including justice involvement. See Appendix B for coding methodology.

Figure 8. Incidence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Youth Committed to DYRS with Active or Closed CFSA Cases.



Source: CCE analysis of 25 DYRS case files of crossover youth.

The team’s review of the crossover youth committed to DYRS also found that many were the oldest or one of the oldest siblings in a large family group, and many case files mentioned the youths’ feeling a need to financially provide for their families as a motivation for the behavior that led to their becoming involved with the delinquency system.

CHILD FATALITY REVIEW DATA

Within the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is an official governmental body known as the Child Fatality Review Committee (CFRC), whose mission is to “reduce the number of preventable child fatalities in the District of Columbia through identifying, evaluating, and improving programs and systems responsible for protecting and serving children and their families.”¹¹² In its 2020 report, CFRC reviewed nine non-infant child deaths occurring between 2018 and 2020. Of these, eight were classified as homicides; all of these victims were crossover youth, having been involved “with child welfare and juvenile justice agencies before the fatal event.”¹¹³ All were Black male youth, four of whom had been arrested eight or more times.

These figures demonstrate that the failure to identify crossover youth in D.C. and address their unique and elevated risks can have tragic consequences. The CFRC identified child welfare and delinquency involvement as the two primary risk factors in youth homicides.¹¹⁴ As the Committee itself noted, “The [victim’s] progression into juvenile justice programs...indicates the need for child welfare and juvenile justice agencies to proactively collaborate and address the needs of this high-risk population of children and youth.”¹¹⁵

SCHOOL AND EDUCATIONAL DATA

There is no specific D.C. data available on educational outcomes for crossover youth or the identification of crossover youth in D.C. schools. However, CCE researchers were able to identify a

few disconnected data points about school problems or discipline—which are often precursors to delinquency system involvement—and educational data about youth in foster care.

The most recent D.C. School Report Card showed that high school youth in foster care fared worse than their peers across multiple educational outcomes.¹¹⁶ The percentage of youth in foster care who graduated from high school within five years is half of that of all District students. (See Table 5.) Chronic absenteeism was also 24% higher for youth in foster care. Additionally, youth in foster care were over twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension, which is a risk factor for both not graduating from high school and becoming involved in the justice system.¹¹⁷ And while the Report Card does not provide exact figures for school arrests, the categories provided indicate the rate for high school youth in foster care is at least 10 times higher than that for all youth.¹¹⁸ This suggests that schools likely need to be included in any efforts to identify and support youth at risk of crossing over or youth who are in the crossover pathway.

Table 5. Selected Outcomes of All and Foster-Care Involved High School Students.

D.C. Report Card, 2022-23 school year, high school students	All Report Card Students	Youth in Foster Care
Out-of-school Suspension Rate	13.8%	28.8%
School-Arrest Rate	<0.1%	<5%
Chronic absenteeism	57%	81%
Graduating in 5 years or less	78.5%	39.3%

Source: D.C. Office of the State Superintendent of Education, D.C. Report Card, 2022-2023.

IN THEIR OWN VOICES: CROSSOVER YOUTH, CAREGIVERS, AND PROFESSIONALS

In 2022 and 2023, CCE gathered information on crossover youth in the District directly from young adults who had been crossover youth, as well as from caregivers and professionals with first-hand knowledge of their issues. Descriptions of the methodologies used are in Appendix B of this report. What came through clearly was that while there were some people and programs that helped these vulnerable youth overcome some of the deficits they faced and build on their strengths, many gaps that are contributing to negative outcomes remain. To keep the identity of the individuals confidential, no personally identifiable information is associated with the below quotes, which instead are only identified as being from a young adult who had been a crossover youth, or from a professional who worked with crossover youth as a case manager, guardian ad litem, or legal counsel.

CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY YOUTH, CAREGIVERS, AND PROFESSIONALS

1. Crossover youth can require a high level of services, which caregivers and systems aren't always able to provide.

- **Youth** noted that during some of the most difficult times they faced, caseworkers were not available, leaving them to navigate situations without their assistance. This often happened on the weekend when their social worker was not working.

"I wish they worked 7 days a week. The weekends were the hardest part because you really need to talk to a Care Coordinator, and you cannot get them." –Youth

- **Caregivers** mentioned that when a child was having behavioral issues and a behavior plan was developed with the youth, the caregiver and the child, there was "no plan for the plan." Caregivers felt they did not have the support and resources they needed to help youth engaged in behaviors that might harm themselves or others.
- **Professionals and youth** noted that families may feel ill-prepared and unequipped to address the needs of crossover youth when they return from custody. Additionally, there are not enough alternative placements available, because many are unwilling to take justice-involved youth; this can mean youth are not living in situations conducive to their overcoming the trauma they have experienced, or are in a place that doesn't feel safe or supportive for them.

"They had nowhere to put me and then they put me in the foster home." –Youth

"My biggest concern is that often DYRS assumes that a child with CFSA will receive services; however, court oversight is needed to ensure that services occur." –Professional

2. Lack of interagency coordination and information sharing can lead to negative outcomes for youth, including being put in harm's way.

- **Youth** said that while in some cases DYRS and CFSA staff knew about their dual system involvement, sometimes they had to share this information themselves, which made them uncomfortable.
- **Youth** and **Professionals** said that there could be conflicting and unreasonable expectations because of the lack of coordination between agencies. Youth indicated that their probation officer would give them multiple tasks without knowing whether they could manage them or make it work.

"There can be duplicative things that can cause [youth] to be overwhelmed, and it becomes counterproductive." –Professional

"It is retraumatizing for youth to keep having to explain their situations." –Professional

- **Professionals** on the child welfare side indicated they did not have access to the "CourtView" electronic court case management and information system and are often left out of hearings due to not being notified by the delinquency system. Several noted instances where judges in delinquency cases inadvertently allowed inappropriate access to youth in violation of neglect orders, potentially placing a youth in harm's way. One professional said that youth have been

mistakenly released from delinquency court hearings to related adults to whom the youth should not be entrusted; they said this was because there isn't a unified case system to flag this, and the child's guardian ad litem is not automatically being served with delinquency case filings. A professional gave an example of DYRS allowing weekend visits in direct violation of the neglect order, without the child welfare side becoming aware for several weeks.

3. When maltreated youth reach their teens, the emotional and mental impact of their past maltreatment is often forgotten, and youth are “blamed” for behavior that is tied to this earlier abuse and neglect.

- The theme of “child blaming” came through repeatedly. Youth are expected to act older than their developmental age, often without adequate supportive adults and systems. Delinquency judges who are unaware of past maltreatment are not able to consider the role the neglect played in the child's behavior and what might therefore be most effective in meaningfully addressing the trauma so they can become a healthy and law-abiding adult.
- **Youth** talked about harsh treatment that was retraumatizing, as well as expectations that they believed were unreasonable given their age.

“In the group home, if you have one write up, you can't see your family.” –Youth

“I was 15 and they were so hard on me. They gave me no chances. I did something like smoking or have a dirty room, and they would step me back. I felt like I could not complete the program because they wanted too much.” –Youth

- **Caregivers** for CFSA expressed frustration with youth who were not compliant with DYRS requirements and indicated they would like a foster parent coach that they could talk to about the challenges they faced.
- **Professionals** noted that crossover youth are more likely to end up with further justice involvement. Youth in group homes due to maltreatment may pick up delinquency charges for what otherwise would be non-criminal behavior if in a private residence; for example, the homes have protocols that require calling the police if a youth damages property and the home wants to file an insurance claim.

*“It seems like the child turns 12 and suddenly everything is blamed on the child.”
–Professional*

“It feels like they go from being seen as a neglected child to the child blaming... you cannot compartmentalize - trauma on the neglect side, accountability on the delinquency side.” –Professional

“Once a client has a lot of eyes on them it seems like there is a lot more of professionals calling the police.” –Professional

“[Social workers] should always be there [for DYRS Team Meetings that a parent would normally attend. Otherwise it] puts it all [e.g. follow up] on the kids, which is a lot for the child without support.” –Professional

4. Crossover youth may face cross-jurisdictional challenges that can push them deeper into the system.

- As noted earlier, about half of D.C. youth in foster care are placed in Maryland, making it challenging to meet delinquency system obligations in the District. And with family and social activities often in Maryland and D.C., there is increased opportunity for youth to end up being involved in cases in more than one jurisdiction.

"[A youth] got arrested outside of the jurisdiction but she was in foster care in D.C., and we didn't know that she was missing court hearings in [that state's] juvenile division. She did not know what to do, no phone, did not know how to retain information [about her case]." -Professional

"Most [foster] homes are in Maryland. I have no system to look them up in unless the client is over 18... I have to leave so many voicemails, and I never hear back." -Professional

- **Youth** note that being committed to a juvenile facility impairs their ability to participate in programs available to youth in the community.
- **Youth** said there were not enough job training programs; those in the focus group were particularly interested in the building industry, healthcare, and security. They also said more help was needed to navigate transitioning to independent living.

"Not retail jobs, but ones with a career path... not McDonald's." -Youth

- **Youth** also noted challenges in navigating all the elements necessary to master the complexity of independent adult life. For example, they would have liked help in knowing how to make doctor's appointments and fulfill requirements for applying to schools.

"They were just in charge of us and did everything for us, but we should learn." -Youth

"Independent living - was not ready for all that." -Youth

- **Youth** and **Professionals** mentioned that there are some programs and services that are only available to youth in foster care if they are also involved in DYRS. Youth also mentioned that transportation was difficult, and making system adults responsible for bringing youth to appointments or providing paid cards for rideshares would help.

WHAT IS WORKING IN D.C. FOR CROSSOVER YOUTH

Youth and professionals also provided information about what is working for crossover youth in the District.

1. **There are caring individuals in all the systems involved who want to help crossover youth succeed.** In a survey of CFSA and DYRS staff, more than three in four said it was important to identify crossover youth on their caseloads, although over 90% said they'd received no training on understanding or serving crossover youth.

"You can find a great worker at each agency that can make all the difference." -Professional

2. Crossover youth find value in some existing programs. The program that youth most frequently cited as being valuable was the Credible Messenger program. DYRS describes this program as “a transformative, mentoring intervention program for youth committed to the agency, with a restorative justice philosophy ... Credible messengers are neighborhood leaders, experienced youth advocates and individuals with relevant life experiences whose role is to help youth transform attitudes and behaviors around violence.”¹¹⁹ That this program was mentioned favorably by multiple youths suggests that it is worth both further study and possible investment.

- **Youth** also mentioned as valuable the services received at the Achievement Centers described earlier in this report, as well as trips, youth coordinators, and employment opportunities and training. One youth noted their disability rights attorney helped them get the services they needed from DYRS. Several noted it was particularly beneficial when different systems worked collaboratively to address issues.

“The credible messenger and youth coordinator worked together to help me.” –Youth

“The credible messenger, PDS [public defender service] and youth coordinator worked together.” –Youth

It cannot be emphasized enough how important it was to the integrity of the audit to collect information from those directly impacted by the child welfare and delinquency systems, as well as those who work directly with these youth. CCE hopes that these youth and professionals likewise will be integrally involved in any reforms that come about as a result of this audit.

SUMMARY: CROSSOVER YOUTH IN D.C.

Despite the dearth of publicly available information on crossover youth in D.C., the picture painted by the various sources analyzed by the audit team confirms a need to identify these youth and develop strategies to address their needs. To summarize:

- DYRS and CFSA numbers understate even the narrowly defined population of dual-jacketed youth. The two agencies provided point-in-time estimates of dual-jacketed youth only; however, CCE analysis showed that throughout any given audit year, there were 2½ times that many youths who at some point were concurrently involved with both the child welfare and delinquency systems. Data from other sources, such as CJCC and agency staff surveys, provide corroborating evidence of higher numbers of crossover youth.
- Many crossover youth in D.C. weren’t concurrently involved with both systems, primarily because their child welfare case was closed prior to or at an earlier point in their delinquency involvement. Review of Superior Court data identified 181 crossover youth during the audit period (2018-2022). That the trauma of abuse and neglect didn’t occur concurrently with justice system involvement does not mean that the effects of that trauma have been erased or have gone away, and as will be discussed further in the findings, failing to include these youth in the counts does them and the District a disservice.

- Youth who are or have been maltreated are more likely to become involved in the delinquency system than those who have not.
- Crossover youth in D.C. have suffered multiple adverse childhood experiences, making them more vulnerable to negative personal outcomes, and putting them at risk of more serious justice involvement.
- Crossover youth face significant educational obstacles which can impact their life trajectories.
- Crossover youth are at high risk of death by violence. Between 2018 and 2020 of CFSA-involved adolescent youth who died in the District, almost all were crossover youth, and of these, all were victims of homicide.
- Crossover youth and their families/caregivers have identified a number of issues they faced in navigating multiple systems often spread across multiple jurisdictions, as did those who are working to help them. They also provided firsthand knowledge of those services and policies that are most beneficial. Their insights, as well as the other data collected, undergird the findings and recommendations in the following section.

Section 4

Findings and Recommendations

This section sets forth the audit’s findings and recommendations. Consistent with the scope of ODCA’s authority, the findings and recommendations focus primarily on two District agencies—CFSA and DYRS—but does not preclude recommending coordination between DYRS, CFSA, and other D.C. and federal agencies, nor does it diminish the importance and impact of all local and federal partners working together to improve the lives of crossover youth in the District.

Finding 1: CFSA and DYRS fail to utilize a definition of “crossover youth” consistent with D.C. Code and, therefore, fail to identify the full population of crossover youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In their regulations and relevant policy documents, CFSA, DYRS, and every other youth-serving agency in the District should adopt and utilize a definition of crossover youth consistent with D.C. Code and distinguish that from the subpopulation of dual-jacketed youth.
2. Consistent with the terms of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) statute, DYRS and CFSA should provide requested data on the full population of crossover youth, and not just those youth who are dual-jacketed, so that OFC can comply with its mandate to collect, analyze, and report on the population of crossover youth in D.C. on an annual basis.

COMMENTARY

When CCE interviewed experts in the field, they uniformly counseled against the use of overly narrow definitions of crossover youth, such as those that limit the population of interest to dual-jacketed youth. That the trauma of abuse and neglect occurred before involvement in the justice system (that is, non-concurrently) does not mean that the effects of that trauma have been erased. Experts noted that excluding these non-concurrent cases understates the number of youth adversely affected by prior trauma or involvement in the delinquency system. Research has shown that treatment plans based on the needs and characteristics of crossover youth broadly defined are more likely to be effective, as they take into account the effects of earlier maltreatment and avoiding duplicative or conflicting services. Identification of crossover youth also can help identify earlier points of potential intervention that might prevent deeper penetration into the justice system.

As noted earlier in this report, D.C. Code defines a “crossover youth” as a child “involved with” or “previously involved with. . . or otherwise known to CFSA” who “is currently or has previously been the subject of a petition alleging delinquency.” That definition is in line with research and evidence of

what is most beneficial for youth, and appropriately encompasses both concurrent and non-concurrent involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.¹²⁰ In the legislative history to the Office of Ombudsperson for Children Establishment Amendment Act of 2020, the D.C. Council expressed serious concerns about the “wellbeing and stability” of “children who experience both the foster care system and the juvenile justice system,” noting that they “too often roll from one system into the next” with the consequence that “these crossover youth face even greater barriers to positive outcomes in adulthood . . . than foster care youth involved in only one system.”¹²¹

CCE’s interactions with CFSA and DYRS during the audit confirm that the agencies have not adopted a definition consistent with that in the Ombudsperson statute. In written responses to CCE audit questions, DYRS stated that it “defines ‘crossover youth as youth who are committed to both DYRS and CFSA” and that “DYRS uses the terms ‘crossover youth’ and ‘dual-jacketed’ youth interchangeably.”¹²² CFSA’s written responses on this topic are less clear, but in interviews senior management defined crossover youth as “youth who are committed to the foster care system in the District and who are adjudicated to DYRS”—a definition nearly identical to the one provided by DYRS and much narrower than the one in the D.C. Code. These responses are in line with the information provided to CCE in response to CCE’s request for April 2022 crossover youth numbers: both agencies only included information on dual-jacketed youth.

The failure of CFSA and DYRS to use a definition of crossover youth that is consistent with the one in the D.C. Code has impaired the ability of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children to comply with its statutory reporting requirements related to crossover youth. D.C. Code states that the Ombudsperson must publish an annual report containing a “crossover youth section” that “shall include:

- A.** The number, demographics, and other relevant characteristics of the crossover youth population;
- B.** Data, metrics, and trend analyses related to outcomes for crossover youth;
- C.** Assessment of interagency communication and coordination related to crossover youth and its impact on outcomes for crossover youth; and
- D.** Any other information the Ombudsperson considers relevant to the outcomes for crossover youth.¹²³

These reporting requirements seek to elicit information and analysis necessary to develop an accurate understanding of the size, characteristics, and needs of the District’s crossover youth population, the factors that affect their life trajectories, and the services, programs, resources, and agency collaboration needed to improve their lives. At this point, however, CFSA’s and DYRS’s lack of a crossover youth definition consistent with the one in the D.C. Code stands as a barrier to achieving those goals.

To date, the Ombudsperson’s office has issued two annual reports—one at the end of calendar year 2022 covering FY 2022 and the other at the end of calendar year 2023 covering FY 2023. Because the Ombudsperson’s office was in start-up mode for much of 2022, its inaugural report contained no crossover youth data but stated that “[r]eporting for cross-over youth will be included in the

December 31, 2023 Annual Report and cover fiscal year 2023.”¹²⁴ Despite that assurance, the 2023 annual report contained none of the legislatively required information for crossover youth, as that term is defined in the statute. Rather, the reported data, which CFSA and DYRS jointly supplied to the Ombudsperson, is limited to the small number (eight) of “young people who were simultaneously committed to CFSA and DYRS” during FY 2023 – the population the agencies refer to as “dual-jacketed youth.”¹²⁵

Since this functional definition used by DYRS and CFSA differs from that in the Code in that it excludes youth non-concurrently involved, the number reported on by these agencies is a fraction of the total number of crossover youth CCE identified in its review of Superior Court case files.¹²⁶

It would enhance the consistency, accuracy and utility of reports, records, and service provision for all D.C. agencies that touch these youth to incorporate into their regulations, policies, and other documents a definition of crossover youth consistent with that in the Ombudsperson statute. A uniform definition of crossover youth would facilitate an accurate counting of these youth, the tracking and measurement of key outcome information, and the District’s ability to marshal, coordinate and deploy properly scaled and tailored resources and investments to serve these children across multiple agencies.

In sum, until CFSA and DYRS recognize crossover youth as a distinct group and define that group in accordance with the D.C. Code definition, they likely will never be able to supply the information that the Ombudsperson’s office needs to fulfill its statutory reporting requirements. If that is the case, the number of crossover youth in D.C. likely will remain unknown, the demographics and characteristics of these youth will not be fully understood, the data needed to track and analyze their outcomes will continue to be unavailable, and the efficacy of interagency communication and collaboration regarding these youth will remain unevaluated. More important, District agencies will lack the information they need to make informed, evidence-based, and fiscally prudent decisions about the services, programs, and investments needed to meet the needs of these youth and to improve their prospects in life.

Finding 2: Neither CFSA nor DYRS (a) identifies crossover youth as statutorily defined in any guiding documents, data management systems, policies or practices; or (b) recognizes that crossover youth have unique needs requiring specialized case management and programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. DYRS and CFSA should each include priorities focused on crossover youth identification, coordination, and programming in future strategic plans.
4. DYRS and CFSA should establish annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to crossover youth identification and outcomes which remain in place for at least five years so that trends can be observed.

5. CFSA and DYRS should begin flagging a youth's crossover status in their case management systems.
6. On their public data dashboards, CFSA and DYRS should include statistics on numbers, characteristics and outcomes for crossover youth as statutorily defined as well as for the sub-population of dual-jacketed youth.
7. CFSA should update its "Bill of Rights" so that the special circumstances of crossover youth are identified and their rights—particularly while under supervision or in secure facilities—are clearly defined.

COMMENTARY

As detailed in prior sections, crossover youth have complex needs that can affect their lives both in the near term (such as education), as well as throughout their life course (i.e. health, housing stability, employment, and risk of future court involvement). And as discussed above, research has shown that the likelihood of improved outcomes can be increased by targeted and coordinated interventions. Despite this reality, neither DYRS nor CFSA include addressing the unique needs of crossover youth in their agency-wide strategies or approaches to fulfilling their missions.

Crossover youth are functionally invisible in the laws, policies, and practices that guide the two key D.C. government child welfare and delinquency agencies. A review of CFSA's and DYRS's relevant regulations, mission statements, annual reports from the audit period, and key policies regarding case management, found no mention of crossover youth that might guide agency priorities or operations for working with this population.

Noting this absence is not to suggest that the agencies and their staff members do not take their missions seriously, nor that they do not seek to provide the highest quality case management for the children in their care. CCE's interviews with agency staff and focus groups with key stakeholders made clear that they have worked with staff who care deeply about serving youth and helping them thrive. Nevertheless, the lack of any explicit, enforced policies or guidance means that these agencies are unlikely to prioritize identifying or tracking crossover youth or addressing those factors that are most likely to impact their ability to successfully transition to adulthood.

There are no Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in DYRS's 2023-2025 strategic plan which capture the information necessary to identify and determine the specific needs of crossover youth.¹²⁷ The plan mentions in Objective 1.2 that individualized care plans will take into account "family circumstances" without reference to maltreatment, abuse or neglect, and does not mention collaboration with CFSA in any of its objectives.¹²⁸ And while Objective 3.1 includes a goal to "improve communication streams among all individuals, agencies, and partners involved in a youth's care," none of the KPIs for this section mention CFSA or engagement of those engaged in the youth's child welfare case in Team Decision-Making (TDM) – "a structured planning and decision-making process" held every 90 days through which "an individualized Success Plan (ISP) is developed" outlining services and needs.¹²⁹ Nor is there anything that specifically prioritizes identifying where a crossover youth

has a closed case with CFSA in order to gather and utilize information from CFSA about the case. By prioritizing the identification of past maltreatment, abuse, and neglect, and collaboration with CFSA for these purposes, DYRS could create a model of care that takes into account the needs of crossover youth and provides appropriate treatment while crossover youth are in the agency's care.

CFSA's key guiding documents likewise do not reference crossover youth or the importance of preventing crossover or coordinating care for maltreated children who are also in the delinquency system. The policy guiding Family Team Meetings does not explicitly require the regular inclusion of case worker(s) from the delinquency system (DYRS or CSSD); it states that "CFSA and contracted agencies providing on-going case management shall invite and encourage the attendance of an array of case stakeholders, including: family members, their supports (e.g. friends, clergy), caregivers, resource parents, service providers, the child's guardian ad litem and parents' attorneys, if one is appointed."¹³⁰

The CFSA Bill of Rights for Children and Youth in Foster Care is also silent on the rights of crossover youth.¹³¹ This document explaining the rights of youth while in foster care in D.C. was statutorily mandated in 2013.¹³² Two related agency rules detail the rights of children living in foster homes (29-6004, "Rights and Responsibilities of Foster Children Living in Foster Homes") and facilities not intended exclusively for children who have been abused or neglected (29-6203, "Statement of Residents' Rights and Responsibilities"); however, none of these rules address the special situation of youth involved in the delinquency system.¹³³ Neither CFSA rules nor the published Bill of Rights describes how being dually-involved—particularly while confined in a secure facility—might impact a youth's rights. Similarly, the CFSA Older Youth Services policy indicates that a youth aged 15 to 20 in a congregate care facility should receive case management services through the Office of Youth Empowerment, but it does not make clear whether this includes New Beginnings and other delinquency system facilities.¹³⁴

The agencies' reluctance to engage with this issue may come from the view, held by interviewed managers and staff within DYRS and CFSA, that crossover youth do not require special action or even attention because of the "holistic" or "whole child" perspective taken by social workers and care coordinators.¹³⁵ CCE heard repeatedly from agency employees that they do not believe their case management practices should be modified to target a particular subpopulation because all of their youth deserve supports and services tailored to their individual needs. However, the reality is that a youth cannot be provided truly holistic treatment if their case records do not reflect their prior child welfare or delinquency involvement or feedback from those other case workers, health care providers, or advocates. And it is unclear whether agency leaders truly ascribe to this view, as they consistently participate in CJCC-facilitated meetings (described in the following finding) about the subpopulation of dual-jacketed youth.

Creating or utilizing an existing data field in their case management systems that identifies the client as a crossover youth would be a meaningful step forward for DYRS and CFSA. CCE's work throughout this audit showed these agencies can already identify many crossover youth using the information they have, albeit imperfectly and unsystematically. For example, of the DYRS case files of youth that court records indicated were crossover youth reviewed by CCE, CFSA was expressly

mentioned in about two-thirds (16). Additionally, DYRS uses a number of assessments that would identify if a committed youth was in foster care or was abused or neglected.¹³⁶ In terms of CFSA, 11 of the 24 cases CCE examined expressly noted that the youth was involved in the delinquency system, including if they were committed to DYRS. Creating a field in their case management systems that staff could flag when they see or receive information indicating a client is a crossover youth would allow for much better data reporting by CFSA and DYRS; and when specialized programming is developed, these youth whose cases were flagged then could be immediately included.

While CFSA and DYRS are the agencies subject to this audit, the ecosystem of entities that interact with crossover youth is much larger; these agencies should address crossover youth in relevant mission statements, regulations, strategic plans, or policies. CCE looked at public documents from the following entities and found no references to crossover youth:

- **D.C. Office of Attorney General.** No references to crossover youth were in documents regarding the Family Services Division, which handles litigation on behalf CFSA, or the Public Safety Division, which handles all delinquency cases.¹³⁷ In addition to OAG having the ability to divert youth to the Alternative to Court Experience program, it also provides grants to community based organizations serving youth and families involved with CFSA, launched a first-of-its-kind Restorative Justice program providing an alternative way to address crime in the District.¹³⁸ Given OAG's programming and its role as the exclusive prosecutor of youth in the District, it should be included in any multi-system approach to serving crossover youth.
- **D.C. Superior Court.** The District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001 states that "if an individual who is a party to an action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court becomes a party to another action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court, the individual's subsequent action or proceeding shall be assigned to the same judge or magistrate judge to whom the individual's initial action or proceeding is assigned to the greatest extent practicable and feasible."¹³⁹ While this seems to reflect an intention to ensure that youth who have been involved in both the neglect and delinquency system are treated in a holistic and coordinated way, CCE could find no explicit mention of crossover youth in any of the Court's public documents, including the most recent (2022) annual report of the Family Court to Congress. The Court Social Services Division (CSSD) also does not recognize crossover youth as a special population. The Family Court 2022 report notes that CSSD identifies ACEs among its delinquency population; as ACEs include several types of maltreatment (and therefore possible CFSA involvement), this screening could help identify crossover youth.¹⁴⁰

Finding 3: There is insufficient communication, collaboration, and data-sharing among agencies regarding crossover youth in D.C.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.** D.C. Council should ensure that the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) has sufficient statutory authority and staffing to fulfill its obligation to collect, analyze, and report on the population of crossover youth in D.C. annually. The Council should also review and make public any data sharing agreements established by and between OFC, CFSA, and DYRS to ensure they sufficiently reflect the agencies' intentions and capabilities to collect, analyze, and share data that would allow OFC to adequately report on the full population of crossover youth, not just on dual-jacketed youth.
- 9.** The chairs and/or staff of D.C. Council committees with oversight over the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) and OFC should meet with relevant agency staff to evaluate any overlapping aspects of their statutory mandates focused on crossover youth data, KPIs, and other issues, identify which agency is best suited to collect, analyze, and publish data and facilitate relevant interagency communications, and make statutory or funding changes as needed.
- 10.** DYRS and CFSA should reestablish the "Crossover Youth Steering Committee" to identify, manage and serve crossover youth in their care; in addition to DYRS and CFSA, this committee should include a diverse cross-section of the justice, education, community supervision, and behavioral health organizations operating in the District, as well as former crossover youth and the caregivers of current and former crossover youth.
- 11.** The reconstituted Steering Committee should determine how the Joint Supervision Workgroup can best serve all crossover youth, re-examining its mission, membership, meetings, and scope.
- 12.** DYRS and CFSA should update the 2017 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was intended to guide collaboration between the two agencies regarding dual-jacketed youth to clearly designate agency roles, rights, and responsibilities, including how decisions will be made around financial responsibilities for housing, programming, treatment, and other services. Any future MOA should be overseen by D.C. Council committees with oversight of the two agencies and remain in force even if there is turnover at the agency Director or Mayoral level.
- 13.** Once a new MOA is in place, the staff of each participating agency and their contractors should be trained in the roles and responsibilities for each agency. DYRS and CFSA should create processes to ensure robust compliance with and understanding of the MOA's expectations.
- 14.** DYRS and CFSA should create a working group to identify barriers to data sharing, and then develop and implement a formal data-sharing agreement that allows for current, consistent sharing of information on crossover youth for the purposes of identification, case planning and management, and development of outcome measures.

15. DYRS and CFSA should work with CSSD and the juvenile justice and child welfare agencies in Maryland and Virginia to develop agreements that allow for greater collaboration and information sharing around crossover youth who are involved with these other entities.
16. Leadership from DYRS and CFSA and staff from the D.C. Council committees with oversight over these agencies should meet with representatives from the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University to learn more about the Crossover Youth Practice Model and its possible applicability to and benefits for D.C. If the Georgetown Center is able and willing, it should be engaged to perform an assessment of DC's approach to crossover youth.

COMMENTARY

The need for CFSA and DYRS to engage a diverse group of relevant federal and local agencies in planning and collaborating to serve crossover youth is imperative—both for providing relevant services and supports to current crossover youth and targeting interventions for youth at greatest risk of crossing over. Having more robust and up-to-date information would enable social workers, care coordinators, probation officers, and contractors to design more effective plans of services and treatments that are tailored to fit the needs of individual youth, and which take into account the types and severity of trauma experienced as a result of earlier child maltreatment.

In 2023, CFSA Director Robert L. Matthews said that he seeks to transform the agency from being simply a child welfare agency to becoming the animating force behind the creation of an effective child and family well-being system in the District of Columbia.¹⁴¹ To accomplish that transformation, Director Matthews called for “enhanced coordination” among the D.C. government agencies that serve children and families, including DYRS.¹⁴² Given the findings of this audit, a specific and coordinated approach to identifying, prioritizing, and creating tailored responses for crossover youth should be a clearly articulated component of this effort.

DYRS and CFSA should formalize interagency collaboration around crossover youth.

Through the information-gathering for this audit, CCE concluded that DYRS and CFSA have limited leadership-level collaboration methods. No executive branch agency or body, inclusive of CFSA and DYRS, is currently required to meet, share information, or have coordinated policies regarding comprehensively addressing the needs of and serving the crossover youth population.

For the 2024 performance oversight hearing, the D.C. Council asked DYRS to report how it “partner[s] with other youth serving governmental agencies” and asked about collaborations with a range of specific behavioral health and violence interruption and prevention programs run by other D.C. agencies. In its brief response, DYRS cited no specific partnerships with CFSA, the Department of Behavioral Health, Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants, or the Office of the Attorney General, only offering that “recently, DYRS worked collaboratively with Court Social Services (CSS) to launch the GPS Rapid Response Team.”¹⁴³

In contrast, in its response to the prompt to “describe CFSA’s collaboration with the DYRS” for its 2024 performance oversight hearing, CFSA mentioned the Joint Supervision Workgroup, which was created by the CJCC’s Juvenile Justice Committee in 2016 to ensure agency awareness of youth who are supervised by more than one agency.¹⁴⁴ In addition to DYRS and CFSA, as of the end of fiscal year 2023, CSOSA, CSSD, PSA, and CJCC participated in these quarterly meetings.¹⁴⁵ CFSA indicated that for these meetings, “A list of all dually committed youth are documented and shared in advance of the meeting with all participants. A deeper dive of services and outstanding needs is completed on youth who are newly committed and/or rearrested.” Their response also noted that, “In addition, ongoing case management and collaboration occurs between social workers and staff for youth who are committed to both CFSA and DYRS” and “Data is collected and discussed on demographics, placement type, school attendance, involvement with the Department of Behavioral Health, educational progress, employment, re-entry and re-arrest rate, time in custody, and exits from custody and commitment.”¹⁴⁶

As has been noted elsewhere, these agencies are focused only on dual-jacketed youth, both in data collection and case collaboration. CCE heard from interviews that interagency case management is informal when it happens at all, and that the quarterly meetings are not a place for ongoing case management of even all dual-jacketed youth, but are focused on troubleshooting service delivery and payment for a select number of cases.¹⁴⁷ Youth committed to DYRS with a closed CFSA case are not included in these quarterly discussions. Given that this group discusses confidential youth cases, it cannot serve as a venue for youth and family involvement in developing policies, practices, and protocols around crossover youth.

The idea that serving crossover youth well requires robust cross-agency collaboration is not an unfamiliar concept for either DYRS or CFSA. CCE’s research for this audit uncovered several prior efforts to facilitate more robust coordination and collaboration between DYRS and CFSA around crossover youth. A November 2009 MOA between CFSA and DYRS includes a detailed scope of services and set of responsibilities related to youth who either are served by both agencies or “who may benefit from placement or other services via the other agency.”¹⁴⁸ (A copy of this MOA is included as Appendix C to this report.) Commitments and responsibilities detailed in the 2009 MOA include:

- “Convene twice a month meetings to discuss and agree upon possibilities for placement, services, costs and agency roles related to youth for which CFSA and DYRS may have shared responsibility and/or involvement for youth who may be served by one agency and who may benefit from placement or other services via the other agency...other appropriate stakeholders, such as: assigned CFSA Assistant Attorney General, social workers, case managers and clinical staff shall attend and participate as appropriate in these meetings.”
- “The agency to whom the youth is committed will search the District’s interagency management system for children and families to determine if the youth has involvement with the other agency... [and] will notify the other agency that the youth is committed.”
- “each respective agency will... invite the case manager or social worker from the other agency to all Youth/Family Team Meetings, Family Group Conferencing meetings, or any other case planning meetings.”

- “As appropriate, each part agrees to present an agreed upon unified placement and/or service plan to the Court.”
- “The DYRS and CFSA staff will document their communications in their respective information systems.”
- “Establishment of Crossover Youth Steering Committee (CYSC): The Directors will designate representatives to a senior level Steering Committee that will be responsible for monitoring the progress toward the goals and objectives of this MOU.”

The 2009 MOA defined “crossover youth” as youth committed to DYRS with an open CFSA case, or youth served by either agency who would benefit from placement with or services provided by the other agency. This definition didn’t explicitly include all youth with non-concurrent DYRS and CFSA cases. While not inclusive of the Ombudsman’s definition of crossover youth, the MOA included many policies and practices that were recommended by youth and other stakeholders to CCE during the audit and which are supported by national best practices. When asked about this MOA by CCE, CFSA staff said it was developed under prior agency heads and is “not active.”¹⁴⁹

In 2017, after the establishment of the CJCC Joint Supervision Workgroup, the members developed and entered into a voluntary Memorandum of Agreement (2017 MOA) to describe their commitment to coordinate, communicate, and share information about dual-jacketed youth.¹⁵⁰ The 2017 MOA states that it is intended to establish a mutually agreed upon process for sharing information between collaborating agencies and for coordinating case-management services. The 2017 MOA calls for the justice-related agencies involved in a D.C. dual-jacketed youth’s life to work collaboratively to “create and execute a case plan and provide services for the youth and his or her family.”¹⁵¹

A copy of the MOA is included as Appendix E. It detailed the actions and commitments that the participating agencies agreed to undertake on a number of topics, including:

- Performance measures;
- Creation of working groups to address barriers to interagency cooperation;
- Required annual cross-agency trainings;
- Quarterly meeting minutes specifying follow-up action items;
- Maintenance of current agency point of contact lists;
- Sharing of information from agency databases;
- Confidentiality of certain data;
- Concurrent agency supervision procedures;
- Presentation of agreed-upon coordinated placement and service plans and case histories to the Court;
- Case-collaboration expectations; and,
- Family team meetings.

This 2017 MOA reflected a promising cross-agency commitment and plan, with some provisions similar to those in the 2009 DYRS and CFSA MOU, although still too narrowly focused on dual-jacketed youth. However, CCE found that most aspects of the MOA – including cross-agency trainings and performance measures – were not being followed. As the MOA lacked any enforcement provisions, nothing bound the agencies who signed the MOA to comply with its provisions. Additionally, most CFSA and DYRS staff members interviewed for this audit, including senior officials, stated that they were unaware of the 2017 MOA or the Joint Supervision Workgroup quarterly meetings.¹⁵² Given that past MOAs are being routinely discarded or ignored following changes in Agency Directors, future MOAs should be overseen by relevant D.C. Council committees and remain in force even if there is turnover at the agency Director or Mayoral level.

Going forward, a wholesale revision and update of the 2017 MOA surrounding joint supervision should be prioritized; it seems only prudent that the CJCC Juvenile Justice Committee, of which both DYRS and CFSA are members, could facilitate this process. CJCC could also ensure that the experiences and voices of families and crossover youth are included, both in an MOA as well as on an ongoing basis. All revisions to the scope of the Joint Supervision Workgroup and the accompanying interagency agreements should be expanded beyond only dual-jacketed youth to allow discussion of and collaboration on the full crossover youth population. At a minimum, there should be put in place mechanisms whereby DYRS case management staff can review the closed CFSA case file of a committed youth and consult with CFSA staff or contractors who were involved with the youth's neglect case when it was open.

There is currently informal information sharing between DYRS and CFSA.

To best serve youth with multiple system involvement, it's critical to have data on these youth and the challenges they and their families have encountered. Basic data sharing would allow the key D.C. agencies to know, at a minimum, which young people are crossover youth; robust data sharing would allow agencies to understand the contours of the youths' personal experiences and involvement in both systems, leading to more effective case planning and better outcomes for youth. As noted in the earlier "In Their Own Voices" section, youth often had to share this information themselves, which made them uncomfortable or caused them to be retraumatized. Additionally, both youth and professionals commented on conflicting and overwhelming expectations and requirements resulting from a lack of coordination between agency case managers. It is unreasonable and counterproductive for youth to be in the position of having to self-manage both information sharing about their own case and interagency collaboration.

Through the course of the audit, CCE learned that DYRS and CFSA front line staff frequently do know about their clients' (primarily simultaneous) involvement in each other's agencies through informal mechanisms and one-on-one communications. In March 2023, CCE coordinated with CFSA and DYRS to distribute a questionnaire to agency staff with case management responsibilities. Of the 25 voluntarily completed surveys, about a third (32%) of respondents indicated that five or more youth on their caseload met the definition of a crossover youth in the Ombudsperson statute. When asked how they learned someone on their caseload was a crossover youth, respondents said this happened through a variety of channels, many of which were informal. Interviewees

elaborated on the informal methods of communication among staff members, describing email communications, phone calls, and CJCC’s periodic Joint Supervision team meetings.

They also reported that these informal practices rely heavily on relationships between current staff, without any specific agency policies, procedures, or infrastructure to ensure continuing cooperation. It is only to the extent that the staff members have pre-existing relationships or develop them over time that these communications typically occur. Staff changes result in these relationships being weakened or lost altogether.

While these informal mechanisms are noteworthy, formal, consistent, and current data sharing between CFSA and DYRS to identify and serve crossover youth is necessary but not occurring, with the exception of the quarterly meetings regarding dual-jacketed youth organized by CJCC described above.

DYRS, CFSA and other District agencies serving crossover youth should evaluate D.C. data sharing laws and develop and implement a plan for appropriate cross-agency data sharing.

The need for improved data sharing—and greater interagency collaboration generally—about D.C.’s system-involved youth has long been recognized but rarely been actualized. For example, in 2010, the D.C. Council passed legislation establishing a Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform that was tasked with submitting a report to include recommendations on “increased coordination, transparency, and accountability between CSS [CFSA’s predecessor agency], DYRS, the Metropolitan Police Department, and other District agencies to ensure the confidential sharing of key information between these agencies.”¹⁵³ This report was not produced.¹⁵⁴ In establishing the Office of the Students in the Care of D.C., its coordinating committee was tasked to, among other things, “[r]eview existing data collection and sharing efforts within and across agencies and make recommendations regarding the exchange and sharing of data for students in the care of D.C.; provided, that all such recommendations comply with local and federal law.”¹⁵⁵ To date, those recommendations were not published either.¹⁵⁶

Additionally, several specific provisions of the D.C. Code create agency powers for youth-related data sharing, but these appear to not have sufficient implementation authority or clarity to allow them to be adequately leveraged by the agencies that would most benefit by shared real-time and aggregate data. For example, D.C. Code § 16-2332 allows both CFSA and DYRS to inspect all juvenile social records when “necessary for the discharge of their official duties.”¹⁵⁷ While this authority to inspect records is necessary for determining on a case-by-case basis if a youth is or has been involved in both systems, it has not proven to be sufficient for ensuring that the agencies or their contractors have the regular, appropriate, ongoing data access or sharing necessary for consistent joint case planning or outcome measurement.

Furthermore, the D.C. Code grants interagency data access authority to the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC). Specifically, OFC can compel access to “any agency record that is required for the discharge of the Ombudsperson’s duties” or issue subpoenas to compel

records.¹⁵⁸ According to their 2023 Annual Report, “OFC partnered with CFSA and DYRS to develop and institute a data sharing agreement between the two agencies that allows for understanding the full scope of the population of youth served by both agencies (dual status or dual-jacketed youth), as well as those youth who have prior history and have crossed over from one system to the other (crossover youth).”¹⁵⁹ However, given that the only data on crossover youth in the report is related to dual-jacketed youth, it is unclear whether the data agreements have been completed or are in force.

Based on the challenges faced by CJCC in its effort to get data for its statutorily-mandated 2020 report detailing the root causes of delinquency involvement, OFC may face challenges in getting the data it needs from CFSA and DYRS.¹⁶⁰ Like CJCC, OFC is not included in agencies statutorily permitted to access youth records in D.C. Code § 16-2332 without a special rule or court order.¹⁶¹ In order for CJCC to get the necessary data access, the D.C. Council passed special legislation, and CJCC obtained an administrative order from the D.C. Superior Court. Additionally, CJCC had separate information-sharing agreements with each agency supplying data (CFSA, DYRS, D.C. Superior Court, OSSE, Metropolitan Police Department, Department of Health Care Finance, Department of Human Services). The data access issues significantly prolonged the data review resulting in the report taking 2.5 years to complete. Having to undergo a process like this to obtain data renders it useless in terms of providing timely, actionable information to help improve service delivery for crossover youth in real time.

By contrast, the D.C. Office of the Chief Medical Examiner’s Fatality Review Division is able to obtain robust, person-level data about children who have died from many of the same agencies that cite privacy restrictions as limiting their ability to share data or case information without needing annual emergency or special legislation from the D.C. Council to exercise its duties. Utilizing its statutory authority, the Fatality Review Division is able to obtain records from the medical examiner, public and private child welfare, education, health, and public safety agencies, and area hospitals, from which a comprehensive report is developed for presentation to the Child Fatality Review Committee.¹⁶² This level of data sharing by local agencies after a child in their care has died should be standard for those who are alive, to help reduce such tragic outcomes.

Furthermore, none of the laws speak to how and to what extent any interagency shared information will be shared with and utilized by social workers, care coordinators, and those supervising youth in the community or in institutional settings to develop case plans which take into account a youth’s history of child maltreatment and risk of delinquency. For example, D.C. Code states that CFSA and DYRS employees can access social records “when necessary for the discharge of their official duties.”¹⁶³ It may be that not all aspects of a youth’s record are appropriate for sharing with all employees of these agencies, and the statute is silent on whether private service providers should have any access whatsoever. These are issues that need to be resolved so that data sharing expectations and limitations are clearly understood by all involved agencies and entities.

Opportunities exist for CFSA and DYRS to improve inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional collaboration and information sharing.

As noted throughout this report, crossover youth's involvement with government agencies is not limited to CFSA and DYRS; public entities besides these two agencies have a meaningful impact on these young people's lives. While a mix of federal and local partners participate in the dual-jacketed youth focused Joint Supervision Workgroup and a wide range of agency leaders are members of the Students in the Care of D.C. Coordinating committee, notable gaps exist in governmental collaboration and information sharing regarding crossover youth.

In terms of the recommended reinstatement and expansion of a Crossover Youth Steering Committee and a broadening of the scope of CJCC's Joint Supervision Workgroup, there are several D.C. and federal government entities that should become active participants. Below are public entities operating in D.C. whose increased collaboration and information sharing with CFSA and DYRS would benefit service provision to crossover youth and their families.¹⁶⁴

- **The Ombudsperson for Children.** To support OFC's statutory duty to "facilitate interagency communication and coordination related to issues impacting CFSA children," OFC staff should participate in interagency strategic efforts and, when appropriate, case discussions.¹⁶⁵ OFC's statute already allows for confidential access to information about CFSA-involved children.¹⁶⁶
- **Office of the Attorney General.** Having information about CFSA involvement of youth who are suspected of or are proven to have engaged in delinquent acts could inform how the youth's case is disposed; diversion to the Alternative to the Court Experience program could be of particular benefit to many crossover youth.¹⁶⁷ In terms of info sharing, ensuring that guardians ad litem and juvenile defenders are both informed of the youth's crossover status and kept up to date on any court involvement is a need that was identified through the course of the Audit that OAG could help meet.
- The **Students in the Care of D.C. Coordinating Committee** is charged with facilitating "inter-agency, department-level leadership in planning educational experiences and outcomes for students in the care of D.C.," including CFSA and DYRS custody; their focus is on a policy level rather than child level.¹⁶⁸ Given CJCC's report showing that crossover youth are more likely to have educational challenges than others, this committee should be engaged in collaborative efforts to understand the root causes of these issues and develop policy and practice remedies.
- **Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC).** CJCC has already taken on a leadership role in facilitating interagency communication around dual-jacketed youth and could become a convener or hub for activities related to improving the District's responses to all crossover youth. Development of a data-sharing MOU between CJCC and CFSA and DYRS whereby it could access youth records would improve its ability to provide timely, actionable information to help improve service delivery for crossover youth.
- **Court Social Services Division (CSSD) of the Superior Court.** As the agency responsible for assessing youth who enter the delinquency system, CSSD is in a good position to share information showing a youth is involved with CFSA or is a current or past victim of maltreatment

who is not known to CFSA. This would be particularly beneficial for DYRS case managers to know and utilize in determining initial placement and programming. Additionally, CCE's analysis of court data showed that many crossover youth are involved with CSSD, either on probation alone or in combination with a DYRS commitment; improved data sharing could help all agencies better serve these young people and also ensure resources are best used.

- **D.C. Superior Court.** Superior Court electronic records do not note crossover youth systematically in a way that could be shared with CFSA or DYRS. While there are a number of ways that the Family Court could be instrumental—for example, to bring leadership and expertise to interagency coordination efforts—flagging crossover youth in the court's data system would be a particularly useful step.
- **The Mayor's Services Liaison Office (MSLO).** MSLO serves children, youth, and families who are involved in Family Court proceedings.¹⁶⁹ Mandated by the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, the office is based in Superior Court and supported by 13 District of Columbia government agency liaisons who are familiar with the types of services and resources available through their 50 respective agencies and can access their information systems and resources from the courthouse.¹⁷⁰ A goal of the MSLO is “to create a seamless system of care for accessing client information, appropriate services, and resources supporting families and children;” it also is tasked with supporting case workers and attorneys, among other relevant staff, in identifying and accessing information and services for children, youth, and families involved in Family Court proceedings. While neither CFSA and DYRS interviewees nor written responses to information requests mentioned MSLO as an available resource, if operating as presented the office could play an important role in coordinating services for youth who have been or are currently involved in multiple systems in the Family Court.

The issue of cross-jurisdictional data sharing came up frequently over the course of this audit. Over half of CFSA foster care placements are out of state (primarily in Maryland) and the proximity of D.C. to Maryland and Virginia means that youth can be involved in the delinquency and child welfare systems in two or even three different state systems simultaneously. To provide effective case management, D.C. agencies need to know which youth are involved in other jurisdiction's systems and the types of services and supports they are receiving there. As noted earlier, youth with multi-jurisdictional involvement reported difficulties in meeting court and agency obligations, and guardians ad litem and attorneys reported not knowing about issues with their clients' cases, or even being able to get information from agencies in other states.

According to CFSA's response to a Child Fatality Review Commission recommendation in its 2018 report, “the exchange of information between Maryland's child protection services agency and CFSA occurs on a routine basis...CFSA Principal Deputy Director and Maryland child welfare officials will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss a variety of agenda items including resolving issues related to exchange of information between jurisdictions.”¹⁷¹ There is no mention of the extent to which these child welfare agencies are obliged or expected to receive or share data with other delinquency systems or professionals involved in the youths' cases.

While D.C. agencies cannot compel other states to engage in data sharing or other forms of collaboration, CCE recommends that both CFSA and DYRS initiate conversations with their counterparts in Maryland—where most youth in out-of-state foster care are placed—and Virginia, in order to begin sharing information about crossover youth involved in the child welfare and delinquency systems there. CFSA should begin tracking the placement of cross-over youth in other states and consider the impact this could have on these youth and their education and case management.

The District should consider adopting a promising best practice model for interagency coordination.

Finally, in terms of a more structured, comprehensive approach, the District should explore the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform’s “Crossover Youth Practice Model” (CYPM). As noted earlier, this model emphasizes multi-agency and court participation, improved prevention and intervention practices, agency culture change, and data sharing and collection to measurably improve outcomes.¹⁷² CYPM includes three phases, each of which could offer significant improvements to the existing state of coordination in the District. They are:

- 1.** Early identification of arrested youth who are involved with the child-welfare system, and decisions regarding charging and placement. Developing data-sharing agreements and protocols are often a first step. When appropriate, youth are diverted away from the delinquency system.
- 2.** Development of a process for joint assessment and planning. The focus is on a collective, cross-system approach that includes the child welfare and delinquency systems, as well as schools, community-based providers, families, and placement providers.
- 3.** Coordination of ongoing assessment and case management, and planning for youth permanency, and transition out of the delinquency and child welfare systems. This phase emphasizes family reunification and the role of community partners to help youth post-case closure.¹⁷³

As mentioned in Section One, many of D.C.’s bordering jurisdictions have implemented CYPM, and jurisdictions that have completed evaluations have found that utilization of CYPM has led to fewer crossover youth.¹⁷⁴ In terms of public safety, these communities also saw reductions in recidivism overall, as well as in the seriousness of the offense, with longer time to re-offense for youth who do recidivate. Improvements for youth included better educational, behavioral health and family reunification/placement outcomes and increased engagement in pro-social activities.¹⁷⁵

The District, through either the audited agencies, CJCC or OFC, could initiate an application for the D.C. to participate in CYPM. Any of these entities could also request that Georgetown’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform assess D.C.’s crossover youth identification, case management, data sharing and planning practices to advance D.C.’s current procedures to reflect best practices.

Finding 4: CFSA and DYRS should develop and utilize evidence-based protocols, policies, programs, and services specific to crossover youth and for preventing crossover.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 17.** CFSA should assess youth involved in the neglect system using a validated tool which identifies those factors that place them at high risk for crossing over to the delinquency system.
- 18.** DYRS should assess all youth using a validated assessment tool that includes whether the youth is a current or past victim of maltreatment, and this information should be used to inform case planning and services provided.
- 19.** CFSA and DYRS intake and case management protocols should ensure crossover youth are identified and tracked in their electronic case management systems.
- 20.** CFSA and DYRS case plans should specifically reference what the needs of youth are related to their current or past cross-system involvement, and CFSA case plans for youth should address ways to mitigate crossover risk.
- 21.** CFSA and DYRS should provide and mandate that their respective staff, contractors, and grantees providing services to crossover youth receive evidence-based trainings on identifying, understanding the issues of, and serving the crossover youth population.
- 22.** The D.C. Council should mandate and fund a report analyzing risk and protective factors for District youth who have been or currently are known to CFSA that affect their likelihood of crossing over into the justice system. This report should be completed and presented to relevant committees by September 30, 2026, and include recommendations, informed by research and best practices in other jurisdictions, on policies, practices, and programs the District should utilize to reduce the risk of crossover.
- 23.** CFSA and DYRS should develop and provide materials and trainings for families, foster parents, and other caregivers of crossover youth, and ensure families known to CFSA have resources to help them address the needs youth identified as being at high risk for crossover.

COMMENTARY

In this report's first section, CCE notes that research has shown that treating crossover youth as a special population in need of tailored supports and services improves their outcomes. Section 3 of this report also shows that these young people have more adverse experiences and worse outcomes than youth who have not experienced child maltreatment and delinquency court involvement. However, this audit found that outside of participating in the CJCC quarterly meetings for dual-jacketed youth, neither CFSA nor DYRS processes or manages cases of crossover youth differently from single-system youth.¹⁷⁶ CCE requested and reviewed copies of relevant DYRS and CFSA policies and practice manuals, as well as publicly available information on or by the agencies, and

conducted interviews of agency staff regarding how the agencies approach provision of services in respect to crossover youth, including the subset of dual-jacketed youth. We found that neither agency:

- Has practices, protocols, or services that are targeted towards youth who have been maltreated and who are involved, or are at high risk of involvement, with the delinquency system;
- Requires their staff to conduct regular joint case or treatment planning with staff from the other agency or agencies with which youth they are serving are involved; nor
- Mandates or provides evidence-based training on serving crossover youth to staff or contractors or grantees.

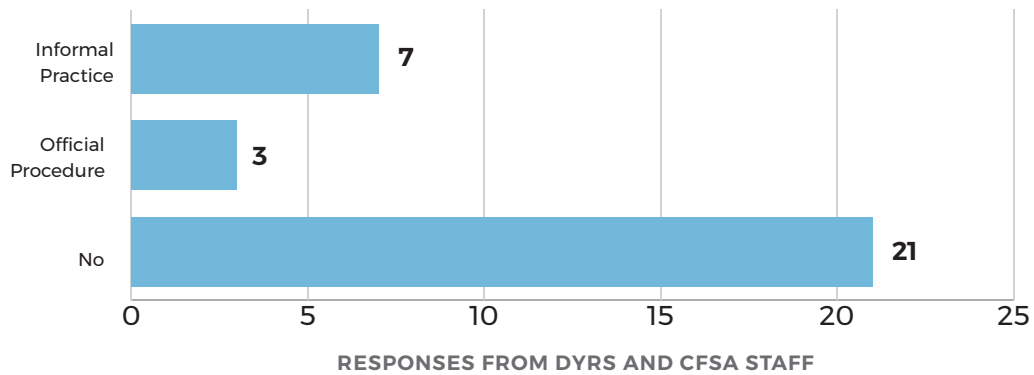
Specifically, CCE found that CFSA has no policies or procedures that reference crossover youth, dual-jacketed youth, or any terms that can reasonably be interpreted to refer to one of those groups as a special population. Only one relevant document was identified for DYRS, but it was not widely followed or known by the staff of the agency during the audit period.

The most recent DYRS protocol on crossover youth is outdated and not enforced.

DYRS developed a written “Dual-Jacketed Youth Protocol” (2017 Protocol) described below and included as Appendix D. The 2017 Protocol instructs DYRS Assessment Specialists and Care Coordinators to “notify the Unit Supervisor and the Care Planning and Coordination Program Manager whenever one of their assigned youth are dual-jacketed” with any of the following agencies: CFSA, Community Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), Pretrial Services Agency (PSA), or Family Court Social Services Division (CSSD). The 2017 Protocol further states that, “[o]nce [a youth is] committed to DYRS, Care Coordinators and the assigned staff from each of the collaborating agencies will work together to meet the youth’s range of needs and requirements from each agency, and in support of his or her successful re-entry into the community post-commitment.” The 2017 Protocol lists the responsibilities of the Assessment Specialists and Care Coordinators with respect to the communication with other involved agencies regarding care plan coordination and collaboration. These responsibilities were included in the DYRS “Care Planning and Coordination Handbook” made effective in April 2017, as a full page on “Dual-Jacketed Youth.”¹⁷⁷

Implementation of the protocol does not appear to be required or widespread, however. CCE surveyed case management staff at both CFSA and DYRS and asked about their knowledge of any protocols relevant to crossover youth. While it was a small sample and its representativeness is not known, over two-thirds of respondents indicated they were not aware of any protocol for crossover youth case management. (See Figure 9.)

**Figure 9. DYRS and CFSA Staff Survey Responses to the Question:
“Are you aware of any specific protocol for a crossover youth’s case?”**



Source: CCE analysis of online questionnaires completed by DYRS and CFSA employees with case management responsibilities

These survey results were echoed in interviews with DYRS staff, who also were generally unaware of the 2017 Protocol or its expectations. Those interviewed indicated it was common practice to notify a supervisor of a client’s involvement with another agency and of any necessary coordination with that agency, but it seems this information is informally required and collected and not based on the 2017 Protocol or any other official policy.

Aside from being largely unknown by staff, the 2017 Protocol is limited and insufficient in a number of ways. Foremost, the policy applies only to youth actively supervised by DYRS and CFSA, CSSD, CSOSA, or PSA – that is, dual-jacketed youth – and doesn’t address how a history of maltreatment could or should affect case management. Once notified, the supervisor is not required to complete any additional documentation, employ targeted resources, or conduct any interagency coordination. The policy heavily relies on emails and case note documentation to establish a working process.

Unfortunately, the Data Division of DYRS is not able to collect or analyze data from case notes because they are in a narrative format, which is also the issue with email communication. This means DYRS is unable to systematically track the number of crossover youth, the services provided for those youth, or any recurring administrative issues with serving dually involved youth and those in the crossover pathway. When there is a change in a youth’s case manager, some of the information gathered may be missed in the transition. This protocol is insufficient and in need of amendment. Having a written protocol that establishes a framework and expectations for interagency collaboration in the development of care plans for crossover youth can meaningfully improve case management.

DYRS and CFSA should utilize validated assessments to identify crossover youth and their needs.

Assessments are a key part of intake and ongoing case management in youth-serving agencies. In terms of crossover youth, information from DYRS’s assessments, if appropriately shared with case

managers, could be used to confirm whether the youth is or has been involved in CFSA. Additionally, if information from these assessments provides evidence of abuse and neglect, DYRS and its contractors, as mandatory reporters, should reach out to CFSA to report suspected maltreatment.

DYRS has undergone multiple iterations of youth assessments over the past decade.¹⁷⁸ This has led to inconsistency in terms of when, how, and why youth are assessed, particularly as staff must be trained or retrained. DYRS uses a variety of assessment instruments intended to align case planning and programming with youths' strengths and needs. DYRS reports it is working towards fully implementing the Youth Levels of Service assessment tool, but it is unclear whether that or other DYRS assessments are sufficient to understand the needs of youth who have been in the child welfare system.¹⁷⁹

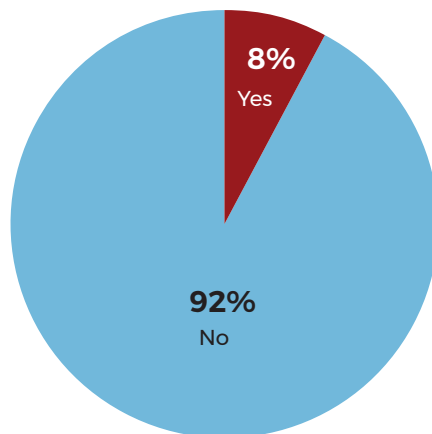
While the extent to which youth involved in CFSA received needs assessments was difficult to ascertain, there does not appear to be any comprehensive screening or assessment tool that could help identify CFSA youth at high risk of crossing over to the delinquency system. In response to the question, "how many diagnostic assessments were completed for youth who had an open investigation, family assessment, or abuse and neglect case with CFSA?" the agency responded that 29 youth completed mental health evaluations.¹⁸⁰ Elsewhere, CFSA reported the number of youth eligible for and consenting to a substance use screening, and assessments related to housing needs. CFSA also recognizes that youth in their care may have school issues, including "chronic absenteeism due to trauma, anxiety, instability and trust issues. At the present, the most common themes presented include safety concerns, mental health challenges, placement instability..."¹⁸¹ While CJCC data showed that educational problems were correlated with crossover youth, it doesn't appear that youth are assessed for this, with care plans changed to address underlying issues.

The lack of fully implemented assessments has consequences for all youth, as they are critical to case planning. In its written responses to the D.C. Council for its Fiscal Year 2024 oversight hearing, DYRS's reported that only 45.3% of newly committed youth received a complete case planning process within 90 days of their commitment start date, well below the target of 80%.¹⁸² This issue is not unique to DYRS; CFSA reported that only 79% of youth in foster care who were deemed to require a case plan had a current one.¹⁸³ Given that many youth in both systems don't have current case plans, it would appear that cross-agency case planning for dual-jacketed youth would be extremely difficult.

There is a need to train staff at DYRS and CFSA, as well as caregivers and foster parents, on crossover youth needs and issues.

Training is an important aspect of addressing the needs of crossover youth, as well as helping staff understand the perspectives of youth and how they experience supervision and case management. CFSA and DYRS documents do not reference any required staff or contractor training on how to manage the cases of crossover youth. This is reflected in the survey of staff: fewer than one in 10 reported receiving any training regarding crossover youth.¹⁸⁴ (See Figure 10.)

Figure 10. DYRS and CFSA Staff Survey Responses to the Question: “Have you received any training geared specifically toward understanding and/or serving crossover youth?”



Source: CCE analysis of online questionnaires completed by DYRS and CFSA employees with case management responsibilities

Appropriate staff training and supervision in administering trauma-informed screenings and assessments are a cornerstone of a trauma-informed case plan and treatment plan for a youth.¹⁸⁵ In their D.C. Council Oversight Hearing response of February 12, 2024, DYRS indicated that all new staff were required to take a training entitled “Adolescent Development/Trauma Informed Care (i.e., ‘Behavioral Health’).” The 40-hour “Intro to the Juvenile Justice System” includes as one topic “Trauma Awareness.” Additionally, DYRS stated that contractors/volunteers receive training in Suicide Prevention and Trauma. Credible Messengers also receive training about trauma and working with young people in this context.¹⁸⁶ As trauma can take on many forms, it is unclear the extent to which these trainings cover issues specifically related to childhood abuse and neglect, and how this maltreatment may manifest in youth in the delinquency system.

In its review of publicly available documents, CCE did not find any evidence of systematic mandatory training (or cross-training) of other individuals who serve crossover youth, including court personnel, attorneys (OAG, Guardians Ad Litem, and defense counsel), school staff, youth workers, and community services providers on how to serve crossover youth, the factors that raise the risk of crossover from the child welfare to the juvenile justice system, or the programs, services, or treatments available for such high-risk youth.

In best practice jurisdictions, foster parents are engaged in the successful implementation of crossover youth policies. In Prince George’s County, Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) procedures were integrated into the standardized foster care training materials, and all foster parents are trained on the CYPM. This training is intended to prevent foster parents from responding to a child’s involvement in the delinquency justice system with a demand to remove the child from their care; foster families instead are provided resources and tools that will support them and the youth in their care. In addition to training foster parents on issues they may face in caring for crossover youth, CFSA should provide trainings on the risks of crossover to families they are currently serving in their homes as well as families with closed CFSA cases. These trainings should include resources that are available to address the challenges they and their children may be facing.

As mentioned in an earlier section, there are practices, programs and services that have been shown to reduce the likelihood that maltreated children will become crossover youth. These include diverting youth who may be engaging in delinquent behavior from formal justice system involvement whenever possible and providing positive childhood experiences such as enrichment activities with caring adults. Conversely, some youth in the child welfare system are at increased risk of crossover, such as those who have a high ACEs score or those experiencing multiple foster care placements. Nowhere in its review of materials did CCE find any reference to a focus on identifying CFSA-involved youth at high risk of crossover, or any case planning, programs, treatment or services that could reduce the likelihood of crossing over.

CCE recommends that the District, through CJCC, OFC, or a university or other research institution, conduct an analysis of what the risk and protective factors are for crossing over from the child welfare to delinquency system in D.C. This information would become the basis of developing policies, protocols, practices and services that would help prevent maltreated youth in D.C. from becoming involved in the delinquency system either concurrent with their CFSA placement or later in their lives.

Finding 5: CFSA and DYRS have some well-regarded and promising programs that offer opportunities for positive childhood experiences, but gaps have been identified in serving youth with acute behavioral health issues; more information is needed to understand the overall capacity and effectiveness of existing programs and what additional services are required to adequately address the needs of crossover youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 24.** The D.C. Council should mandate that CJCC, OFC, a research institution or another qualified entity evaluate the effectiveness and capacity of programming and other services in meeting the needs of crossover youth in D.C. and provide recommendations of best and promising programs and practices for these youth for the District to consider adopting.
- 25.** Based on current positive feedback from professionals and youth, the D.C. Council should fund the Credible Messenger program so that all youth who are or who are at risk of becoming crossover youth can participate.

COMMENTARY

This audit made clear that there is no inventory of the programs, services, and treatment available for crossover youth in the District. Additionally, CCE's interviews and case file reviews indicated a need for better local care for youth with serious behavioral health needs.

Without access to high quality programs to build on strengths and meet the needs of crossover youth, case plans alone are unlikely to have a meaningful impact. Neither agency provided

reference to any program or service that was specific to crossover youth, but in interviews of youth and their professionals, several cited programs and initiatives at DYRS and CFSA that they believed were helpful and contributed to positive childhood experiences (PCEs). There is no evidence of DYRS or CFSA conducting any evaluation of these promising programs or initiatives; such an evaluation would indicate not only what the positive outcomes of the programs are, but also which youth are most likely to benefit from the different programs.

Based on the annual reporting, Council oversight reports, and responses to audit inquiries, it also remains unclear whether the capacity of existing CFSA, DYRS, or other agency programs is sufficient to meet the existing or likely future needs of cross over youth. For these reasons, it is recommended that an evaluation be conducted to assess the effectiveness of currently-available programs in improving outcomes for crossover youth, and identify what is currently most needed for this population. While this is separate from the recommendation in the prior section that a study be done on how to prevent CFSA-involved youth from crossing over, it might be cost-effective to engage a single entity for both evaluations.

There are inadequate local residential placements for crossover youth with acute behavioral health needs.

A recurring issue in interviews and in the case files CCE reviewed was a concern about the lack of services available locally for crossover youth with the most acute behavioral health needs. Several interviewees for this audit expressed serious concerns about the lack of a residential treatment facility or hospital in the District of Columbia designed to serve the needs of youth requiring intensive, out-of-home psychiatric services and care, particularly for justice-involved youth; they indicated that some facilities won't accept youth with more serious charges. In case file notes, case managers and other professionals regularly mentioned the need for such a local resource, and challenges in justifying the expense of sending youth to distant facilities.

For youth experiencing an acute psychiatric crisis, it is sometimes recommended that they receive care at a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF). A PRTF is defined as any non-hospital facility with a provider agreement with a state Medicaid Agency to provide inpatient services benefits to Medicaid-eligible individuals under the age of 21.¹⁸⁷ Currently, there is no such facility in the District of Columbia, leaving a gap in the availability of vital psychiatric services for youth in crisis. CCE's DYRS case file review and statements from interviewees reported that D.C. justice-involved youth have been sent as far away as Arizona to receive necessary treatment in a PRTF.

It is best practice to keep system-involved youth close to home to receive treatment in the community, and to include their family or guardian as a part of their care in delinquency cases.¹⁸⁸ When D.C. youth are sent to out-of-state PRTFs, it can exacerbate or create disconnection with their families, case workers, communities, and support systems. As of 2024, the only option for youth to receive inpatient psychiatric care in the District is Children's National Hospital; due to lack of local capacity, many of the children who need such care must be sent to out-of-state facilities. Additionally, according to agency staff and other professionals who work with crossover youth, hospitals will sometimes refuse to take youth who have high-level mental and behavioral health needs and also

has a “serious” or violent charge or have any delinquency history at all, therefore leaving many crossover youth and other vulnerable justice-involved youth without a local option for treatment.¹⁸⁹ System-involved girls with high needs are particularly impacted and at risk of being sent to a PRTF far from the District, as there is no local therapeutic group home for girls.

In their 2021 Annual Progress and Services Report, CFSA detailed their efforts to secure a PRTF in the District of Columbia through a request for proposals.¹⁹⁰ The following year, CFSA reported they were unable to identify a provider to build the small, local PRTF for youth ages 8–18 in need of short-term psychiatric treatment.¹⁹¹ Agency staff indicated that there is significant difficulty developing partnerships with regional PRTFs because of payment issues: DC has low Medicaid rates and has a reputation of being slow to process and pay claims.¹⁹² During interviews for this audit CCE also learned that although CFSA was not the only D.C. entity discussing the need for PRTFs, there is no known progress on developing a plan or securing a provider since the 2022 CFSA effort.¹⁹³

CFSA and DYRS should work with the Department of Behavioral Health and other relevant agencies to both quantify the need among youth in their care for local intensive residential placements and develop plans to overcome barriers to providing this level of care locally to D.C. youth who need it.

There are promising programs in D.C. that could benefit crossover youth.

In response to a request for information about crossover youth programming, DYRS provided information about its DC YouthLink program, which is modeled after Wraparound Milwaukee, considered a national best practice for serving youth involved in both the child welfare and delinquency systems.¹⁹⁴ During interviews of DYRS staff, however, no one referred to this program when asked about DYRS programming for crossover or dual-jacketed youth. In a review of publicly available information on both the DYRS and the D.C. Council websites, the most recent substantive references to the YouthLink program and any data about participants is in its 2018 annual report and 2020 oversight responses; CCE was not able to find additional data about youth participation or evaluations of program efficacy that have been published since.^{195 196}

The DYRS program most frequently cited by former crossover youth and agency staff as being valuable to dual-system-involved youth is its Credible Messenger program. DYRS describes its Credible Messenger Initiative as “a transformative, mentoring intervention program for youth committed to the agency, with a restorative justice philosophy... Credible messengers are neighborhood leaders, experienced youth advocates and individuals with relevant life experiences whose role is to help youth transform attitudes and behaviors around violence.”¹⁹⁷ The program provides intensive mentoring, life-coaching, and 24-hour crisis-intervention response. As noted in the section “In Their Own Voices,” several crossover youths mentioned they valued this program, which suggests that it is worth both investment and further study to document it as an evidence-based program and to document any positive effects on outcomes for crossover youth.

Additionally, several former crossover youths reported receiving valuable services at DYRS Achievement Centers, which offer community-based services focused on work, education, relationships, community, health, and creativity.¹⁹⁸ They fondly recalled agency-coordinated trips, youth

coordinators, and employment opportunities and training. A better understanding of which services crossover youth particularly valued and how they impact outcomes would also provide data to help District leaders make funding and programming decisions.

While CFSA does not have any crossover-specific programming, staff noted that the agency does have programs designed for older youth in which dual-jacketed youth may be able to participate. For example, the agency uses external vendors to provide services such as financial management, vocational and education support, and independent living or housing support. Additionally, in 2021, CFSA entered into an agreement with DYRS to have eight Credible Messengers “loaned” to the agency to be assigned to youth in the child welfare system. While CFSA indicated in its written response to D.C. Council’s FY 2022 Performance Oversight Hearing question on collaboration with DYRS that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was being developed to expand DYRS’s Credible Messenger program to support youth and families connected to CFSA, no mention of this MOU is made in the 2023 response to Council. By expanding to include youth who are only involved in CFSA, the Credible Messenger program may encounter youth at risk of crossover and potentially be able to address issues before they become known to the delinquency system. It is unclear to what extent CFSA services are functionally available to youth who are in residential facilities like New Beginnings, or to youth who may be involved in other states’ legal systems.

There are other local programs provided by other agencies and community-based organizations that could also help meet the needs of crossover youth in the District. CCE identified two programs below in the course of fact-finding for this audit, but a more extensive inventory, as is recommended, is necessary to best understand what currently-available resources could be targeted toward crossover youth.

Bridges is a program provided by the non-profit **Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children of D.C.** (CASA) that pairs youth who are committed to DYRS but living in the community with specially trained youth advocate volunteers.¹⁹⁹ While CASA traditionally works with youth involved in the child welfare system, it began applying their trauma-informed approach to working with justice-involved youth referred by the court in 2019. Public information on the Bridges Program states that “experience offered by CASA volunteers presents an excellent opportunity for partnership in jurisdictions seeking to transform the way in which they serve crossover youth.”²⁰⁰ In early 2024, CASA staff indicated that they were aware that at least some of the 90+ young people in the program were dually-involved. Their initial internal outcomes evaluation showed that over three in four youth in the program were not re-arrested.²⁰¹ This community-based program is another that should be evaluated as a possible model for increasing positive youth experiences for those youth who need them most.

The Youth Services Division of the Family Services Administration in the **Department of Human Services**. One of the Division’s programs, Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS), is a voluntary early intervention program to which CFSA—as well as other agencies, parents, and schools—can refer youth ages 10–17 who are engaging in behaviors such as truancy and conflicts with family; it is often a last option before a youth is referred to the juvenile-justice system or the youth’s family becomes involved in the child welfare system.²⁰² Per the agency website, “All youth receiving PASS

intensive case management services have access to community support services such as mentoring, tutoring, and after-school programming.” The Department of Human Services pre-hearing response indicated that 466 youths were served by PASS in FY 2023; only two of these youth were referred by CFSA, per the agency’s 2024 Performance Oversight response.²⁰³ Understanding the extent to which youth currently in PASS have past CFSA involvement would help gauge the extent to which this D.C. government program could become a tool for preventing youth crossover.

CFSA and DYRS should identify best and promising practices and programs in other jurisdictions that could benefit D.C. crossover youth.

“Homegrown” programs and practices can be quite effective, particularly when they incorporate the perspectives of people with lived experiences and address issues and needs specific to the community, and their outcomes have been evaluated. However, when it comes to programs and practices that have a positive impact on the lives of crossover youth, there may be other communities around the country from which D.C. can learn and perhaps borrow from, adapting as necessary to meet the needs of District youth.

As was mentioned earlier, there are a number of jurisdictions involved in the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM); reading about their experiences, and having conversations with leaders in those communities, could provide insights into what worked well (and what should be avoided). However, there also may be jurisdictions not involved with CYPM that are engaging in innovative programs and practices. A systematic review—either by an agency such as CJCC or an outside expert—would help D.C. think expansively about what can be done to improve the lives of these vulnerable young people, while increasing public safety in the District. CCE recommends that the D.C. Council commission such a study that can be used in conjunction with the other efforts noted throughout this report.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Acronym Glossary

Acronym	Name
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children of D.C.
CFSA	D.C. Child and Family Services Agency
CCE	Council for Court Excellence
CDC	U.S. Centers for Disease Control
CJCC	Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
CPS	Child Protective Services
CSOSA	Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
CSSD	Court Social Services Division
CYPM	Crossover Youth Practice Model
CYSC	Crossover Youth Steering Committee
DCPS	D.C. Public Schools
DYRS	D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
FTE	Full Time Employee
FY	Fiscal Year
GAL	Guardian Ad Litem
JPC	Juvenile Processing Center
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPD	Metropolitan Police Department
MSLO	Mayor's Services Liaison Office
OAG	D.C. Office of the Attorney General
ODCA	Office of the District of Columbia Auditor
OFC	Office of the Ombudsperson for Children
OSSE	Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Acronym	Name
PASS	Parent and Adolescent Support Services
PCE	Positive Childhood Experience
PINS	Persons in Need of Supervision
PRTF	Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities
PSA	Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia
SCDC	Office for Students in the Care of D.C.
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TDM	Team Decision-Making
USAO	U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia
YSC	Youth Services Center

Appendix B

Methodology

To conduct this audit on the District's responses to crossover youth on behalf of the ODCA, CCE conducted extensive fact-finding and data collection of the two directly audited agencies, CFSA and DYRS. Data and information also were collected from the courts, local youth involved in these systems, their families, caregivers, attorneys and others directly involved with crossover youth issues. CCE formed a 10-person steering committee, which included board members from across sectors of law, business, medicine, and education. While steering committee members did not work for or within the child welfare or delinquency systems, they provided valuable insight and feedback, performed legal and policy research, developed information and data requests, and conducted case file review with the audit team. The types of data collection performed as part of this audit study are detailed below.

AGENCY DATA REQUESTS

The audit team issued three requests for data and information to CFSA and DYRS to request their organizational charts, relevant policy and program information on the subject of the care population of interest, and data the agency collected on the numbers of youth in the population.

CASE FILE REVIEWS

After speaking with field experts, the audit team determined examining agency case files was necessary to analyze the support and programming provided to youth in D.C.'s care. Youth experiences were analyzed in the case notes from CFSA social workers, DYRS case coordinators, Credible Messengers, and other relevant staff. The case files contained various details about the services and support received by youth, the youth's education, physical and mental health, housing placement, and other relevant information for case management purposes. The case file records, either physical case files or virtual case access, were accessed to evaluate the agency processes for serving and supporting crossover youth in D.C. during the audit period of FY 2018 (October 1, 2017) through FY 2022 (September 30, 2022).

CFSA case file review. CFSA required the audit team to sign confidentiality agreements to review physical case files in order to ensure the agency did not violate any confidentiality and privacy protections in place for the youth. The audit team reviewed the cases on-site at CFSA offices in a conference room. No files were photocopied or removed from the room. The information collected by the audit team from the 24 cases was input into an online data coding tool and the collected

responses were only accessible by the audit team. Once the CFSA case file review was complete, all materials remained in the conference room. While the D.C. Superior Court is not subject to District government authority, the Court agreed to provide data of youth whose cases matched the definition of crossover youth for this audit study. The audit team submitted a data request to the Superior Court's Strategic Management Division which manages all data requests to the Court. After submission, the data pulled by the Court's data analysts were provided in a spreadsheet via a Box.com file folder with demographic data, case information, case file dates, case status, and dispositions.

The audit team requested from CFSA's data analysts 24 randomly selected case files of youth who had an open case during our audit period FY 2018- to FY 2022 and were aged 10-17. CFSA provided information about their randomized selection process. For out-of-home cases, they selected unique children. For in-home cases, they selected unique families. Data was to be collected at a specific point in time, specifically September 30 of each fiscal year. However, due to some youth having had their cases managed by both CFSA and private provider the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) during the audit period, they used a cumulative count of foster care cases instead of relying solely on a point-in-time approach. CFSA then reduced the random sample to include 20 CFSA managed foster care cases, up to 10 youths who had at least one placement with DYRS (either DYRS group or secure facility), and 10 files randomly selected. The final sample included 2 cases of in-home foster care, 2 NCCF cases, and 18 cases from out-of-home foster care. The audit team created a SurveyMonkey coding tool as a device to collect demographic information, family history, substance use, education, system interactions, etc., from the CFSA case files. Data cleaning and analysis was performed in Excel and Python. Visualizations were created in Tableau.

DYRS case file review. As is described below, CCE was able to identify crossover youth utilizing Superior Court case files. The audit team randomly selected 25 IdentIDs using the Superior Court data of crossover youth, and asked DYRS for permission to review the case files of these youth. In October 2023, DYRS required the ODCA to issue a subpoena to gain access to agency case files. There was a requirement for each team member to sign a confidentiality agreement to protect the confidentiality and privacy of client information. ODCA complied, issuing a subpoena containing the details of the case file review and a listing of case file and identification numbers of cases the audit team wanted to review. In turn, DYRS provided access to their case management system, FAMCare, for two weeks, as well as a training on navigating FAMCare and technical assistance throughout the review.

The audit team created a SurveyMonkey coding tool with 76 questions as a device to collect demographic information, family history, substance use, education, system interactions, etc., while reviewing the DYRS case files. Answers recorded provided both quantitative and qualitative data, including key quotes from case files. Within the FAMCare system, the team found basic demographic information relatively easily, but other tabs (like Education, Behavioral Health, etc.) contained sparse information. To track down this information, CCE found the "Scanned Documents" tab had documents (ranging from four to 100+ documents, depending on the youth) containing psychiatric evaluations, MPD Arrest Reports, educational updates, etc. The documents were often-times in PDF form and sometimes unsearchable. The information in those files were sometimes conflicting or incomplete. Under the pressure of a two-week timeline, CCE's team struggled to

collect complete current or historical information in the youths' case files, given the lack of organization in the FAMCare Case Management System. Data cleaning and analysis was performed in Excel and Python. Visualizations were created in Tableau.

ACES SCORING

As noted in the text, as part of analysis of the DYRS case files, CCE staff sought to ascertain the scope of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) faced by crossover youth. As noted above, CCE staff were not able to do a thorough review of the cases provided due to time and data constraints; therefore, the ACE scores assigned are imperfect and likely underestimate the number of exposures to adverse childhood experiences that these youth faced. The decision-making criteria used to determine whether to assign a score to each of the 11 ACE criteria²⁰⁴ are as followed:

Criteria:	Reasoning for Assigning Point Values
<p>1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 only if there was explicit mention of the circumstances listed or emotionally abuse generally.</p>
<p>2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 only if there was explicit mention of physical abuse or signs of injury on the youth.</p>
<p>3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 if there was mention of youth experiencing sexual assault or any of the circumstances listed.</p>
<p>4. Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 only if there was explicit mention of feeling lack of support from family or having no one to rely on.</p>

Criteria:	Reasoning for Assigning Point Values
<p>5. Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 if there was mention of any of the criteria listed or a neglect case was brought against youth's parent.</p>
<p>6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 if there was mention of a separation/divorce, or if the father or mother had never been an active part of the youth's life but is alive.</p>
<p>7. Was your parent/caregiver: (a) Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at him/her? or (b) Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or (c) Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 if there was mention of any of the circumstances listed or if youth witnessed violence experienced by any member in the household.</p>
<p>8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 if there was mention of a household member abusing alcohol or drugs.</p>
<p>9. Did a household member go to prison?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 if there was mention of a household member being incarcerated. A score of 1 was also assigned if there was mention of a household member having a conviction, even if incarceration was not indicated.</p>
<p>10. Have you ever seen or heard someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in your neighborhood in real life?</p>	<p>Assigned a score of 1 if youth mentioned exposure to this type of community violence as a witness or a victim.</p>

D.C. SUPERIOR COURT CASE FILE REVIEW

The D.C. Superior Court is a federal agency and was not legally required to participate in this audit. The Court agreed to provide the audit team population-level data of youth who both had an open case in the Delinquency court during the audit period (FY 18 to FY 2022) and at any time was in a

family who had a case in the child abuse and neglect court. Our dataset included youth who had a delinquency case file start date between 01/01/2018 and 12/31/2022 and also had a neglect/abuse case opened at any point in their life before 12/31/2022. The spreadsheet provided by Superior Court contained Master (913 rows), NEG (Neglect) (395 rows), and DEL (Delinquent) (519 rows) and contained information including gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as disposition of the case. Two youths who only had delinquency and neglect cases that started after 01/01/2023 were dropped from the dataset because they did not fall within the audit period. The DEL and NEG sheets were intended to contain identical information as aggregated in the Master sheet, however there was a slight discrepancy. After cleaning data of discrepancies in four cases, the final working dataset included 181 unique youth across Master (902 rows), NEG (390 rows), and DEL (512 rows) sheets. Data cleaning and analysis was performed in Excel and Python. Visualizations were created in Tableau.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

There were three focus groups conducted to inform the work of this audit.

Justice-involved youth focus groups. The first was a focus group of young adults who had been crossover youth in D.C., identified through the help of a community-based organization that works with justice-involved youth. There were two independent volunteers from the organization who had established relationships with the youth. The volunteers led participating youth through a series of prepared questions while the audit team observed and conducted notetaking. The volunteer did not have any additional role in developing the questions, development of this audit report, or the recommendations set forth. The participating youth were ages 18-21, provided explicit, informed consent to participate on an anonymous and voluntary basis and received \$50 gift cards for their voluntary participation.

Family and caregiver focus group. The audit team convened a focus group of caregivers of youth in the child-welfare and juvenile-delinquency systems. The **Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center** hosted this focus group. While this group was not familiar with the term “crossover youth”, there were experiences shared by caregivers about navigating CFSA services, and their Maryland contractor – National Center for Children and Families – while supporting crossover youth in their home.

Youth defender and guardian ad litem focus group. The audit team conducted online focus groups of attorneys who represent youth in the child-welfare and juvenile-justice systems. The attorneys participated on a voluntary basis without compensation. In total, we held three focus groups and a total of 10 attorneys participated.

The audit team also conducted a total of 46 interviews with national and local experts, current and former D.C. agency leadership and direct services staff, community and government stakeholders, D.C. Superior Court judges and practitioners. The qualitative data collected during these interviews are distributed throughout this audit report as support for the findings and areas for further review as described in the recommendations.

SURVEYS

Youth and families. With the assistance of community-based organizations, surveys were distributed to system-involved youth, caregivers of these youth, and direct-services staff from CFSA and DYRS. All participants submitted their responses anonymously and were offered the opportunity to have an in-person confidential interview. Once surveys were submitted, the participating organizations were provided \$25 gift cards to compensate each crossover youth and caregiver participant who completed the survey. The youth and caregivers were provided with paper surveys to solicit anonymous responses about their experiences engaging with District federal and local agencies while navigating the crossover pathway. CCE received 8 youth survey responses and 3 caregiver responses. The participating organizations gave a \$25 gift card to each crossover youth and caregiver participant who completed the survey.

CFSA and DYRS staff. The audit team distributed a single online survey to direct service staff and supervisors at CFSA and DYRS to solicit anonymous responses related to the services and support available to crossover youth in the current care apparatus. We received 28 responses. While the survey was distributed to all relevant staff, the extent to which these responses are representative of all staff is not known. Direct-services staff at the audited agencies completed the surveys anonymously and were not compensated for their survey completion.

LITERATURE AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

Best Practices Data Collection

This working group reviewed a substantial body of academic and governmental literature and studies on the characteristics of and challenges faced by crossover youth. The group also interviewed more than ten experts in the field who have done extensive research on crossover youth, have worked with family courts and child-serving agencies to improve programs and systems that address the needs of this population, or have developed a model that can be customized to serve crossover youth in different jurisdictions.

Legal Review and Analysis

This working group researched and analyzed District of Columbia statutes and regulations and the Superior Court rules and precedents that establish the legal framework for addressing the needs of crossover youth. This effort included a review of CFSA's and DYRS's enabling statutes, organizational histories, and interagency agreements. The working group also reviewed case law from the U.S. jurisdictions that have implemented some form of a best practice model for crossover youth care.

Appendix C

November 2009 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between CFSA and DYRS

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY
AND
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES**

I. INTRODUCTION

This Memorandum of Agreement (“MOA”) is entered into between the District of Columbia CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY, (“CFSA”) and DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES, (“DYRS”), collectively referred to herein as the “Parties.”

CFSA and DYRS agree to work together to address the needs of children which may require the services of both agencies.

II. PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this agreement is to establish a mutually agreed upon joint planning and coordination process for youth who fall into the following three categories:

- CATEGORY 1:** Youth who may be served by one agency and who may benefit from placement or other services via the other agency.
- CATEGORY 2:** Youth who are served by both CFSA and DYRS or dual jacketed youth.
- CATEGORY 3:** Youth who are in the custody of and housed in DYRS’ detention or shelter facilities who have an open case file with CFSA.

This joint planning and coordination process seeks to support the respective missions of CFSA and DYRS by creating a forum to plan the services for shared youth and to establish clear roles and responsibilities for CFSA and DYRS for expeditious placement.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Pursuant to the applicable authorities and in furtherance of the shared goals of the Parties to carry out the purposes of this MOU expeditiously and economically, the Parties do hereby agree:

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES PERTAINING TO CATEGORY 1 YOUTH

1. Convene twice a month meetings to discuss and agree upon possibilities for placement, services, costs, and agency roles related to youth for which CFSA and DYRS may have shared responsibility and/or involvement for youth who may be served by one agency and who may benefit from placement or other services via the other agency.

2. Each party shall have the responsibility to provide a prompt response to any action agreed upon by the parties.
3. Each party agrees to continue case management for cases where the child receives placement services. Case management responsibilities do not change.
4. Both parties agree that all placement services arranged through this MOA shall only be permitted in licensed locations and for approved services.
5. The Director of each agency shall designate a co-chair for the twice a month meetings that have the authority and ability to make binding decisions at the meeting.
6. Each party shall ensure that in addition to the co-chair, other appropriate stakeholders, such as: assigned CFSA Assistant Attorney General, social workers, case managers and clinical staff shall attend and participate as appropriate in these meetings.
7. Each party agrees that meeting minutes with agreed upon action items will be circulated within three business days after the meeting has occurred; the parties will alternate responsibility for recording and distributing the minutes.
8. Both parties shall utilize the Interagency Placement and Services Referral form (**Attachment A**), and **attach pertinent documentation**, to be forwarded at least three business days prior to the scheduled meeting to the necessary party.
9. Each party shall present no more than two cases at each meeting, unless otherwise agreed.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES PERTAINING TO CATEGORY 2 YOUTH

1. The agency to whom the youth is committed will search the District's interagency management information system for children and families to determine if the youth has involvement with the other agency. If it is determined that the youth has involvement with the other agency, the agency where the youth is committed, will notify the other agency that the youth is committed.
2. The assigned case manager or social worker of each respective agency will work collaboratively to case plan and provide services to the youth and their family.
3. The case manager and social worker of each respective agency will follow this protocol.
 - A. Invite the case manager or social worker from the other agency to all Youth/Family Team Meetings, Family Group Conferencing meetings, or any other case planning meetings.

- B. Consult and notify the case manager or social worker from the other agency of any planned or emergency change of placement prior to the placement change.
 - C. Maintain monthly contact to ensure appropriate provision of services. All communications will be documented in the CFSA and DYRS information systems.
 - D. Provide timely notification to the other of termination of services, case transfer, closure, etc.
 - E. Each Agency representative shall ensure that other appropriate stakeholders, such as: assigned CFSA Assistant Attorney General, social workers, case managers and clinical staff shall attend and participate as appropriate in these meetings.
4. As appropriate, each party agrees to present an agreed upon unified placement and or service plan to the Court.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES PERTAINING TO CATEGORY 3 YOUTH

- 1. DYRS staff will query the District's interagency data management system for children youth and families or other documents to determine if the youth has an open case with CFSA.
- 2. DYRS staff will notify the respective CFSA social worker that the youth is residing in a DYRS facility to determine plans for placement.
- 3. The CFSA social worker will take the lead in contacting and coordinating services and/or placement plans with the youth's Court Social Services Probation Officer to determine the direction of the case and begin to plan by scheduling and coordinating a Family Team Meeting and other services as necessary.
- 4. The CFSA social worker will communicate with the DYRS case manager regarding proposed plans and include DYRS staff in any planning meetings in the event that commitment to DYRS is a consideration.
- 5. The DYRS and CFSA staff will document their communications in their respective information systems.

IV. DISPUTE RESOLUTION OR APPEAL PROCESSES:

In the event that an agreement cannot be reached between the DYRS and CFSA staff charged with joint case planning and/or coordinating responsibilities, the staff on the same date or the next business day of the matter not being resolved must immediately report to their respective supervisors for resolution within two business days. If a resolution or consensus is not possible at this level, then the matter must be referred to the DYRS Chief of Committed Services and the CFSA Deputy Director for Agency Programs or the Community Services (for cases managed by private agencies) for a resolution within three business days from receipt of dispute.

V. ESTABLISHMENT OF CROSSOVER YOUTH STEERING COMMITTEE (CYSC)

The Directors will designate representatives to a senior level Steering Committee that will be responsible for monitoring the progress toward the goals and objectives of this MOU. The committee will also be responsible for identifying and troubleshooting emergent issues.

VI. DURATION OF MOA

The period of this MOA shall be from date of execution by the signatories.

VII. AUTHORITY FOR MOA

D.C. Official Code § 2-1515.04 (2) and (5); DC Official Code § 16-2332 (b)(1)(D) and (H).

VIII. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The parties to this MOA will use, restrict, safeguard, and dispose of all information related to services provided by this MOA, in accordance with all relevant federal and local statutes, regulations, policies. Information received by either party in the performance of responsibilities associated with the performance of this MOA shall remain the property of both parties.

IX. TERMINATION

Either Party may terminate this MOA in whole or in part by giving sixty (60) calendar days advance written notice to the other Party.

X. NOTICE

The following individuals are the contact points for each Party under this MOU:

Jill Forbes
Placement Administrator
CFSA
400 6th St. SW
Washington, DC 20024
Phone 202-727 – 7688

Linda Harllee-Harper, Program Manager
Resource Management and Utilization Division
DYRS
450 H St. NW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone 202-724-4740 Fax 202-724-1476

XI. MODIFICATIONS

The terms and conditions of this MOA may be modified only upon prior written agreement by the parties. Any modification or amendment of this MOA shall be valid only when reduced to writing, duly signed, and attached to the original MOA. A Party may initiate discussions regarding modifications to this MOA by giving thirty (30) days notice in advance of the proposed modification.

XII. MISCELLANEOUS

The parties shall comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations whether now in force or hereafter enacted or promulgated.

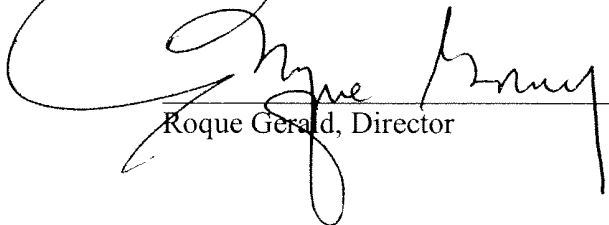
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have executed this MOA as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES



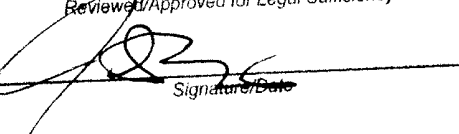
Vincent Schiraldi, Director
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY

Date: 11/9/09



Roque Gerald, Director

Date: 11 | 3 | 09

CFSA Office of General Counsel
Reviewed/Approved for Legal Sufficiency


Signature/Date

Exhibit A: Interagency Placement and Services Referral Form



**DYRS/CFSA INTER-AGENCY REVIEW REFERRAL
FORM**

Child's Name:

Name of Social Worker:

Child's DOB:

Name of Supervisor:

Agency:

Administration/Program/Unit:

Date of Child's first agency contact:

Details of initial involvement:

Current Court Status:

Current Placement:

Detail description of child's agency history: (include court involvement, placements, family situation)

Detail reason for interagency review (include placement type and services recommendations):

Social Worker Signature:

Date:

Program Manager Signature:

Date:

Attachment: Referral Package to include: recent psychological/psychiatric evaluation,
court report, school record/assessment/current level of functioning, etc.)

Inter-agency Committee Representative approval for presentation

Signature:

Date:

Interagency Committee Representative denial for presentation

Signature:

Date:

Reason for Denial:

Appendix D

**2017 DYRS Dual-Jacketed Youth Protocol,
from DYRS Care Planning and Coordination
Handbook, April 2017**

Dual-Jacketed Youth

Youth who are involved in both the juvenile justice and another supervising agency are often referred to as “dual-jacketed.” Assessment Specialists and/or the Coordinators must notify the Unit Supervisor and Care Planning and Coordination Program Manager whenever one of their assigned youth is dual-jacketed with DYRS and any of the following agencies: Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), Community Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), Pretrial Service Agency (PSA), and/or Court Social Services (CSS).

Once committed to DYRS, Care Coordinators and the assigned staff from collaborating agencies will work together to meet the youth’s range of needs and requirements per each agency, and in support of his or her successful re-entry into the community post commitment.

Procedures:

Assessment Specialists and/or Care Coordinators are responsible for the following:

1. Keeping the collaborating agencies informed of care plan updates and any changes in placement or critical acts of non-compliance (e.g., abscondence, electronic monitor tampering, re-arrest) and immediately reporting those changes within one (1) business day of the event.
2. Inviting all collaborating agency professionals responsible for the youth to all care meetings.
3. Documenting all efforts of care collaboration under the “Case Notes” section of the youth’s file in the DYRS Database within one (1) business day of each meeting.
4. Including the Care Planning and Coordination Program Manager and Unit Supervisor on all email communication regarding dual-jacketed youth, and notifying the Unit Supervisor immediately if there are issues or concerns with the collaboration.
5. Notifying the DYRS Utilization Specialist by email of the start date of supervision by the other agency to create this enrollment in the youth’s file in the DYRS Database within one (1) business day of becoming aware of the dual-jacketed status.
6. Maintaining monthly contact with all professionals responsible for the youth’s case to ensure the role expectations are met.

Please Note: DYRS is always the primary agency responsible for conducting the CAFAS for DYRS youth who are also connected to other agencies.



Appendix E

2017 Joint Supervision Workgroup Memorandum of Agreement

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE
COORDINATING COUNCIL, THE COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER
SUPERVISION AGENCY, THE COURT SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION OF THE
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, THE D.C. DEPARTMENT OF
YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES, THE PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE AGENCY

I. Statement of Purpose

This memorandum of agreement (MOA) is entered into between the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), the D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), the Superior Court of the District of Columbia's Court Social Services Division (CSSD), the Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia (PSA), and the D.C. Child and Family Service Agency (CFSA), collectively referred to hereinafter as the "Parties". It constitutes an agreement by the Parties as to the roles, responsibilities and procedures for managing the cases of youth in such a way that serves the best interest of public safety, the well-being and rehabilitation of the person, and the protection of confidential information. For purposes of this MOA, "Youth" is defined as a person who has matters (open cases) simultaneously in both the Family Court and the Criminal Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

II. Authority

This MOA is pursuant to the authorities applicable to the CFSA, CJCC, CSOSA, CSSD, DYRS, and PSA. Specifically, CJCC's authority to enter into this MOA with the other Parties is pursuant to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Restoration Act of 2002, Public Law 107-180 and DC Code § 22-4231. CSOSA's and PSA's authority rests with the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997, Pub. L. 105-33, D.C. Official Code § 24-133, Title 23, Section 1303 (h) of the D.C. Code and Title 18, Section 3154 of the U.S. Code and the applicable exceptions under the Privacy Act and Systems of Record Notices. For DYRS, D.C. Code §§ 2-1515.04, 2-1515.06, and 16-2332 apply; CSSD's authority is found in D.C. Code §§ 11-1722, 16-2332; CFSA's authority is within D.C. Code § 16-2332; D.C. Code § 4-1303.01a.

III. Background and Brief Description of the Parties' Interrelationships

In the District of Columbia, D.C. Code § 16-2301 classifies all persons under the age of 18 as a "child", unless the person is 16 or 17 years old and is either charged as an adult by the United States Attorney's Office for a specific offense enumerated in D.C. Code § 16-2301(3) (A) [(a "Title 16 offense")], (B), or is 15 years or older and is charged with a traffic offense. "Youth" means a "child" as that term is defined by § 16-2301(3) above and the terms "juvenile", "child", and "resident" are used interchangeably.

A child or youth who is charged with committing a delinquent act is adjudicated in the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Delinquency proceedings are

brought before the Family Court by the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, following consultation with the CSSD; CSSD supervises all youth who are pending trial and/or adjudicated to a disposition of probation. Children adjudicated as delinquents may be placed on probation and supervised by CSSD or committed to DYRS for a period determined by the Family Court. The period of probation or commitment can extend past the person's eighteenth birthday. However, the probation or commitment period must terminate no later than the person's twenty-first birthday.

CFSA is responsible for providing support for the protection of children who have been abused or neglected from further experiences and conditions that may be detrimental to their health, growth, and development. Through the coordination of public and private partnerships, CFSA provides services and family stabilization resources to families and children who have been (or alleged to have been) abused or neglected. Additionally, CFSA is responsible for providing placement services to CFSA committed youth between the ages of 18- 21. Where Parties such as the CSSD, DYRS, or CSOSA primarily manage the youth placement, CFSA social workers are encouraged to attend team-planning meetings and to provide information to the court that is involved in the abuse/neglect matter. If Parties other than CFSA release a youth from placement, CFSA must assume full responsibility for placement services until the court closes the abuse or neglect case. CFSA must assume full responsibility for the provision of services until the court closes the abuse or neglect case.

The D.C. Superior Court, Criminal Division has jurisdiction over cases where a person 18 years of age or older has been charged with a criminal offense under the D.C. Code and in cases where a person 16 or 17 years old is charged with either a Title 16 offense or a traffic offense, or is 15 years of age or older and is transferred to adult court.

The Pretrial Services Agency (PSA) gathers and presents information about newly arrested defendants (including persons 16 or 17 years of age charged with a traffic offense, or charged as an adult by the US Attorney's Office, or transferred from Family Court to adult court) and the available release/detention options for judicial officers (in both the Superior Court and the US District Court for the District of Columbia) to use when deciding what, if any, conditions are to be set for those defendants who are to be released. Pursuant to the DC bail laws, PSA recommends the least restrictive conditions of community release that promote public safety and return to court.

PSA supervises defendants who have been released during their pretrial period by monitoring their compliance with certain conditions of release and helping to assure they appear for court appearances. PSA's supervision gives defendants the opportunity to participate in a variety of pro-social interventions in an effort to decrease the likelihood of future criminal behavior.

CSOSA is responsible for supervision of persons who have been released on probation, parole, or supervised release. In addition, CSOSA is responsible for supervising persons less than 18 years of age with civil protection orders issued in intra-family cases where specific programs have been ordered.

A number of adults currently under CSSD and/or DYRS supervision have a pending criminal matter resulting from a subsequent offense committed by the individuals. These individuals may be supervised by PSA and/or CSOSA. Similarly, a number of CFSA wards

have a pending adult criminal matter and may be under the supervision of PSA and/or CSOSA. Persons who have either an open delinquency or CFSA Neglect Family Court case and an adult case supervised by PSA or CSOSA are referred to in the MOA as "dual jacket[ed]."

DYRS is the District's cabinet level juvenile justice agency. It is responsible for providing detention, commitment, and aftercare services for those youth up to 21 years old adjudicated as delinquent and committed to the Agency's custody and residing in both DYRS and contracted facilities and in the community. The agency does this, in partnership with its families and the public, through a wide range of programs emphasizing individual strengths, skill development, personal accountability, family empowerment, community engagement and public safety.

IV. Program Goals and Objectives

This MOA establishes amongst the Parties, a mutually agreed upon process for information sharing and case management services that support the development of appropriate planning and, to the extent possible, joint coordination for persons who are simultaneously under the supervision of an agency in the abuse/neglect, juvenile and adult systems. This process for joint planning and coordination will support the respective missions and statutory duties of the aforementioned agencies by creating a forum to plan the services and community supervision, pursuant to each agency's jurisdictional responsibilities (*e.g.*, pre-trial, post-disposition) for persons under concurrent supervision and to delineate respective roles and responsibilities for case management services, and community supervision. The Parties' goal in coordinating and joint planning is to ensure that each youth leaving the respective systems is prepared for independence, and whenever possible, is placed in a family-like setting.

V. Responsibilities of the Parties

A. Parties' Planning Coordination and Services

- 1) The CJCC will be responsible for planning and convening quarterly meetings with the Parties to review and monitor the progress of the MOA's performance measures developed by the partners (*e.g.*, cross systems training, enhanced information sharing, etc.) to facilitate resolution of barriers to successfully achieving the Parties' shared goals as expressed in the MOA.
- 2) The CJCC will coordinate, as needed, short-term workgroups to identify inter-departmental barriers and put forth recommendations to remedy the aforementioned issues and/or barriers.
- 3) The CJCC, in consultation with participating agencies, will facilitate and develop annual cross agency trainings consistent with state and federal statutory, regulatory and policy requirements of each respective agency as well as incorporate best practices for providing services to youth and adults on probation or parole. This will help ensure fidelity to emerging and best practices, and permit a constant review of lessons learned.

- 4) The CJCC will support the coordination of service activities with all relevant Parties in order to address the needs of youth offenders (as defined by the individual supervising agency) who are under the supervision of more than one of the Parties.
- 5) The CJCC quarterly meeting minutes shall be circulated to all of the Parties within five (5) business days of the meeting. Each Party agrees to follow up on the action items to ensure fidelity to both emerging and best practices in the fields of youth and criminal justice.
- 6) The Director of each agency will designate representatives to attend the quarterly meetings who will have the authority and ability to make binding decisions at the meetings.
- 7) No agency shall be required to adhere to or carry out actions contemplated or agreed upon by the Parties in the absence of the agency that will be impacted.
- 8) Each Party shall provide a prompt response to any action agreed upon by all the Parties.
- 9) Each Party agrees to continue to provide placement or supervision services for youth, unless the supervising agency/ies has determined the objectives detailed in the pre/post disposition have been met to the maximum extent possible. To the extent practicable, Parties to this MOA shall regularly engage in coordinated case management services.
- 10) The Parties agree to maintain a current list reflecting the appropriate point(s) of contacts for their agency that includes, but is not limited to probation officers and case managers and social workers for use by the partner agencies in carrying out the procedures set forth in this MOA. The list shall be updated quarterly when CJCC convenes case management reviews.

B. Parties' Shared Electronic Data Access

In keeping with the stated purpose of the MOA, each Party agrees to provide to the others the information necessary for each to handle its respective responsibilities to the fullest extent allowed by law, regulation, court order and policy. All Parties agree information shared via this MOA will be utilized by authorized agency officials, solely for case management services and supervision purposes among the Parties.

- 1) PSA agrees to make data available via JUSTIS to authorized and designated members of CFSA, DYRS and CSSD.¹

¹ Pursuant to D.C. Code §23-1303(d), any information contained in PSA files, presented in its reports, or divulged during any hearing is not admissible on the issue of guilt in any judicial proceeding, but such information may be used in proceedings under sections 23-1327, 23-1328, and 23-1329, in perjury proceedings, and for the purposes of impeachment in any subsequent proceeding.

- 2) DYRS agrees to provide requisite information from its FamCare database to designated members of CSSD, CFSA, PSA, and CSOSA.
- 3) D.C. Superior Court agrees to make CourtView data available to authorized personnel of PSA, DYRS, CFSA and CSOSA through JUSTIS.
- 4) CSOSA agrees to make its SMART law enforcement information available to designated members of DYRS, CFSA and CSSD through JUSTIS.
- 5) CFSA agrees to provide demographic information from its FACES database to designated members of PSA, DYRS, CSSD and CSOSA on a monthly basis.

Procedures Part 1 - New Adult Arrests (persons under DYRS/CSSD supervision charged each day in a new adult criminal matter)

A. Pretrial Services Agency (PSA)²

- 1) PSA reviews the lock-up list for arrestees on both the U.S. and DC/Traffic lock-up lists. For each person on the list under the age of 30, PSA will query JUSTIS to identify persons with prior youth delinquency adjudications.
- 2) If a person under the age of 21 is on the day's lock-up list and committed to DYRS or under the supervision of CSSD, PSA will contact the DYRS/CSSD point of contact and advise that agency of the arrestee's name, date of birth, and arrest charge.

PSA will also ascertain from DYRS/CSSD, the assigned case manager's name and contact information, as well as, the arrestee's most current address and noteworthy compliance information for use in the Pretrial Services Report (PSR) being prepared for use by the judicial officer.

- 3) PSA will identify arrestees under the age of 21 on both the U.S. and D.C./Traffic lock-up lists, as well as citation lists, if applicable. Once the lists have been completed for the day, PSA will generate a list of arrestees identified as being under the age of 21 and transmit it to the CFSA point of contact.

B. D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS)

- 1) When a person committed to the DYRS is arrested as an adult, DYRS will, upon request from PSA or CSOSA, provide the name of the youth's case worker and his or her contact information, the date of birth and last known address for the youth as recorded in the DYRS database, and any other information regarding that youth deemed relevant by DYRS.
- 2) When a person committed to DYRS is arrested as an adult, DYRS will also provide

² Pursuant to D.C. Code §23-1333, a judicial officer shall take a person's juvenile law enforcement and case records into account in determining whether there are conditions of release that will reasonably assure the appearance of the person as required, and the safety of any other person and the community.

the PSA/CSOSA worker the youth's level of compliance while committed, including all absences, level of risk in the community, and any other information deemed relevant to public safety by DYRS.

- 3) When requested by CSOSA/PSA, DYRS will provide a list of the charges for which the youth was committed to DYRS.

C. Court Social Services Division (CSSD)

- 1) D.C. Superior Court has jurisdiction over persons who have a case or cases in the abuse/neglect, youth and/or adult systems. The Court also conducts arraignments and presentments, as part of its obligations under its enabling statute.
- 2) CSSD's assigned points of contact will be the Supervisory Probation Officer (SPO) responsible for its Intake Unit I and Unit II. The SPO or designee will search CourtView to identify youth offense information germane to the arraignment of an individual in Courtroom C-10. The SPO or designee will also provide the name and contact information for probation officer staffing the youth case and his/her SPO.³
- 3) PSA or CSOSA will contact the designated SPO or designee, who shall respond to PSA or CSOSA within a four (4) hour time frame on the same business day. In the event that the designated SPO or designee fails to make contact with PSA or CSOSA within the four (4) hour time frame on the same business day, the CSSD Deputy Director shall be contacted to ensure information sharing occurs on all youths charged in the adult arraignment Court.

D. Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA)

- 1) The CSOSA Offender Processing Unit, upon receiving a case for anyone 15-21 years of age or younger, will confer with the youth regarding any current or past supervision with youth justice agencies. If the offender responds in the affirmative, the information provided will be documented in the SMART database system for the assigned CSO charged to make contact with the youth agency.
- 2) Upon verification of interagency involvement, the point of contact for each of the partner agency(s) case manager and/or probation officer will document the information in the record. The case will then be assigned to the identified CSOSA Community Supervision Services Team for case management responsibilities and follow up with the partnering agency contacts.

E. Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)

- 1) When a young person committed to CFSA is arrested as a youth, CFSA will

³ Upon contact, the designated CSSD probation officer will provide to PSA the respondent/offender's last known address (to include a court ordered placement), risk range classification (i.e., low, medium, high), and compliance information relative to whether or not the respondent/offender was minimally, moderately or fully compliant.

provide the name of the youth's case worker and his or her contact information, the date of birth and last known address for the youth as recorded in the CFSA database, and any other information regarding that youth deemed relevant by CFSA to CSSD, DYRS, PSA, and/or CSOSA.

- 2) When a young person committed to CFSA is arrested as an adult, CFSA will provide the name of the youth's case worker and his or her contact information, the date of birth and last known address for the youth as recorded in the CFSA database, and any other information regarding that youth deemed relevant by CFSA to CSSD, DYRS, PSA, and/or CSOSA.

F. The Parties Mutual Responsibilities Regarding Information Exchange

- 1) Each Party agrees to provide to the others any information necessary for each to handle its respective responsibilities to the fullest extent allowed by law, regulation, court order, policy, and this MOA. All Parties agree information shared in accordance to the terms of this MOA, will be utilized solely for current case management services and supervision purposes amongst the Parties.
- 2) The Parties acknowledge that CSOSA and PSA share its administrative record data with the Parties pursuant to its enabling statutory charter and the applicable provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974. The Parties agree to the following terms and limitations on the use of CSOSA/PSA administrative record data:
 - a) The Parties acknowledge the sensitivity of the data accessed and shared by CSOSA/PSA requires safeguarding and dissemination controls, privacy and IT security controls, pursuant to and consistent with the Privacy of 1974 and other applicable state and federal law, regulations and policies.
 - b) The Parties to this MOA will use, restrict, safeguard, and dispose of all CSOSA/PSA information related to the shared administrative data provided by this MOA in accordance with all relevant federal and local statutes, regulations, and agency policies;
 - c) The Parties shall maintain the confidentiality and integrity of CSOSA/PSA administrative data pursuant to this MOA and applicable state and federal statutes and regulations and policy/ies (e.g., the Privacy Act).
 - d) The Parties acknowledge additional uses of CSOSA/PSA administrative record data may only be used with written permission by the CSOSA/PSA signatories or designees.
 - e) Any Party, upon discovery of data errors, inaccuracies, and/or discrepancies in the administrative data provided, shall address data issues, including correcting inaccuracies, where feasible and appropriate, within five (5) business days of discovery of the data errors.

- f) The Parties shall promptly purge, shred, data wipe or destroy all administrative record data (including any screenshots, emails, reports, printouts, source data, excel files, etc.) which do not constitute a match of entities (e.g., persons or cases), are outside the scope of the request, or that are no longer needed for the purposes for which it was obtained within 30 days of either event and send written notification to CSOSA's Office of General Counsel and CSOSA's technical and operational points of contact (POCs) certifying the action.
- g) The Parties agree that employees will comply with applicable federal and District of Columbia law regarding the confidentiality of youth and adult records and identifying information, including but not limited to: the D.C. Mental Health Act (D.C. Official Code §§ 7-1201.01 et seq. (2001 Edition)), the D.C. HIV/AIDS statute (D.C. Official Code §§ 7-302 and 7-1605 (2002 Edition)), drug/alcohol treatment records (42 C.F.R. Part 2); Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552) and the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a).
- h) Request for any CSOSA or PSA administrative record data that references or includes substance abuse, mental health, medical data or any information not consistent with this MOA shall be made in writing through the CSOSA Office of General Counsel (OGC);
- i) The Parties agree that CSOSA and PSA are the owners of any administrative record data that is shared, retrieved or accessed through their database systems and the Parties will maintain such records in accordance with the terms of this MOA.
- j) The Parties shall retain CSOSA/PSA administrative record data commencing upon execution of this MOA and store sensitive administrative data in areas that are physically safe (i.e., encrypted methods that secure the data at rest and in transit) from access by unauthorized person at all times.
- k) The Parties acknowledge that an information system incident is an unexpected, unplanned event that could have a negative impact on information technology resources. It requires immediate action to prevent further negative impacts. It may be an event that violates security policies or one that circumvents security mechanisms (e.g., hostile probes, intrusions, malicious software).
- l) If a Party is affected by an intrusion that involves CSOSA or PSA data, the Party shall react to the incident per CSOSA's IT rules of behavior, privacy and incident response policies.
- m) The affected Party shall be responsible for investigating, reporting, resolving the breach, and shall notify CSOSA's Office of General Counsel or designee when an incident involves a Party's host system/infrastructure or a Party's

user's account that hosts CSOSA administrative data.

- n) In the event of a detected intrusion attempt originating from the Party's intrusion detection sub-system or any other agency intrusion detection system that shares collected information concerning the CSOSA and PSA data, the affected Party, or its designated agent shall have the authority to isolate the intrusion, investigate, and notify CSOSA's Office of General Counsel.
- o) If any Party experiences an administrative record paper breach or cyber security intrusion or incident on its electronic system(s) that houses CSOSA or PSA administrative record data, it shall notify CSOSA's Office of General Counsel or designee of the breach incident within one hour of becoming aware of the incident and to U.S. CERT <https://www.us-cert.gov/forms/report> (for electronic).
- p) If a cyber-intrusion occurs on any Party's electronic system where CSOSA/PSA administrative record data is housed, that Party shall be responsible for investigating the breach and the costs of notification of the breach, as well as which stakeholders should be informed of the breach.
- q) CSOSA, upon written notice, may suspend the use and access of the data described in this MOA to any Party whenever a determination has been made that any term of this MOU or related rule, procedure, or policy is violated or reasonably appears to be violated.

Procedures Part 2 -Concurrent Supervision

A. Pretrial Services Agency (PSA)

- 1) PSA will seek to obtain any appropriate release of information form for youths under its supervision in order to exchange treatment information with CSSD/CFSA/DYRS.
- 2) The assigned pretrial services officer (PSO) will work collaboratively with CSSD/CFSA/DYRS to case plan and provide services, as appropriate, to the youth.
- 3) Upon recommendation of modification or adjustment, PSA will consult with and notify CSSD/CFSA/DYRS of any planned or emergency changes of placement or release conditions prior to the changes being implemented, otherwise within 48 hours or two (2) business days.
- 4) PSA will maintain monthly contact with CSSD/CFSA/DYRS to ensure that each respective Party is appropriately providing services consistent with their statutory duties and obligations. All communications will be documented in the PRISM, PSA's information system.
- 5) PSA will provide timely notification within two (2) business days to CSSD/CFSA/DYRS of a youth's significant violation status relative to conditions of release, termination of

services, case transfer, closure, etc. PSA will also provide timely notification to CSSD/CFSA/DYRS of a youth's loss of contact with PSA and/or a youth's failure to appear for a court appearance.

- 6) As appropriate, PSA agrees to work with CSSD/CFSA/DYRS in order to present an agreed-upon coordinated placement and/or service plan and history to the Court. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached between PSA and CSSD/CFSA/DYRS, staff must immediately e.g., on the same day or the next business day, report the disagreement to their respective supervisors for prompt support toward a feasible resolution.
- 7) PSA clients who are placed on GPS may require special case planning with other agencies so that the conditions that supersede others are clearly defined between agencies with the client.
- 8) PSA monitors a youth's pending adult charge while committed with CFSA. Within five (5) business days of the youth's release date, CFSA will contact PSA and conduct a case plan for the ward's reentry into the community.
 - a. If the dual jacketed youth has a pending youth charge where he is securely detained pending trial or disposition PSA agrees to work with CSSD/CFSA/DYRS to present an agreed-upon coordinated placement for the youth within ten (10) business days. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached between PSA and CSSD/CFSA/DYRS, staff must immediately, e.g., on the same day or next business day, report the disagreement to their respective supervisor for prompt support towards a feasible resolution.

B. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS)

- 1) The assigned DYRS case manager or social worker will work collaboratively with the other Parties to create and execute a case plan and provide services for the youth and his or her family.
- 2) The DYRS case manager or social worker, to the extent feasible, will invite the respective worker from the other Party agencies to all team decision-making meetings or any other case planning meetings in reference to dual jacketed youths.
- 3) When possible, the DYRS case manager or social worker will consult with and notify the case managers of the other Party agencies of any planned or emergency change of placement prior to the placement change.
- 4) The DYRS case manager or social worker will make immediate contact with the case managers of the other Party agencies when there is imminent harm to the youth or when the youth poses an imminent significant risk of harm to the community.
- 5) The DYRS case manager or social worker will maintain biweekly contact with CSOSA/ PSA and any other relevant or appropriate agencies to ensure appropriate provision of

services and progress of the youth. All communications will be documented in the respective Party's information systems, including the placement of the youth in a residential facility.

- 6) The DYRS case manager or social worker will provide timely notification to the other Party agencies within two (2) business days of non-compliance, termination of services, case transfer, closure, or other actions that will effect dual supervision, including the placement of the youth in a residential facility.
- 7) The DYRS case manager or social worker will provide immediate notification to the case managers of the Party agencies and any other designated persons when a youth absconds from a DYRS placement and/or fails to appear for a youth court proceeding.
- 8) As appropriate, and to the extent possible, each Party agrees to present an agreed-upon unified placement and or service plan and history to the Court.
- 9) Upon the release of a dual jacketed youth from prison or a Residential Treatment Facility, the DYRS Team Decision Making Coordinator or Case Manager /Social Worker will invite the adult Probation/Parole Officer/ PSO to attend the meeting and contribute to the case plan for the youth's reentry back into the community.
- 10) In cases where the services provided to a youth are contracted through a Lead Entity, the DYRS Case Manager or Social Worker will maintain the responsibility as the primary point of contact with those providers as well as maintain the role as primary supervisor of the youth. The case manager/social worker will provide the adult probation/parole officer with monthly reports regarding the youth's compliance. When the youth is not compliant with the services provided and conditions of his or her DYRS Community Placement Agreement (CPA), DYRS will provide notice within two (2) business days for all non-compliance with services and CPA, including serious infractions such as GPS tampering, placement disruptions, and abscondences.
- 11) In cases where the services supplied to a youth are provided by PSA and CSOSA, the adult pretrial/probation/parole officer will maintain the responsibility as the primary point of contact with the service providers as well as maintain the role as primary supervisor of the youth. The pretrial/probation/parole officer will provide monthly reports regarding the youth's compliance to the DYRS case Manager. When the youth is not compliant with the services provided and conditions of probation, the pretrial/probation/parole officer will provide notice of the non-compliance to DYRS within two (2) days of the agency's notification of violation(s). For serious infractions of pretrial/parole/probation, notification will occur within (2) business days of the agency's notification of violation(s).
- 12) In the event an agreement cannot be reached between the Parties' staff charged with joint case planning and/or coordinating responsibilities, the staff on the same date or the next business day of the matter not being resolved must report the disagreement to their respective supervisors for prompt resolution.

C. Court Social Services Division (CSSD)

- 1) The assigned CSSD probation officer will work collaboratively with the other Parties to ensure case planning, services and supervision for the youth occurs.
- 2) The CSSD probation officer, to the extent feasible, will invite the respective worker from the other Party to all youth probation conferences or any other case planning meetings in reference to dual jacketed youths. However, the youth's case plan shall not be amended, unless it is determined by the youth's probation officer that modification(s) of the plan is needed to meet the goals of the youth's disposition.
- 3) The CSSD probation officer shall consult with and notify the social worker/case manager/probation officer representing the other Party (ies) of any planned or emergency change of Court ordered placement prior to the placement change.
- 4) The CSSD probation officer shall maintain biweekly contact with other Parties to ensure appropriate provision of services. All communications will be documented in the respective Party's information systems as well as in JUSTIS.
- 5) The CSSD probation officer shall provide timely notification to the other Parties of non-compliance, termination of services, case transfer, closure, etc. Note: CSSD shall not be required to request an extension of the period of youth probation beyond the period in effect at the time that the matter becomes a dual jacketed case.
- 6) As appropriate, and to the extent possible, each Party agrees to present an agreed-upon unified placement and or service plan and history to the Court.

D. Child and Family Service Agency (CFSA)

- 1) The assigned CFSA social worker will work collaboratively with the other Parties to create and execute a case plan and provide services for the youth and his or her family.
- 2) The CFSA social worker will invite the respective workers from the other Parties to all family team meetings, or any other case planning meetings in reference to youths who have adult criminal charges.
- 3) The CFSA social worker will consult with and notify the case managers of the other Parties of any planned or emergency change of placement prior to the placement change.
- 4) The CFSA social worker will maintain biweekly contact with CSOSA/ PSA/DYRS and any other relevant or appropriate agencies to ensure appropriate provision of services and progress of the youth. All communications will be documented in the respective Party's information systems.
- 5) The CFSA social worker will provide notification within two (2) days to the other Parties of non-compliance, termination of services, case transfer, compliance, and closure.
- 6) The CFSA social worker will provide notification within 24 hours to the case managers of the

Parties and any other designated persons when a youth absconds from a CFSA placement.

- 7) As appropriate, and to the extent possible, each Party agrees to present an agreed-upon unified placement and/or service plan and history to the Court
- 8) In the event an agreement cannot be reached between the Parties' staff charged with joint case planning and/or coordinating responsibilities, the staff on the same date or the next business day of the matter not being resolved must report the disagreement to their respective supervisors for prompt resolution. If not resolved by the respective supervisors, a team meeting shall convene so the team can reach an agreement.
- 9) Whenever possible the coordinated plan should move the young person toward release to or reunification in a stable and nurturing family like setting.

E. Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA)

- 1) The assigned CSOSA Community Supervision Officer (CSO) will work collaboratively with the other Parties to create and execute a case plan and provide services for the youth and his or her family.
- 2) The CSOSA CSO will invite the respective workers from the other Parties to all family team meetings, or any other case planning meetings in reference to youths who have adult criminal charges.
- 3) The CSOSA CSO will consult with and notify the case managers of the other Parties of any planned or emergency change of placement prior to the placement change.
- 4) The CSOSA CSO will maintain biweekly contact with CFSA/PSA/DYRS and any other relevant or appropriate agencies to ensure appropriate provision of services and progress of the youth. All communications will be documented in the respective Party's information systems.
- 5) The CSOSA CSO will provide notification within two (2) days to the other Parties of non-compliance, termination of services, case transfer, and closure.
- 6) The CSOSA CSO will provide notification within 24 hours to the case managers of the Parties and any other designated persons when a youth absconds from a CSOSA placement.
- 7) As appropriate, and to the extent possible, each Party agrees to present an agreed-upon unified placement and/or service plan and history to the Court.
- 8) Prior to release or upon placement or supervision with CSOSA of a committed youth under the age of 21 from prison or a Residential Treatment Facility, the adult Probation/Parole Officer will connect with the CFSA social worker to plan a joint pre-release planning meeting and contribute to the case plan for the client's reentry into the community.

- 9) In cases where the services supplied to an offender are provided by CSOSA, the adult community supervision officer will maintain the responsibility as the primary point of contact with the service providers as well as maintain the role as primary supervisor of the ward. The community supervision officer will provide monthly contact and information sharing regarding the youth's compliance to the CFSA Social Worker, PSA Pre-Trial Officer, and or DYRS Case Worker. When the youth is not compliant with the services provided and/or conditions of probation, the community supervision officer will provide notice of the non-compliance to CFSA within two (2) days.
- 10) In the event an agreement cannot be reached between the Parties' staff charged with joint case planning and/or coordinating responsibilities, the staff on the same date or the next business day of the matter not being resolved must report the disagreement to their respective supervisors for prompt resolution.
- 11) Whenever possible the coordinated plan should move the youth toward release to or reunification in a stable and nurturing family like setting.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

A. Anti-Deficiency Act

Nothing contained in this MOA shall be construed to obligate any Party to any expenditure or obligation of funds in excess or advance of appropriations, in accordance with the Federal Anti-Deficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. §1341 (federal and DC Parties); and the District of Columbia Anti-Deficiency Act, D.C. Official Code §§ 47-355.01-355.08 (2001) (DC Parties only), as the foregoing statutes may be amended from time to time, regardless of whether a particular obligation has been expressly so conditioned.

B. Controlling Regulations and Laws

Each Party understands that the provisions of this MOA are subject to federal and local laws of the District of Columbia. The Parties shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and rules, whether in force at the time of the execution of this MOA or subsequently enacted or promulgated during the period this MOA is in effect, including but not limited to federal and D.C. laws governing the disclosure of drug/alcohol treatment records, mental health, and other sensitive and personally identifiable information. Nothing in this MOA shall be construed as in any way impairing the general powers of the Parties for supervision, regulation, and control of their respective youth.

C. No Rights Created

This MOA does not and shall not be construed to create any rights, substantive, or procedural, enforceable at law by any person in any matter, civil or criminal.

D. No Third-Party Beneficiary

This MOA shall not and is not intended to benefit or to grant any right or remedy to any person or entity that is not a Party to this MOA.

E. Existing Obligations Not Affected

This MOA is not a substitute for any statutory, regulatory or policy obligation a Party may have. Any such obligations an agency may have are still binding on that Party.

F. Liability/Indemnification

Each Party is responsible for its own conduct under this MOA, and retains all rights, benefits, privileges, defenses, including immunities, available under applicable federal and the District of Columbia law. No Party agrees to insure, defend, or indemnify any other.

G. Confidential Information

The Parties to this MOA will use, restrict, safeguard, and dispose of all information related to services provided by this MOA, in accordance with all relevant federal and local statutes, regulations, and policies. Information provided by any Party in the performance of responsibilities associated with the performance of this MOA shall remain the property of that Party.

H. Publicity and Media

Publicity releases and/ or media interviews in connection with the activities credited to this MOA shall not be undertaken by any Party without consultation with the other Parties' designated official(s) responsible for public/ media affairs.

I. Effective Date

This MOA is effective upon signing by the last Party and shall remain in effect thereafter unless modified or terminated. The agreement will not be limited by the departure of a Party.

J. Modification and Termination

This MOA may be modified at any time by written consent of all Parties, and may be terminated by any Party upon 60 days advance written notice by the terminating Party to the remaining Parties. Additionally, all Parties agree to provide reasons for termination and agree to meet during the interim period for the purpose of renegotiation or modification of the MOA. The MOA will not be terminated by the departure of any single Party.

K. Full Agreement and Merger

The terms and conditions of this MOA constitute the full and complete agreement among the Parties. No other verbal or written agreement shall, in any way, vary or alter any provision of this MOA unless all Parties consent to vary or alter the provision in a signed writing.

L. Dispute Resolution and Governing Law

ATTACHMENT “A” POINTS OF CONTACTS

Child and Family Services Agency

Lia Walker 202 727.3443
Community Partnership Administrator

Michelle Frazier 202 645-6547
Permanency Administrator

Sarah Thankachan 202 442--6174
Office of Youth Empowerment

Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency

Yolanda Bethea 202.585.7339
Acting Associate Director, Community
Supervision Services (CSS)

Debra Kafami 202.585.7403
Deputy Associate Director, CSS

Renard Brown 202.585.7374
Program Analyst

Court Social Services Division

Jacqueline Wright 202.508.1819
Program Manager, Region -1

Pauline Francis 202.879.4742
Program Manager, Intake

Vonda Frayer 202.879.4786
Youth Intake Unit I (Moultrie Courthouse)
Supervisory Probation Officer

Mark Jackson
Youth Intake Unit II (Youth Serv Cen. Olivet Rd.), Supervisory Probation Officer 202.409.1690

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Charisma X. Howell, Deputy Executive Director 202.442.7739

Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services

Garine Dalce, Deputy Director of Youth and Family Services 202.299.3923 (office)
202.805.7790 (cell)

Julie Ennis, Program Manager, Case Management Division 202.299.3928 (office)

Pretrial Services Agency

For information concerning new arrests or intake matters: PSA Diagnostic Units (24/7 operation)

Janeth Munoz, Court Services Program Manager 202.585.7028
202.585.7030
202.585.7073

For information concerning cases being handled within PSA's supervision area:

PSA Supervision Program 202.585.7955
Cynthia Cummings, Supervision Program Manager 202.442.1668

For information for cases involving persons with substance abuse and/or mental health issues:

PSA Treatment Program 202.220.5505
Michael McGuinness, Treatment Program Manager 202.220.5509

The Parties shall attempt in good faith to resolve any dispute arising out of or relating to this MOA promptly by negotiations between executives who have authority to settle the controversy. If the Parties cannot resolve their dispute through good faith negotiations, the Parties agree that in any legal action arising under this MOA, the applicable federal and District laws shall apply and the venue will be in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

M. Jointly Drafted

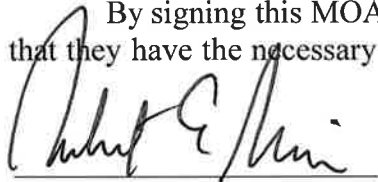
This MOA shall be deemed to have been drafted by all Parties, and in the event of a dispute, shall not be construed against any individual Party.

N. Notices

All notices related to this MOA shall be sent by the most expeditious means available, including but not limited to email, overnight courier, facsimile, certified or registered mail to the addresses set forth below. Notice shall be deemed delivered when received by the other Party. The individuals listed in "Attachment A" are the points of contact for each Party.

VII. SIGNATORY PROVISION

By signing this MOA on behalf of the Parties, the signer represents and warrants that they have the necessary authority to bind the participating agency for which they sign.



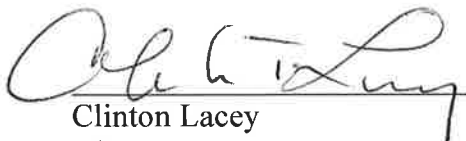
Robert E. Morin
Chief Judge
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

1/13/17
Date



Nancy Ware
Director
Court Services and Offender Services
Agency for the District of Columbia

1/12/2017
Date



Clinton Lacey
Director
D.C. Department of Youth
Rehabilitation Services

1/24/17
Date



Brenda Donald
Director
D.C. Child and Family Services Agency

1-17-17

Date



Clifford T. Keenan
Director
Pretrial Services Agency

1/13/2017

Date



Mannone Butler
Executive Director
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

1.13.17

Date

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Members of the Audit Team & Acknowledgments

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Former CCE staff member Jennifer Ubiera originally conceptualized this project and was its primary researcher and initial drafter; we are grateful for her vision to develop this project – in collaboration with the CCE staff, Steering Committee, and the Office of the D.C. Auditor – and for her passion for and dedication to improving the lives of justice-involved youth. We also greatly appreciate CCE's Policy Director Tracy Velázquez, who took over as the primary author for this report in late 2023 and ensured that the final report was robust, accurate, and resonant. Misty Thomas Zaleski served as Executive Director of CCE throughout the audit project.

In addition, CCE is grateful for the significant research and writing contributions of Senior Advisor James Tuite – who supported this project for nearly two years as an active volunteer – as well as the invaluable edits, feedback, and suggestions from the members of the Audit Steering Committee. We also thank our current and former staff, fellows, and interns who contributed meaningfully to this project: Aayushma Bastola, Emily (Tatro) Cassometus, Hyla Jacobson, Lucas Fox, and Takeyshia Johnson. CCE also thanks Brian Chappell and Gary Stapleton of the law firm Hogan Lovells for their research support, significantly expanding the capacity of our small staff to understand the issues and comparative practices fully.

CCE is especially grateful to the former crossover youth, parents and foster families, legal advocates and other youth justice professionals, community stakeholders, and researchers who provided valuable feedback for this report. Specifically, Sasha Bruce Youthwork generously assisted CCE with our impacted youth and families' focus groups and surveys, and we appreciate expert stakeholders like D.D. Davis, Eduardo Ferrer, Britney Mobley, and Kaitlyn Sill, who all provided insights and feedback along the way.

Additionally, we would like to recognize the following current and former D.C. administrators

and agency staff who spent a significant amount of time on this audit, including: Director Robert Matthews, Stephanie Jones Peguero, and Michele Rosenberg of the Child and Family Services Agency; Director Sam Abed, Adam Aljoburi, Aisha Braithwaite Flucker, Director Hillary Cairns (former), Aki Damme, and LaShunda Hill of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services; Director Kristy Love, Toni Lemons, and Erin Partin of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Petrina Jones-Jesz of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children; and Erin Cullen, Dave Rosenthal, and Elizabeth Wieser of the D.C. Office of the Attorney General. Finally, we greatly appreciate the support of D.C. Superior Court Chief Judge Anita Josey-Herring and Dr. Sandra Embler of the D.C. Courts for facilitating CCE's access to court data that provided vital context and clarity for this audit's findings.

ENDNOTES

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- 6 For this evaluation CCE needed to define the population of concern clearly, especially since some individuals or entities may define the term “crossover youth” slightly differently. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, a “crossover youth” in D.C. means: a person 21 years of age or younger who: 1) *is currently or was previously* the subject of a substantiated investigation by CFSA and 2) *is currently or was previously* the subject of a petition alleging delinquency filed by D.C. Family Court or by another jurisdiction. This definition is generally consistent with the definition of crossover youth used in legislation establishing the Office of Ombudsperson for Children in 2021. See D.C. Code § 4–671.08(d); *read in conjunction with* D.C. Code § 4–671.01(5). That definition, like the one used in this report, recognizes that involvement with the two systems can be concurrent or non-concurrent, and uses the filing of a delinquency petition as the marker for justice-system involvement. The only difference between the definitions relates to the marker for child welfare involvement; in the D.C. Code, this is defined as being currently or having been previously “involved with, or otherwise known to” CFSA, which is broader than the “substantiated investigation” standard used in this report. CCE decided that, for purposes of the audit, it was preferable to use the bright line “substantiated investigation” marker, which makes clear that CFSA believed its involvement was necessary and appropriate.
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- 201 Comments by Suzie Dhere at the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group meeting, 2/6/2024.
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Agency Comments

On April 5, 2024, we sent a draft copy of this report to the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) and the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) for review and written comment. The two agencies sent back a joint response on May 6, 2024, included here in its entirety.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES
AND CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES



TO: D.C. Auditor Kathleen Patterson, Office of the D.C. Auditor

FROM: Director Sam Abed, Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
Director Robert Matthews, Child and Family Services Agency

SUBJECT: Crossover Youth D.C. Auditor Report

DATE: May 6, 2024

DYRS and CFSA reviewed the Crossover Youth Draft Report and while we are eager to collaborate with each other and the other critical agencies identified in the report, it is important to note at the outset that only eight (8) youth in Fiscal Year 2023 had active cases with both CFSA and DYRS. In those cases, CFSA and DYRS collaborate to coordinate care. The other critical agencies include the Office of the Attorney General, Superior Court of the District of Columbia (Superior Court), Superior Court of the District of Columbia's Family Court Social Services Division (CSSD), and other child serving agencies.

The location of an expansive crossover youth strategy should be at the intake stage of the delinquency system, which is controlled by the Office of the Attorney General. Knowledge of a child welfare contact at the intake stage of a delinquency case (e.g. when a youth is charged with an offense) is instructive to the prosecutor with respect to case forwarding decisions and to the court for purposes of a disposition, however, it is of diminished value after a youth is committed to DYRS.

Our goal is to develop a comprehensive crossover initiative that will benefit the children and families that we serve. We look forward to thoroughly analyzing the data presented in this report and will share the data with our partnering agencies to gain a clearer understanding of the challenges surrounding youth involved with multiple agencies.

We believe adopting a more expansive definition of a crossover youth is an important first step, which should be followed by meaningful data sharing between the critical agencies. Additionally, establishing a strong collaboration with the Superior Court is crucial to ensure that youth involved in the child welfare and the delinquency system have their cases overseen by one judge so coordination of services for them and their families can be more streamlined and less burdensome.

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Founded in 1982, the Council for Court Excellence (CCE) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan civic organization that envisions a justice system in the District of Columbia that equitably serves its people and continues to be a model for creating strong and more prosperous communities. CCE identifies and proposes solutions by collaborating with diverse stakeholders to conduct research, advance policy, educate the public, and increase civic engagement.



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