

## INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

Work Group on Returning Non-Delinquent Youth Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2025

1:00 pm EST

Via Zoom



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### Preliminary Business

#### Call to Order

Chair C. Bickford (NH) called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm EST.

#### Roll Call

Director Underwood called the roll and a quorum was established.

#### Voting Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner, Chair
2. Anne Connor (ID), Commissioner
3. Chris Biehn (IN), Commissioner
4. Amy Welch (KY), Commissioner
5. Corrie Copeland (TN), Commissioner
6. Trissie Casanova (VT), Commissioner

#### Compact Staff and Ex Officio Members in Attendance:

1. Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, Compact Administrator (GA)
2. Nita Wright, Deputy Compact Administrator (IN)
3. Melina Hampton (KY), Deputy Compact Administrator, Designee
4. Raymundo Gallardo (UT), Deputy Compact Administrator
5. Jenny McFadden (WI), Deputy Compact Administrator
6. Juan "John" Sepulveda, Ex Officio Member representing National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS)

#### Members Not in Attendance:

1. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner

#### National Office Staff in Attendance:

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

#### Agenda

A. Connor (ID) made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. A. Welch (KY) seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## Check-ins

- Chair C. Bickford (NH) opened the floor for members to share their role in relation to the Interstate Commission for Juveniles (Commission) and share their highest hopes for the work group.
  - N. Wright (IN) is an ICJ deputy compact administrator. She hopes to gain a better understanding of how other states operate and find ways to improve the system for returning youths. She also hopes to find creative ways to include other stakeholders who are working toward the same goals, but from different perspectives.
  - J. McFadden (WI) is an ICJ deputy compact administrator. She hopes to learn from others and develop best practices that promote the safety and best interests of youth and families, encourage information sharing, and ensure “we are doing the best we can for the youth.”
  - T. Casanova (VT) is a deputy compact administrator for ICJ and Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) and state human trafficking consultant. She hopes to unpack barriers identified in the survey and bring in external stakeholders to find common ground for working better together so that young people can be safely picked-up and returned home.
  - Amy Welch (KY) is an ICJ commissioner and compact administrator. She hopes to learn from others, get feedback, and share ideas.
  - Chris Biehn (IN) is an ICJ commissioner and compact administrator. Having previously worked as a juvenile probation officer, he is eager to learn about returns from a new perspective.
  - Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb is the Commissioner of the Georgia Department for Juvenile Justice and an ICJ compact administrator. She also serves on multiple other committees related to human trafficking. She hopes to develop a broader understanding of how the work of ICJ and other stakeholders impacts the greater mission of juvenile justice agencies.
  - A. Connor (ID) is an ICJ commissioner and deputy compact administrator. She has been an ICJ practitioner in both Idaho and Nevada. She is happy to continue work begun by the West Region, particularly since returns have become increasingly complex over the years. She highlighted the importance of engaging other national stakeholders and learning from one another. She noted that the ICJ rules, particularly those related to non-delinquents, were developed with limited information about how other stakeholders operate. She emphasized the importance of working together to ensure that young people get home safely.
  - Raymundo Gallardo (UT) is a deputy compact administrator. He reiterated the importance of addressing barriers and finding solutions to improve response to complex cases, which often involve suspected abuse, neglect, and abandonment issues. He hopes to find new ways to work together to serve and reunite families.
  - John Sepulveda is an ex officio member representing the National Partnership for Juvenile Services. He is also the Deputy Director of the Jefferson County Youth Detention in Birmingham, Alabama. He looks forward to learning and providing feedback. He hopes to improve communication, particularly with detention team.
  - Corrie Copeland (TN) is an ICJ commissioner. She noted that returns have become more complicated, and youth are ever evolving. She hopes to ensure that ICJ maintains pace with

- youth and collaborates with that stakeholders to find common ground and promote the best interest of families and youth.
- Melina Hampton (KY) is an ICJ deputy compact administrator and designee. She hopes to find ways to improve communication and collaborations.
  - Chair C. Bickford (NH) echoed the importance of the hopes and priorities expressed. She added that the work group would provide more opportunities to engage and collaborate with stakeholders than are available through standing committees.

## **New Business**

### **Review Top Concerns for Returning Non-Delinquent Runaways Survey Report**

- Chair C. Bickford (NH) called attention to the work group's charge: review related reports, conduct further analysis, and prioritize strategies for addressing top concerns.
- Chair C. Bickford (NH) provided an overview of the *Top Concerns for Returning Non-Delinquent Runaways, Survey Report*. The top three issues were:
  1. Lack of Communication between state ICJ Offices about the circumstances in which the youth was located.
  2. Lack of understanding or alignment between ICJ Rules and child welfare agency requirements and practices.
  3. Lack of clarity about ICJ requirements related to pick-up and detention of runaways.
- Chair C. Bickford (NH) emphasized the importance of exploring these barriers and root causes, before getting to solutions
- She indicated the work group would focus on issue #1 for the first few months, then bring in additional stakeholders.
- She highlighted the importance of working with other stakeholders to fully understand challenges and develop solutions.

### **New & Updated Commission Resources about Returns**

- Director Underwood provided an overview of a presentation titled "Homeward Bound: Returning Youth through the Interstate Compact for Juveniles."
  - The presentation was developed with input from many different ICJ offices. It provides information about the Compact, the Commission, the ICJ rules, and practical applications. The goal of the overview was to garner feedback from members prior to releasing the presentation for general use by other commission members.
  - Director Underwood asked members to share how they explain why states need ICJ rules on returns.
  - Chair C. Bickford (NH) answered that if there were no rules or requirements, then states would all do things differently and potentially infringe on juveniles' rights.
  - A. Connor (ID) responded that the ICJ rules on returns provide a roadmap for how states can operate in the same way to ensure kids are returned safely.
  - T. Casanova (VT) added that the Compact helps create consistent practices between states so that there are less opportunities for bias.
  - Director Underwood thanked members for their input and encouraged others to provide feedback to help ensure the presentation is helpful for ICJ offices.

- Director Underwood emphasized content related to addressing abuse and neglect. She pointed out that, pursuant to Rule 6-101, holding a non-delinquent youth in custody for more than 24 hours is the trigger for other Compact requirements related to returning non-delinquent runaways. Federal funding supports shelters and other services for runaway and homeless youth, including those who are not detained.
- A. Connor (ID) asked whether the Commission had addressed who should determine whether a runaway is “a danger to themselves or others” (and therefore must be “detained in secure facilities” pursuant to Rules 6-102 and 6-103).
- Director Underwood reported that the Rules Committee discussed the issue and determined no action should be taken by the Commission because states already have laws and policies that establish how such determinations are made. In most states, courts make such determinations, usually in the context of mental health concerns.
- N. Wright (IN) shared that Indiana’s practice is to temporarily detain runaways who they believe have put themselves in harm’s way.
- Director Underwood responded that since the question is not addressed by the Compact or ICJ rules, states must determine the best way to carry out the Compact in accordance with their own laws and policies.
- Director Underwood stated that the National Office would send the presentation to work group members to review and provide feedback.
- Director Underwood also encouraged members to review the *Fact Sheet on ICJ Returns and Non-Delinquent Runaways*, which can be found on the Commission’s website. The Fact Sheet was developed to address some of the common concerns reported in the survey.

### Next Steps

- Chair C. Bickford (NH) provided an overview of the action plan for the next few months. The work group will focus on identifying and addressing the underlying challenges related to the top three issues, beginning with issue #1. Glenn Tapia, Alliance for Community Justice Innovation, will join the group in February to provide training on adaptive problem solving. He will facilitate subsequent meetings, which will focus on Issue #1 until May. In June, the group will assess the work that has been done and adjust the process as needed to address issues #2 and #3. There will be no meeting in July.
- Chair C. Bickford (NH) requested time be set aside for an in-person meeting at the 2025 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) in August, with plans to invite other ex officio members and stakeholders to join at that time.
- Chair C. Bickford (NH) proposed extending future meetings to 90 minutes. There were no objections.
- Chair C. Bickford (NH) encouraged members to contact her or the National Office to discuss ideas for stakeholders they would like to include in future meetings.
- The next meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2025.

### Adjourn

Chair C. Bickford (NH) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 2:05 pm EST.