

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

—
H.P. 1284 - L.D. 1923

An Act to Update Juvenile Justice System Reporting Requirements and to Direct the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Human Services to Study Modifying the Long Creek Youth Development Center

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 34-A MRSA §7009, as enacted by PL 2023, c. 425, §4, is amended to read:

§7009. Publication of data

~~By February 15, 2024~~ Beginning August 15, 2026, each month the department shall develop and publish on its publicly accessible website data regarding the number of juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system. The data must be updated monthly and include information regarding the numbers of juveniles referred, diverted, detained, placed on probation, ordered to serve a period of confinement and committed to the department. The department shall deidentify the data and remove any potential personal identifying information of the juveniles. The data must be organized by region of the State and broken down by age, gender and race.

Sec. 2. Department of Corrections and Department of Health and Human Services to convene working group. The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Human Services shall jointly convene a working group to examine the current programming and use of physical facilities at the Long Creek Youth Development Center, referred to in this section as "the center." The working group shall provide recommendations for modifying the use of land and facilities at the center and reinvesting corrections funds currently designated for youth incarceration into a continuum of community-based services over the next 5 years.

1. The Commissioner of Corrections and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, or the commissioners' designees, shall serve as members of the working group and shall jointly appoint the following 9 members to the working group:

- A. A representative of children's behavioral health services within the Department of Health and Human Services;
- B. A representative of the Department of Education;

- C. A representative of a community-based youth service provider;
- D. A representative from a community-based organization offering youth shelter or housing resources;
- E. A representative of the State Forensic Service with experience in juvenile justice matters in the State;
- F. An expert in juvenile justice matters in the State;
- G. A youth who has directly experienced the juvenile justice system in the State;
- H. A parent of a youth who has directly experienced the juvenile justice system in the State; and
- I. A representative of a statewide labor organization representing employees at the center.

The superintendent of the center or the superintendent's designee serves as an ex officio, voting member of the working group.

2. The working group shall:

- A. Study efforts of other states and municipalities in other states that have modified their juvenile detention centers to determine the best practices for modifying the center;
- B. Examine the current status of the land and facilities at the center to determine opportunities for modifying the land and facilities, including renovating existing buildings or constructing additional facilities;
- C. Consider alternate uses for the land and facilities at the center, including but not limited to a crisis receiving center, an assessment of youth in crisis center, a youth emergency shelter, youth transitional housing and a community resource center;
- D. Examine the current use of the center's budget and staffing and explore opportunities for alternative uses of financial and human resources for services, including, but not limited to, housing, behavioral health, education, substance use disorder prevention and treatment, wraparound case management and diversion;
- E. Explore existing community-based services provided to youth and work with community-based organizations to determine potential programming that could take place at the center; and
- F. Examine and recommend best practices for maintaining and operating a secure and safe facility for juvenile clients.

3. No later than February 15, 2028, the Commissioner of Corrections and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services shall jointly submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over criminal justice and public safety matters that includes the working group's findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation related to the working group's duties. The joint standing committee may report out legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.