

*Recommendations of the DC Juvenile Justice Advisory Group  
Alternatives to Juvenile System Involvement for  
Youth Who Run Away or Are Pushed Out from Home and  
Youth Who Remain in Risky Locations Late at Night*

Flowchart of Alternative Response

Central responsibility for **coordination and accountability** sits with Department of Human Services (DHS.) A new Youth and Family-Partnership Design and Accountability Board co-plans, advises, and holds DHS and service providers accountable; Board's mission centers equity for traditionally marginalized youth.

**Prevention** services include recreation and open, safe, and fun spaces for youth in the community. Community knows about available programs and is guaranteed easy access to mental health and other family supports, including conflict resolution and family mediation.

Person (including police\*)  
sees teens at 2:00 am  
outside Gallery Place. Calls  
24-hour **hotline** expressing  
concern.

OR

Teen out at 2:00 am at  
Gallery Place decides they  
want help and calls or texts  
the 24-hour **hotline**.

**Hotline** triages referral to  
Mobile Response Mental  
Health Team or Street  
Outreach Team.

**Mobile Response Mental  
Health Team**  
OR  
**Street Outreach Team**

**New Place-based and  
Person-based Services**

aligned and collaborating  
with

**Respite homes, as  
needed.**

**Continuum of Care**

**\*Police:** After PINS decriminalization, police procedures would not change in situations where officer suspects youth is a victim or perpetrator of crime. If no suspicion of crime, police procedures again would not change but officer now has the option to counsel the youth about available services and call the hotline. Officers bear no responsibility to supervise a youth until service providers arrives.

Description of Components

**Coordination and Accountability**

- The Department of Human Services (DHS) serves as the central agency to manage and coordinate services.
- The Youth and Family Partnership Design and Accountability Board's focus on marginalized youth incorporates, in particular, Black youth, youth with disabilities, LGBTQ youth, Latinx/Spanish-speaking and other immigrant youth, and their families. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) and the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG) support the Board.

**Prevention**

- Access to services is available to all youth and families who need them, even without involvement in child welfare or juvenile justice systems. Agencies within child welfare or juvenile justice systems can easily refer children and families to prevention services if they receive reports that don't rise to their level of involvement.

## **Hotline**

- 24-hour, text and TTY-capable Youth Services Hotline with a similar number to 911.
- Hotline staff are specially trained to work with youth in crisis, assess needs, and triage to either the Mobile Response Mental Health Team or the Street Outreach Team.
- Juvenile system personnel, including police, can call the hotline to refer youth and families and 911 dispatchers can patch appropriate callers over to the hotline.

## **Mobile Response Mental Health Team**

- Sufficiently resourced to rapidly respond in the community and provide on-site crisis support and/or immediate, voluntary access to transportation to an appropriate service provider, if needed.
- Team includes mental health and crisis responders focused on youth, following a “CHAMPS-lite” or CAHOOT-type model. Team does not include law enforcement.
- Equipped to respond even when youth is reported as a risk to themselves or others.
- If team has concerns of violence or CSEC/sex trafficking, engages on-call violence interrupters or sex trafficking supports from scaled-up versions of existing services (i.e. Fair Girls and Courtney’s House.) Team also follows mandated reporting requirements to CFSA Hotline for victims of abuse and neglect and sex abuse.
- If a youth doesn’t need or want transport to services, mobile response team provides information about where to connect with services if/when the youth wants and asks youth’s consent to contact parent and/or contact them for follow up service referrals.

## **Street Outreach Team**

- Team of peers, credible messengers, advocates, and/or service providers meets youth where they are, informally counsels youth, and shares information about available services and activities.
- Sufficiently resourced to rapidly respond to hotline referrals and to routinely circulate in areas where youth hang out to proactively engage youth in services and activities.
- If team has concerns of violence or CSEC/sex trafficking, engage on-call violence interrupters or sex trafficking supports from scaled-up versions of existing services (i.e. Fair Girls and Courtney’s House.) Team also follows mandated reporting requirements to CFSA Hotline for victims of abuse and neglect and sex abuse.

## **Place- and Person-based Services**

- Reach neighborhoods where need exists, are youth-friendly, and connect youth to community-led programming.
- Multiple hubs conveniently located around the city based on need, including at least one 24-hour location, and mobile Advocates who meet youth and families where they are to provide services.
- Tied into Building Blocks.
- Staffed by Advocates: Full time DHS staff (i.e. through PASS-ICM program), trained in positive youth development and supported to build long-term relationships and provide restorative, trauma-responsive and culturally competent services to youth and their families.
- On-site crisis and non-crisis services ensure “hot handoffs” from Advocates.
  - Co-located specially trained staff from health services, DBH, and Office of the

- Student Advocate (or other education reengagement services.)
  - Peer supports for youth suffering from trauma, substance use disorder, mental health needs, and housing instability, as well as for LGBTQ youth and victims of abuse and neglect.
  - Capacity to meet hygiene, clothing, and food needs.
- If Advocates have concerns of violence or CSEC/sex trafficking, they engage on-call violence interrupters or sex trafficking supports from scaled-up versions of existing services (i.e. Fair Girls and Courtney's House.) Advocates also follow mandated reporting requirements to CFSA Hotline for victims of abuse and neglect and sex abuse.

### **Respite Homes**

- Sufficiently resourced to guarantee immediately available beds.
- May be specially trained foster care-like host families or short-term congregate care community-based facilities. Mobile Response Mental Health Team, Street Outreach Team and/or staff of the 24-hour Hub determine which is appropriate depending upon youth's need and availability.
- Locations are kept confidential from the public as much as possible for youth's safety.

### **Continuum of Care**

- Restorative services at the core with ongoing supports to family through fully-funded, accountable service providers.
- Operated, monitored, and funded by DHS and Youth and Family Partnership Design and Accountability Board.
- Access to a full spectrum of accessible, aligned, accountable service providers in the community:
  - Includes recreation and opportunities for youth to explore and identify passions.
  - No or low barriers to accessing and coordinating services.
  - Includes a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) within DC.
  - Service providers and agencies have capacity and requirements to share individualized information to ensure each youth and family have their needs met.
  - Service providers track, report, and monitor aggregate data of outcome-based measures (not output-based.)
  - DHS and Board hold service providers accountable to achieve outcomes and make funding decisions based on data demonstrating success meeting the community's need, not routine decisions year after year.
  - City equips and requires a network of service providing organizations and agencies to engage youth as partners in service planning, to be accountable to families, and to participate in ongoing system improvement with targeted improvement support to service providers who struggle to meet outcomes.
- City fully funds services to meet the need.
  - Sustained funding through dedicated public dollars in city budget vs. grants.
  - Sufficient capacity to ensure youth and families access services with no wait time.
  - Ongoing, dedicated funds for training (including values and cultural competence) and capacity building.
  - Public service campaigns, school-based campaigns, and other communications with the community to ensure everyone knows about available services.