



# PENNSYLVANIA JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

Volume 34, Number 11

November 2023

## 2023 JAMES E. ANDERSON PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

The 2023 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice, sponsored by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC), the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (PCCJPO), the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), and the Juvenile Court Section of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges (PCSTJ), was held on November 1-3, 2023, at the Hilton Harrisburg. The conference theme was "Building a Stronger Tomorrow: Youth, Communities, and Stakeholders in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System". This year, over 900 individuals registered for the conference.

### Judges/Hearing Officers Training

On Wednesday, November 1, over 75 judges and hearing officers from across Pennsylvania participated in a training event entitled "JJRA of 2018 & Other Issues Facing Regions of Our Commonwealth". The event began with an opportunity for judges and hearing officers to assemble in six regional groups and engage in a facilitated discussion. These "Juvenile Delinquency Roundtable" discussions, led by Juvenile Court Judges, focused on issues facing each region, shared strategies proven successful in the local jurisdictions, and talked generally about shared matters of interest. Chief juvenile probation officers also joined in these regional discussions. Participants were provided with select respective county data to raise awareness and contribute to data-informed discussions. Participants commented afterward on the discussions as a constructive way to assist, engage, and learn from their neighboring jurisdictions. The second part of the event was opened by Mike Pennington, Executive Director, PCCD, followed by his introduction of Seth Bloomquist, JCJC Director of Detention Monitoring. Seth delivered an informational session regarding the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA), interest of justice (IOJ) determinations required by the Act, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reporting requirements, and other matters specific to the JJRA. The session included guidance and advice regarding the JJRA, best practices associated with IOJ determinations, frequently asked questions about the JJRA and IOJ determinations, and a helpful information packet.

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**SAVE the DATE! SAVE the DATE! SAVE the DATE! SAVE the DATE! SAVE the DATE!**

Thank you for making this year's conference a huge success! The 2024 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice is scheduled to be held on **November 6-8, 2024.**

## Juvenile Defender Training

On Wednesday, November 1, the Juvenile Defender Association of Pennsylvania hosted their annual training for juvenile defenders. Approximately 30 juvenile defenders from across the Commonwealth attended the training to learn more about critical issues in the field. Topics covered during the training included: Juvenile Law 101, interest of justice (IOJ), trauma, and the Luzerne County Wellness Courts. The session ended with a presentation from the Juvenile Law Center entitled: "Impact Strategies: The Benefits of Legislative Advocacy".

## Professional Caucuses

The **Juvenile Probation Supervisor Caucus** was facilitated by Kimmy Mulik, Deputy Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Carbon County. Approximately 35 supervisors from across the state were in attendance. An open and fluid conversation occurred around these various topics:

- Hiring and retention of qualified juvenile probation officers,
- Lack of available detention beds and IOJ cases who require longer detention stays,
- Residential placements being more selective in whom they admit,
- Diversion, specifically with School/Community Justice Panels, and
- Expungements.

The **Juvenile Probation Officer Caucus** was facilitated by Honor Rounsville, Deputy Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, McKean County. Approximately 50 Probation Officers from across the state were in attendance, with tenure ranging from less than a year to 25 years. Various topics were discussed relating to the field which included:

- Increase in gun violence,
- Lack of detention and residential beds,
- Alternatives to detention, such as reporting centers,
- Staff recruitment, retention, and safety,
- Pending state juvenile justice reform legislation, and
- Youth with specialized needs, including female offenders, sex offenders, and dual-diagnosed youth.

The **Victim Services Caucus** was facilitated by Angie Mackley, Deputy Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Franklin County and the PCCJPO's Chair of the Victim Services Committee. There were 10 participants representing various counties and agencies. The discussion revolved around:

- Victim/Community Awareness Curriculum for Facilitators,
- Large disparity of victims of color,
- Outsourcing of payment processing for victims, and
- Fundamental fairness.

The **District Attorney's Caucus** was facilitated by Renee Merion, Deputy District Attorney, Chester County. Nine District Attorney's representing, predominately central and western counties were in attendance. The topics discussed were:

- Detention and residential bed space and staffing shortages, specifically for youth with mental health concerns,
- Proposed HB 1381 (mandatory Consent Decrees and raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 13),
- Child welfare staffing shortages,
- Inefficiency of electronic monitoring,
- Definition of competent, when competency evaluations are being requested and how to restore competency, and
- Lack of attention and concern to victims' needs and input.

## Chief/Provider Forum

This year's Chief/Provider forum featured a panel of experts on staff recruitment and retention, two challenges facing probation and providers. The four panel members were John Cvejkus, Director of Field Ops Division, Pennsylvania Office of Administration; Yvonne Aguayo, Dering Consulting Group; Rebeka Smith, JusticeWorks Family of Services, Director of Human Resources; and Mike Ziemianski, Vice President of Human Resources, Adelphoi. Andrew Benner, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Cumberland County, and Co-Chair of the PCCJPO's Chief/Provider Committee introduced the session. Dr. Abigail Wilson, Director of Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Education Services, Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services moderated the panel

discussion. The audience of about 100 people ranked the questions they wanted answered using an online survey. Questions focused on implementing successful recruiting and retention strategies, motivating good employees, working with fewer and less experienced staff, and coping with generational challenges. The panel members generously shared tips, such as the importance of building your brand, conducting “stay” rather than exit interviews, using empathy with employees, creating safe spaces, and understanding the nuances of online recruiting. The panel’s combined knowledge and experience gave participants concrete ways to improve recruitment and retention in their own workplaces.

### Youth Awards Program

On Wednesday, November 1, 2023, the 2023 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice hosted the Youth Awards Program to recognize youth from across Pennsylvania for being selected as winners of the Creative Expression Contest and recipients of the Outstanding Achievement Award. Additionally, the Juvenile Court Section of the PCSTJ presented three deserving youth with the James E. Anderson Juvenile Justice Scholarship. The Youth Awards Program concluded with a presentation from this year’s Youth Awards speaker, Lieutenant Thomas L. Lenox, of the Erie Police Department. Prior to attending the Youth Awards Program, youth award winners were given the opportunity to engage in a workshop session with Lieutenant Lenox.



### Morning Plenary

On Thursday morning, November 2, Hon. David R. Workman, Chair of the JCJC, gave the “Conference Welcome”. The morning plenary session, “Engaging the Community to Transform Young Lives”, featured Chad Houser, the Founder, CEO, and Executive Chef at Café Momentum, a nationally recognized nonprofit restaurant and training program that provides paid internships for justice-involved youth. Chad recounted his personal journey that not only led to a career as a chef and owner of one of the top restaurants in

Dallas since its opening in 2015, but also fostered a passion to help youth gain self-confidence and learn marketable skills. His experiences were ultimately intertwined with the journeys of the many youth who have benefited from the unique Café Momentum model for juvenile justice. Chad concluded his dynamic, engaging, and powerful message by describing the exciting future of the Momentum Advisory Collective as the nonprofit looks to scale the model across the country. Following the plenary, the Café Momentum team facilitated a biscuit making workshop for judges. The judges learned from two Momentum Ambassadors and two interns the recipe and techniques to make delicious biscuits as well as the impact of the Momentum model—paid workforce development training, life skills and social skills training, and education and financial literacy—on their lives.

### Workshops

Over 600 people registered to attend 14 different workshops on Thursday, November 2. In an effort to allow participants to maximize exposure to the selected topics, all workshops were offered during both the morning and afternoon. Workshops and materials, if available, are featured on our website at [www.jcjc.pa.gov](http://www.jcjc.pa.gov) on our Annual Conference page.

### Afternoon Plenary

On Thursday afternoon, November 2, Michael Umpierre, Director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University, welcomed and facilitated a panel discussion with a variety of system and community partners who described their unique roles, programs, and strategies that contribute to the health, safety, and well-being of youth, families, and communities. The panelists included Meghan Black, Assistant District Attorney, Allegheny County; Hon. Christopher Cerski, Magisterial District Judge, Montgomery County; Lieutenant Lenox, Erie Police Department; Susan Smith, Youth Services Program Specialist, Youth Ambassador Program, Beaver County; Rev. Terry Vassar, One Voice One Community, Fayette County; and a justice-involved youth, Bench Mark Program, Lancaster County. Each panelist provided an overview of their organization’s program, its purpose, its goals, and its impact on youth, families, and communities. Then, the panelists engaged in

a lively, invigorating discussion during which they described the various community partners who support their work and how they built those partnerships, how the panelists address the needs of youth and families in their communities to help them succeed, the most prominent challenges and obstacles the panelists face as they do their valuable work in their communities, and what advice the panelists have for others who are looking to partner within the community to support youth and families.

### Annual Awards Program

On Thursday, November 2, the 2023 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice hosted the 43rd Annual Awards Program to honor both individuals and programs for their outstanding work in Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system (see Award Winners on pages 5 and 6). Nearly 400 conference participants attended the event to celebrate and recognize award recipients. During the Awards Program, the Honorable Maureen A. Skerda, Presi-

dent Judge of Forest and Warren Counties and President of the Juvenile Court Section of the PCSTJ, was presented the Outstanding Leadership Award for demonstrating exceptional leadership, dedication, and service to Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system.



### Resource Day

The conference concluded with Resource Day on Friday, November 3, with over 50 vendors. Conference participants had the opportunity to learn about new, innovative, and creative approaches to working with justice-involved youth. Representatives from private and public residential programs, informational services, technology services, and other relevant services were available to present information and discuss products and services.



## 2023 Award Winners

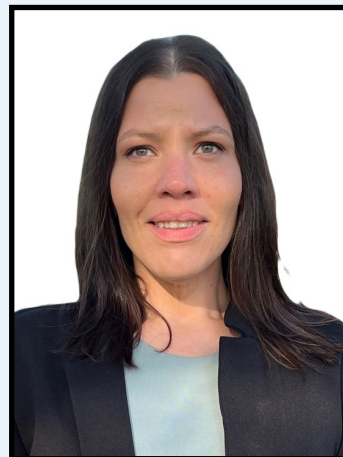


OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD  
Hon. Maureen A. Skerda  
President Judge  
Forest and Warren Counties



DR. THOMAS L. AUSTIN  
UNDERGRADUATE  
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD  
Denise Rodriguez  
Shippensburg University

DR. ANTHONY F. CEDDIA  
AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING  
SCHOLARSHIP IN  
JUVENILE JUSTICE  
Janelle Torres  
Northumberland County

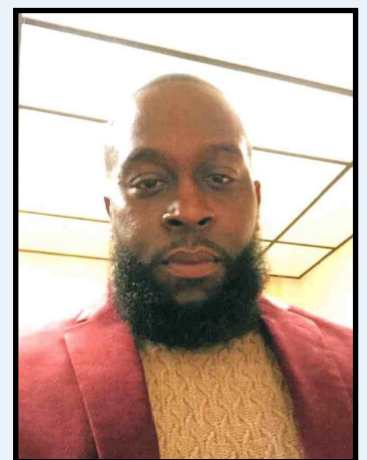


RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM OF  
THE YEAR  
Shannon Smith  
Adelphoi Village  
Middle Creek  
Female Secure



COURT-OPERATED  
PROGRAM OF THE YEAR  
Valerie Ketter  
Allegheny County  
Drug and Alcohol Unit

MERITORIOUS SERVICE  
AWARD  
Kevin Jackson  
Alternative Rehabilitation  
Communities, Inc.



*Congratulations!*

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission congratulates all of the

## 2023 Award Winners

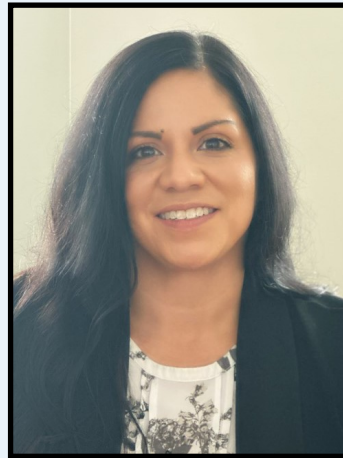


COMMUNITY-BASED  
PROGRAM OF THE YEAR  
Earl Grier  
Aggression Replacement  
Training® Program



VICTIM ADVOCATE  
OF THE YEAR  
Jamie Hanlon  
Dauphin County  
Victim Witness Assistance Program

JUVENILE COURT SUPPORT  
SERVICE AWARD  
Tracey Weir  
Allegheny County



JUVENILE PROBATION  
OFFICER OF THE YEAR  
Fabiola Monteverde  
Lehigh County



JUVENILE PROBATION  
SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR  
Michelle Harris Alexander  
Chester County

CHIEF JUVENILE PROBATION  
OFFICER OF THE YEAR  
Amanda Gallagher  
Washington County



*Congratulations!*

# JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION UPDATES

## DR. MEGHAN OGLE JOINS JCJC



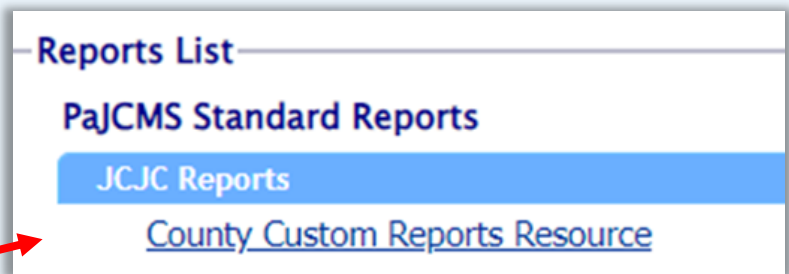
The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) is pleased to announce that Dr. Meghan "Meg" Ogle joined our team as our new Research Analyst on October 31, 2023. Dr. Ogle arrives following her work at Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) in partnership with the Stoneleigh Foundation where she engaged with seven counties across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to evaluate their Capstone Projects focused on advancing racial justice and equity. She continues to work with two additional counties to better outcomes for youth simultaneously involved in the child welfare, behavioral health, education, and juvenile justice systems. Prior to her time with the CJJR, Dr. Ogle worked with the Office of Research and Data Integrity at Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice for seven years while completing her doctoral degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University. She is passionate about translating research into tangible practice and policy changes and excited for the opportunity to continue working with the excellent juvenile justice practitioners and stakeholders across Pennsylvania.

In her free time, Dr. Ogle has the goal of attempting to run a marathon in every state. She enjoys traveling, reading, basketball, and hanging out with her wife and two bunnies, Hareold and Ruth Bunny Ginsburg.

## TECHNOLOGY CORNER

### New PaJCMS Standard Report

We now have available a new PaJCMS Standard Report named **County Custom Reports Resource**. This report had been requested by various county users at past JCJC Technology User Group Meetings. The resource is accessible in the Reports List shown here.



The report displays various available county custom reports by name and their descriptions based on an individual searching for a term within the report name and by specific county or all counties. Below is an example of what the resource looks like in PaJCMS.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please contact the JCJC Help Desk at [RA-JCJCHELPDESK@pa.gov](mailto:RA-JCJCHELPDESK@pa.gov) or 717.477.1199.

Custom Report Resource		
County	Report Name	Description
Lehigh	Current Community Based Services	Juvenile name, county jid, start date, projected end date, probation officer, and total per.
	Demographics for All Community Based Services by Date Range	Parameter - Date range. Demographic, break down, per age number, totals and percentage.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

### iLOOKOUT TRAINING OFFERED IN JANUARY

The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) is excited to offer a mandated reporter training, *"iLookOut Training Helps Promote Recognition of Protective Factors for Children and Families"*. The Penn State Center for the Protection of Children through the iLookOut for Child Abuse Project will be providing an interactive virtual workshop on January 10, 2024, 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

iLookOut has a history of developing high-quality evidence-based mandated reporter trainings. The first iLookOut Core Training is now the official mandated reporter training for Head Start programs in all 50 states and U.S. Territories. This training is currently available for mandated and permissive reporters in Pennsylvania and early childhood professionals in Maine and satisfies state requirements for mandated reporter training in both states.

In this 90-minute virtual workshop, participants will learn about strategies for identifying, supporting, and responding to children and families at risk for maltreatment. This will also be an opportunity for an interactive discussion on bias, resilience, reasonable suspicion, and how they factor into making a report.



The 2024 JCJC  
Staff Development Schedule,  
to be released in December.

Participants will be able to identify types and red flags of child abuse, discuss the impact of implicit bias on child protection, and recognize the importance of protective factors. iLookOut's workshop will promote critical thinking of the participants, show how inclusion helps promote fair treatment, and examine strategies for identifying risk factors and responding appropriately to promote child safety.

At the conclusion of this virtual workshop, participants will be provided with a link to gain additional knowledge, skills and information on reporting child abuse and neglect, and obtain three additional training hours, by taking iLookOut's online mandated reporter training.

You will be able to register for this workshop and other workshops in the [JCJC Event Management System \(JEMS\)](#), upon release of the 2024 JCJC Staff Development Schedule. Contact Sonya Stokes, Director of Professional Development, if you have any questions about this or any other professional development opportunities at [systokes@ship.edu](mailto:systokes@ship.edu).

### ANNOUNCING THE RELEASE OF THE PREVENTION LEARNING PORTAL

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, in partnership with the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support project at Penn State, is pleased to announce the release of the Prevention Learning Portal (PLP). This tool is designed to help prevention practitioners better understand and incorporate the best practices of prevention science into their work with youth and families.

The PLP serves as a one-stop-shop for service providers and practitioners, offering prevention resources, training, and self-paced learning programs. All available courses are free and have been developed by experts with significant experience in providing technical assistance to communities implementing prevention programming. Courses which are currently available include: Upstream Prevention; Implementation Science; Understanding Risk and Protective Factors; Youth Engagement Parts 1 and 2; Project Management; and Developing S.M.A.R.T. Goals. More courses are under development and will be added to the Portal over the next year.

Early prevention is an essential approach to help prevent youth problem behaviors, such as substance use, violence, delinquency, and school dropout, that can all lead to future system involvement. By implementing proven, effective, evidence-based programming; communities can help to buffer their youth from risky behavior, improve positive family management, and increase the availability of pro-social opportunities that can provide alternatives to negative behaviors.

To access the portal, please visit [plp.psu.edu](http://plp.psu.edu). For more information, please contact Geoff Kolchin at [gkolchin@pa.gov](mailto:gkolchin@pa.gov).



## JCJC'S GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

What did you gain from having the JCJC-sponsored Graduate Education Program as a cohort-based program and interacting with juvenile probation officers from other Pennsylvania counties?

*When I first applied to the JCJC-sponsored Graduate Education Program, I was the only person from my county and did not know anyone else involved in the program. I was able to be accepted and began my journey at the beginning of COVID so my first year I spent the entirety online and I was unable to meet my cohort in person until the second year. This did not mean that we did not become close as we started our own group chat and helped each other work through a multitude of problems, whether with schooling or outside of schooling. The cohort dealt with many different life events as we lost one of our cohort members tragically in the first year. We also had many happy life moments as two of us had children during the two years that we participated in the program. All the while, all of us in the cohort helped and stood by each other, as we all were able to accomplish the end goal and receive our master's degree. Now every year I look forward to possibly seeing one of my cohort members at the JCJC conference or reaching out to someone to ask a question about what detention center they are using now, which has led to us utilizing resources that my county was unaware of. So, in the end I started with a cohort of random people but ended with a cohort of friends.*

**Matthew Stanzione – Class of 2022**  
**Lycoming County Juvenile Probation Office**

## BUILDING MOMENTUM

Join us December 5 for an original 50-minute documentary featuring an in-depth look at the Momentum model for youth justice that started in 2015 with Café Momentum, an award-winning restaurant and culinary training facility with a paid post-release one-year internship program that provides employment, life skills training and wraparound care to justice-involved youth in Dallas, Texas.

BUILDING MOMENTUM tells the story of founder Chad Houser's efforts to provide resources, opportunity, and wraparound care to justice-involved youth in his hometown of Dallas through the eyes of the Café Momentum team and the inspiring youth that the program serves.

To support the program's national expansion, the documentary will explore the Café Momentum ecosystem of support, including employment, education, community, and mental health services, as well as the life-changing impact of the Momentum model on Dallas' most at-risk youth. Café Momentum has begun its national expansion plans. In 2022, they launched programming in Nashville and Pittsburgh. They are currently exploring five additional cities.

**Register now at**

[www.jcjcjems.pa.gov](http://www.jcjcjems.pa.gov)





## NATIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements are reprinted from JUVJUST, an OJJDP news service:

### NEW DOUBLE ISSUE OF THE AMBER ADVOCATE AVAILABLE NOW

OJJDP has released the latest issue of The AMBER Advocate newsletter. This double issue features articles on:

The new OJJDP-funded multimedia edition of the "When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide."

A new memoir by Patty Wetterling - "Dear Jacob."

A missing person's case spanning from New York to Mexico.

Captain Jada Breaux of the Chitimacha Tribal Police Department in Louisiana.



#### RESOURCES:

- Access the new multimedia "When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide."
- Access previous issues of the newsletter.
- Read about AMBER Alerts on Instagram.
- Follow OJJDP on X formerly known as Twitter and Facebook.

### OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS' BLOG DISCUSSES OJJDP GRANTEE UNLOCKING YOUTH POTENTIAL

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) recently posted a blog post spotlighting an OJJDP grantee serving Houston area youth—Civic Heart. The organization provides services to justice-involved youth, helping them overcome barriers to success.

The blog highlights two OJJDP-funded Civic Heart initiatives: VOICES and Youth C.A.N. (Create A New Beginning). VOICES is tailored to the needs of girls and provides services to reduce the risk of future system involvement. Youth C.A.N., supported by a grant awarded through OJJDP's Second Chance Act program, is designed to help system-involved youth successfully reenter their communities.

The blog also describes Civic Heart's support of Houston's Youth Justice Community Reinvestment Fund, which OJJDP Administrator Liz Ryan said exemplifies "how young people and communities benefit when agencies come together and focus on community-based services."

OJJDP has awarded more than \$192 million to fund organizations like Civic Heart in communities nationwide, part of more than \$4.4 billion in OJP grant funding awarded in fiscal year 2023.

#### RESOURCES:

- October is Youth Justice Action Month. Learn more.
- Access OJJDP youth reentry resources.
- Follow OJJDP on X formerly known as Twitter and Facebook.

### COORDINATING COUNCIL TO HOLD MEETING ON DECEMBER 6

On December 6, 2023, the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Council) will convene from 1 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET in Washington, DC. The Council is an independent body within the Federal Government that coordinates federal programs related to youth justice and missing and exploited children.

The Council's December meeting will examine strategies to improve and increase the range of multi-disciplinary supportive services available to justice-involved youth and youth at risk of justice involvement. A panel of experts representing a wide range of perspectives will provide both verbal and written testimony to inform the Council's work. OJJDP Administrator Liz Ryan, who serves as Council Vice Chair, will provide opening remarks.

The meeting is open to the public and will be available via online video conference. Registration is required.

#### RESOURCES:

- Visit the Council's website for more information.
- Follow OJJDP on X, formerly known as Twitter and Facebook.

### REGISTER FOR WEBINAR ON PREVENTING RACISM, IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING, AND HATE CRIMES

On December 7, 2023, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. ET, OJJDP will present "Empowering People Working with Youth to Understand and Prevent Racism" as part of OJJDP's Preventing Youth Hate Crimes & Identity-Based Bully Initiative.



This webinar will help participants understand the intersection of hate, identity-based bullying, and racial bias, and how these negative behaviors affect African American youth. Presenters will discuss the history of racism in the United States and the drivers of racial bias, identity-based bullying, and hate crimes against African Americans. Participants will learn tools and strategies for lasting positive change to combat racist and hateful thoughts and behaviors leading to incidents of hate and bullying.

#### RESOURCES:

- Learn about OJJDP's Preventing Youth Hate Crimes & Identity-Based Bullying Initiative.
- Visit StopBullying.gov.
- View FBI Press Release on Supplemental 2021 Hate Crime Statistics.
- Follow OJJDP on X formerly known as Twitter and Facebook.

This publication is produced monthly by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. Guest articles are welcome; please submit by e-mail to [ra-oajcnews@pa.gov](mailto:ra-oajcnews@pa.gov).

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