



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DCYF to Lead Rhode Island in New Initiative Addressing Youth Crime, Violence and Behavioral Health Needs

Rhode Island is one of six states selected by The Council of State Governments Justice Center

PROVIDENCE, RI – Rhode Island is one of six states selected to participate in a new initiative to adopt statewide strategies across youth- and family-service systems that address youth crime, violence and behavioral health needs. Through the [Collaborating for Youth and Public Safety Initiative](#) (CYPSI), state agencies, led by the [Department of Children, Youth & Families](#) (DCYF), will partner with [The Council of State Governments \(CSG\) Justice Center](#) to strengthen effective community-based services that help prevent young people from entering the juvenile justice system unnecessarily and improve public safety.

As part of CYPSI, DCYF and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals, and Department of Education, in partnership with local providers and other stakeholders, will assess the availability and quality of community-based services and related state policies, financing structures, workforce needs and implementation strategies. Based on this assessment, the CSG Justice Center will help Rhode Island develop more robust prevention services, use resources more efficiently and establish a statewide youth violence prevention strategy.

“Mental health, community violence and other challenges facing young people are complex and DCYF team members are unwavering in their efforts to improve the well-being and safety of children in every community in our state,” **said DCYF Director Ashley Deckert, MSW, MA.**

“Expanding access to services and supports that focus on prevention advances our efforts to keep families together whenever possible.”

“Young people do better and communities are safer when resources are invested in effective community-based services,” **said Dr. Larome Myrick, Executive Director of the [DCYF Division of Youth Development](#) (DYD).** “We look forward to collaborating with other states and national

experts to create solutions that promote better outcomes for youth and families in Rhode Island.”

Dr. Myrick and Shannon Massaroco, PMP, Chief of Program Development for the DYD, are leading Rhode Island’s participation in the initiative in alignment with [DCYF’s “Setting P.A.C.E. for Rhode Island Children & Families” 2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#), which is built on the four pillars of Prevention, Accountability, Collaboration and Engagement, and [Governor Dan McKee’s “RI 2030” plan](#).

As part of CYPPI, Rhode Island will receive nine months of no-cost technical assistance, peer learning opportunities and expert guidance from the CSG Justice Center to advance effective youth public safety strategies.

“Rhode Island’s commitment to improving outcomes for youth and public safety is evident, and we’re excited to support their efforts through this initiative,” **noted Josh Weber, Deputy Division Director at the CSG Justice Center**, who oversees juvenile justice work. “By taking a coordinated, research-driven approach, Rhode Island is positioning itself as a national leader in working across systems to address the challenges facing youth today.”

Other states selected to participate in CYPPI are California, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico and New York.

About the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

At [Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families](#), our mission is to build a system of care where every child grows up in a safe and loving family environment that supports the development of strong, resilient families throughout the state. To fulfill our mission, we believe that family, community and government share responsibility for the safety, protection and well-being of children, emphasizing prevention over intervention through an integrated continuum of care that reflects a partnership between all parties and is culturally relevant. Learn more at [dcyf.ri.gov](#) and read our [2025-2030 strategic plan](#).

About The Council of State Governments Justice Center

[The Council of State Governments \(CSG\) Justice Center](#) is a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that combines the power of a membership association, serving state officials in all three branches of government, with policy and research expertise to develop strategies that increase public safety and strengthen communities. For more information about the Collaborating for Youth and Public Safety Initiative and related resources, please visit the [CYPPI webpage](#).

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