

Community Transition Services

DCYF Agency Request Legislation for Juvenile Rehabilitation



A young person's success in reentering their community after a period of incarceration depends on participation in effective community-based services. Having least restrictive placement options coupled with therapeutic supports is a critical combination, and this is exactly what the Community Transition Services (CTS) program aims to provide.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, lawmakers established a CTS program through House Bill 1186 to be developed and implemented by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). This program is a further transition from the least restrictive alternatives for community residential confinement for eligible Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) young people. CTS offers access to therapeutic supports and community-based interventions for those reentering their community. Young people participating in the CTS program will be able to complete their legal obligation in their community instead of in a residential setting.

For information on House Bill 1186, visit:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1186&Initiative=false&Year=2021>.

CTS is a therapeutic and supportive community-based program where:

- A young person serves a portion of their residential sentence (up to 18 months) living in the community outside of a JR institution or community facility.
- Community resources are provided, including access to housing supports (housing vouchers for up to six months), independent living, education, employment, counseling, and treatment.
- Connections to natural supports and family are fostered.
- Youth are allowed community access for up to 16 hours per day.
- JR will identify community providers who reflect the young people being served with regard to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender expression.
- Youth are placed on electronic monitoring for the duration of the CTS program.

A young person is eligible for CTS if:

- They have served 60% of their minimum sentence (no less than 15 weeks) and:
 - Are on a JR sentence with a release date before their 25th birthday, or
 - Are in a JR facility serving a sentence with the Department of Corrections (DOC) and have a release date before their 26th birthday. Having DOC Supervision upon completion of their residential obligation does not disqualify them from eligibility for CTS.
- JR has determined that the CTS program is in the best interest of the individual and community using a risk assessment tool and has considered the availability of placement, treatment, and programming. This determination must include consideration of the person's behavior while in confinement and any disciplinary considerations.



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A young person is not eligible for CTS if they:

- Have pending charges or warrants.
- Are on a DOC or JR sentence for a sex offense and classified as a Level III Sex Offender.
- Will be transferred to DOC, are currently in DOC's custody, or under DOC supervision.
- Were adjudicated or convicted of the crime of Murder in the 1st or 2nd degree.
- Meet the definition of Persistent Offender. For more information, visit <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=9.94A.030>.
- Require an out-of-state CTS placement.

DCYF's JR regional field offices will oversee and implement the CTS program. Eligibility for CTS will depend on a newly revised risk and needs assessment and other established criteria.

Additional deliverables as part of the legislation include:

- Community partners convened to help inform recommendations on improving outcomes for individuals exiting JR. The final report was released in June of 2022, with three areas of focus, including:
 - Increasing community involvement before and after an individual's exit from a JR facility.
 - A landscape analysis of community-based reentry services available.
 - Gaps in services that need to be addressed to ensure a successful CTS program across the state.
- The Washington State Institute for Public Policy will assess the CTS program to determine its impact on community safety, racial disproportionality, recidivism, state expenditures, and youth rehabilitation to the extent possible. A preliminary report on this impact is due to the Governor and Legislature by Jun. 30, 2024, with a final report provided by Dec. 1, 2033.



JR's ongoing work to develop policy, practice, and procedures will solicit guidance from the literature, young people involved, and community partners who have lived experience. A key component of CTS will include connecting young people to services delivered by persons similar to them in race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, etc., to address racial equity and social justice.

CTS will involve a comprehensive network of community resources based on a young person's needs. Using the Risk/Need/Responsivity approach will ensure the right young people are served with the right services at the right time. CTS will be phased in over time, implemented with thoughtful preparation and planning to ensure young people return to the community prepared and ready for success. CTS is set to launch May 1, 2024.

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