

Community Transition Services Program

This document is intended to provide answers to some of the frequently asked questions of **Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) staff**.



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WHAT IS COMMUNITY TRANSITION SERVICES (CTS)?

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CTS provides a least restrictive option to residential confinement for eligible JR young people. CTS offers therapeutic supports and connections to services along with electronic monitoring in the community while young people are finishing their sentence. It provides them with opportunities to enhance their independent living skills, establish housing, obtain their own transportation, and build credit. Adding this step-down opportunity allows other young people currently eligible for community facility placement, but unable to attend due to capacity issues, a chance to experience a step-down transition to help them prepare for community reentry.

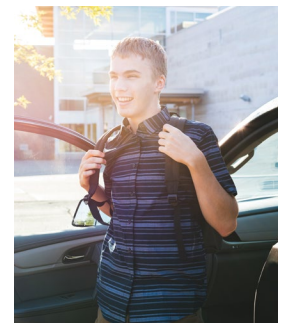


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HOW DID THE CTS PROGRAM GET AUTHORIZED?

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E2SHB 1186 passed during the 2021 Legislative Session, authorizing a CTS program. This program takes effect six months after the agency adopts a new risk assessment tool to aid implementation of the program. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/bills/summary?BillNumber=1186&Initiative=false&Year=2021>

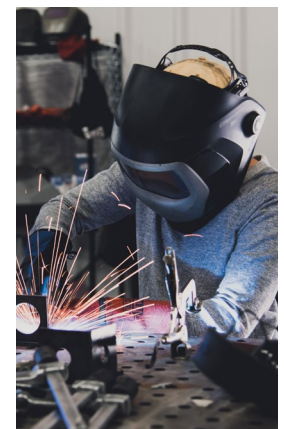


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HOW WILL THE NEW RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL INFORM ELIGIBILITY FOR CTS?

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The new risk assessment – the Integrated Developmental Evaluation and Assessment (IDEA) – calculates a need score and will be used to identify an eligibility ranking based on dynamic needs using the Risk/Need/Responsivity principles. Focusing our assessments on need and response (as opposed to risk of recidivism) provides the best opportunity to achieve a measurable impact and positive developmental trajectories for the young people in our care. The IDEA assessment will undergo regular testing and validation to ensure fidelity and minimize bias.



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WHAT ARE THE RISK/NEED/RESPONSIVITY PRINCIPLES?

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- **Risk** is about “whom” to serve. Rehabilitative interventions are most appropriate for moderate to high-risk young people.
- **Need** is about “what” should be done. Providing effective treatment for the identified needs as opposed to a “one size fits all” approach.
- **Responsivity** speaks to “how” interventions are delivered and therapeutic supports are provided. Using cognitive behavioral skills (e.g., DBT) and tailoring interventions to the unique needs of the young person has been shown to lead to positive outcomes.

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WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CTS?

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A young person serving a **juvenile** sentence is eligible for CTS if:

- They have served 60% of their minimum sentence and no less than 15 weeks, and
- JR has determined that the CTS program is in the best interest of the young person and the community using a risk assessment tool, and has considered the availability of placement, treatment, and programming. This determination includes consideration of the young person’s behavior while in confinement and any disciplinary considerations.
- They are not made ineligible by one or more of the factors described in the “Who is not eligible for CTS” section below.

A young person serving an **adult** sentence is eligible for CTS if:

- (1) They have a release date after their 25th birthday but on or before their 26th birthday, or (2) They have an earned release date on or before their 26th birthday, and have completed 60% and at least 15 weeks of their term of confinement.
- They have no more than 18 months remaining on their term of confinement.
- 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 young person and the community using a risk assessment tool and has considered the availability of placement, treatment, and programming. This determination includes consideration of the young person’s behavior while in confinement and any disciplinary considerations.
- They are not made ineligible by one or more of the factors described in the “Who is not eligible for CTS” section below.



Q WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CTS?

A A young person is not eligible for CTS if they:

- Have pending charges or warrants.
- Have a juvenile or adult sex offense and been classified as a Level III by the Adult End of Sentence Review Committee or the JR Sub-Committee.
- transferred to the Department of Corrections (DOC), are in DOC's custody, or under DOC's supervision.
- Were adjudicated or convicted of the crime of Murder in the 1st or 2nd degree.
- Meet the definition of Persistent Offender: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=9.94A.030>.
- Require an out-of-state CTS placement



Q HOW WILL CTS BE IMPLEMENTED?

A CTS will be implemented in phases. Using a phased-in approach allows the program to be established and refined over time to ensure the success of the participants, the program, and the risk assessment used to determine eligibility.

Q WHEN WILL CTS BEGIN?

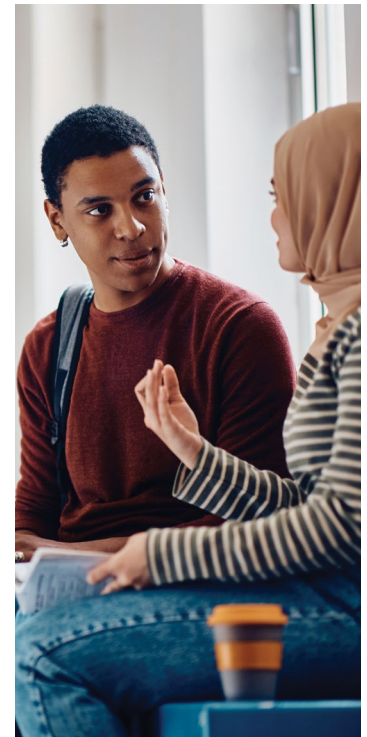
A CTS will begin six months after the new risk assessment is designed and implemented and DCYF provides notice to the Legislature and the Governor's Office. This occurred on Nov. 1, 2023 resulting in a CTS launch date of May 1, 2024.

Q HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN CTS?

A JR plans to phase in the CTS program with 5-10 youth in two locations. Additional youth will be added to the CTS program in staged intervals to ensure a smooth transition for them, the JR staff, and the community. CTS has a maximum capacity of 50 young people at any given time.

Q DO CTS CANDIDATES HAVE A FUTURE PLAN?

A Yes. Developing a thorough Future Plan is part of the eligibility criteria to review preparedness and gain acceptance into the CTS program. JR staff will work closely with the young people and their families to identify what their reentry goals are and what supports are needed to promote a successful transition to CTS.





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WHAT IS INVOLVED WHEN SOMEONE PARTICIPATES IN CTS?

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Young people participating in the CTS program have an orientation phase for the first seven days, during which they stay at home unless attending school, work, or treatment appointments. This will help them adjust to the new opportunity and get familiar with the structure. They will work with their community counselor to identify a structured daily schedule and ensure the electronic monitoring equipment is functioning well.

As part of the requirements for CTS, participants will enroll in school, secure employment, or both, depending on their Future Plan goals. They will attend treatment to address any mental health, substance use, or medical concerns. Their community counselor will support them and help address any barriers around access to community services and supports. They will have the ability to connect to family and be part of pre-approved community activities. They will maintain close and regular contact with the community counselor and other regional office staff to ensure accountability to the CTS program.



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HOW WILL THIS PROGRAM ALIGN WITH DCYF'S EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOCUS?

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JR prioritizes identifying and building community capacity using DCYF's strategic priority of eliminating racial disproportionalities and advancing racial equity. We will identify community providers who reflect the young people being served with regard to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender expression.

Using a validated needs assessment and involving youth, family, and community voice in the development of the CTS program will create joint ownership and an opportunity to provide the right services to the right young people at the right time in a way that matches their needs and reentry goals.



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HOW WILL WE KNOW IF THE CTS PROGRAM IS WORKING?

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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 the Legislature by Jun. 30, 2024, with a final report provided by Dec. 1, 2031.

Another way we will know if the program is working is by asking the participants, their families, natural supports, and the involved community providers for feedback on their experience with CTS.

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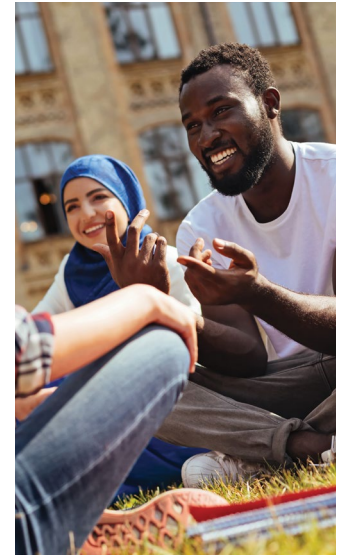
HOW WILL WE ENSURE THE COMMUNITY IS INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING CTS?

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Work groups have been created that include DCYF staff, program experts, community partners, providers, and people with lived experience. Youth and families' voices will be sought out, and this team will work together to ensure it creates an equitable and effective program.

As a required part of the legislation, DCYF worked with several entities to develop recommendations regarding improving outcomes for young people exiting JR. A CTS stakeholder group and tribal work sessions occurred. The final report was due June 30, 2022, and can be found in the CTS Work Group Recommendations Report: https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/CTS_Workgroup_Recommendations2022.pdf.

Additionally, JR established a contract with Washington State University to conduct reentry focus groups which will help us better understand the reentry needs and challenges for individuals and how to improve long-term outcomes for young people exiting JR.



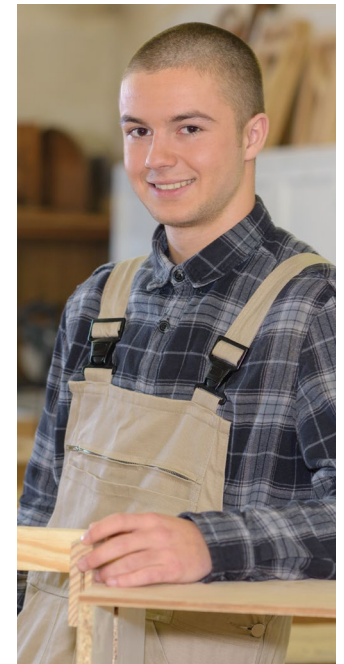
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CAN YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSFER FROM AN INSTITUTION DIRECTLY TO CTS?

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CTS is meant to be the least restrictive placement option as part of the continuum of residential care. Currently, the plan is to phase in CTS with 5-10 youth, drawing eligible candidates from the eight community facilities.

If a young person is not eligible for community facility placement due to security classification or sentencing restrictions, they may not be eligible for CTS. These cases can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility for community step-down placement.



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WHAT WILL THE CASELOAD SIZE BE FOR THE COMMUNITY COUNSELORS?

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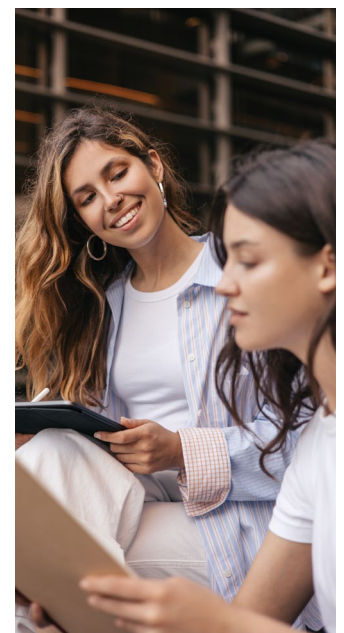
Community counselors will have a mixed caseload of CTS participants and parole aftercare clients. CTS will be phased in starting with two sites, locations yet to be determined. As such, the caseload overall is still to be determined. JR will adjust as needed depending on the location of the CTS participants and the availability of a combination of in-person and virtual contacts and supports.

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WILL CTS PARTICIPANTS BE ON PAROLE AFTERCARE?

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No. CTS is a least restrictive placement option as part of their residential sentence. The time spent in CTS does not count toward a parole aftercare obligation. If there is a parole aftercare obligation, it will begin when they have completed their residential sentence in a JR institution, community facility, or on CTS.





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HOW MUCH COMMUNITY ACCESS CAN SOMEONE HAVE WHILE ON CTS?

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A young person participating in CTS may participate in work, education, community restitution, approved community activities, family events, and treatment programs in the community 12 hours per day and up to 16 hours a day, if approved by JR per RCW 13.40.205(11) <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=13.40.205>.

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WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE VIOLATES THE CONDITIONS OF CTS?

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If they are on a DOC sentence and participating in CTS and commit a violation requiring them to return to total confinement **after** their 25th birthday, they will transfer to the custody and supervision of DOC for the remainder of their sentence. If they are under the age of 25, they will return to a JR institution.

If they are on a JR sentence and violate the conditions of CTS, they will be returned to a JR institution. If the violation includes an escape or other illegal activity, they could also receive a new charge.

Once a young person transfers back to a JR institution, they may be eligible for CTS again if they are approved through the screening and acceptance process outlined in JR policy: *Community Transition Services*.



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HOW DO REGIONAL STAFF HANDLE THE TRANSFER FROM CTS TO AN INSTITUTION OR DOC? WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

A

Regional staff are responsible for monitoring CTS participants. There are a specific set of guidelines to explain how to facilitate a transfer of a CTS participant with program violations that result in a need to be transferred to a more secure placement. Because these individuals are still under sentence, this is considered an administrative transfer, and due process procedures do not apply (i.e., hearing, revocation). An internal review will occur to help determine the best response to CTS program violations.



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WILL YOUTH WHO HAVE A REGISTERABLE SEX/KIDNAPPING OR FIREARM OFFENSE BE REQUIRED TO REGISTER WITH THE COUNTY THEY PLAN TO RESIDE IN WHILE PARTICIPATING IN CTS?

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Yes. They will follow the same registration requirements as other JR sentenced youth or DOC sentenced young adults.

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HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY COUNSELORS AND COUNSELOR ASSISTANTS BE TRAINED? IS THERE A MODEL FOR THIS? IS THERE QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR CTS?

A

JR will train staff working in the CTS program in trauma-informed basic counseling techniques designed to help them develop a therapeutic relationship with the young people. This will likely include a foundation in DBT skills, engagement and motivation techniques, motivational interviewing, and other skill sets shown to be effective in building a professional and therapeutic relationship with young people involved with the juvenile justice system.

The CTS program will be anchored in national best practice reentry principles, including youth-driven Future Plans, matching to their goals, including natural and familial support, and a focus on building community connections.

JR will rely on research and best practice recommendations for quality assurance protocols yet to be developed. There is a unique set of guidelines designed for CTS to promote youth success in this least restrictive, step-down program.



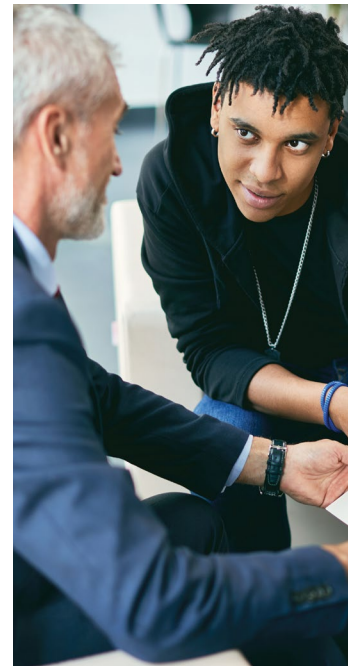
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HOW DOES A YOUNG PERSON PREPARE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY?

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The ideal young person for the CTS program is:

- Participating in treatment
- Attending school or work in the community (if they are in a community facility)
- Displaying a positive attitude and behavior
- Engaging in recreation and has interests in community activities
- Developing a Future Plan
- Able to secure safe and stable housing
- Connecting to family/natural supports in the community



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ARE THERE STAFF RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE CTS PROGRAM?

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Yes. JR regions will support CTS participants with dedicated FTEs.



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HOW DO JR STAFF HELP PERPARE CTS CANDIDATES FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY?

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JR residential and community counselors will work together to help prepare CTS candidates for the review process. This involves a shared responsibility to:

- Meet with the youth and family
- Review the risk assessment and identified needs as part of the IDEA
- Complete the CTS screening form and electronic monitoring agreement with the young person
- Review the contact expectations and incentive program with them
- Review the Future Plan for any additional updates or changes
- Conduct the home assessment
- Ensure legal notices are completed
- Prepare the young person for the Interim Future Planning Meeting - CTS Review
- Attend the Interim Future Planning Meeting - CTS Review

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WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS FOR JR STAFF WHEN SOMEONE IS PARTICIPATING IN CTS?

A

Community counselors and other JR staff in the regional offices will work closely with the participants to support their programming, health and wellness, and accountability to the CTS program. JR staff will:

- Lead the CTS orientation
- Monitor the CTS agreement and equipment
- Assist with school or work access and participation
- Conduct community accountability checks
- Help with treatment appointments
- Offer support to young people and their families
- Encourage recreation and community activities
- Provide housing essentials as available

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HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY BE NOTIFIED OF SOMEONE PARTICIPATING IN CTS?

A

Per RCW 13.40.205(8), "If requested by the juvenile's victim or the victim's immediate family, the secretary shall give notice of any leave or community transition services...to the victim or the victim's immediate family." <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=13.40.205>

School and law enforcement notifications will occur per normal JR procedures.

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A YOUNG PERSON IS DONE PARTICIPATING IN CTS?

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Once they are done with their residential sentence, they will be finished with CTS. The electronic monitoring equipment will be removed. If they have a parole aftercare obligation, it will begin the day they finish with CTS. If they have an obligation to Juvenile Court or DOC, they will begin that term the day they finish CTS.

If they don't have any obligations to any court or JR, they are eligible for supports through JR's Community Assisted Reentry (CAR) services for up to 12 months after they finish CTS. CAR services are 100% voluntary. The Regional CAR specialist or community counselor can help explain more about what CAR services and supports look like.

For more information on CTS, read the *CTS Fact Sheet* at: https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/JR_0038.pdf

For more information on CAR services, read the *Community Support for All Youth Fact Sheet* at: https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/JR_0043.pdf

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