



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Juvenile Justice Commission broadens scope

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Adjudicated Juvenile Rehabilitation Review Commission has broadened the scope of its mission from just juvenile justice facilities to all out-of-home placements that result from an adjudication of delinquency. The group also will focus on examining and improving resources and services for juveniles transitioning out of placement.

The Commission will work with the Executive Branch – specifically the Division of Juvenile Services and the Department of Health and Human Resources – to ensure there are transitional services for youths leaving the system, adequate bed capacity at facilities, and adequate attorney representation of juveniles, among other issues, said Justice Margaret Workman, Chairman of the Commission.

“The National Center for Youth in Custody as well as the American Bar Association have urged all state judicial systems to implement plans for monitoring juvenile programs and facilities. The work of the Commission and our Court Monitor have brought West Virginia into compliance with these national standards. The Monitor’s work will now expand to build on this progress in the area of services when youth in placement transition back to their communities,” Justice Workman said.

“One of the Commission’s goals includes ensuring the tools, skills, and access to resources necessary for successful return to their communities are in place, and the Monitor’s work will expand to cover these types of transition issues,” Justice Workman said.

The Supreme Court established the commission in 2011 to look at the Division of Juvenile Services’ operations plan and programs at the Industrial Home for Youth in Salem and the Kenneth “Honey” Rubenstein Center in Davis. The Commission issued a progress report in March.

In April 2012, Cindy Largent-Hill was hired as a Monitor to oversee juvenile justice facilities. Her responsibilities include visiting facilities and talking with residents, reviewing files of residents at the two centers and other youth in court-ordered out-of-home placements, and working with judges to make sure the placements are meeting rehabilitation goals.

At the Commission’s June quarterly meeting, Ms. Largent-Hill reported that a recent webinar by the National Center for Youth in Custody confirmed that having a juvenile justice oversight commission and a juvenile justice monitor is a national best practice.

(<http://nc4yc.org/training/webinars/details/20-monitoring-conditions-from-the-inside-and-out.html>.)

The American Bar Association adopted a resolution in 2008 suggesting all jurisdictions to set up monitors for all prisons, jails and juvenile facilities and listing elements of effective monitoring, which the Juvenile Justice Commission meets.

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