

Justice-Involved Youth Subcommittee Notes

May 8, 2026

The Justice-Involved Youth Subcommittee met to continue planning collaborative strategies to better connect justice-involved youth with education, workforce services, and work-based learning opportunities. The discussion emphasized building stronger partnerships and reducing service gaps for youth transitioning between schools, juvenile justice settings, community programs, and employment.

Expungement & Legal Resources: The group discussed expungement resources and current limitations surrounding access to individualized legal assistance. Continued outreach with Iowa Legal Aid was identified as a next step to better understand available expungement clinic services and potential advocacy needs.

Justice-Involved Youth Career Pipeline: A tiered Cedar Valley career-to-work model was presented for in-school, probation-involved, and detained youth. The proposed approach would provide progressively more intensive career exploration, skill development, and work-based learning opportunities based on each youth's circumstances and readiness. Partners also discussed developing a coordinated referral process and identifying supports such as transportation and mental health resources.

Work-Based Learning & Employer Engagement: CVMA will continue serving as a connection point for manufacturing work-based learning opportunities. Discussion focused on improving referral follow-up, identifying employer needs, and developing clearer information about the skills and qualifications employers are seeking. The group also discussed employer-created one-pagers, soft skills, certifications, mock interviews, application assistance, and other activities that could better prepare youth for employment.

Referral & Support Coordination: Partners discussed adding a way to identify Title I enrollment or justice involvement within referral/intake processes. This could help partners recognize available resources, coordinate services, and reduce duplication. Potential participant supports discussed included wages, uniforms, transportation, case management, and other services needed to successfully participate in work-based learning.

Youth Summit & Partner Engagement: The group discussed potential speakers and activities for the upcoming Youth Summit, including justice-involved programming, young professional panels, workforce success stories, and employer engagement. Junior Achievement was also identified as a potential partner for financial literacy and soft-skills programming.

Next Steps: Partners will continue developing the tiered career-to-work model, strengthen WBL referral processes, gather employer feedback on desired skills and credentials, explore employer-led mock interviewing and application coaching, continue expungement resource outreach, and identify opportunities for partners to participate in the Youth Summit.