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Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee Meeting

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Agency: [Cuyahoga County Council](#)

Date: Sept. 17, 2024

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Summary

- Bridget Gibbons, a subcommittee member and a deputy administrator at the county's juvenile court, called for better youth reentry services following incarceration.
- Gibbons also said a countywide holistic approach that accounts for early childhood experiences of trauma is needed.

Follow-Up Questions

- What services help families prepare for the reentry of their youth?
- What age should intervention start, especially those with a history of exposure to gun violence?

Notes

Juvenile Court Advisory Subcommittee (advising the Cuyahoga County Council Public Safety & Justice Affairs Committee)

Tuesday, Sept. 17

Subcommittee members:

- Ron Adrine, retired Cleveland Municipal Court administrative judge
- Marvin Cross, a former Cleveland police commander who now works as a security consultant
- Former Common Pleas Court Judge Robert McClelland
- Bridget Gibbons, a deputy administrator at the county's juvenile court
- Jennifer Blumhagen Yarham, executive director at youth mental health nonprofit Applewood Centers Inc.

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

The first person to speak during public comment was Juvenile Court Magistrate Mark Stanton, who said he had been in the court system for 45 years. He expressed disagreement with media reports about the inadequacies of attorneys assigned to represent kids in the juvenile system who are accused of crimes.

[Editor's note: More than 1,200 children accused of serious crimes in Cuyahoga County since 2020 have been defended by court-appointed attorneys who did not meet the state's qualification requirements, according to [reporting by The Marshall Project - Cleveland.](#)]

McClelland asked if attorneys can be deemed unqualified if they don't meet state requirements for taking continuing legal education (CLE) courses. Stanton said that is true, adding that there are specific course requirements to be state-qualified to work in the juvenile justice system. He also said being unqualified according to state rules doesn't mean an attorney is unqualified from a competence standpoint.

Stanton said he was familiar with the programs, efforts and interventions that Gibbons [presented in previous meetings](#). He commended her efforts.

Stanton said the severity of criminal activity in Cuyahoga County -- and exposure to it at an early age -- is heightened compared to other counties in the state.

Cross said the early intervention and youth diversion programs Gibbons presented need more funding.

Next, subcommittee members reviewed some of their priorities:

Adrine said he wants to learn from organizations with a global reach about successful recidivism programs, particularly related to gun violence.

Adrine and Cross want to compare crime levels between Cuyahoga County and Franklin and Hamilton Counties.

Cross is working with the FBI on gun trafficking. He also expressed interest in [bindovers](#), which is a process in which courts transfer a youth defendant's case to adult court.

There was a discussion on the governor's report and [potential changes to juvenile detention facilities](#)..

Gibbons said the court is getting technical assistance in assessing current programs. The plan is to conduct a comprehensive review of the programs for youth in areas such as probation services, early intervention and diversion programs.

Gibbons asked the subcommittee to consider recommending the county budget for the [Cuyahoga Care First Initiative](#).

Adrine said he wants a gathering with all Juvenile Court judges to discuss programs, policies and strategies, and procedures.

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