



**Findings and Recommendations from**  
***A Broken Web: Improved Interagency Collaboration***  
***is Needed for D.C.'s Crossover Youth (2024)***

**Finding 1:**

The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) fail to utilize a definition of “crossover youth” consistent with D.C. Code and, therefore, fail to identify the full population of crossover youth.

**Recommendations**

- 1) In their regulations and relevant policy documents, CFSA, DYRS, and every other youth-serving agency in the District should adopt and utilize a definition of crossover youth consistent with D.C. Code and distinguish that from the subpopulation of dual-jacketed youth.
- 2) Consistent with the terms of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) statute, DYRS and CFSA should provide requested data on the full population of crossover youth, and not just those youth who are dual-jacketed, so that OFC can comply with its mandate to collect, analyze, and report on the population of crossover youth in D.C. on an annual basis

**Finding 2:** Neither CFSA nor DYRS (a) identifies crossover youth as statutorily defined in any guiding documents, data management systems, policies or practices; or (b) recognizes that crossover youth have unique needs requiring specialized case management and programming.

**Recommendations**

- 3) DYRS and CFSA should each include priorities focused on crossover youth identification, coordination, and programming in future strategic plans.
- 4) DYRS and CFSA should establish annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to crossover youth identification and outcomes which remain in place for at least five years so that trends can be observed.
- 5) CFSA and DYRS should begin flagging a youth’s crossover status in their case management systems.
- 6) On their public data dashboards, CFSA and DYRS should include statistics on numbers, characteristics and outcomes for crossover youth as statutorily defined as well as for the subpopulation of dual-jacketed youth.
- 7) CFSA should update its “Bill of Rights” so that the special circumstances of crossover youth are identified and their rights—particularly while under supervision or in secure facilities—are clearly defined.



**Finding 3:** There is insufficient communication, collaboration, and data-sharing among agencies regarding crossover youth in D.C.

### **Recommendations**

- 8) D.C. Council should ensure that the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) has sufficient statutory authority and staffing to fulfill its obligation to collect, analyze, and report on the population of crossover youth in D.C. annually. The Council should also review and make public any data sharing agreements established by and between OFC, CFSA, and DYRS to ensure they sufficiently reflect the agencies' intentions and capabilities to collect, analyze, and share data that would allow OFC to adequately report on the full population of crossover youth, not just on dual-jacketed youth.
- 9) The chairs and/or staff of D.C. Council committees with oversight over the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) and OFC should meet with relevant agency staff to evaluate any overlapping aspects of their statutory mandates focused on crossover youth data, KPIs, and other issues, identify which agency is best suited to collect, analyze, and publish data and facilitate relevant interagency communications, and make statutory or funding changes as needed.
- 10) DYRS and CFSA should reestablish the "Crossover Youth Steering Committee" to identify, manage and serve crossover youth in their care; in addition to DYRS and CFSA, this committee should include a diverse cross-section of the justice, education, community supervision, and behavioral health organizations operating in the District, as well as former crossover youth and the caregivers of current and former crossover youth.
- 11) The reconstituted Steering Committee should determine how the Joint Supervision Workgroup can best serve all crossover youth, re-examining its mission, membership, meetings, and scope.
- 12) DYRS and CFSA should update the 2017 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was intended to guide collaboration between the two agencies regarding dual-jacketed youth to clearly designate agency roles, rights, and responsibilities, including how decisions will be made around financial responsibilities for housing, programming, treatment, and other services. Any future MOA should be overseen by D.C. Council committees with oversight of the two agencies and remain in force even if there is turnover at the agency Director or Mayoral level.
- 13) Once a new MOA is in place, the staff of each participating agency and their contractors should be trained in the roles and responsibilities for each agency. DYRS and CFSA should create processes to ensure robust compliance with and understanding of the MOA's expectations.
- 14) DYRS and CFSA should create a working group to identify barriers to data sharing, and then develop and implement a formal data-sharing agreement that allows for current, consistent sharing of information on crossover youth for the purposes of identification, case planning and management, and development of outcome measures.
- 15) DYRS and CFSA should work with CSSD and the juvenile justice and child welfare agencies in Maryland and Virginia to develop agreements that allow for greater collaboration and information sharing around crossover youth who are involved with these other entities.
- 16) Leadership from DYRS and CFSA and staff from the D.C. council committees with oversight over these agencies should meet with representatives from the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University to learn more about the Crossover Youth Practice Model and its possible applicability to and benefits for D.C. If the Georgetown Center is able and willing, it should be engaged to perform an assessment of DC's approach to crossover youth.



**Finding 4:** CFSA and DYRS should develop and utilize evidence-based protocols, policies, programs, and services specific to crossover youth and for preventing crossover.

**Recommendations**

- 17) CFSA should assess youth involved in the neglect system using a validated tool which identifies those factors that place them at high risk for crossing over to the delinquency system.
- 18) DYRS should assess all youth using a validated assessment tool that includes whether the youth is a current or past victim of maltreatment, and this information should be used to inform case planning and services provided.
- 19) CFSA and DYRS intake and case management protocols should ensure crossover youth are identified and tracked in their electronic case management systems.
- 20) CFSA and DYRS case plans should specifically reference what the needs of youth are related to their current or past cross-system involvement, and CFSA case plans for youth should address ways to mitigate crossover risk.
- 21) CFSA and DYRS should provide and mandate that their respective staff, contractors, and grantees providing services to crossover youth receive evidence-based trainings on identifying, understanding the issues of, and serving the crossover youth population.
- 22) The D.C. Council should mandate and fund a report analyzing risk and protective factors for District youth who have been or currently are known to CFSA that affect their likelihood of crossing over into the justice system. This report should be completed and presented to relevant committees by September 30, 2026, and include recommendations, informed by research and best practices in other jurisdictions, on policies, practices, and programs the District should utilize to reduce the risk of crossover.
- 23) CFSA and DYRS should develop and provide materials and trainings for families, foster parents, and other caregivers of crossover youth, and ensure families known to CFSA have resources to help them address the needs youth identified as being at high risk for crossover.

**Finding 5:** CFSA and DYRS have some well-regarded and promising programs and offer opportunities for positive childhood experiences, but gaps have been identified in serving youth with acute behavioral health issues; more information is needed to understand the overall capacity and effectiveness of existing programs and what additional services are required to adequately address the needs of crossover youth.

**Recommendations**

- 24) The D.C. Council should mandate that CJCC, OFC, a research institution or other qualified entity should evaluate the effectiveness and capacity of programming and other services in meeting the needs of crossover youth in D.C. and provide recommendations of best and promising programs and practices for these youth that the District could consider adopting.
- 25) Based on current positive feedback from professionals and youth, the D.C. Council should fund the Credible Messenger program so that all youth who are or who are at risk of becoming crossover youth can participate.