

PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

=====

Meeting Date: September 1, 2026	☐	Consent	☒	Regular
	☐	Ordinance	☐	Public Hearing

Department: Public Safety Department
Submitted By: Public Safety Department
Submitted For: Criminal Justice Commission

=====

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

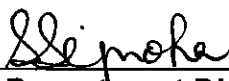
Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to receive and file: the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) Annual Plan Report (Report) as presented by County staff and Michelle Suskauer, 2025 CJC Chair.

Summary: Since its establishment in 1988, the CJC has prepared and distributed an Annual Plan Report to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to inform the BCC of its activities and accomplishments of the prior year and the current CJC strategic Work Plan. The CJC held its Annual Planning Meeting on February 23, 2026, to develop a strategic work plan aligned with the organization’s goals for the year. Guided by the theme Challenges and Opportunities in the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice System, the CJC identified key priorities across legislative, court, juvenile justice, and behavioral health areas. On March 27, 2026, the CJC approved these priorities, which include legislative initiatives such as countywide e-bike regulation, vaping and THC law reform, open carry safe-space amendments, and programs supporting at-risk youth. Court system priorities focus on jury participation, interpreter workforce development, attorney capacity, supervised release programs, and federal detainer tracking. Behavioral and mental health priorities aim to improve crisis transportation, family engagement, youth diversion, screenings, mentorship, and resource mapping, alongside updated probable-cause affidavits. This Report provides details of each of the CJC committees and projects and activities they engaged in during 2025 and the initiatives throughout 2026. Michelle Suskauer, 2025 CJC Chair, will make a brief presentation to the BCC. Countywide (JW)

Background and Policy Issues: In accordance with Ordinance 2023-039, the CJC serves as an advisory board to the BCC; created to study all aspects of the criminal justice and crime prevention systems within the federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies within the County to include the health and human services and educational systems, among others, as they pertain to criminal justice or crime prevention. The CJC shall make recommendations to the BCC on policies and programs designed to accomplish the objectives of: 1) ensuring the coordination of law enforcement and crime prevention efforts in the county; 2) to ensuring an efficient, just and cost-effective criminal justice system in the county; and 3) effecting the reduction of crime in the county on a permanent basis. This Report serves the purpose of informing the BCC on the various activities, accomplishments, and work plan of the CJC. Currently, the CJC is the largest advisory board to the BCC and among the longest standing boards. The CJC was originally funded by the Economic Council and appointed all private sector members. The CJC’s operations and staffing are now fully funded through the BCC. The Executive Director is considered a County employee and Department Head. The Executive Director has the authority to hire additional administrative, professional, and clerical County employees to support the CJC subject to BCC approval.

Attachment:
1. CJC Annual Plan Report

=====

Recommended by:		8/19/26
	Department Director	Date
Approved By:		8/14/26
	Deputy County Administrator	Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact

Fiscal Years	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>	<u>2029</u>	<u>2030</u>
Personal Services					
Operating Expenses					
Capital Outlay					
Grants & Aids					
Program Income (County)					
In-Kind Match (County)					
Net Fiscal Impact	0				

ADDITIONAL FTE

POSITIONS (Cumulative)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	0	0	0
-------------------------------	----------	----------	---	---	---

Is Item Included In Current Budget? Yes _____ No _____
Is this item using Federal Funds? Yes _____ No _____
Is this item using State Funds? Yes _____ No _____

Budget Account Exp No: Fund _____ **Dept.** _____ **Unit** _____ **Obj.** _____ **Prog.** _____
Rev No: Fund _____ **Dept.** _____ **Unit** _____ **Rev.** _____ **Prog.** _____

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: NSR 8/19/06

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

Liza M. 8/10/2020
 OFMB
 PA 8/19
 MAR 3/19

Comments:

Handwritten: Bund. Pack 8/20/26

Contract Dev. And Control

26 8.20.26

B. Legal Sufficiency:

Tean-Adel Williams
Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

Department Director

This summary is not to be used as a basis for payment.

Criminal Justice

Annual Planning Meeting **Report**

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT



**Palm Beach County
Criminal Justice Commission**
Improving Justice Outcomes

Introduction

The Criminal Justice Commission held its Annual Planning Meeting on February 23, 2026, to strategically conduct a prioritization work plan that aligns with the organization's goals and priorities for 2026. This year's theme was *Challenges and Opportunities in the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice System*. This collaborative effort brought together key system stakeholders from various public and private sector agencies to review past performance, assess emerging trends, and identify opportunities for growth and improvement.

The meeting featured four expert panel discussions that explored challenges and opportunities across critical areas of the justice system, including *juvenile justice, behavioral and mental health, courts systems, and trends in policing*. Panelists also examined emerging issues, the impact of new technologies, and innovative strategies being implemented to improve system effectiveness and community outcomes.

Following the panel discussions, guests and members were divided into four action-planning groups to develop priorities and recommendations in the areas of *juvenile justice, behavioral and mental health, courts systems, and legislative priorities*. These breakout sessions encouraged collaborative problem-solving and helped identify actionable strategies to guide the Commission's work in the coming year. The meeting fostered open dialogue ensuring that the upcoming year's objectives are both ambitious and achievable.

Criminal Justice Commission

The Criminal Justice Commission is established to study all aspects of the criminal justice and crime prevention systems within the federal, state, county, municipal and private agencies within the County. This purpose shall include the study of the health and human services and educational systems, among others, as they pertain to criminal justice or crime prevention. The ***Criminal Justice Commission*** shall make recommendations to the ***Board of County Commissioners*** on policies and programs designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- A. Ensure the coordination of law enforcement and crime prevention efforts in the County;
- B. Ensure an efficient, just, and cost effective criminal justice system in the County; and
- C. Effect the reduction of crime in the County on a permanent basis.

*"Never forget that justice is what
love looks like in public"*
– **Cornel West**

Criminal Justice Commission Authority

The Criminal Justice Commission shall have the following authority and powers:

- A) To review, research and evaluate existing systems and programs within the scope of the Criminal Justice Commission;
- B) To establish task forces or subcommittees to study in detail key aspects of programs and systems within the scope of the Criminal Justice Commission;
- C) To adopt from time to time rules and bylaws providing for the governance of the Criminal Justice Commission, which rules and bylaws will be adopted by a majority vote of the members of the Criminal Justice Commission;
- D) To establish an executive committee by the majority vote of the members of the Criminal Justice Commission, which executive committee will have such powers and authority as delegated by the Criminal Justice Commission;
- E) To review and comment on all grant requests for programs and systems within the scope of the Criminal Justice Commission;
- F) To make recommendations on modifying, creating or abolishing public and private systems and programs within the scope of the Criminal Justice Commission;
- G) To make recommendations on modifying, creating or abolishing legislation, ordinances or regional or county-wide comprehensive plans dealing with systems and programs within the scope of the Criminal Justice Commission;
- H) To assist the consolidation of systems and programs within the scope of the Criminal Justice Commission when approved by the Board of County Commissioners;
- I) To request members of all agencies within the auspices of the Board of County Commissioners to provide the Criminal Justice Commission in a timely manner with all data and information requested by the Criminal Justice Commission, to appear at any meeting requested by the Criminal Justice Commission, and to otherwise work in cooperation and good faith with the Criminal Justice Commission in pursuing the Criminal Justice Commission's objectives;
- J) To take all acts reasonably required by the Criminal Justice Commission in the exercise of the authority set forth above and the pursuit of the Criminal Justice Commission's objective.

Action Planning Group Results

The Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) convened four dedicated Action Planning Groups to identify the most pressing needs across the county's criminal justice landscape, focusing specifically on legislative priorities, behavioral/mental health, juvenile justice, and courts systems. Through collaboration with representatives from law enforcement, the courts, community leaders, educators, medical professionals and public safety, these groups worked to pinpoint emerging challenges, strengthen system coordination, and develop targeted policy recommendations that will guide the CJC's work through the 2026 planning cycle and into the 2027 legislative session.

"The first requisite of civilization is that of justice."-Sigmund Freud

Legislative Priority Action Planning Group identified major policy issues affecting the county's criminal justice system for the 2026 legislative cycle. The group, representing law enforcement, the courts, education, and public safety, identified three primary legislative priorities—countywide E-Bike regulation, vaping and THC oil possession reform, and expanded open-carry safe-space restrictions—along with a research initiative focused on jury duty reform. These priorities aim to address emerging safety concerns, inconsistent enforcement outcomes, and long-standing system challenges.

Juvenile Justice Action Planning Group discussed expanding reentry programming in the county jail and improving coordination across juvenile justice partners. Juvenile priorities focus on strengthening data sharing, establishing respite beds for at-risk youth, enhancing mentorship opportunities, and expanding workforce development pathways. These efforts aim to support prevention, diversion, and long-term outcomes for youth who interact with the justice system.

The Court Systems Action Planning Group identified several operational challenges as well, including interpreter shortages, limited attorney availability for wheelhouse assignments, barriers to jury participation, and the need to refine supervised release procedures. The group also recommended improved federal detainer tracking to better understand immigration-related impacts on case processing.

The Behavioral/ Mental Health Action Planning Group emphasized the need to strengthen cross-agency coordination, improving crisis response systems, and expanding prevention and early-intervention efforts. Key priorities included developing a comprehensive behavioral-health transportation plan to reduce reliance on law enforcement during mental-health crises, enhancing data collection, and increasing education for law enforcement and judges on mental health, disabilities, and trauma. Participants highlighted the need for improved screening at the Juvenile Assessment Center, expanded diversion opportunities for youth—including consistent access across all school types—and better data on existing programs such as Juvenile First Offenders and youth diversion initiatives. Prevention emerged as a central theme, with calls to increase family engagement, address root causes like childhood trauma and abuse, and coordinate information on domestic-violence and sexual-assault prevention efforts. Additional recommendations included expanding mentorship and paid internship programs for at-risk youth, implementing updated probable-cause affidavits with

mental-health identifiers, mapping countywide behavioral-health resources, and creating a flow chart to visualize service gaps and system pathways

Collectively, the initiatives outlined will guide CJC task forces through 2026 as they draft proposals, engage stakeholders, and prepare for the 2027 legislative session.



**Palm Beach County
Criminal Justice Commission**
Improving Justice Outcomes

2026 Workplan

The 2026 Work Plan outlines the Criminal Justice Commission's coordinated priorities and action strategies to strengthen Palm Beach County's criminal justice, juvenile justice, behavioral/mental health and courts systems in the year ahead.

2026 Legislative Priorities

The Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) convened its Legislative Priority Action Planning Group to identify and prioritize policy initiatives impacting the criminal justice system in Palm Beach County.

The highest priority involves establishing a countywide ordinance regulating E-Bike use, prompted by rising youth-involved accidents and inconsistent municipal rules. Mid-level legislative priorities include creating misdemeanor/felony thresholds for THC oil possession to improve enforcement consistency in schools and expanding firearm-restricted safe spaces to better protect family-oriented public areas. Additionally, the group seeks to explore improved compensation models and partnerships to increase participation and demographic diversity across jury pools for jury duty reform.

Legislative Priorities Identified

1. **Countywide E-Bike Regulation**
2. **Vaping and THC Oil Possession Law Reform**
3. **Open Carry Safe-Space Amendments**

Research and Planning Initiative

- **Jury Duty Reform**
- **Reentry and educational services within the county jail**

These initiatives will be advanced through several CJC task forces including:

- Law Enforcement Planning Council
- Criminal Justice Commission Research and Planning Group
- Court Systems Task Force
- Data Task Force

- **Countywide E-Bike Regulation:** The rapid rise in E-Bike use across Palm Beach County has created growing safety concerns, especially among youth riders, due to inconsistent municipal regulations and resulting enforcement challenges. Law enforcement agencies report increasing issues such as high-speed riding by minors,

**“It is the spirit and
not the form of law
that keeps justice
alive.”**

– Earl Warren

limited safety education, unclear age requirements, and a rise in youth-involved accidents. With the Town of Palm Beach already adopting an ordinance that could serve as a model, proposed actions include reviewing existing municipal regulations, evaluating youth safety training programs like Jupiter Police Department's model, and developing a countywide ordinance establishing minimum rider age, safety and helmet requirements, and clear enforcement guidelines. The expected outcome is a uniform countywide framework that improves safety and provides consistent standards for E-Bike use.

► **Vaping and THC Oil Possession Law Reform:**

Schools across Palm Beach County are seeing a rise in vaping incidents involving THC oil, but current Florida law classifies possession of any amount as a felony, creating enforcement challenges since prosecution often requires lab confirmation that many agencies cannot obtain. As a result, charges are frequently not filed, outcomes are inconsistent, and schools must rely on lesser paraphernalia violations. To address this, the group proposes establishing misdemeanor and felony possession thresholds—similar to cannabis laws—through a state legislative amendment. Key actions include reviewing existing statutes, drafting threshold-based legislative language, analyzing data from youth diversion programs, and engaging legislative partners to advance reforms, with the goal of creating clearer statutory guidance that supports consistent enforcement and appropriate consequences for youth offenders

- **Open Carry Safe-Space Amendments:** The Action Planning Group identified growing concerns about the open carry of firearms in family-oriented public spaces, noting that while state law preempts local firearm regulation, expanding the list of designated safe spaces could strengthen community safety. Participants highlighted vulnerable locations such as playgrounds, public pools, basketball courts, government buildings, and children's recreation areas, emphasizing gaps that remain despite existing prohibitions within 1,000 feet of schools and universities. Proposed actions include reviewing state firearm preemption laws, identifying appropriate safe-space designations, drafting legislative language to expand restricted areas, and coordinating advocacy with other urban jurisdictions, with the goal of advancing a state legislative amendment that establishes additional firearm-restricted safe spaces.

- The Action Planning Group identified jury duty reform as a mid-level research priority, noting that Florida's longstanding \$15-per-day juror compensation creates financial barriers that reduce participation, limit demographic diversity, and contribute to operational challenges such as juror shortages and budget impacts for the Clerk's Office. The group examined models like California's "Be the Jury" program, which offers higher compensation through nonprofit partnerships, and outlined actions including researching national compensation models, evaluating funding opportunities, analyzing participation demographics, and exploring a local pilot program to strengthen jury pool diversity and engagement. Additionally, a request was submitted to assess reentry and educational services within the county jail, prompting plans to review existing programming, identify service gaps, and evaluate best-practice models for improving reentry outcomes.

2026 Juvenile Justice Priorities

The Juvenile Justice Action Planning Group identified several key priorities aimed at strengthening prevention, intervention, and long-term outcomes for youth across Palm Beach County. Recognizing the need for better coordination and more supportive services, the group emphasized improving cross-agency data sharing, expanding short-term respite options for at-risk youth, enhancing mentorship opportunities, and increasing workforce development pathways for justice-involved young people. Together, these priorities reflect a countywide commitment to building a more responsive, collaborative, and youth-centered system that addresses immediate needs while supporting long-term success.

Juvenile Justice Priorities Identified

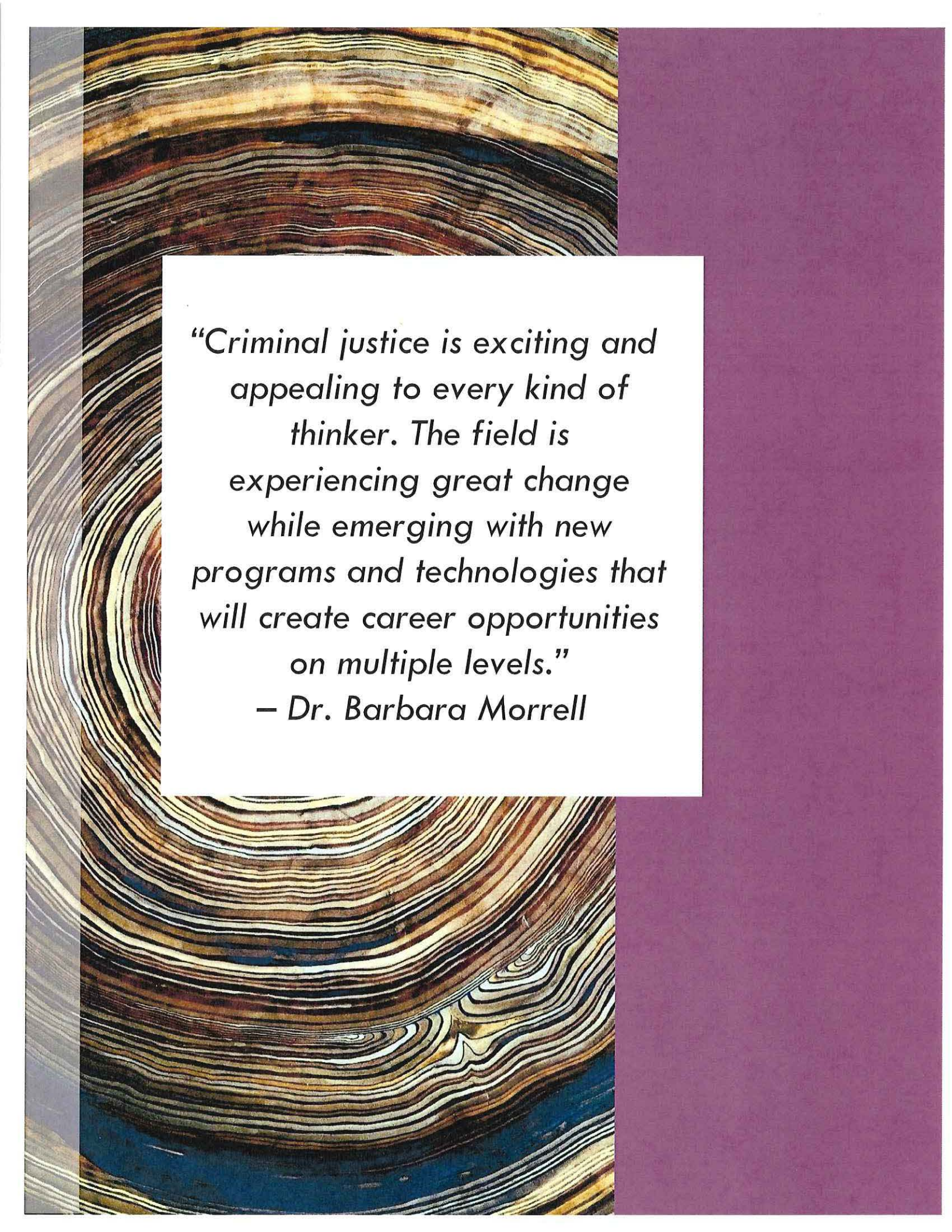
1. **Cross-Agency Data Coordination**
2. **Respite Beds for At-Risk Youth**
3. **Mentorship Programs**
4. **Workforce Development**

These initiatives will be advanced through the Data Task Force.

- **Cross-Agency Data Coordination:** The Juvenile Justice Action Planning Group identified cross-agency data coordination as its top priority, recommending the creation of a dedicated Data Task Force to strengthen

information sharing among key partners, including the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Palm Beach County School District, the Children's Services Council, and probation services. By establishing structured data-sharing practices and holding quarterly coordination meetings, the initiative aims to improve decision-making, enhance program evaluation, and support more effective, collaborative responses to youth needs across the county.

- ▶ **Respite Beds for At-Risk Youth:** The Juvenile Justice Action Planning Group identified the expansion of respite beds as a critical priority, noting that Palm Beach County lacks sufficient short-term placements for youth who cannot safely remain at home but do not require secure detention. The goal is to establish approximately ten respite beds within the next one to two years, supported by strategies such as pursuing state and federal grant funding, leveraging CINS/FINS resources, and exploring the repurposing of existing facilities like Highridge to meet this need.
- ▶ **Mentorship Programs:** The Juvenile Justice Action Planning Group emphasized the expansion of mentorship programs as a key prevention strategy, proposing a model that includes weekly mentoring sessions, school-based programming, participation from law enforcement and corrections professionals, and structured career exploration opportunities. This approach aims to provide consistent guidance, positive role models, and early exposure to future career pathways for youth across the county.
- ▶ **Workforce Development:** The Juvenile Justice Action Planning Group identified workforce development as a key priority, recommending expanded opportunities for justice-involved youth through paid internships, job preparation programs, partnerships with CareerSource, and targeted business recruitment efforts. While these initiatives aim to build stronger employment pathways and long-term economic stability for young people, the group noted that transportation barriers and limited employer participation remain significant challenges that must be addressed to ensure meaningful access and impact.



“Criminal justice is exciting and appealing to every kind of thinker. The field is experiencing great change while emerging with new programs and technologies that will create career opportunities on multiple levels.”

— Dr. Barbara Morrell

**“Justice is truth in
action.”**
– Benjamin Disraeli

2026 Courts Systems Priorities

The Court Systems Action Planning Group identified several operational and systemic priorities aimed at strengthening jury participation, improving court staffing, enhancing case processing efficiency, and increasing the accuracy of federal detainer tracking. Together, these initiatives reflect a coordinated effort to address workforce shortages, modernize court operations, and ensure the justice system remains accessible and effective for Palm Beach County residents.

Court Systems Priorities Identified:

- ▶ **Civic Duty and Jury Participation**
- ▶ **Interpreter Workforce Development**
- ▶ **Wheelhouse Attorney Capacity**
- ▶ **Supervised Release Program Improvements**
- ▶ **Federal Detainer Tracking**

These initiatives will be advanced through the Court Systems Task Force.

- ▶ **Civic Duty and Jury Participation:** The Action Planning Group discussed ways to strengthen civic engagement and improve jury participation. The group recommended a series of strategies including increasing juror compensation to approximately \$80 per day, expanding free transportation options through Tri-Rail, Brightline, and Palm Tran, launching public education campaigns, designating June as Civic Duty Appreciation Month with a County Proclamation, and promoting youth civic involvement through driver licensing programs.
- ▶ **Interpreter Workforce Development:** The court system continues to face significant interpreter shortages that slow case processing, prompting the group to recommend developing workforce pipelines through partnerships with high schools, colleges, trade schools, and community organizations. These collaborations would support training opportunities and help fund interpreter certification, creating a more sustainable and reliable interpreter workforce for the courts.
- ▶ **Wheelhouse Attorney Capacity:** To help reduce case backlogs, the group recommended expanding wheelhouse attorney capacity by recruiting retired attorneys, engaging out-of-county attorneys, and offering continuing legal education incentives to strengthen the pool of available legal professionals.

- ▶ **Supervised Release Program Improvements:** The Action Planning Group recommended to review policies governing the Supervised Release (SOR) program, including drug testing procedures and remote orientation options.
- ▶ **Federal Detainer Tracking:** To strengthen the accuracy and monitoring of immigration-related case impacts, the group recommended enhancing federal detainer tracking by systematically recording ICE identification numbers, country of origin, custody status, court attendance, and deportation outcomes, enabling clearer insight into how federal detainees influence case disposition.

Behavioral/ Mental Health

The Behavioral Health Action Planning Group shared a commitment to strengthening crisis response systems, improving coordination across agencies, and expanding prevention and early-intervention strategies for youth and adults. The group emphasized the importance of the following behavioral/ mental health priorities.

Behavioral/Mental Health Priorities Identified:

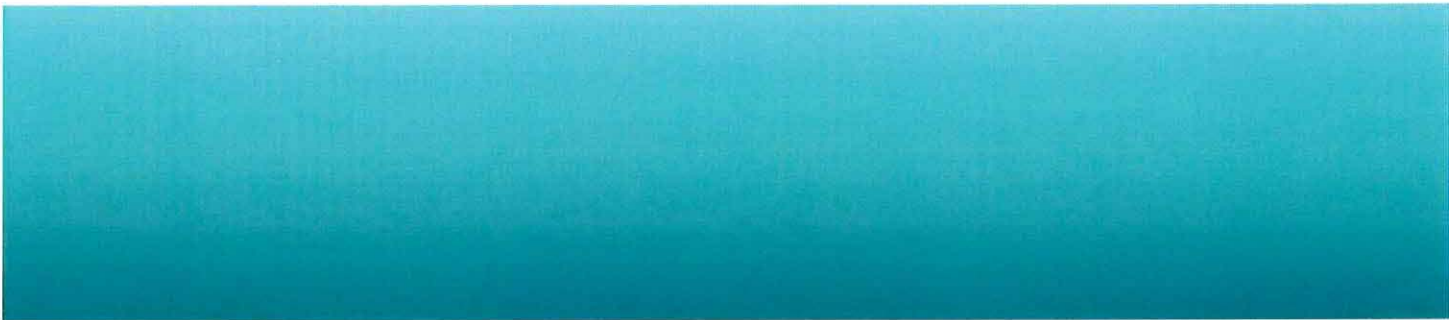
- 1. Enhancing transportation options for mental health crisis**
- 2. Increase family engagement**
- 3. Expand behavioral/mental education and awareness**
- 4. Expand youth diversion programs**
- 5. Improve mental health and developmental-disability screenings**
- 6. Expand mentorship and paid internship opportunities for at-risk youth.**
- 7. Create comprehensive mapping of behavioral health resources**
- 8. Implement updated probable-cause affidavits**

These initiatives will be advanced through the Behavioral Health Task Force, Law Enforcement Planning Council and Public Safety Coordinating Council.

- ▶ **Enhance transportation options:** The Action Planning Group recommended developing a comprehensive transportation plan and coordination efforts between agencies for care coordination and MRT services with Health District and Community Services Department for individuals experiencing mental health crises, i.e. Baker Act

evaluations to alleviate the demand on law enforcement agencies.

- ▶ **Increase family engagement:** The group discussed addressing root causes of issues, such as childhood trauma and abuse through prevention and early intervention programs that would strengthen family engagement of youth who have been involved in the criminal justice system.
- ▶ **Expand education and awareness:** The Action Planning Group expressed that expanding education and awareness on mental health, disabilities, and trauma for law enforcement, judges, and the community will improve identification and understanding of mental health while providing guidance on appropriate responses.
- ▶ **Expand youth diversion programs:** The group recommended conducting research on the Broward Youth Diversion Program to explore aspects that could be implemented locally as a method to improving the use of pre-arrest diversion programs and ensuring all youth, including those in charter/private schools, have access to these programs.
- ▶ **Improve mental health and developmental disability screening:** The participants discussed the lack of mental health and developmental disability screening at the Juvenile Assessment Center and encouraged further research to improve services provided within.
- ▶ **Expand mentorship and paid internship opportunities for at-risk youth:** The Action Planning Group expressed a great deal of support regarding expanding mentorship and paid internship opportunities for at risk youth. It was recommended to involve community volunteers, school-based programs, or partnerships with local businesses to expand the mentorship and internship programs.
- ▶ **Create comprehensive mapping of behavioral health resources:** The Action Planning Group recommended creating a comprehensive mapping of current behavioral health resources, receiving facilities, and transportation opportunities in the county to prevent duplicated efforts as well as creating alliances with all organizations.
- ▶ **Implement updated probable-cause affidavits with mental health identification boxes:** The Action Planning Group recommended updating the use of mental health indicators on probable-cause affidavits across all law enforcement agencies to assist coordinated care within the criminal justice system for individuals in mental health crisis.





Action Planning Meeting Takeaways!

Juvenile Justice: Challenges & Opportunities

Palm Beach County continues to face significant challenges in its juvenile justice system, particularly around balancing accountability with rehabilitation for youth. Stakeholders emphasized the need to focus on behavior-based interventions, strengthen parental accountability for truancy and family-related issues, and expand access to respite care by revisiting eligibility criteria and increasing the availability of mentorship and foster family supports. The growing needs of youth with autism highlight the importance of specialized training for both youth-serving and adult-serving systems. Opportunities also exist to expand diversion programs, including pre-arrest citations and broader access to supportive services, ensuring that young people receive timely, developmentally appropriate interventions.

Behavioral & Mental Health: Challenges & Opportunities

Behavioral health impacts continue to shape the criminal justice landscape, with many individuals cycling through the system due to trauma, addiction, and a lack of life skills upon release. Participants noted that individuals often experience re-traumatization, institutionalization, and relapses, underscoring the need to address root causes rather than symptoms. Addiction is frequently treated as an acute issue despite requiring long-term, chronic-care models to be effective. Strengthening victim education and improving coordination among agencies responding to domestic violence remain ongoing needs. Data-driven decision-making, improved approaches for individuals who do not recognize their need for help, and prevention strategies for children of justice-involved parents were identified as critical opportunities for system improvement.

Court System: Challenges & Opportunities

The Palm Beach County court system faces several operational challenges, including a shortage of courtroom interpreters, low juror attendance rates, and complex federal detainer holds that make it difficult to track individuals and resolve cases efficiently. Additional concerns include the need to evaluate pretrial services and the Supervised Release Program, particularly around drug testing timelines and judicial education. With 60–65% of individuals in jail represented by the Public Defender's Office, the system continues to experience a shortage of court-appointed attorneys and a pressing need for more capital-qualified and pro

bono legal professionals. Expanding jury duty reform and increasing juror compensation were highlighted as opportunities to strengthen jury diversity and improve representation.

Policing Trends: Challenges & Opportunities

Law enforcement agencies across Palm Beach County emphasized the importance of collaboration as they navigate emerging technologies, legislative changes, and evolving public safety needs. New tools—including AI-enabled body-worn cameras, reverse phone search capabilities, AI-assisted call transcription, underwater drones, gun-draw detectors, and facial recognition—offer opportunities to enhance investigative efficiency and officer safety. Agencies are also adapting to legislative developments such as House Bill 757, unified 911 system efforts, e-bike regulations, and discussions around expanding open-carry safe-zones. At the same time, new risks such as AI-generated bomb threats, spoofed emergency calls, and ambush attempts highlight the need for community education on AI misuse and continued innovation in policing strategies.

Across all four panels—juvenile justice, behavioral health, court systems, and policing—Palm Beach County leaders underscored a shared commitment to strengthening coordination, modernizing practices, and addressing the root causes that drive individuals into the justice system. While each sector faces distinct challenges, from interpreter shortages and juror participation gaps to youth service needs, trauma, addiction, and rapidly evolving technology, the discussions highlighted meaningful opportunities for innovation and collaboration. By investing in prevention, expanding supportive services, leveraging data, and embracing responsible technological advancements, the county is positioned to build a more responsive, equitable, and effective justice system. The collective insights from these action-planning sessions provide a strong foundation for shaping future policy, improving outcomes, and enhancing public trust across the entire criminal justice continuum.

