

**TO:** Youth Service Bureau Directors

**FROM:** Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) Diversion Workgroup

**DATE:** June 30, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Change to Family with Service Needs (FWSN) statutes

**Effective July 1, 2020, Section 8 of PA 19-187 provides that Family with Service Needs (FWSN) behaviors will no longer be under Juvenile Court Jurisdiction.** These behaviors include: (1) has without just cause run away from the parental home or other properly authorized and lawful place of abode, (2) is beyond the control of the child or youth's parent, parents, guardian or other custodian, (3) is engaged in indecent or immoral conduct and/or (4) is 13 years old or older and has had sexual intercourse with another person and the other person is 13 years old or older and not more than two years older or younger than the child. Similar to the changes made with Truancy, ***these behaviors may now be referred to the local Youth Service Bureau (or other local agency in the absence of a YSB).***

Police may continue to assist a parent or guardian in locating a child who has run away from home, but such assistance is no longer mandated by CGS §46b-149a, unless a FWSN petition was filed on or before June 30, 2020. **Initial police assistance to families in need is being encouraged and a new process has been created for making referrals effective July 1, 2020.** Police may still have the initial contact with families struggling with these types of behaviors, and the hope is they will utilize the new referral process and help a parent make the referral to the YSB.

Instead of a court referral through a FWSN petition, a youth may be referred to their local Youth Service Bureau (or other local agency in the absence of a YSB) using the enclosed referral form by either a police officer or a parent. Youth may be referred for the above listed reasons (\*please note that behaviors described in (3) and (4) above have been combined into one category on the form). The referral form mirrors the form previously used for Juvenile Court with appropriate edits made.

While police may complete the form and refer a child to the YSB, it is strongly recommended that parent(s)/legal guardian be encouraged to complete and submit the referral form on their own behalf in order to gather the most accurate and complete information. When appropriate, police should work alongside a parent(s)/legal guardian and assist them in making the referral. In the event a police officer needs to make a referral directly, please make sure the referral includes as much information and detail as possible on the behavior and background information of the child being referred prior to accepting the referral. If the referral form is not complete, please follow up with the individual completing the form for more information.

Guidance will follow at a future date regarding serving the Runaway population. When appropriate, with some cases, DCF may need to be involved for this population. Having a safe place to stay is of utmost importance and these cases may require additional case management or additional supports and services.

Services for FWSN cases may be available through agencies such as Beacon Health Options, Wheeler Clinic (which have contracts with DCF to provide services), other local community agencies, or through your own YSB. Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) is also available for this population across the state and a list of locations by juvenile court district is enclosed with this memo. Beacon Health options is now providing Voluntary Services through a DCF contract. They provide the Voluntary Care Management

program (VCM) as well as Integrated Family Care and Support (IFCS) and Intensive Care Coordination (ICC). Information on these services can be found at <https://www.beaconhealthoptions.com/providers/beaconct/>.

It is important for the YSB staff to be knowledgeable of services available in their community and will need to conduct a full intake with these cases to get a full picture of services and supports that may be necessary prior to making referrals for services. Some of these cases can be complex and may require extra case management.

Additionally, there is a parent guide included with the referral form that should be distributed to the parent before they complete the referral process. The Parent Guide explains what to expect and supports that may be available from the Youth Service Bureau. **Hard copies of the Referral form and the Parent Guide should be available at each Youth Service Bureau for distribution and available on each YSBs website**. The form is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese simplified. There is also a fillable form in English only that can be completed electronically.

The Referral Form and Parent Guidance documents can also be found at <https://www.ctyouthservices.org/Diversion/Important-Documents/> which is a page on the CT Youth Services Association website- [www.ctyouthservices.org](http://www.ctyouthservices.org)

If you have additional questions, please contact Erica Bromley, Juvenile Justice Liaison, CT Youth Services Association at [ebromley@ctyouthservices.org](mailto:ebromley@ctyouthservices.org).