



COUNTY OF ESSEX
DEPARTMENT OF CITIZEN SERVICES
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICE-YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION
50 South Clinton Street – 3rd Floor, East Orange, New Jersey 07017
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Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.
Essex County Executive

Anibal Ramos, Jr.
Department Director

Jason M. Martinez
Division Director

Essex County Youth Services Commission

Thursday, June 18, 2026 Via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87138238255>

AGENDA

CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 -10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided on the Essex County Website.”

- 1. Open Public Meeting Law:** Announcement of the Opening of the Public Meeting Act
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Minutes Approval:** March 19, 2026, 2:00 PM
- 4. Subcommittee's Report:**
 - I. Planning
 - II. Monitoring
 - III. Allocation/Proposal
- 5. Action Items:** Consideration and approval of funding in the amount of \$17,500 for each participating Junior Public Safety Academy and Olympics program for the following municipalities:

Bloomfield Police Academy, Bloomfield Fire Academy, Irvington Fire Academy, Maplewood Police Academy, Newark Police Academy, Orange Public Safety Academy, South Orange Police Academy, West Orange Police Academy

Total Funding Amount: \$140,000

6. ECYSC (Updates/Announcements): Jason Martinez, YSC-Administrator

7. State Community Partnership and Family Court Programs (Only if there are Updates/Announcements):

8. Youth Justice Commission (Updates/Announcements):

- I. Court Liaisons
- II. JDAI
- III. RTJ

9. Public and/or Youth Service Commissioner (Updates/Announcements): Public Portion of the Meeting

10. Adjournment: Next Meeting, July 16, 2026 Via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87138238255> or In Person, 50 So. Clinton St. East Orange, NJ - Suite Samuel Okparaekwe, 2nd Fl

ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING

ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING

THURSDAY, March 19, 2026

2:00 PM- Via ZOOM <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85956421449>

Attendees: **Hon. Leonardo Hernandez** - Designee for Presiding Judge, **Kenneth James** Designee for Family Division Manager, **Ana Rivera**- Designee for Chief Probation Officer, **Asmeret Ghebremicael** – Designee for Highest elect official of County government, **Anthony Higgins** -Designee for County Prosecutor, **Michelle Callari** – County Public Defender, **Rosi Hermida** - Designee for Superintendent of Schools, **Brittnay Murray** – Youth Shelter Director, **Todd Barcliff** -Youth Detention Center Director, **Tyrone Hunter** – Juvenile Family Crisis Intervention Unit – Director, **Colette DeGrazia** - Designee for County Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Director, **April Caldwell** – Designee for Workforce Investment Board Representative, **Alle Reis** -Business Representative, **David Armstrong** - Parent or parent organization of at-risk or justice-involved youth , **Lori Scott Pickens**, **Erica Cashew**, - Education Sector, **Laquanda Williams** – Domestic violence, and/or victims’ rights group, **Rev. Bernard Wilks** – Clergy, **Jasmine Joseph-Foreman** - Education Sector, **Erica Cashew** -Education Sector, **David Sims** – Child advocacy, **Isaiah Fudge** – Civic Organization, **Sarah Cruz** -Municipal Youth Services Commissions, **Reginald Bledsoe**, **Taieta El-Amin**, **Adejobi Odeneye**, **Shelton Thurman**, **Josephine Garcia**, **Caryl Lucas** - Representative with knowledge, experience, or interest in local youth, the local community, or the juvenile justice system. *Amanda Compton*, *Nicole Jackson*, *Ron Small* – Court Liaisons - Youth Justice Commission, *Jason Martinez* -Youth Services Commission Administrator, *Michelle Wasington-Davis* – Secretary of Essex County Youth Services Commission, *Nayellie Collazo*, *Alicia Holman*, *Flohisha Johnson* -MDT

ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING

ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING

Convenors, Altarik White, Nicole Williams - Leaders for Life, Charles Mainor-UCC, Michael Freeman – UCC RTJ

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Approval of Minutes: Judge Leonardo Hernandez opened the meeting, confirmed attendance, and initiated recording by commission protocol.

Motion: Approve minutes from January 15th, 2025.

Moved: Erica Cashaw

Second: Lori Scott-Pickens

Passed by roll call vote.

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Presentation:

United Community Corporation Art Therapy Program

Charles Mainor, Director of Youth, Family and Senior Services of United Community Corporation, stated, "The Art therapy Program will provide community-based supervision combined with therapeutic treatment through creative outlets. The duration of the program would run 30-60 days with 20 youth enrolled at a time. The program would occur on Monday through Thursday from 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. for 35 weeks."

Brittany Murray asked about the program's target population and the referral source.

Mr. Mainor responded stating: "The program would service male and female high school students between the 9th and 10th grade.

Anthony R. Higgins asked if there are any restrictions for youth that may be referred to the program.

Mr. Mainor noted that there are no restrictions that may limit a youth's eligibility into the program.

Lori Scott-Pickens asked what the program's capacity is for serving youth.

Mr. Mainor followed up stating that the program would serve up to 60 youth with serving 20 youth at a time.

Presentation:

YES Program

Brittney Murray, a representative from the YMCA, stated that the program would provide two bed nights for Alternative to Detention youth who have been referred through the courts. The ages served are 13-17 years old. Services that youth would receive include: one-one-one counseling, group counseling, recreational activities, clothing, life skills, etc."

Anthony R. Higgins asked for clarification referencing the two bed nights that the youth can be placed at the YMCA Shelter during the pendency of their matter until further order of the court rather than physically staying only two nights at the shelter.

Ms. Murray clarified that the two-bed nights references the actual number of beds the shelter can offer to ECYSC as an Alternative to Detention. She also indicated that the program would serve up to 8 youths a year and each youth would be assigned a mentor.

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Judge Leonardo Hernandez asked if either one of the beds is currently being used by anyone from Essex County.

Ms. Murray stated that neither of the beds are currently being used by anyone from Essex County.

Anthony R. Higgins highlighted the significance of differentiating the programs due to some of the programs having the same name.

LaQuanda Williams asked who the referral source for youth would be referred to in the program.

Ms. Murray noted that the youth are court ordered through the YJC.

LaQuanda Williams asked if the youth court ordered through the Youth Justice Commission or through the juvenile judges in Essex County through Mr. Hunter.

Ms. Murray asked for additional clarification for which Ms. Chambers clarified stating that the youth would be referred through Mr. Hunter of the Family Crisis Intervention Unit.

Mr. Martinez stated that this is an alternative to detention program that will be for court-ordered youth.

ECYSC (Updates/Announcements): ECYSC Planning Framework Overview Jason Martinez, YSC-Administrator

Mr. Martinez noted some changes to the Youth Justice Commission referencing the three-year comprehensive plan. A big overview of the overall planning framework for the ECYSC. The planning process serves as a foundation for identifying the count needs and priorities. The planning committee will oversee and convene monthly to analyze data and support ongoing planning activities. The planning chairman, LaQuanda Williams, will provide regular updates at the ECYSC meetings. The goal of this framework is to develop a coordinated effective system of care that supports positive youth development targeting all points of the juvenile continuum including prevention, diversion, detention-alternative, and reentry.

State Community Partnership and Family Court Programs (Updates/Announcements):

Division of Youth Services | YSC - Multi-Disciplinary Team Convenors

Alicia Holman stated that as of today, MDT has provided services to 64 youth. MDT has conducted three site visits including the Temple of Hip Hop, the PUSH Program, and the Newark Street Academy. All information received will be provided to the courts as well as Director Martinez for further collaboration.

Essex County Prosecutor's Office – Summer Internship Program & What's it all about Conference

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Nicole Garves-Watson stated that on 12/17/25, the ECPO hosted their annual What's IT all About Youth Conference where students from grades 7-9 participated in interactive workshops revolving violence prevention, substance abuse awareness, and positive decision-making. The youth also explored future education and career paths and participated in workshops that focused on knowing your rights by the New Jersey Division of Civil Rights and Welcomed approximately 400 students. Overall, 25 organizations attended and provided information tables for the students. New Jersey Division of Civil Rights, Newark Museum, NJPAC, the Essex County's Division of Community Health Services, Family Connections, etc. The ECPO is currently preparing for the 2026 annual Summer Youth Employment Internship Program that would provide high school students with hands-on exposure to careers in law, law enforcement, and public service. The program will also incorporate life skills development, substance abuse prevention, college and career readiness. Ms. Graves-Watson also mentioned that every year, former high school students return and assist with the current high school students. Ms. Graves-Watson also highlighted two youth who were in the program with one youth currently working with the FBI in New York and one youth working in the Admissions Officer at Columbia University.

Referring to the alumni, Lori Scott-Pickens asked how the information shared being documented Ms. Graves Watson noted that herself as well as current interns who also document the alumni's success stories.

Leaders For Life – Prevention, Day & Evening Reporting Center Programs

Nichole Williams stated that Leaders for Life has served 20 youth in their Day Program and 22 youth in their Evening Program. Leaders for Life continue to work one on one with each youth as they identify their own career and education paths. In addition, LFL also collaborates with other organizations within the area to provide current youth and youth who completed the program with additional services.

Dr. White highlighted a student who recently completed the detention alternative program and continues to attend Leaders for Life's Alternative High School to receive his high school diploma. After the completion of the detention-alternative program, each youth are provided with the opportunity to continue their studies at the Alternative High School.

Ms. Williams mentioned that Leaders for Life will be partnering with RWJBH again for their symposiums that will provide six weeks of training for youth in the detention- alternative programs.

Township of West Orange Police Dept. – Junior Police Academy

Justin Davis noted that approximately 90 students apply each year for the Junior Police Academy. The Junior Police Academy will take place at Liberty Middle School. The WOPD is

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currently in the works of submitting the application forms to the middle schools in preparation of the new cadets.

Youth Justice Commission (Updates/Announcements):

Court Liaisons

Amanda Compton- Dover stated that the triennial plan will hopefully be coming out next month. The plan will be more concise, and each continuum will be its own entity. The YJC is also providing county-focused data rather than the entire state's worth of data. The YJS will also supply a list of resources that focus on community programming and community building which will also be included in the plan.

RTJ

Michael Freeman stated that two weeks ago, staff attended the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Conference in Philadelphia alongside other hubs to discuss the collaborative effects between the RTJ Hubs. Mr. Freeman highlighted two young people who have received full-time employment.

Public and/or Youth Service Commissioner (Updates/Announcements): Public Portion of the Meeting

Adjournment:

Motion by Josephine Garcia to conclude the meeting with Lori Scott Pickens seconding the motion

Next Meeting: April 16, 2026

Via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87138238255> or In Person, 50 So. Clinton St. East Orange, NJ - Suite Samuel Okparaeké, 2nd Fl