

June 30, 2025

Final Report for Statewide Gender-Responsive Training & Girls* Advocacy Programming

Provided by The Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State



Department of Children, Youth, and Families Contract Number: 2413-58050

Resulting From Solicitation Number: 24DCYFJR71

Contract Timeframe: 8/19/2024 - 6/30/2025

Report Contributors

Tristan Eddy

Ann Munro

Hailey Gray

Julia Kagochi

Alexis Hale

Sara Khan

Adanech Munro

Mary Richardson

Report Authored by Tristan Eddy, Program & Policy Director at The Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State - teddy@jfgcoalition.org

Contact

If you have questions or would like to request a copy of this report in a different format, please email justiceforgirls.wa@gmail.com

The Term 'Girl'

**The term 'girl' is used inclusively and refers to cisgender girls, transgender girls, gender non-conforming youth, genderqueer youth, and any girl-identified youth.*



Copyright © 2025, The Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State, All rights reserved.
JFG is a registered 501c3 organization. Our Federal Tax ID number is #47-3100860.
1200 12th Ave S, Suite 175 Seattle, WA 98144 | jfgcoalition.org

Special Thanks

We extend our sincere gratitude to the girls and gender-expansive youth at Echo Glen and Ridgeview who generously shared their experiences and participated in our advocacy program this year. Your time, insight, and leadership were essential to shaping the recommendations in this report, and we are deeply appreciative of your trust and partnership.

We are also thankful to the DCYF staff who supported this work throughout the year. In particular, we would like to recognize our contract specialist, William Stadler; Echo Glen's Associate Superintendent, Nichelle Curtis-McQueen; Education Team staff, DeAnna Wilson and Kolanye Bykoff; Living Unit Managers, Izzy Campbell and Dannee Smith; Ridgeview's Administrator, Michelle Ragland; and the entire JFG team and youth facilitators who led trainings and programming with dedication and care. Each of you played a key role in advancing this contract and we are grateful for your shared commitment to girl justice!

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	6
Terms, Acronyms, and Lens	7
Organizational Background	8
Contract Achievements and Challenges	10
Achievements	10
Challenges	11
Conclusion	12
Gender-Responsive Staff Training	12
Feedback from Staff on JFG’s Trainings	12
Findings on Gender-Responsive Programming	15
Goal and Methodologies	15
Findings	15
Organizational Change/Readiness	18
Recommendations and Implementation	20
Tier 1: Immediate Actions (0–6 months)	20
Tier 2: Mid-Term Integration (6–18 months)	21
Tier 3: Long-Term Culture Building (18+ months)	23
Conclusion	24
Appendix A: Why We Focus on Girls*	26
Appendix B: JFG’s Gender Responsive, Race Equity, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity & Expression Best Practices in Juvenile Rehabilitation	30

Executive Summary

Purpose

In fiscal year 2025, Justice for Girls (JFG) partnered with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to strengthen gender-responsive and racially equitable practices across Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) facilities. This work included staff training, youth stipends, and the implementation of GAIN (Girls Advocacy & Impact Network)—the only program specifically designed for girl-identified and nonbinary youth in the JR system. While other offerings such as DBT, ReSet, and LGBTQ+ groups include some gender-responsive elements, only GAIN was built to directly address the needs, identities, and leadership potential of these youth in both female JR facilities: Echo Glen and Ridgeview.

Organizational Assessments and Findings

Through a combination of focus groups, surveys, and an organizational assessment, JFG found consistent gaps between staff perception and resident experience, especially regarding safety, mental health care, basic hygiene access, and educational opportunity. Girls reported long waits for therapy, a desire to see facility improvements (such as better lighting and the addition of meaningful decorations) that would help make the space feel less institutional and more reflective of their identities and needs, and a lack of vocational or higher education opportunities for the older residents. These disparities reflect deeper systemic issues that require attention and sustained change.

Staff appear genuinely committed to creating a rehabilitative environment for girls but often cite understaffing as a barrier to fully realizing that goal; similarly, most girls spoke positively about staff and shared that they have at least one trusted adult they can turn to for support.

Girls* Advocacy & Impact Network (GAIN) Program

Despite logistical challenges in training delivery and cross-facility programming, GAIN participants remained highly engaged—testifying on legislation, sharing personal stories,

and shaping policy. Their leadership made clear that when young people are trusted and supported, they can be powerful advocates for themselves and their peers.

Recommendations and Integrated Roadmap

This report concludes with a tiered roadmap of recommendations, offering a phased approach for DCYF to build on current efforts and move toward a more equitable, youth-centered, and gender-responsive system of care.

Introduction

Services provided under the DCYF Contract create a specialized niche for gender-responsive programming that supports girls and young women in developing the essential skills and relationships they need to thrive as adults. Gender-responsive approaches focus on deep-seated issues as opposed to behaviors and/or symptoms. Doing so creates a safe space for young women and girls to work through personal traumas while catering to their specific needs.

The Contract outlined a course of action detailing DCYF's Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) plan to implement appropriate gender-responsive approaches in SFY 2025. The funds awarded were aimed to create statewide gender-responsive, racial equity training for staff, and girls' advocacy programming for residents served in the JR system. Specifically, the program sought to develop and provide the following:

1. Girl-centered antibias and gender-responsive training for adults working with girls
2. Advocacy program facilitation for girls in the continuum of the JR system
3. Youth stipends for girls participating in advocacy programming

This comprehensive report summarizes Justice for Girls' achievements, challenges, and recommendations for sustaining positive changes in the long term, particularly in the context of gender-responsiveness and girls' advocacy programming in JR facilities. This report also includes recommendations for: training and education of staff; education and programming for youth; organizational change and readiness; and implementation of specific evidence-based gender-responsive programs and/or services.

Terms, Acronyms, and Lens

Terms and Acronyms:

“Girl” - Throughout this report, the term ‘girl’ is used inclusively and refers to cisgender girls, transgender girls, gender non-conforming youth, genderqueer youth, and any girl-identified youth.

“Gender-responsive” - Gender-responsive means actively recognizing and addressing the diverse needs, roles, and situations of all gender identities in the design and implementation of programs, policies, and activities. It goes beyond simply acknowledging gender differences; it actively seeks to reduce gender inequalities and promote gender equality. This involves understanding how gender influences individuals' lives, challenging harmful gender norms, and ensuring equitable outcomes for all.

“DCYF” - Department of Children, Youth, and Families

“JFG” - The Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State

“JR” - Juvenile Rehabilitation

“GAIN” - Girls* Advocacy and Impact Network

Lens: “Girl-centered”, “Race Equity” and “Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)” approaches describe an array of policies and practices that are mindful of the issues and needs of all girls developmentally; of girls of color who are impacted by structural, institutional and historical racism; and of those who identify as LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming who face higher rates of rejection, violence, suicide and homelessness when compared to their general population peers. Gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, and class make a collective mark on how girls experience their social contexts and, in turn, how they behave. Many of these reasons intersect and compound. Intersectional theory looks at how the interaction of different layers of identity and oppression shapes girls’ experiences. Recognizing that girls experience and hold multiple and intersecting identities is an important part in granting

them agency and autonomy. In this document, we include descriptions and terms of identity to create an inclusive and intersectional approach in how we analyze the impact of systemic inequity.'

Organizational Background

Who is JFG?

The Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State (JFG) is a nonprofit that uses advocacy and training as levers to drive change for girl-identified youth* in WA state. JFG's mission is to improve the status of girls by addressing the underlying conditions that perpetuate the adversity they face and paving pathways for a better future. Our state's most vulnerable girls face violence, family instability, lack of economic prospects, and risk of exclusion from schools and involvement in child welfare or judicial systems. JFG scales up culturally responsive, girl-centered programs, policies, and practices to interrupt inequity, reform systems and address root causes that deprive girls of opportunities.

JFG formed roughly a decade ago. Back then, a small group of advocates, academics, and court administrators from across the state were asked to testify in Olympia on trends in the treatment of girls specifically in the juvenile justice system. In 2016, with the support of a federal National Girls Innovation grant, we gained 501c3 status, formed a board, and expanded our scope to include advocacy and training across multiple systems including school, mental health, health, housing, child welfare, and juvenile justice.

A girl enters the juvenile justice system through complex, interconnected pathways rooted in trauma and systemic bias, highlighting the urgent need for preventive, gender-responsive interventions that JFG provides. We know, for instance, that a girl's pathway into the juvenile justice system often originates with surviving abuse, especially sexual violence. Racialized, gender-biased pathways push a girl out of school and into court involvement. When a girl ends up court involved, there are usually multiple other systems with whom she's had contact, where interventions could potentially interrupt court contact in the first place. Efforts to create more effective programs and practices that are responsive to girls' needs are growing, but we need more funding to evaluate and scale these efforts.

We create change through advocacy, model programs, and training using these strategies:

- **Spotlight** – Use data and best practices to drive change.
- **Convene** – Bring statewide stakeholders and communities together across sectors and systems to advocate for girls’ policy agendas and to improve access to girl-centered practices training and programming.
- **Pilot** – Integrate best practices, model programs, and policies into existing systems.

Our work contributes toward a world where girls and young women are no longer criminalized for the trauma they have experienced. We address the root causes – poverty, violence, racism and sexism. We engage girls as drivers of the policies, programs and practices that directly impact them. *Examples:*

- Instead of jailing girls for truancy, running away and other non-violent offenses, shape better policies and transformational community-based services to address their needs.
- Instead of punishing girls for behavior that is the natural result of chaotic social contexts, train professionals working in systems such as schools, law enforcement and courts to respond supportively to girls in need.
- Instead of speaking on behalf of girls, build a Girls Advocacy Program to ensure girls are equipped to testify and train alongside Coalition staff, board and members

Why Girls*?

The challenges for these girls, who are marginalized by poverty, violence, and racism, have remained remarkably consistent. Systems are not working optimally for boys either, however, we focus on girls, because, despite decades of attention, the rates of girls’ involvement in the juvenile justice system continue to rise. Nationally, and in WA state we know that girls’ pathways into the system are different. A court-involved girl was very likely unsuccessfully served first by another system, especially the child welfare, law enforcement, mental health, and/or school systems. It takes more stress and trauma for her to commit a serious crime, and she is much more likely to be detained for running away, domestic altercations, truancy and/or prostitution. More information on why we focus on girls can be found in **Appendix A**.

Contract Achievements and Challenges

Achievements

This past year, JFG successfully conducted eight in-person and virtual focus groups with both DCYF staff and female-identifying residents at Echo Glen Children's Center (Echo Glen) and Ridgeview Community Facility (Ridgeview). Using a mixed-methods approach—semi-structured interviews, group discussions, and anonymous feedback surveys—we were able to collect valuable qualitative data. DCYF staff consistently demonstrated a clear dedication to embedding gender-responsive strategies into their daily work. They expressed a genuine interest in improving services and practices that align with the needs and experiences of girls in their care.

Youth participants also brought critical insight to these conversations. Many expressed appreciation for specific staff and programming, while also raising concerns and identifying areas where facility practices could be more trauma-informed, inclusive, and youth-centered. Their honesty and engagement laid the foundation for meaningful dialogue and accountability.

A major highlight of the year was the continued implementation and evolution of our Girls Advocacy & Impact Network (GAIN). For the first time in its five-year history, the program brought together girls from both Echo Glen and Ridgeview through a virtual shared space. This cross-facility collaboration fostered connection and solidarity among youth who are often isolated by geography and placement. Participation remained high at Echo Glen, however, the meeting time proved more difficult for members at Ridgeview due to their evening jobs. Overall, members expressed strong interest in the curriculum and advocacy opportunities provided throughout the year.

GAIN began with foundational work on self-advocacy and healthy relationships, then moved into more advanced skills, including interpreting statewide data on girls' experiences and learning how to translate lived experiences into legislative advocacy. Members explored findings from the Washington Healthy Youth Survey and drew direct connections to their own lives. This approach helped them understand the power of

combining data with personal storytelling in a way that is strategic, trauma-informed, and impactful.

By January 2025, the 18 GAIN members were prepared to actively participate in the legislative session. They learned about the structure and function of the legislature, engaged with real-time policy issues, and took action in meaningful ways. Youth signed in on bills, submitted public comments, signed onto our budget proviso letter, and provided written or virtual testimony on five separate bills. Their contributions were thoughtful, articulate, and deeply rooted in both lived experience and policy knowledge.

Although most of our priority and support bills did not pass during this session, they gained strong momentum and will continue to advance next year. The youth's involvement helped lay critical groundwork for long-term policy change.

Challenges

While this year's work produced strong outcomes, we also encountered several challenges that limited the full reach and impact of the contract.

One of the more persistent difficulties was engaging campus staff in scheduled trainings and focus groups. Our initial focus group for staff had just two participants, prompting JFG staff to reschedule the session twice in order to reach a broader audience. While we understand the day-to-day demands placed on facility staff, this limited engagement impacted our ability to gather diverse perspectives and identify gaps in current gender-responsive practices.

We also experienced barriers when trying to open up training opportunities to staff outside of the female-designated cottage units. Although we received clear feedback that security staff, counselors, and male cottage staff would benefit from gender-responsive and trauma-informed training, it proved difficult to coordinate timing and space that accommodated broader participation. This created an unintended silo effect, where the training and dialogue were concentrated among a smaller group of staff already familiar with the girls' programming, rather than expanding to those who may be less experienced but equally influential in shaping daily youth experiences.

Additionally, coordinating a shared GAIN space across both Ridgeview and Echo Glen presented logistical challenges, particularly in managing scheduling conflicts and disparities in facility technology access. These factors occasionally disrupted participation or required JFG staff to adjust programming on short notice.

Finally, as with any remote or hybrid programming, there were moments where engagement dipped due to facility-wide priorities, technical issues, or competing demands on both youth and staff time.

Despite these challenges, we found facility partners to be collaborative and receptive, and we are optimistic about improving participation and systems alignment moving forward.

Conclusion

Despite these challenges, the contract year was an overall success. The insights gained from focus groups, the progress made in building staff capacity, and the youth-led advocacy through GAIN all represent meaningful strides toward a more gender-responsive and equitable juvenile rehabilitation system in Washington State. JFG is proud of what was accomplished with DCYF and looks forward to continuing this work in the future.

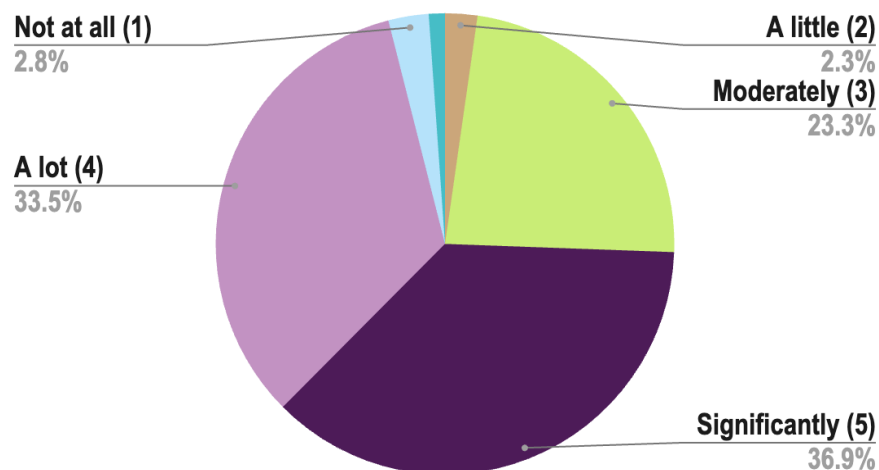
Gender-Responsive Staff Training

Feedback from Staff on JFG's Trainings

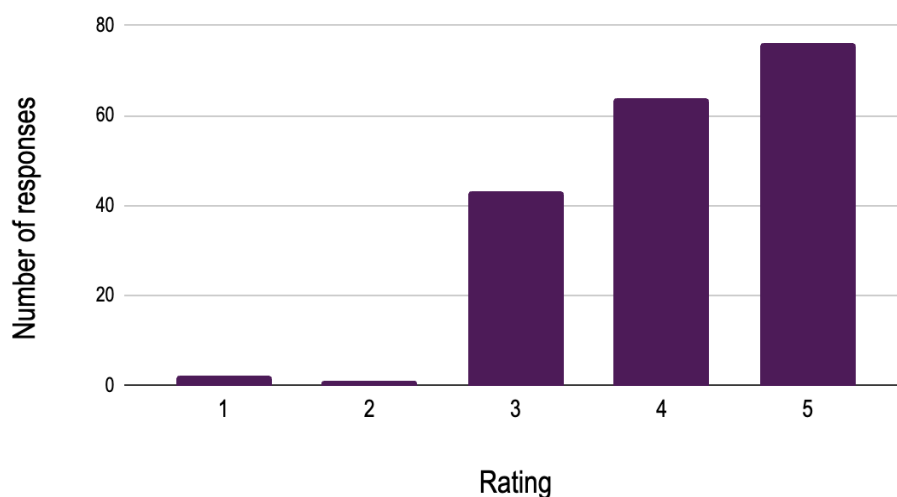
Overall Reception

The training was generally well-received, with many participants describing it as informative, well-structured, and easy to follow. Respondents appreciated the clarity of the presentation and the inclusion of reference materials to deepen their understanding. Several noted that the training expanded their awareness of the specific needs and rights of girls and women of color, and some found the content personally meaningful, especially those with lived experiences related to the statistics shared.

I have a deeper knowledge of how I/my organization can implement this learning and better center girls* in our work/practice. Rated 1-5.



How would you rate the quality and relevancy of the training?



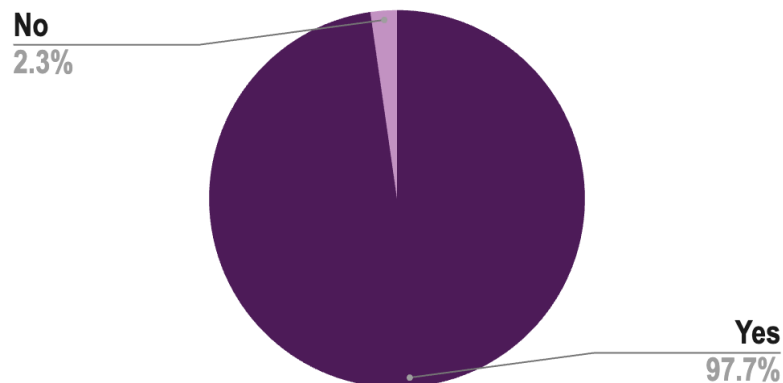
Content Relevance

A recurring theme in the feedback was the perceived limited relevance of the training for staff working in all-male facilities. Many participants acknowledged the importance of understanding gender-responsive practices but questioned its immediate applicability to their daily work with male youth. Some felt the training would have been more impactful if it included direct testimonials from girls or more interactive media to ground the concepts in lived experience, which we consider adding in the future.

Access and Format

The self-paced format was appreciated, especially by those balancing multiple responsibilities. Participants found the training easy to navigate and appreciated that it allowed them to pause and return as needed. A few suggested adding audio narration to support different learning styles. Staff also appreciated JFG's flexibility in offering online 'live trainings' to allow staff not on-campus at that time to join remotely.

Did you learn something you didn't know before taking the training that you can take back to your org/use in your life?



Opportunities for Improvement

Some participants felt the training content was either already known, somewhat redundant, or too general. Others expressed concern that the training might unintentionally reinforce divisions by emphasizing gender and racial differences, though these perspectives were in the minority.

Key Takeaways

- Most evaluation respondents gave high marks for quality and relevance
- Helpful for raising awareness, especially for those new to gender-responsive work
- Limited perceived relevance for staff serving exclusively male populations
- Calls for more multimedia, real-world testimonials, and interactive elements
- Suggested audio support to accommodate diverse learning preferences

Findings on Gender-Responsive Programming

Goal and Methodologies

JFG's primary goal is to support DCYF's Juvenile Rehabilitation efforts to enhance gender-responsive services. JR believes that “by addressing root causes rather than just managing surface-level behaviors and symptoms, they can create a safe environment where young women and girls can process their personal traumas while receiving support tailored to their unique needs.”

To gauge enhancements that are needed, during the last quarter of 2025, JFG held a series of online and in-person meetings with key stakeholders, including both residents and staff. Using a gender-responsive race equity standards assessment to center the discussion, JFG examined current training, programs, and services to determine their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Through these meetings, JFG collected valuable insights to help shape services that would enable girls to build essential skills and relationships for successful adulthood.

JFG also conducted an anonymous electronic survey with girls from Echo Glen and Ridgeview to better understand use of pronouns by staff, connections to mental health services and access to gender-specific care such as period products, clothes, bras and shoes, birth control and gender-affirming care.

Findings

Additionally, JFG conducted an organizational assessment to better understand the current landscape of gender-responsive programming within and across the JR system. Through this process, we found that GAIN remains the only program currently operating that was explicitly designed for girl-identifying and nonbinary youth in JR. While other offerings such as DBT group, ReSet, Choose180, and the LGBTQ+ group may incorporate elements of gender-responsiveness, none were intentionally created with the specific needs, experiences, and identities of these youth in mind.

While there are currently some offerings for girls and gender-expansive youth—such as Women’s Groups—feedback from residents indicated that these **groups do not follow a structured curriculum and tend to function more as informal spaces for conversation about gender-related issues**. While these spaces are valuable for peer connection and support, they do not provide the consistency or depth needed to address the complex and specific needs of incarcerated young women. JFG recommends the introduction of a curriculum-based women’s program grounded in the gender-responsive standards outlined later in this report. Such a program should include structured modules focused on topics such as trauma, identity, relationships, empowerment, and reentry, ensuring that young women have access to content designed specifically for their lived experiences. GAIN stands apart in its consistent integration of a curriculum focused on empowerment, race equity, intersectionality, and identity, serving as a model for what gender-specific programming can and should look like.

A general finding that emerged across all focus groups was the **persistent disconnect between how staff and youth perceive safety, support, and basic services**. Staff often believe they are maintaining appropriate boundaries and offering adequate care, while youth describe experiences that suggest otherwise. This gap in perception points to a broader systemic issue where institutional practices may unintentionally overlook or diminish the needs and perspectives of the young people in their care.

Residents shared that basic dignity and physical comfort were not reliably upheld. They described living in environments with poor maintenance, extreme temperature fluctuations, and little sense of personalization or comfort. Youth repeatedly brought up issues around hygiene access, including the need to request menstrual products from male staff, enduring long wait times for bathroom access, and feeling mocked or dismissed when asking to meet these needs. These experiences created a baseline of discomfort that compromised both emotional safety and trust.

When asked if they could change one thing at their facility to better meet their needs as a girl, residents responded:

“I want to have the same opportunities as males.”

“I want staff to take time to talk to me when I’m angry or upset.”

Concerns around mental health support were equally pronounced. Nearly every participant reported significant trauma histories, often involving sexual abuse, yet they described long delays in accessing therapy and a lack of support during mental health crises. Group sessions often felt shallow or misaligned with their actual needs, leaving many without meaningful outlets for emotional processing or healing. Girls expressed a desire for trauma-informed care that is responsive, not retraumatizing, and for therapeutic spaces that feel safe and affirming.

In addition to emotional and physical care gaps, **youth consistently expressed frustration with the lack of relevant educational and vocational programming.** Many felt unprepared for life after release, particularly youth nearing transition out of JR. There is currently no higher education program at Echo Glen and no reliable access to computers to improve digital literacy. The female residents at Echo Glen contrasted their limited opportunities with those available to young men at Green Hill, who have access to vocational certifications, mechanical engineering, woodshop, and college-level courses. These disparities underscored a clear inequity: young women are being offered fewer pathways to success based solely on gender. This disconnect must be addressed with a commitment to providing equal access wherever possible.

"[I] hadn't thought about the importance of empowering images of women on facility walls."
-JR Staff

"Group relationships between the residents can really differ depending on the day and who's in the facility."
-JR Staff

Cultural belonging and community connection were also areas of concern. Youth reported a lack of racial and cultural representation among staff, minimal access to cultural education, and family engagement policies that often excluded important relationships. Visitation spaces were particularly problematic for residents with children or young siblings, as current options—like the kitchen or PBX meeting room—are not safe or developmentally appropriate for children. Youth expressed a strong desire for a more welcoming, child-friendly space where they could connect with family in a meaningful and safe environment.

Lastly, it was evident that **training and ongoing staff development must be strengthened.** The disconnect between staff's understanding of their role and youth

perceptions of safety and care suggests a need for more comprehensive, ongoing education around trauma, gender, and cultural competency. Integrating gender-responsive training into onboarding processes and holding biannual refreshers tied to staff meetings can help reinforce best practices and ensure that care remains aligned with the evolving needs of youth.

These findings reflect a complex but urgent need to realign systems, practices, and environments to better serve girl-identifying and nonbinary youth. Later in this report, we provide a tiered roadmap with concrete steps for implementing these recommendations in a phased, sustainable manner.

Organizational Change/Readiness

The findings from JFG’s focus groups and training engagements point to a JR system that is in the early stages of becoming gender-responsive, with both promise and substantial areas for growth. Facilities like Echo Glen and Ridgeview have demonstrated openness to feedback, and many staff express a sincere desire to meet the needs of the young people in their care. However, significant gaps remain between intent and impact, particularly as seen in the disconnect between how staff and youth perceive safety, dignity, and support.

One of the clearest indicators of limited organizational readiness is the **recurring misalignment between staff beliefs and youth experiences**. While many staff believe they are maintaining appropriate boundaries and providing adequate services, residents consistently reported unmet basic needs, feeling unsafe, and struggling to access essential hygiene, mental health, and educational support. This disconnect suggests that while gender-responsive values may be endorsed in principle, they are not yet consistently integrated into daily practice.

Physical environment and basic dignity emerged as foundational concerns. The state of the facilities, ranging from poor temperature regulation to inadequate lighting and unsanitary conditions, has a direct impact on how girls perceive their worth and safety. These issues, compounded by reports of having to ask male staff for menstrual products or waiting excessive periods to use the bathroom, signal that current policies do not

adequately account for the gendered experiences of youth in custody. These are not peripheral issues; they are core to any trauma-informed, gender-responsive approach.

In terms of emotional and physical safety, the picture

is especially complex. Girls described feeling unsafe during night hours, discomfort with male staff presence during private moments, and a lack of trust in staff confidentiality. These concerns were often in direct contradiction to staff reports that youth feel protected or have access to trusted adults. Such discrepancies reveal

the need for better systems of accountability and feedback that elevate youth experiences, particularly around supervision practices and physical contact policies.

"[We need] staff who have healthy boundaries: emotional and physical."

-JR Resident

Mental health services remain critically underdeveloped, with girls reporting long delays and little access to trauma-informed therapy

despite nearly all participants disclosing histories of abuse. While staff often believed that mental health emergencies were being appropriately addressed, youth described these moments as isolating, unsupported, or even retraumatizing. Organizational readiness in this area will require not only increased staffing and access but also a fundamental shift in how emotional needs are prioritized and met.

Engagement in gender-specific programming also showed unevenness.

While programs like GAIN were well-received, youth across facilities voiced a strong desire for more practical life skills training, education tailored to their reentry needs, and culturally affirming spaces. The lack of dedicated programming for older youth, especially those up to age 25, further indicates a misalignment between the population's needs and what is currently offered. Similarly, restrictive family engagement policies and a lack of cultural education show how institutional practices continue to marginalize youth support systems and identity development.

Staff training, a key component of this contract, faced repeated logistical barriers.

Attendance at scheduled sessions was low, and efforts to expand training beyond the female cottages to include security staff, counselors, and male unit staff were difficult to coordinate. This limited access is a significant hurdle in advancing a facility-wide culture

shift. Without broad and consistent staff engagement in gender-responsive training, practices will remain fragmented and uneven.

In summary, while Echo Glen and Ridgeview show pockets of progress and a willingness to improve, the facilities are not yet organizationally ready to be fully gender-responsive. The foundation is there (staff interest, some programmatic success, and a system open to critique) but meaningful change will require stronger alignment between policy and practice, increased staff engagement, improved conditions, and a systemwide commitment to centering the lived experiences of girls and gender-expansive youth in every aspect of care.

Recommendations and Implementation

Tier 1: Immediate Actions (0–6 months)

Laying the foundation by addressing urgent safety, dignity, and care needs.

A. Strengthen Youth Dignity and Sense of Safety

- Ensure consistent access to menstrual hygiene products without youth having to ask male staff.
 - **Ensure access to menstrual hygiene products within classrooms and spaces throughout campus.** Some female residents reported that due to misuse by others, menstrual products were removed from bathrooms and made available only at the health center, often resulting in long delays. To preserve dignity and minimize disruption to education, menstrual products should be available in all bathrooms and accessible without requiring youth to leave the learning environment.
- Revise bathroom access policies at Echo Glen to eliminate long wait times and improve privacy.
- Conduct a safety audit with the security team at Echo Glen focused on nighttime supervision and gender dynamics.

B. Improve Mental Health Access

-
- Reduce therapist wait times to under 2 weeks.
 - Implement interim emotional support options (e.g., peer support such as girl groups and/or individual therapy check-ins that are gender-responsive).
 - Ensure that staff are trained in trauma-informed de-escalation and confidentiality practices.

C. Elevate Youth Voice in Staff Trainings

- Begin integrating youth feedback into staff development sessions.
- Require all new hires to complete gender-responsive onboarding training.
- Incorporate biannual staff meetings to highlight gender-responsive best practices (See **Appendix B**).

Tier 2: Mid-Term Integration (6–18 months)

Embedding practices that reflect youth needs and close staff-resident perception gaps.

A. Enhance Facility Environment

- Improve climate control and lighting in youth rooms and shared spaces.
- Add girl-friendly décor and culturally relevant visual materials to living units.
 - ◆ **Residents at both facilities shared that current posters and visuals feel outdated and disconnected from their identities.** Updating these materials to feature powerful women and girls, especially those of color and LGBTQ+ individuals, can help foster a greater sense of belonging and self-worth. Living spaces should reflect and affirm the youth who reside in them, making the environment feel more welcoming, inspiring, and inclusive.
- Prioritize repairs and cleanliness as signals of safety and respect.

B. Expand Programming and Reentry Preparation

- Provide life skills, financial literacy, higher education, and vocational training tailored to girls and young women.
 - ◆ **Introduce educational and vocational opportunities for young women at Echo Glen.** The older population of female residents at Echo Glen

consistently expressed a desire for more practical preparation for life after release, including access to higher education, job training, and independent living skills. In contrast, young men at Green Hill have access to a broader range of opportunities including mechanical engineering, a wood shop, college courses, and industry-recognized certifications in trades, which are not currently offered to young women. This disparity reinforces gender-based inequities and limits future outcomes for girls in the system. Equal access, wherever possible, must be prioritized. Young women should not face reduced opportunities simply because of their gender or facility shortcomings. Investing in education and vocational programming for girls is essential to both equity and long-term success.

- Launch targeted programming for older youth (18–24) transitioning into adulthood.
 - ◆ We recommend introducing **certification programs for peer support and mentoring groups** that equip girls with leadership skills, as these opportunities foster confidence, accountability, and a sense of purpose while preparing them to positively influence their peers and other residents.
- Create dedicated gender-specific and culturally grounded therapeutic groups.
- Enshrine meaningful access to civic engagement programs. Civic engagement is essential because it empowers individuals, especially those who are system-impacted, to have a voice in the policies that affect their lives, fostering a sense of agency, accountability, and belonging in a democratic society. While JFG remains committed to offering the GAIN program, its continuation depends on factors outside of our control; codifying civic engagement programs ensures their longevity and protects them from disruptions like staff turnover.
- Investing in programs that support youth who are parents (such as parenting classes and specialized support for parents of children with disabilities) as these resources build critical skills, reduce isolation, and help young families thrive despite the challenges of early parenthood.

C. Increase Cultural Responsiveness and Representation

- Improve recruitment and retention of diverse staff, with a focus on Black, Indigenous, and female representation.

-
- Expand resident access to ethnic studies, cultural education, and community mentorship.
 - Review and revise call list and family visit policies to support extended family structures and parenting youth. Many residents have meaningful relationships outside of their nuclear families, including with siblings, grandparents, chosen family, or their own children. Current policies are often too rigid and do not reflect the diverse support systems youth rely on.

◆ **In addition, create a designated visitation space that is safe and welcoming for babies and children.** Many residents, both female and male, are parents or have young siblings. Current visit areas at Echo Glen (e.g., kitchen or PBX meeting room) are not suitable for young children and may pose safety concerns. We recommend renovating a space to include clean, soft flooring for infants, age-appropriate toys, and an environment designed to encourage bonding and meaningful connection between residents and their families.

Tier 3: Long-Term Culture Building (18+ months)

Shifting the organizational culture to sustain equity, healing, and belonging.

A. Institutionalize Training and Accountability

- Mandate ongoing gender-responsive training every 6 months for all staff, regardless of unit assignment.
- Use real youth narratives (with consent) and data to inform training updates.
- Embed gender equity goals into staff evaluations and leadership development.

B. Monitor Program Effectiveness and Youth Outcomes

- Develop tools for measuring program impact on reentry success, mental health, and youth safety.
- Establish mechanisms for youth to regularly provide anonymous feedback on conditions and services.

-
- Reassess policies and procedures every 12 months through a gender and race equity lens.

C. Foster a Culture of Healing and Trust

- Celebrate cultural heritage and resilience through regular events and activities.
 - ◆ **Several girls specifically mentioned wanting more events** like the Juneteenth celebration, which made them feel seen and connected, as well as workshops focused on cultural hairstyles that affirmed their identity and personal expression. These activities were not only meaningful but highlighted how rare it is for their culture to be reflected or valued in the facility's programming. Youth expressed that having more consistent access to culturally relevant education and creative outlets would help them feel more grounded, confident, and connected to their heritage.
- Build in consistent opportunities for staff-youth relationship building grounded in mutual respect.
 - ◆ **It is essential to continue supporting Youth Voice and other resident-led initiatives that center and uplift the perspectives of young people**, as these opportunities foster leadership, build confidence, and ensure that programming reflects the real needs and experiences of those it aims to serve.
- Make gender-responsive care a visible, organization-wide priority, not limited to female-designated units.

This phased approach allows DCYF facilities to move from compliance to transformation by creating an environment where girls and gender-expansive youth are truly safe, supported, and seen.

Conclusion

The partnership between JFG and DCYF in FY25 marked a meaningful step toward building a more gender-responsive and racially equitable JR system. Through focus groups, assessments, training, and the continued implementation of the GAIN program, it became clear that young people are eager to lead, engage, and advocate for better systems when

given space and support. The findings also revealed key disparities between staff perception and youth experience, particularly around programming, opportunities, and mental health support. These insights should not be seen as criticisms alone, but as a call to action: a blueprint for what comes next.

This report outlines a clear, phased roadmap to guide DCYF toward lasting cultural and operational change. It reflects not only what needs to improve, but what's already working and worth investing in further. The success of programs like GAIN and the powerful advocacy of its participants show that system-involved youth are not passive recipients of services, rather they are partners in change. If their voices remain centered, and if gender-responsive practices are integrated at all levels, DCYF can move from incremental shifts to a full transformation in how it serves girls and gender-expansive youth.

JFG looks forward to continuing this collaboration and supporting the hard but necessary work of creating spaces where all youth can heal, grow, and thrive.

Appendix A - Why We Focus on Girls*

Below are six reasons we focus on girls:

1. Girls' development differs from cisgender boys. However, programs, policies and practices currently do not reflect the differing needs that arise as a result. Gender, race and SOGIE (Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression) are significant social influences in a youth's development. The socialization¹, stressors² and biases³ girls experience are different from boys whose SOGIE corresponds with their birth sex. For example, girls are expected to be "ladylike," and when they deviate from this unfair norm, they get in trouble. They get pushed out of school and into court contact, and seldom is the connection made between behaviors and their underlying gendered pressures and biases. Many programs, policies and practices do not reflect an increased understanding of the needs of girls, even though research exists about the range and types of programs and services that work for them⁴. We must do more to ensure access to programs that support healthy development for girls.

2. BIPOC* girls experience high levels of systemic racism, oppression and inequality, which pose serious barriers to accessing opportunities. BIPOC girls are disciplined at disproportionately high rates, and discriminatory practices create high rates of school "pushout," especially for Black girls⁵. Due to adultification bias⁶, Black girls are viewed as less innocent and more adultlike than their white peers, and as a result they are punished for minor offenses like talking back to teachers, defiance, and dress code violations⁷. Criminalized for their communication styles, self-expression, and reactions to trauma, these girls are then disproportionately funneled into the juvenile justice system via the school-to-prison pipeline, which hinders their ability to lead safe and healthy lives⁸. This pattern is evident in WA, where Black and Indigenous girls make up only 6% of all girls, but 20.9% of court-involved girls⁹. Further, more than their white peers, BIPOC girls in WA witness physical abuse, feel unsafe at school, are disconnected from adults who they see as helpful and access fewer after-school activities¹⁰. The needs and desires of BIPOC girls in WA are routinely ignored. We need to center these girls and the marginalized identities among them in order to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and provide gender-responsive and racially equitable support to girls. We need to work with educational institutions and other sectors to create restorative practices that are effective for and unique to BIPOC girls, shifting systems from punishment to a holistic approach that helps girls actualize their potential.

* BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. We use BIPOC to center the unique experiences of Black and Indigenous communities and to avoid generalizing all people of color. For more information please visit this page: [YWCA: Why We Use BIPOC](#).

3. Girls are more at-risk for experiencing violence and exploitation, and they respond differently to that exposure¹¹. In WA, girls are disproportionately witnessing or experiencing some forms of violence in their lives, which can have negative impacts on their mental health and well-being. Girls experience a higher number of adverse childhood experiences than boys, with the largest differences for sexual abuse (32% difference) and emotional neglect (21% difference)¹². The impacts of gender-based violence can be especially severe for BIPOC girls who are hypersexualized by society and who grow up in communities where

systemic racism has prevented access to adequate services. In King County, Black girls make up 1% of the population, but 52% of child trafficking survivors are Black and 84% are female¹³. WA ranked second-highest in the Nation for missing Indigenous women cases in urban centers, and Seattle ranked first among cities nationwide in Missing Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG) cases, with Tacoma rating 7th.¹⁴ LGBTQ youth are also particularly vulnerable to violence, experiencing homelessness at almost double the rate of their cisgender, heterosexual peers¹⁵, which puts them at risk of sex trafficking, trauma, and adversity.¹⁶ It is critical that policies and programs reflect girls' unique exposures and reactions to violence, actively protecting the youth who are most vulnerable due to the compounding impacts of racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of oppression.

4. Our systems punish girls for behavior that frequently results from being victims themselves. Although boys represent a majority of systems-involved youth nationally and in WA, the proportion of girls in the juvenile justice system has increased, and we know that girls' pathways into the system are different¹⁷. Girls are more likely to be detained for offenses that are known reactions to violence and trauma, like running away, domestic altercations, truancy and prostitution¹⁸. When girls' protective bonds are weakened by violence, abuse or instability in the family, they may engage in more risk-taking and self-harming behavior. These coping mechanisms and reactions to relational trauma are then criminalized, creating direct, gendered pathways into the juvenile justice system. For example, survivors of domestic child sex trafficking are too often arrested and detained on prostitution charges instead of being recognized and supported as victims of human trafficking¹⁹. Rather than blaming girls for surviving abuse and trauma, we need to create systems that prioritize their healing, recognizing that their deviant behavior often stems from root causes like racism, sexism, poverty, and exploitation.

5. Social change efforts routinely leave out the voices of girls and/or use data in ways that cause harm and reinforce barriers in BIPOC communities. As community members, we focus on girls because many of us have witnessed and experienced the harm done to girls and gender-expansive youth, and we want to create systems that prevent this harm, rather than reinforcing it. We also want to upend the harmful ways data can be weaponized against BIPOC communities and BIPOC girls, and we want to instead utilize data to tell a true and positive story of our communities in our change efforts. We focus on girls because we frequently leave them out of conversations that create change, and we must be accountable to centering girls in the work and engaging in strengths-based conversations about girls when they are not present.

6. Girls endure a disproportionate share of the hardships and barriers created by broader social determinants and systems of oppression, and these underlying conditions must be addressed in order for girls to thrive. Historical inequities throughout our community seriously compound the individual struggles girls face. We see this, for instance, in zip codes across WA, where budgetary neglect disadvantages BIPOC girls in low-income neighborhoods. For instance, sidewalks, healthy and affordable food and quality housing are all disproportionately lacking in lower income areas. We cannot look only at individual school or court policies in social change efforts; rather, we have to take all the social determinants into account. We focus on girls because they deserve access to data that reflects the structural inequities underlying the social determinants of health in their community. For example, separating truancy and school engagement data by race and

gender is an integral part of understanding who benefits and who is burdened by existing policies and practices. Combining these data with city equity data²⁰ and indices then help us trace how historical racism and sexism has contributed to the issues impacting girls and gender expansive youth. Ultimately, comprehensive and equity-driven data analysis is a vital tool to help advocates and policymakers consider structural barriers and historical systems of oppression when shaping solutions.

Citations

1. Across all backgrounds, girls are taught, soft-wired, to value and make decisions in the context of maintaining relationships, often over their own needs and best interests. They face unique roles, pressures and strengths as a result of their socialization. Girls will engage in risk-taking behavior to sustain connection with people they feel attached to.
2. Source: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/226358.pdf>. Studies have identified some gender differences in rates and types of exposure to stressors – conditions that elicit strong negative responses and that are perceived as uncontrollable and unpredictable. Researchers theorize that girls have stronger connections to family than boys do throughout life and that this connection often serves as a protective factor. The theory follows that when this protective bond is weakened by instability, violence, sexual abuse, and/or lack of parental supervision, girls may engage in more risk-taking behaviors, which in turn may lead to delinquency.
3. We know that girls are pushed out of opportunity by systems bias, and differential expectations, and this plays out differently for girls based on race and sexual orientation. On the one hand, systems take a paradoxical, paternal stance toward girls. There is a desire to protect them, while at the same time punish them for behaviors deemed defiant or deviant, “unladylike”. When girls depart from gendered norms, they get in trouble. They get pushed out of school and into court contact in an effort to get them to comply with these norms. Seldom is the connection made between behaviors and underlying causes. Instead, it’s labeled as deviance or defiance and punished.
4. Source: <https://www.mdrc.org/publication/helping-girls-get-back-track>. Though rigorous research on gender-responsive programming is limited, those being evaluated share a treatment approach to address the effects of trauma, a focus on relationships, and life skills and health education tailored to the lives of girls. Gender and race specific treatments and interventions to keep girls from becoming involved in the systems in the first place or getting pulled deeper into the system.
5. National Black Women’s Justice Institute. (2019). *End School Pushout for Black Girls and Other Girls of Color*. https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/0c71ee_7d6b6469aa144b0397a4d7cd5d0f8051.pdf.
6. Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality. (2017). *Adultification Bias*. <https://genderjusticeandopportunity.georgetown.edu/adultification-bias/>.
7. Green, Erica, et al.(2020). "A Battle for the Souls of Black Girls." The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/01/us/politics/black-girls-school-discipline.html>.
8. Ibid. [National Black Women’s Justice Institute. (2019). *End School Pushout for Black Girls and Other Girls of Color*. https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/0c71ee_7d6b6469aa144b0397a4d7cd5d0f8051.pdf.]
9. Justice for Girls Coalition. (2018). *Pierce County Profile, 2010-2016*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cbfa913e6666973cad3c4d/t/5cf149ef6a61250001fc4a60/1559316980839/Final+Data+Walk+Pierce+05.14.2018.pdf>.

-
10. Justice for Girls Coalition (2020). *Washington State Girls* Fact Sheet on Violence, Mental Health and Well-being*.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cbfa913e6666973cad3c4d/t/5f8f8e50242cb42ab864164d/1603243601468/JFGFactSheet_ViolenceMentalHealth.pdf
 11. The National Crittenton Foundation. (2016). *Beyond ACE: Summary Findings from the Crittenton Family of Agencies 2014-2015 Administration of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)*. https://crittentonsocal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ACE_REPORT_final.pdf.
 12. Ibid. [The National Crittenton Foundation. (2016). *Beyond ACE: Summary Findings from the Crittenton Family of Agencies 2014-2015 Administration of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)*.
https://crittentonsocal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ACE_REPORT_final.pdf.
 13. Rights4Girls. (2019). *Racial and gender disparities in the sex trade*.
<https://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2018/09/Racial-Justice-fact-sheet-Sept-2018-Final.pdf>.
 14. Urban Indian Health Institute, division of the Seattle Indian Health Board
 15. Dworsky, A., Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M. (2018). *Missed opportunities: Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness in America*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. <https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/VoYC-PP-Brief-FINAL.pdf>.
 16. Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). *Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
<https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/VoYC-LGBTQ-Brief-FINAL.pdf>
 17. Source:
https://nationalcrittenton.org/portfolio/gender-injustice-system-level-juvenile-justice-reforms-for-girls-2015//JfG_Coalition_Issue_Brief_on_Systems_Reform_2017. The challenges for these girls, who are marginalized by poverty, violence and racism, have remained remarkably consistent. Systems are not working optimally for boys either, however, we focus on girls, because, despite decades of attention, the rates of girls' involvement in the juvenile justice system continue to rise. Nationally, and in WA state we know that girls' pathways into the system are different. A court involved girl was very likely unsuccessfully served first by another system, especially the child welfare, law enforcement, mental health and/or school systems. It takes more stress and trauma for her to commit a serious crime, and she is much more likely to be detained for running away, domestic altercations, truancy and/or prostitution.
 18. Justice for Girls Coalition (2017). *System-Level Juvenile Justice Reforms for Girls Policy Brief*.
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cbfa913e6666973cad3c4d/t/5cf00e8e6fdabf0001f31ee0/1559236239880/Girls+Policy+Brief+March+2017+FINAL+SENT.pdf>
 19. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2019). Crime in the United States 2018: Arrests by age. Uniform Crime Reports. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2018/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/topic-pages/tables/table-38>.
 20. For an example, see City of Tacoma Equity Index
<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=175030>
-

Appendix B - JFG's Gender Responsive, Race Equity, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity & Expression Best Practices in Juvenile Rehabilitation



Justice for Girls’ Gender Responsive, Race Equity, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity & Expression Best Practices in Juvenile Rehabilitation

Purpose: This assessment serves as a dynamic tool aimed at fostering ongoing enhancement within the court system. It is not intended to identify deviations from established standards and evaluate compliance. The primary objective is not to identify shortcomings or failures, but rather, to provide valuable insights, actionable recommendations, and a comprehensive understanding of emerging capacities.

Lens: "Girl-centered", "Race Equity" and "Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)" approaches describe an array of policies and practices that are mindful of the issues and needs of all girls developmentally; of girls of color who are impacted by structural, institutional and historical racism; and of those who identify as LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming who face higher rates of rejection, violence, suicide and homelessness when compared to their general population peers. Gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, and class make a collective mark on how girls experience their social contexts and, in turn, how they behave. Many of these reasons intersect and compound. Intersectional theory looks at how the interaction of different layers of identity and oppression shapes girls’ experiences. Recognizing that girls experience and hold multiple and intersecting identities is an important part in granting them agency and autonomy. In this document, we include descriptions and terms of identity to create an inclusive and intersectional approach in how we analyze the impact of systemic inequity.’

**Throughout this document, JFG uses the term “girls” inclusively. The term refers to cisgender girls, transgender girls, gender non-conforming youth, genderqueer youth, and any girl-identified youth.*

General Guiding Principles

High quality care that fosters a girl's agency and choice must build from an understanding of the ways her social context, trauma, identities and oppressions intersect and compound.¹ Care providers working within and across systems must work to directly address the root causes of behaviors that stem from traumatic social contexts and “provide an alternate, non-justice-system path for girls’ healthy development and healing”.² Providing high quality care should reflect these practices:

- **Be culturally responsive:** Address girls’ needs and risks based on the girls’ identified cultures, which include gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, ability and sexual orientation.
- **Build from relational theory:** Recognize healthy female development hinges on healthy, mutual relationships.
- **Address safety:** Integrate trust development, trauma-informed care and awareness of socially-based power differences
- **Use a skills-based, strengths-based approach:** Increase engagement in services, increase confidence and develop multiple competencies.
- **Serve girls holistically:** Consider individual differences, build on natural supports and address needs in multiple areas of life, e.g., school, home, work, and with peers.
- **Flattening hierarchies:** Seeking to challenge unequal power dynamics and levels of authority between girls and prison staff in treatment and communication.³
- **Demographic data:** publish data on juvenile detention with consideration of gender, race, ethnicity, age, admission reason, and length of stay.⁴

¹ Rooted in intersectional and developmental theories, such as ecosystems theory, feminist theory and risk and resilience theory, JFG recognizes that a girls’ social context—family, peers and community—are influential to her development and behaviors, and that race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity & expression (SOGIE), and class, among other layers of identity, shape a girls’ experiences.

² In Francis T. Sherman and Annie Black 2015 report *Gender Injustice*, 2015, they write: “Trauma from abusive and unhealthy family and peer relationships, unhealthy and dangerous living conditions, and failed structural support mold girls’ development and can push a girl into juvenile justice involvement.”

³Crewe, B., Schliehe, A., & Przybylska, D. A. (2023). ‘It causes a lot of problems’: Relational ambiguities and dynamics between prisoners and staff in a women’s prison. *European Journal of Criminology*, 20(3), 925-946. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14773708221140870>

⁴ Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission, 2021 Gender Justice Study: Executive Summary and Recommendations (2021)

Juvenile Justice Best Practices

A. Online and In person Facility (Visitation areas, common areas, cottages, and offices – physical layout and design, visual space, operational structure; this also applies to any online services provided by staff. Online services include case meetings, groups, therapy sessions, etc.)

Standard
1. The facility or online environment offers a girl-friendly, anti-racist, affirming sexual orientation & gender identity and expression (SOGIE) environment. • Environments are welcoming to girls across all racial identities and those who identify as LGBTQ+ with a comfortable visual environment. Things such as posters, pictures, books, audio-books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and wall decorations are inspiring, representative and empowering, and highlight positive achievements across these populations of girls. Advertising and other images show healthy messages for girls (magazines show respectful images of women). • Environments do not have materials or play music that normalizes or glorifies any form of violence (physical, emotional, mental, sexual, etc) against girls or reinforces gender, race or SOGIE stereotypes. • The physical facilities are clean, well lit, comfortable (e.g., temperature), organized, and well-maintained. • Girls have a say in what the space looks like and have a way to give feedback on ways to make it more welcoming and affirming.
2. Facilities are physically safe for girls. • The physical structure of the facilities where girls meet or reside is a safe place where they feel protected from violence, physical/sexual abuse and other harm. • Girls are equipped in the online environment where they meet or reside with access to emergency safety access via the internet. (For example, are girls receiving education on online safety protocols such as how to keep their online identities safe from predators?) • Girls have access to select a restroom (such as gender-neutral/gender-free, single stall restroom) that aligns with their identity without fear of violence, intimidation, or harm at any time of the day or night. • Girls have privacy while dressing/undressing and tending to their private needs, in accordance with state law.
3. The location of the facility accommodates girls' lives. • Facilities are accessible to the communities from which the girls came. • Facilities are easily accessible by mass transit.
4. The facility provides a family and child friendly space. • The facilities include family friendly visitation space for the girl's family and children.

B. Staffing: Hiring and Training

Standard
5. Staff who are hired are gender, race and SOGIE-conscious. • Applicant interview questions focus on gender, race and SOGIE, including knowledge about gender-responsive, anti-racist, SOGIE evidence-based practices; interest and experience in working with girls; and knowledge about girls' physical and psycho-social development. • Staff are selected based on their interest in working with girls (including girls of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations), maturity, knowledge about gender-responsive approaches, healthy attitudes towards girls, and healthy physical/sexual/emotional boundaries.
6. Staff are clear about their roles and boundaries with girls. • Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and include gender-responsive, race-equity, SOGIE best practices. • Staff acknowledge that they hold a position of power over the girls they serve. They do not use their power to undermine, manipulate, coerce or mistreat them. (For example, power imbalances show up in age differences, race and gender-identity, and systems, etc.) • Staff are trained and understand how to maintain their professional boundaries with girls and that young women are often socialized from an early age to seek male approval and attention. • Policies exist, and are available for staff and girls to review, on touching between staff and girls, sexual harassment, grievances, safety of staff and staff training requirements.
7. Staff are culturally diverse and culturally responsive. • Staff reflect the race and ethnicity of female-identifying residents. • Staff reflect the sexual orientations and/or gender identities of female-identifying residents. • Staff are multilingual, if needed, to match the language of female-identifying residents. • Staff are trained and evaluated on being culturally responsive and respectful (such as awareness of cultural differences and its impact on gender and cultural identities).
8. Staff receive orientation and training on gender, race and sexual orientation & gender identity and expression (SOGIE). • Staff receive mandatory skill and value-based training on gender-responsive, race & SOGIE skills within three months of hire on girls' psychosocial/adolescent development. • Continuing education/on-going training is required. • Staff hold regular meetings with a focus on enhancing gender-responsive, race-equity, SOGIE learning and practice.

9. JR has created an environment that is positioned well for continuous learning and training.

- Staff are routinely and consistently made aware of new resources and are open to new approaches.
- Administrators have established a supportive learning environment.

C. Staffing: Supervision Competencies / Expectations

Standard
10. Staff are given regular evaluations/feedback regarding their gender-responsive, race-equity, SOGIE skills. ● Staff get regular targeted performance reviews/evaluations regarding their gender-responsive, race-equity approach and skills with female-identifying residents.
11. Staff exhibit healthy attitudes around all girls. ● Staff are held accountable for having gender-responsive, anti-racist, SOGIE-responsive behaviors. ● Staff exhibit sensitivity to gender, race and SOGIE through language and practice. (For example, girls are given the option to share their pronouns and preferred names and staff honor those requests.) ● Staff do not use profanity, demeaning language, threatening language, slurs, and gender-based, racial or SOGIE-based stereotypes. ● Guidance is provided to staff on how to recognize their own biases in their work with female-identifying residents and what kind of change is needed. ● Staff take the physical and emotional safety of female-identifying residents seriously.
12. Staff use responsive communication skills with female-identifying residents. ● Staff use “relational language” not “rules language” with girls, with other staff, and in program materials. Relational language is more personal, less authoritative and less threatening. It states what is needed rather than what cannot be done. It describes to the girl what is being requested in relationship to others, themselves and the person making the statement. ● Staff use relational practice by validating girls’ feelings, using reflective listening skills and affirmations, and developing trust. ● An atmosphere of openness and dialogue with female-identifying residents is encouraged.

D. JR Sponsored Programs

Standard
13. Programs and services are trauma-informed. ● Treatment and program staff are aware of the impact trauma has on girls' psychology, physiology, and behavior. ● Programs offer female-led individual and/or single-gender group services for girls who have experienced abuse and other trauma. ● Program has a philosophy to help girls move from victimization to surviving/thriving.
14. Program design and curriculum is based on evidence-based/promising practices that are responsive to gender, race and SOGIE. ● Evidence-based practices selected have demonstrated effects with girls compared to no treatment/alternative treatment. ● Girls have regular and continuous opportunities to give input into the design/redesign of the program. ● Curriculum is relevant to girls' lives, empowering, and skill-based with the content, words, and approach targeted to girls. ● Programs incorporate knowledge of girls' psycho-social development. ● Efforts exist to make the program small and personal, such as small subgroups with staff mentors.
15. Programs and services incorporate caring adults/mentors/adult role-modeling. ● Adults in the program provide positive and empowering role modeling, mentoring, and advocacy. ● Staff challenge examples of negative, unhealthy, or narrow gender role models that girls are exposed to in pop culture, media and other settings. ● Staff help girls identify women and/or gender-expansive adults in their lives who are good role models for them. Time is set aside for girls to establish significant relationships/mentors with caring adults.
16. Mental health programs are based on the needs of girls. ● Mental health emergencies are responded to immediately and girls receive required attention. ● All girls are evaluated for mental health and risks (including episodic or chronic behaviors). ● Mental health staff are trained and experienced in talking through topics such as sexual orientation and gender identity with girls in a non-judgmental and unbiased way.
17. Program includes teaching girls communication and interpersonal skills. ● Girls are taught how to establish appropriate boundaries, be honest, state needs and feelings. ● Girls are taught how to speak up for themselves and express all of their emotions.

- Staff are taught how to not be reactive to strong emotions (such as anger) and address emotions in a way that is supportive to the female-identifying residents.

18. Confidentiality is respected and expected in all programs and services for girls.

- Programs uphold consequences if confidentiality is breached.

19. Programs and services are available for girls with children and teach parenting skills.

- Programs offer parenting classes in the context of the child's developmental stages, appropriate discipline and expectations in raising children, and running a household. Girls are taught how to care for the basic needs of a child and self.
- Programs discuss the "real life" picture of parenthood from a physical, emotional, mental, economic, and social standpoint.

20. Programs and services are available to teach life skills.

- Programs teach life skills to girls on how to manage day-to-day activities, including managing money and credit, balancing a checkbook, grocery shopping, and making healthy life choices/decisions so she is able to function independently.
- Programs give female-identifying residents opportunities to learn new life skills in decision-making and to get needed information.

21. Programs and services are available to help female-identifying residents pursue their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.

- Programs support female-identifying residents in developing skills and a plan to reach their goals.
- Programs emphasize high yet realistic and attainable expectations, bolstered by hope.

22. Programs and services are available to help female-identifying residents establish healthy family connections and support, if appropriate.

- Families are invited to program functions that celebrate female-identifying residents.
- Family members are provided with information about the programs and services female-identifying residents are attending.
- Female-identifying residents are asked how they want their families involved in their treatment and programming.
- Families are given resources to be able to provide a supportive home environment with healthy relationships.

E. Case Management, Re-entry, and Cross-System Coordination

Standard
23. Re-entry Counselors/Parole Officers know what other public systems girls are involved with (child welfare, mental health, schools) and work to reduce multiple meetings and assessments that could be coordinated. • Data sharing agreements are on file that allows for appropriate information transfer among systems. • Re-entry Counselors/Parole Officers develop case plans around what other services a youth is receiving to reduce duplication (e.g., not ordering mental health services if a girl is already involved in services.) • Re-entry Counselors/Parole Officers participate on multidisciplinary planning teams when invited (IEP meetings, wraparound meetings).
24. Re-entry Counselors/Parole Officers refer to outside services that use effective practices. • Outside services use practices shown to be effective or promising. This would include practices that are listed on the Washington State inventory of Evidence, Research and Promising Practices, or the agency can demonstrate that practices are effective through internal data evaluation.
25. Outside practices are gender-responsive, racially equitable and SOGIE affirming. • The locations of outside services are in safe, accessible areas. • The agencies are visually welcoming towards all girls. • Staff are trained in working with female-identifying residents referred from the justice system, and/or are trained to work with trauma, behavior disorders, substance abuse, and family conflict and have a history of working with girls. • Services do not combine genders in treatment groups unless girls make up at least half of the group.
26. Outside services that promote individual strengths and interests are made accessible to girls through an incentive-based program or parole requirements. • Services that involve arts, athletics, computers, music, etc. are available to girls without cost through agreements with community partners. • The agencies are visually welcoming towards female-identifying residents.
27. Case planning addresses girls' pathways to delinquency and self-destructive behavior. • Parole/re-entry plans consider issues impacting girls (e.g., trafficking, running away, refugee issues) and continuously seek new information about issues impacting girls (e.g., Covid impact on girls).

28. Case planning is holistic.

- Planning addresses the whole girl within her social context (her relationships, socio-economic status, culture, media, peers, spiritual practice, family, school, home, social services, juvenile justice, education, social/emotional support, etc.). For example, the risk assessment process addresses the whole girl and her social context.

29. Case planning promotes girls' educational success and employability.

- Academic functioning is assessed at intake and includes reading, language, and mathematics competencies. Different learning styles are acknowledged and supported.
- Assessing vocational interests and capacities of the girl is free from gender, race and SOGIE bias. Girls are considered for the same job openings and opportunities as boys (and vice versa).
- Vocational interests are assessed as an option for promoting employability.
- Staff develop goals with girls for educational and/or vocational plans.
- Staff understand disciplinary measures of the schools girls could attend in order to assist girls in problem-solving and set goals for educational success.

30. Case planning is trauma-informed.

- Staff develop goals with girls to help girls manage their individual trauma symptoms when appropriate.
- Staff are aware of trauma treatment resources in their community.
- Staff receives background information on all girls in the program regarding trauma in order to prevent re-triggering negative experiences (PTSD, emotional reactions).
- Staff are trained on how to respond to a girl's disclosure of abuse or other trauma.
- Staff are trained on how to screen/assess and respond to suicidal behavior.
- Staff are aware of historical and systemic trauma experienced by the specific cultural, racial or ethnic groups of girls they are working with.

31. Facility has a clear and simple grievance procedure that is accessible to all female-identifying residents.

- At initial screening, girls are given information about appropriate staff behavior and how to make a complaint or express concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Staff are trained to recognize and report boundary issues committed by other staff.

32. Re-entry intake services are gender-responsive, race equity and SOGIE focused.

- JR staff ensures re-entry programs utilize intake assessment and screening instruments that are based on theory and practice relating to girls, girls of color, and girls who identify as LGBTQ+, and have been validated or at least have had practical use on these populations of girls.
- Female-identifying residents and their families are given information about how re-entry services operate, what to expect, and the purpose of re-entry assessment.
- Assessments are conducted in an environment that ensures that female-identifying residents feel safe and comfortable.
- All assessment tools/instruments are reviewed and are free from cultural, racial, gender, sexual orientation bias and barriers. These tools also include accommodations for language, e.g., access to interpreter services.
- Girls are asked what they need or want from re-entry services during intake.

F. Cross-System Coordination

Standard
33. Re-entry services that girls are referred to are relationship-based. ● Staff recognize the importance of healthy relationships and positive connections are at the core of successful re-entry. Re-entry services reflect an understanding of the significance of relationships and connections in girls' lives. ● Staff help girls see any connections between their relationships and their involvement in the juvenile justice system. Girls are prepared and supported when separating from unhealthy relationships. Staff understand that girls generally won't give up unhealthy relationships until they create healthy relationships. ● Connections to family are explored and strengthened if appropriate.
34. Re-entry services address issues of relational aggression. ● Staff recognize and intervene in acts of relational aggression (a more subtle form of aggression that uses behaviors intended to hurt a girl by harming her relationships with others including: verbal put-downs gossip/rumors name-calling, derogatory language, passive-aggressive behaviors, ignoring a girl, telling others not to associate with a certain girl as retaliation, manipulating relationships through indirect hurtful means such as behind her back or more often through social media).
35. Re-entry services are culturally-appropriate.

- Staff recognize multi-cultural issues and identities of female-identifying residents, as well as the different ways power and authority are viewed in their respective cultures.
- Staff actively learn about events, places, customs, rituals, and people (especially women) important in girls' cultural heritage.
- Re-entry service materials are inclusive and not culturally biased, e.g, translated when needed and reviewed by members of the community.

36. Re-entry services are strength-based.

- Staff assess areas of strength during risk assessment and, when appropriate, present this information to other court partners (e.g., judges).
- Programs work with female-identifying residents from the point where she is in her life. Program builds upon girls' existing strengths and understands how to help girls internalize (own) their successes, instead of externalizing them (credit others). Staff focus on girls' strengths and enhance girls' skills to empower them to make healthy decisions.
- Staff attempt to support behavior change with positive rewards (praise, incentives) and minimizes use of punishment (e.g., violations) when possible.
- Staff uses strength-based language and labels, such as "promising" vs. "at risk" girls, "powerful voice" vs. "loud voice", "negotiator" vs. "manipulator." Avoid negative labels such as crazy, bitch, manipulative.