

2024 Q2

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF  
JUVENILE JUSTICE

# QUARTERLY TRANSFORMATION REPORT



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## 21st Century Transformation Update

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# ABOUT THE TRANSFORMATION PLAN

## **IDJJ's Transformation Plan aims to:**

- **Establish close-to-home youth residential centers and community interventions for youth and families**
- **Provide dorm-like, youth-friendly, rehabilitative spaces**
- **Cultivate a welcoming, family-involved, community-integrated, vibrant, respectful, culturally responsive atmosphere**
- **Create a safe, peaceful, restorative, supportive, empowering, healthy climate for youth, families, and staff**

# EDUCATION UPDATE

School District #428 is contained within IDJJ, with alternative high schools at each secure facility. The high schools operate under the authority of the Illinois State Board of Education.

## Graduations

On June 13th, School District #428's Maya Angelou Alternative High School at IYC Warrenville held a graduation ceremony for five high schoolers and eight 8th graders! Families, educators, and staff joined together in the library to celebrate the accomplishments of these students.

On June 26th, IDJJ celebrated 8 more high school graduates. These young men at IYC Chicago worked hard for this accomplishment, and IDJJ staff, along with their families, celebrated them with a ceremony and luncheon!

## Illinois State Board of Education Recognition

IDJJ School District #428 teacher Beverly Singleton was recently honored with an Award of Meritorious Service at the Illinois State Board of Education's annual Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year banquet. Ms. Singleton, who teaches Career & Technical Education at IDJJ's PEACE Center at St. Charles, first came to IDJJ in 2018 to help youth work toward earning their GED. Her background in banking and commercial lending, however, has given her a passion for teaching youth about finances and fiscal responsibility, which is a big part of her work with the youth today.



## PEACE Center Grand Opening

On March 27th, IDJJ celebrated the grand opening of the new **PEACE Center at St. Charles!** Director Vickery offered opening remarks, and Senator Don DeWitte, Senator Rachel Ventura, and Rep. Dan Ugaste also spoke at the event. Assistant Superintendent of Programs Rayeshundra Henderson spoke and introduced community partners from New Life Centers (Amy Williams) and Project Flex (Jenn Jacobs & Zach Wahl-Alexander), who also shared about their work at the PEACE Center. One of the PEACE Center young adults gave closing remarks by speaking about his experience at PEACE. He noted that if he would have had the opportunities offered at PEACE in his community, he believes he would never have been involved in the decisions that led him to IDJJ. PEACE staff offered tours to guests and gave those in attendance the opportunity to see all the great programs that are happening at PEACE. **CBS aired a full 3 minute segment on the PEACE Center.**

## Community Partner Expansion

Long-time IDJJ partner, **Project Flex**, works with youth in three IDJJ secure facilities: IYC Warrenville, IYC Chicago, and the PEACE Center at St. Charles. Project Flex is a program through Northern Illinois University's Department of Kinesiology. Project Flex is helping youth prepare for successful reentry into their communities. The Project Flex team of graduate students, alumni, and researchers use sports as a way to make a positive impact on the lives of IDJJ youth. They utilize evidence-based programming focused on physical and mental health, character development, career exploration, and higher education access. Most recently, Project Flex expanded their work with IDJJ by starting a program at the PEACE Center for young adults interested in receiving certification as a personal trainer! Seven young adults have earned their industry-recognized personal training certifications this spring.

# PROGRAMS UPDATE



## Family Visit Events

This spring, IYC Warrenville hosted a family engagement event for women's history month and also hosted a Juneteenth barbecue for families. The PEACE Center hosted family fun day this spring that included glow golf and other fun activities in the gymnasium. IYC Pere Marquette hosted a spring family fun day full of fun outdoor activities and food.

## Summits of Hope

This year, IDJJ's Aftercare team has worked to collaborate with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to include youth and families in monthly Summit of Hope events around the state. The Summit of Hope is a community expo bringing together local service providers to create a "one-stop" environment for justice-involved youth and their families to obtain assistance and connect to resources. IDJJ has participated in Summit of Hope events in Rockford, Peoria, and Chicago this year.

## Senate Bill 426

Senate Bill 426 passed in the spring legislative session, enabling IDJJ to serve emerging adults ages 18-22 who are currently in an Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facility. IDJJ plans to repurpose the Illinois Youth Center (IYC) at Harrisburg to serve individuals in IDOC custody who need high school educational services. The launch of the repurposed facility at IYC Harrisburg is expected in the Spring of 2025, and will correspond with the opening of the new Monarch Youth Center in Lincoln.

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# STAFFING UPDATE

## Hiring process begins at the new Monarch Youth Center in Lincoln, IL

Plans for employment screenings for the new Monarch Youth Center in Lincoln were made in the second quarter of 2024. Lincoln's Park District allowed DJJ to host screenings at their facility in mid-July since the Monarch campus is still under construction. The Monarch Youth Center is expected to open in the spring of 2025, allowing youth from central Illinois to be housed much closer to their homes and families. Monarch's unique design will create an educational, therapeutic, and trauma-informed environment for youth. [Check out this story on Monarch from WAND-TV in Decatur!](#)

## Northern & Southern Region Employment Screenings

IDJJ has been hosting monthly employment screenings for juvenile justice specialists in the northern and southern regions of Illinois. Efforts to increase publicity for these screenings has increased applicants. Updated pages on the [Careers section of the IDJJ website](#) are helping applicants to have a better understanding of the hiring process and come to screenings prepared with the proper forms and documents.

## Academy Graduations

IDJJ's academy for juvenile justice specialists had a graduating class of 24 in March and another class of 31 that graduated on July 12th. These are some of the largest classes since COVID and helps greatly with staffing challenges in facilities.



# KEEPING UP TO DATE ON IDJJ

As IDJJ continues to make steady progress on the 21st Century Transformation Plan, we will continue to update stakeholders in a variety of ways. The best way to keep abreast of all that is happening with IDJJ is by regularly checking our website and social media!

Our website includes many different reports, resources, links to news articles and stories about juvenile justice and about IDJJ, information on secure facilities, educational and career & technical education opportunities, and more!

IDJJ's website url is <https://idjj.illinois.gov/> and the social media handles are listed below.

Thank you for taking the time to read about IDJJ's progress on the 21st Century Transformation in the second quarter of calendar year 2024!



[idjj.illinois.gov](https://idjj.illinois.gov/)



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