DEFINING THE PATH FORWARD

2025 YOUTH JUSTICE SUMMIT

NEW YORK STATE | Youth Justice Institute

Center Hope-Building Strategies in Services and Policy
Integrate hope-building strategies into both personal and professional spaces that serve youth. This includes goal setting, mapping pathways to goals, and building agency (the belief that one can take action toward a goal).

Guarantee Safe, Supportive Homes & Communities
Every young person deserves a stable home and community environment enriched with support and meaningful exposure to opportunities.

Serve with Love and Persistence
Deliver services to youth with patience, consistency, and care—treating every interaction as a chance to heal. Adopt love as a framework in which policy is rooted.

Hire and Invest in Youth
Bring young people fully into the work that affects their lives. Hire them. Train them. Pay them. Financial stability is a foundation of safety and empowerment.

Tell Stories. Humanize Data. Center Equity
Use storytelling to elevate lived experience. Behind every number is a person—this value should guide how we communicate and make decisions based on statistics. Center equity at every stage: from how metrics are defined to how results are shared. Always ask—who is being represented, who is being left out, and who gets to decide what matters?

Make Data Participatory
Youth, families, and communities need access, answers, and agency--not permission. Do research with youth, not on them. Engage them in asking questions, making meaning, and shaping how data is used.

Prioritize Prevention and Invest in Stability
Prevention must be the priority. When contact with the system occurs, youth need stability—achieved through cross-system collaboration and the dismantling of silos.

Address Overlooked Issues
Focus attention and resources on underrepresented issues like labor trafficking and the unique experiences of girls and gender-expansive youth.

Leverage the Transformative Power of Education Equitably
Education should be an empowering, transformative experience for all young people.

Share Power and Deepen Collaboration
Strengthen partnerships between youth and others by sharing power, building trust, and co-creating solutions by those closest to the challenges and those closest to the opportunities to advance action.