



**Department of  
Criminal Justice**

**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

**2026 - 2028**

Updated July 2026

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# A WORD FROM THE COMMISSIONER



**Tom Ross, Commissioner**

**We are leaders in the  
criminal & juvenile  
justice field.**

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Greetings partners,

Created in 1983 and recodified in 2026 the Utah Department of Criminal Justice (DOCJ) is a leader in the field of criminal and juvenile justice policy development. DOCJ serves as the primary granting agency for the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) funding, provides indigent defense services, delinquency prevention funding, and crime victims services programming

and funding at the state level. As a commission dedicated to evidence-based practices, DOCJ also engages in research and data collection in collaboration with partners across the state in an effort to coordinate and sustain sound policies and practices in Utah. We are confident the development and implementation of our strategic plan presented here will help us be held accountable and assist us in ensuring enacted policies and programs are carried out responsibly and with diligence.

# DOCJ

## DIVISIONS & TEAMS

We are an office with diverse experience working together to create a better criminal and juvenile justice system for all.



# ABOUT OUR DIVISION & TEAMS



## 01. CCJJ

DOCJ staffing is led by the Commissioner and comprised of individuals from various educational backgrounds with a wide range of experiences to support the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) in forming and implementing justice policies that rest on best practices. The Commission itself consists of nineteen statutorily delegated and appointed members representing all facets of the criminal and juvenile justice system.



## 02. Sentencing Commission

The Sentencing Commission is tasked by statute with maintaining and updating sentencing and supervision guidelines for adults and juveniles, the master offense list, and the collateral consequence guide. The Commission also provides training, research, and recommendations to the Legislature, the Governor, the Judicial Council and CCJJ itself regarding sentencing, release, and supervision policies. There are seventeen statutorily delegated and appointed members.



## 03. Juvenile Justice

Within DOCJ, there are three groups focused on juvenile justice: The Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee JJOC is statutorily responsible for overseeing the implementation of the juvenile reform efforts and for gathering and analyzing data that measures the impact of the policy changes at the state level. While the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice serves as the designated State Advisory Group for the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) and establishes a comprehensive compliance plan to meet eligibility for federal grants. The RED Collaborative is a branch of UBJJ that was created to help address and maintain compliance with the fourth core protection of the JJDPA.



## 04. Victim Services Commission

Created in 2023, the Victim Services Commission's goal is to generate unity for ongoing efforts to reduce and eliminate the impact of crime on victims through a comprehensive and evidence-based prevention, treatment, and justice strategy.



## 05. Office for Victims of Crime

Established by the Utah Legislature in February 1986, the mission of the Utah Office for Victims of Crime is to advocate for the rights and needs of crime victims in Utah by assisting in their restoration through financial compensation and other victim services.



## 06. Grants

DOCJ provides supplemental funding through state and federal grants to Utah state agencies, counties, municipalities, and other local organizations that provide programs and services which support and improve the criminal and juvenile justice ecosystem in Utah. The Grants team develops funding strategies for CCJJ approval and establishes projects throughout the State, while providing ongoing programmatic support, financial compliance monitoring, and training to grantees.



## 07. Data & Research

DOCJ is responsible for a wide-ranging research agenda that supports the development of new justice policies in Utah. The data and research team is responsible for conducting and coordinating research across Utah's criminal and juvenile justice systems while expanding current data capabilities and data system integration efforts.



## 08. Behavior Treatment & Management

Within DOCJ, there are two groups focused on behavior treatment and management. The first is the Domestic Violence Treatment Board, and the second is the Sex Offense Management Advisory Committee.



## 9. Indigent Defense Commission

Created in 2016, the Utah Indigent Defense Commission protects constitutionally guaranteed liberties through ongoing support for effective indigent defense services throughout the state.



## 10. Judicial Nominating Commission

DOCJ oversees and staffs the state's judicial nominating commissions. There are ten judicial nominating commissions--one for each judicial district, an appellate / Supreme Court commission, and the new Business and Chancery Court commission--with seven members each. DOCJ oversees the work of all of these commissions as they review judicial applications, conduct interviews, and submit nominees to the governor based on the merit-driven criteria established in Utah's constitution and statutes. DOCJ staff also advise the Governor on judicial appointments as requested.



## 11. JPEC

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) conducts performance evaluations of all state judges. JPEC provides ongoing evaluations to judges with the aim of continuously improving the quality of the judiciary. As judges stand for retention elections, the Commission publishes the evaluation report and determines whether the judge meets or exceeds performance standards or fails to meet them. Voters ultimately decide whether each judge will continue to serve in office.



## 12. Prosecutor Conduct Commission

Newly created in 2025, the Prosecutor Conduct Commission duties include receiving, initiating, investigating, or hearing complaints of alleged professional misconduct by a prosecuting attorney and reporting, gathering and publishing data on claims of professional misconduct by prosecuting attorneys.



## BACKGROUND

Created in 1983 and recodified in 2026, the Department of Criminal Justice is the coordinating body for criminal and juvenile justice policy in Utah. We are staffed by various experts in their respective fields who assist the Department in fulfilling its statutory duties and obligations set forth by the governor and legislature.

## VISION

We envision a justice system that is unified across all branches and level of government which:

- Serves the community and instills public confidence and support.
- Ensures the safety and security of all citizens, provides assistance for victims, and affords a just process for those accused of violating the law.
- Is founded on principles of respect for diversity, timely and equal access to services, and a comprehensive approach to criminal and juvenile justice that includes prevention and treatment.

## MISSION

Our mission is to connect and collaborate with system partners on criminal and juvenile justice policy with the goal of reducing crime and delinquency in Utah.

By delivering an objective and wide-ranging research and grant agenda, the Department ensures current and sought after policies rest on sound data and input from diverse perspectives.

# VALUES

## Collaboration

We create a productive space wherein system and community partners can have dialogue and cooperation on criminal and juvenile justice policy. We share information, data, research, and expertise while acknowledging contributions from others in our work. We forge new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships to fulfill our statutory obligations.

## Innovation

We collect, analyze, and identify data trends to monitor changes in policies and reveal potential gaps in the system. We adapt to meet emerging needs and continue to learn new technology to respond to the priorities of the governor, legislature, and community we serve.

## Integrity

We are good stewards of resources, and we act ethically. We value commitment to excellence in the actions we take to fulfill our mission and meet statutory responsibilities. We are trustworthy, transparent, and hold ourselves accountable.

## Truth

We value research. We believe a shared understanding of existing national and local data trends and analysis is critical when developing public policy. We endeavor to provide accurate information to the governor, legislature, system partners, and the general public.

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## OVERVIEW

In 2023, DOCJ began a strategic planning process to identify strengths, challenges, gaps, and opportunities within the agency. Based on the agency assessment findings, strategic goals and objectives were developed. It is the hope of our agency to implement this strategic plan on an ongoing basis where it is reviewed often, integrated into our daily operations, and actively guides our decision making. In 2025 and 2026 an updated survey was sent out to staff and recommendations were incorporated into this update.

## STRENGTHS & ASSETS

- Collaboration, communication, and effectiveness with local and national partners
- Well trusted through grants, research, and support across all areas of expertise
- Small but mighty! Excellent, highly educated, competent, skilled individuals
- Positive work environment, team that works well together internally

## CHALLENGES & GAPS

- Neutrality in policy and research
- Division silos and communication
- Limited staff with quickening pace of policy changes, initiatives, and new responsibilities
- Lengthy process of implementation of some policies and operational efficiency

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance information sharing by sharing resources, cross train on tasks, implement lunch and learns, increase efficient staff meeting
- Leverage emerging technology
- Increase accessibility to information with more outreach and education to general public, legislators, rural and diverse communities

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

## 01. Goal: Engage with system partners to support policy development

### **Objective 1: Collaborate effectively with the governor, legislature, system partners, and the community on criminal and juvenile justice policies**

- Strategy: Proactively coordinate policy discussions during the legislative session and throughout the interim
- Strategy: Ensure diverse perspectives and experiences are represented on commissions, councils, and boards
- Strategy: Cultivate new relationships as needed and strengthen current relationships to present a unified front
- Strategy: Increase opportunities for public engagement by ensuring public meetings are posted 24 hours in advance and allow time for public comment during the meeting

### **Objective 2: Provide and communicate input and expertise on policies**

- Strategy: Attend and testify at committee hearings during the legislative session and throughout the interim
- Strategy: Utilize different mediums to communicate information
- Strategy: Implement GRIT Initiative Project

#### **Performance Metrics**

- Number of meetings, number and type of working groups
- Number of policies worked on and products such as information summaries, bill language, literature reviews, etc. produced from commissions, councils, boards, and working groups
- General Session Summary Report

## 02. Goal: Ensure current and sought after policies rest on sound data and research

### Objective 1: Implement statutory requirements including FY 26 policies and Governor's executive order

- Strategy: If available, gather data, monitor policy effects, and recommend changes as necessary
- Strategy: Publish and elevate relevant statutory reports

### Objective 2: Support policy development by providing accurate data and research

- Strategy: Ensure there is research and data support representation on commissions, councils, boards, and working groups
- Strategy: Establish a research and data request process for internal and external requests
- Strategy: Publish and elevate relevant data and research reports

### Objective 3: Improve coordination and connection of data systems for data collection and reporting

- Strategy: Implement HB 403, HB 304, and other relevant data policies

#### Performance Metrics

- Number of completed research studies, briefs, and informational products published and presented on
- Number of completed statutory reports, annual reports published and presented on
- HB 403 progress report
  - Percentage of systems connected
  - Number of established memorandums of understanding with relevant data agencies

### **03. Goal: Deliver a comprehensive approach to criminal and juvenile justice that includes prevention and addressing needs to achieve public safety**

#### **Objective 1: Provide services and assistance for individuals impacted by crime**

- Strategy: Implement UOVC Strategic Plan. Improve timeliness in making determinations on victims' applications and processing payments. Re-evaluate the benefit limits
- Strategy: Implement VSC Strategic Plan and recommendations from VSC Study
- Strategy: Implement Safe at Home program

#### **Objective 2: Afford a just process for those accused of violating the law**

- Strategy: Implement IDC Strategic Plan. Provide services, funding and promote equal access to effective counsel to rural Utah
- Strategy: Implement JPEC Strategic Plan. Collect and disseminate valid information about each judge's performance. Provide useful feedback to judges about their performance so they may become better judges
- Strategy: Implement PCC statutory responsibilities
- Strategy: Ensure Judicial Nominating Commission is fully staffed and coordinated to meet judge vacancy needs
- Strategy: Fulfill extradition requests within a week of request

#### **Objective 3: Promote sentencing policies that effectively address the three separate goals of criminal sentencing: Risk Management, Risk Reduction. and Restitution**

- Strategy: Implement Sentencing Commission Strategic/Work Plan and requirements set forth from the General Session (HB 274)

#### **Objective 4: Promote policies, programming, and practices that effectively address behavior treatment and management**

- Strategy: Create and implement strategic plan for Domestic Violence Treatment Board
- Strategy: Create and implement strategic plan for Sex Offense Management Advisory Council

#### **Objective 5: Identify and address disparities at key points in the adult and juvenile justice system including socioeconomic, geospatial, and other disparities**

- Strategy: Implement Juvenile Justice team strategic plan which includes the work of JJOC, UBJJ and R/ED Collaborative
- Strategy: Implement juvenile and adult geospatial mapping studies
- Strategy: Lead policy, program, and practice efforts with the goal of promoting approaches that incorporate community strengths, resources, and strategies tailored to local circumstances and needs

#### **Performance Metrics**

- Amount of funding distributed to victim services
- UOVC Claim Timeliness: Percent of victim claims processed within 50 days or less
- Number of IDC grants provided to counties
- Number of Victim Rights Request and number of requests that are resolved
- JPEC Improvement % increase in website visits over previous year
- Number of individuals served by Safe at Home Program
- Number and funding amount of extraditions
- Number of judge vacancies filled
- Trend analysis on the presence of disparities, use geospatial maps
- Number and type of community engagement strategies implemented
- Division progress/annual reports

## **04. Goal: Increase public safety by reducing crime and delinquency and increasing protective factors that are linked to mitigating risk factors for system involvement**

### **Objective 1: Implement adult criminal and juvenile justice policies**

- Strategy: Ensure policy coordination and data monitoring of adult criminal justice reform policies that passed in 2015 and subsequent policies through the CCJJ Commission
- Strategy: Implement/continue working groups from all commissions and boards for the criminal justice system
- Strategy: Work collaboratively with Utah Association of Counties (UAC) to continue to build out county level criminal justice coordinating councils
- Strategy: Ensure policy coordination and data monitoring of juvenile justice policies that passed in 2017 and subsequent policies through JJOC
- Strategy: Implement/continue working groups through the JJOC

### **Objective 2: Provide funding through state and federal grants to Utah state agencies, counties, municipalities, and other local organizations that provide programs and services**

- Strategy: Establish grants strategic plan
- Strategy: Identify high needs communities through the use of geospatial methods. Prioritize funding based on identification of high needs/gaps in services
- Strategy: Identify new grant resources to expand DOCJ grant portfolio
- Strategy: Leverage AI and identify needed grants management system updates

### **Objective 3: Implement quality monitoring of grants**

- Strategy: Ensure regular auditing and reporting for compliance
- Strategy: Provide training through town halls and other mediums as necessary
- Strategy: Routinely have grantees present at relevant stakeholder meetings

#### **Performance Metrics**

- Adult Criminal and Juvenile Justice Annual reports
- Recidivism and desistance measures
- Parolees on 72-hour holds: This is the number of individuals on parole that generated inmate-days for all participating jails in the state
- Condition of Probation Felony Offenders: Number of Felony offenders placed on probation and given jail time as a condition of probation
- Number of individuals on parole that generated inmate-days for all participating jails in the state
- Number of Felony offenders placed on probation and given jail time as a condition of probation
- Number of grants and amount distributed
- Number of programs/people served through grant distribution
- Number of grantees deemed in compliance, Number of site visits conducted
- Number of grants and amount distributed to identified high needs area

## **05. Goal: Promote individual and team excellence while anchoring our culture in trust and personal autonomy**

### **Objective 1: Promote and provide opportunities for professional and career development that advances skillsets related to job responsibilities**

- Strategy: Ensure funding supports for trainings and conferences
- Strategy: Promote attendance of trainings and conferences as a part of individual employee performance plans

### **Objective 2: Provide cross training and support on eligible work assignments**

- Strategy: Evaluate gaps and needs of current work assignments through communication with supervisor during quarterly performance meetings
- Strategy: Based on gaps and needs, identify opportunities and strengths where cross training and sharing of resources is feasible among staff

### **Objective 3: Align the number of full-time employees with the agency's needs in order to meet statutory responsibilities**

- Strategy: Review current and new statutory obligations and assess capacity and budget resources to fulfill unmet needs

### **Objective 4: Unify and support staff**

- Strategy: Conduct regular staff meetings with team building activities and presentations of highlighted projects from different divisions and teams

### **Objective 5: Implement lunch and learns every other month**

- Strategy: Have team members sign up for lunch and learns. Leverage state resources such as DTS and DHRM

**Objective 6: Responsibly manage, report, and utilize agency funding in accordance with all state and federal budget and finance rules**

- Strategy: Pay all vendors and reconcile all state and federal transactions within set timeframes
- Strategy: Closeout annual budget on time following state agency calendars and procedures by August deadline
- Strategy: Prepare and submit all budget, comp, performance, and budget request data according to fall GOPB deadlines
- Prepare fiscal notes and other fiscal projections/forecasts during session and as needed throughout the year

**Performance Metrics**

- Quarterly Reports
- Individual performance plans
- The number of staff meetings, trainings, team building activities, and service projects

## 06. Goal: Increase accessibility and awareness of policy initiatives, resources, and research

### Objective 1: Help the legislature, system partners, and the community more easily access assistance, resources, data, and research

- Strategy: Continually keep public facing website up to date
- Strategy: Regularly publish research and reports on website
- Strategy: Disseminate products through various mediums
- Strategy: Present at Interim and regular legislative meetings as requested
- Strategy: Engage more with communities across the state, including rural areas, and providing training on research initiatives like the 403 project
- Strategy: Implement Statewide Customer Experience (CX) Program. Resolve 100% of requested assistance through the Qualtrics Intercept within one week
- Strategy: Implement Governor’s rebranding initiative by December 2026
- Strategy: Implement Federal Accessibility rules by April 2027

#### Performance Metrics

- Number of presentations
- Number of published work
- Number of website visits
- Customer Experience (CX) Program feedback ratings through Qualtrics Intercept
- Quarterly operational reports

# APPENDICES

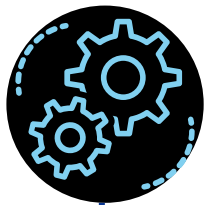
As DOCJ is uniquely comprised of various commissions, divisions, and teams, the following attachments are completed strategic plans by some divisions.

An annual work plan template has been created to help each division set goals and strategies that align with the overall agency's vision, mission, values, and strategic goals. Each division and team should refer to their respective strategic plan/work plans at least quarterly and revise as needed.

Finally, a strategic mapping document was also developed to help the agency and each division connect and streamline strategic plans to annual work plans, performance plans, and relevant operational and annual reports.

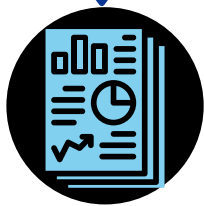
# Appendix A: Strategic Mapping

*How can we best meet our responsibilities while maximizing efficiency?*



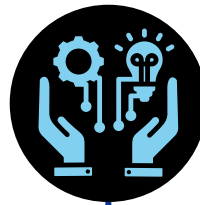
## Operational Reports

Summary of progress from annual work plans and should include team/individual milestones



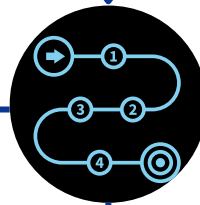
## DOCJ Annual Report

Summary of accomplishments from the year pulled from operational reports/annual work plans, and list out division and statutory reports



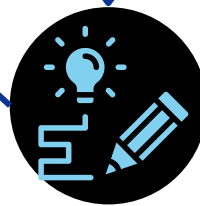
## Strategic Plan

Overall agency vision, mission, values, goals, and objectives for the next three years



## Annual Work Plans

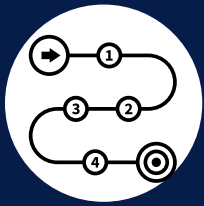
Detailed strategies to achieve goals and objectives from strategic plan with designated leads/teams



## Individual Performance Plan

Performance plan goals should fit neatly under agency goals, and support annual work plans with flexibility to include individual goals

# Appendix B: Annual Work Plan Template



## Annual Work Plans

Detailed strategies to achieve goals and objectives from strategic plan with designated leads/teams

Goal #	Strategy	Champion	Budget & Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
1	Strategy: Proactively coordinate policy discussions throughout the interim and during the legislative session	CCJJ, Sentencing, UBJJ, Victims	Existing Budget	Ongoing	Underway