

# NEBRASKA

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COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT  
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE



Pete Ricketts, Governor

December 19, 2018

To: County Officials and Juvenile Diversion Partners

Re: Juvenile Diversion Resources: Nebraska Supreme Court's Victim Youth Conferencing (VYC)

Dear Colleagues:

Attached is a letter from Debora Denny, Director of Office of Dispute Resolution, describing Victim Youth Conferencing (VYC) and the success it is having with youth in our schools, diversion, and probation systems. VYC is a restorative justice strategy that allows interested victims of minor offenses the opportunity to meet with the youth that caused them harm in a safe structured setting facilitated by a trained mediator. The process allows the youth to be held accountable, truly understand the harm the offense has caused by both parties expressing their feelings and perceptions of the offense, and work to reach an agreement on steps the youth will take to repair the harm suffered by the victim. In appropriate cases, this is an excellent evidence-based approach that can be utilized in juvenile diversion.

Each county is represented by a regional mediation center that can accept your diversion referrals to provide this service. If your county participates in the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid grant program, this would be an allowable service within the grant. The Office of Dispute Resolution also has the ability to assist in covering the costs of the service, if necessary. I would encourage you to reach out to your local mediation center to discuss how you might be able to incorporate their services into your program.

Nebraska mediation center information can be accessed [here](#).

I have also included an updated example diversion flowchart that incorporates VYC and restorative justice into the process. Please let me know if you have any questions about utilizing this service within your diversion program.

Happy Holidays!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Hoffman".

Amy Hoffman  
Director, Juvenile Diversion Programs Division

Darrell Fisher, Executive Director

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STATE OF  
**NEBRASKA**  
JUDICIAL BRANCH

December 20, 2018

TO: County Officials and Partners in Nebraska Counties' Juvenile Diversion Programs

RE: Juvenile Diversion Resources: Nebraska Supreme Court's Victim Youth Conferencing (VYC)

Dear Colleagues:

First, happy holidays to you! I want to share with you that over the past few years, Nebraska's six regional mediation centers initiated a new program, **Juvenile Victim Youth Conferencing (VYC)**, available to youth in schools, diversion, and probation, as well as the victims who have suffered a loss as a result of the youth's actions. VYC is available without charge to youth and victims through a generous grant from the Sherwood Foundation and Supreme Court funds, as well as from some counties' local budgets and Community Based Aid funds.

Over the past few years, county diversion programs, school-based diversion, courts, and probation have all used VYC as a means to hold youth accountable for their wrongdoing.

A VYC is a facilitated restorative justice process that provides interested victims of offenses such as theft, burglary, minor assaults, and vandalism the opportunity to voluntarily meet with the youth who caused harm in a safe and structured setting with a goal of holding the offender directly accountable for their behavior, while providing the victim with assistance and compensation. Reparation plans are entered into by the youth and victim or victim surrogate, and overseen to assure compliance with the restoration agreements. The VYC process balances the needs of the victim, the needs of the offender, and the needs of the community.

Our recent 18-month program pilot demonstrated that 84% of youth who participated in VYC did not recidivate within 1-year of successful completion of the program. As many as 440 youth offenders have participated in the VYC program since its initiation, of which a significant 42% were referred through juvenile diversion during the past fiscal year (2017-2018).

You may already be using VYC services and working with your local mediation center. Over the course of the next several months, representatives of Nebraska's six regional mediation centers will continue their efforts to partner with you to serve your community through victim youth conferencing.

I strongly encourage your involvement in collaborating with the mediation center in your region, including the development of Memoranda of Understanding, in order to continue to integrate this restorative justice-based service for youth in our systems. Please contact Alisha or me if you'd like to learn more about restorative justice resources such as Victim Youth Conferencing. Our [Restorative Justice](#) Webpage has more information for you too.

Thank you,

Debora Denny, J.D.  
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# JUVENILE DIVERSION PROCESS FLOWCHART

