DJJOY Facility Visitation Guidance

The foremost commitment in the Division for Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth is to the health and safety of the young people in our care and custody.

In order to serve our youth effectively, we rely heavily on the involvement of family members and other outside participants and service providers to engage, support, and work with the youth in our custody. In-person visitation by families and legal representatives contributes greatly to the wellbeing and support of youth throughout their time in residential programming.

Due to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, facilities must take extra precautions regarding the flow of people in and out of our facilities to protect health and safety of the youth and staff. As part of our multi-pronged response to COVID-19, DJJOY is taking special steps to ensure the safety of youth in care. These mitigation strategies are necessary to reduce the possibility of facility-based transmission of COVID-19 and will remain in effect until further notice.

(1) Each of our facilities is being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by professional cleaners over the next several weeks. During that time, our residential programs will be closed to all persons other than DJJOY staff members who are essential to the operation of the residential program. This will include family members, legal counsel and vendors.

(2) Facilities will expand the use of telephone and video communication, including providing additional incoming and outgoing phone calls to all youth, to support continued family visitation and attorney consultation opportunities for all youth. Other non-critical services to youth that can be delivered remotely will be facilitated by DJJOY using alternative technologies.

(3) Facilities will screen all individuals, including DJJOY staff, before granting entry to the facility. This screening is designed to determine whether the person is at risk of exposure to COVID-19:

- Have you traveled to a country for which the CDC has issued a Level 2 or 3 travel designation within the last 14 days?
- Have you had contact with any Persons Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID19 within the last 14 days, OR with anyone with known COVID-19?; and
- Do you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath)?

Recognizing the traumatic impact this evolving health crisis could present to residents, facilities will address circumstances warranting additional visitation, such as where the visitation would meet the therapeutic needs of the youth and not present danger to the health and well-being of other youth or OCFS staff. Requests for in-person visits by family members or other individuals for unusual or urgent circumstances will be considered and responded to on a case-by-case basis.

These suspensions will be revisited on an ongoing basis in consideration of statewide guidance for the operation of congregate care facilities. A return to visitation will be enacted as soon as possible.