

YOUR WILLISTON COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER



December 2025

BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

802.764.1151

COMMUNITY
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED

TO WORK WITH THE
COMMUNITY JUSTICE
CENTER

Serving Bolton, Hinesburg, Huntington, Richmond, St. George and Williston, the WILLISTON COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our communities through restorative practices specifically tailored to meet the needs of impacted and responsible parties.

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The restorative justice process invites people to tell their story of being harmed and being accountable for harming another person.

Prof Tim Chapman, Visiting Professor at The University of Strathclyde and Università degli Studi di Sassari (Italy), Chair of the European Forum for Restorative Justice

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SERVICES ARE CHANGING

Earlier this year, Vermont passed Act 180, which restructures how pre-charge diversion will operate statewide. The new system aims to make diversion more consistent and available to more people across Vermont.

Beginning in 2026, every county will have one lead diversion entity funded through the Vermont Attorney General's Office; the Burlington Community Justice Center is expected to become the countywide hub for pre-charge referrals.

While restorative justice services are changing in Chittenden County, the Williston Community Justice Center continues to serve local residents and handle referrals as we always have. The transition to the centralized model will be occurring in summer 2026, and extensive planning is underway to shape the service delivery and retain the strong local component.

We're working closely with the Attorney General's Office, other Chittenden County centers, and community partners to shape the transition plan. A Steering Committee and Transition Team are in place and meeting monthly. The Town also stood up an Advisory Committee for the transition that will begin meeting this month.

CONTINUED WORK, WCJC NARRATIVE REPORT TO THE AGO, December 2025



The Williston Community Justice Center is staffed by Mandy Ferland, Restorative Justice Program Manager. Joining Mandy in the work are many volunteers.

Currently, there are thirty-four active volunteers working on restorative panels. Some have been volunteering for years and some are newly engaged in this work; about half have served on panels less than one year. Outreach, involvement, and word of mouth continue to bring those interested to panel work; five have expressed interest but are currently unvetted and trained and are not, yet, included among active volunteers. This includes two from the Williston CJC Advisory Board.

Of note, active volunteers do include one from the Essex CJC. Both Essex and Burlington CJsCs have offered assistance and panel collaboration, due to high numbers of pre-charge referrals.

The WCJC is currently scheduling into mid-January; this is typical.

Panels meet four weeks a month, on Tuesday and Thursday. A new panel was recently added, meeting on the first Tuesday afternoon. Other panels meet in the evening. Between two and three cases are heard per meeting.

Panels are made up of as many as five trained and training volunteers, a staff person, and the responsible party or person who committed the crime. Impacted parties, or victims, are always welcome should they choose to attend. Others may join the panels, on invitation. Panels have been joined by parents, siblings, spouses/partners/significant others, foster parents and guardians, guardian ad litem, police officers, probation officers, mental health workers, and other supports, friends, and pets.

As of December 1, 2025, the WCJC has twenty-seven active pre-charge referrals, as well as two school referrals. These school referrals are included as non-charge or community referrals. We have closed forty-nine pre-charge cases since July 1st.

The oldest active case is from a June 2025 referral. This is expected to have a closure in December, with attendance at a re-scheduled Safe Driving course. There are three July referrals open; all were rescheduled completions, due to hospitalization, State (DCF) treatment custody, and a family death.

Ages of referred individuals are between 15 and 85 years of age, with the youngest, a school referral, aged 12.

Non-charges, misdemeanor, and felony pre-charges have been referred. Referring agencies include Hinesburg, Richmond, and Williston PDs, the Chittenden County Sheriff's Department, and the State's Attorneys Office as returned cases.

Most cases are referred by the WPD. Case samples are sent by the WCJC monthly, to be shared with officers.

Additional monthly updates and information are shared. These include newsletters and training materials.

WORK DONE

IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER OF 2025...

WCJC volunteers facilitated 29 panels.

IN THESE LAST TWO MONTHS...

the Williston Community Justice Center has successfully closed 13 cases through volunteer panels.

STORIES TO TELL

ADDICTION...

As a dark entity hovers, I see my reflection staring back at me.

Desperation sinks in, and I feel lost, consumed by the overwhelming sense of darkness from my pores.

This exhilarating sensation captivates my every thought, as I slip deeper into a transparent wraith of incomprehension and despair.

My mind, body, and soul are instantly possessed by an unattainable and unexplainable power that wields an unknown strength impossible to resist.

The eyes sag low; the light turns dark.

The heart slows to a pace that leaves me questioning if I'm still alive.

Driven by rage and compelled by fear; rejection becomes the most assertive, logical action to take.

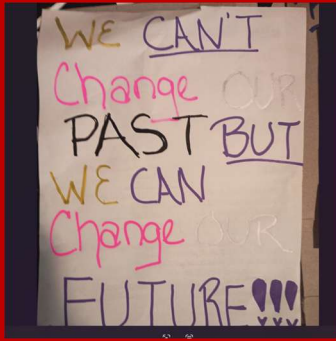
But denying the unfeasible thought that I'm no longer in control suddenly become apparent.

I'm left in the wake of fear, desperation, and despair.

Despite all my sincere attempts to overcome and persevere, a dark entity still hovers, and my reflection is still staring back at me.

Welcome to addiction.

David Berard



By referred participant

“I understand that you may not want to hear this, but I want to sincerely apologize for my actions. What I did was wrong, and I shouldn’t have taken your money. I was going through a tough time, but everyone experiences difficulties, but I didn’t consider your situation and what you’re going through. I was selfish... And I just want to make things right between us thinking about the situation, it’s messed up and I want to sincerely apologize for my actions.” *(Quote by referred participant)*



Wally and Freya by author Lindsey Pointer, with Stella Mongodi illustrator, is a **“heartwarming picture book that teaches empathy and inclusion”** and the first in a series on restorative justice practices for kids. “This book is sure to delight children and grownups alike.”

An author reading is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=908dHH61b2M>

“I... [did] not fully process how many people I inconvenienced by one careless decision and continued to repeat the same mistake of speeding for the fun of it. Getting my first speeding ticket after my crash forced me to look back on my mistake and how my actions do impact everything around me... but it shouldn’t take a mistake to understand the impact our choices have. Safe driving protects lives, spares time for emergency responders, minimizes stress and worry in friends and family, keeps the environment cleaner and saves other drivers and pedestrians from delays or injuries. Every decision on the road matters. Staying mindful can make all the difference.” *(Quote by referred participant)*

“... The Community Justice Center is an amazing program. Instead of fines and other kinds of punishments, people can really think deeply and reflect on what got them to that point.... Thank you for giving me a second chance through the CJC. This has taught me true responsibility...” *(Quote by referred participant)*

**WILLISTON COMMUNITY
JUSTICE CENTER**
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Please share this resource!