

# Raising the Delinquency Age Status Report

*Updated June 22, 2026*

## Background

In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature amended the juvenile code to raise the minimum age of delinquency from 10 to 13. The Legislature also updated the child protection code so that youth under 13 who commit a delinquent act will be considered a “child in need of protection or services” (CHIPS). These changes will take effect on August 1, 2026, and represent a major shift in how the state responds to children exhibiting “concerning or harmful behaviors.” Under this statutory change, youth under 13 who commit delinquent acts will now be served primarily through the child welfare system. This transition requires extensive coordination among state agencies, counties, Tribal Nations, courts, law enforcement, schools, and community partners.

## Implementation Planning

In late 2025, to support this transition, the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) launched a collaborative effort to plan for implementation. The effort solicited insights via interviews from more than 70 individuals across the state. State experts also convened twice in the spring of 2026 to identify system needs, clarify roles, surface promising practices, and co-develop an implementation approach. The resulting implementation framework outlines the priorities and sequence of activities needed to prepare for and sustain the change. The framework included short-, medium-, and long-term priorities.

### Short-Term Priorities (before August 1, 2026)

- Immediate efforts focus on preparing the field for implementation. Key needs include developing clear cross-agency guidelines, clarifying roles across local systems, establishing consistent referral and screening processes, launching a statewide communication plan, and delivering comprehensive, cross-sector training on statutory intent, workflow changes, trauma-informed practice, and the service array.

### Medium-Term Priorities (August 1, 2026–June 30, 2027)

- During the first year of implementation, partners will assess service capacity, identify gaps, and explore models for a comprehensive system of care. Additional priorities include licensing reform, expanding residential and community-based treatment options, and conducting a full regulatory crosswalk to ensure alignment among federal, state, and Tribal requirements.

## Long-Term Priorities (After June 30, 2027)

- Sustaining change will require modernizing and integrating data systems, establishing shared performance measures, expanding workforce capacity, strengthening family systems and supports, and ensuring continued access to diversion and restorative justice programming and mental health supports. Success depends on investment across systems and ongoing collaboration among all partners.

This framework reflects the collective insights of practitioners, policymakers, community providers, and advocates. It is designed to guide Minnesota’s coordinated effort to improve outcomes for at-risk children and families through a more developmentally appropriate and service-oriented approach.

As an interagency partnership focused on the healthy development of children and families, the Minnesota Children’s Cabinet is convening workgroups of state and local constituencies to activate and guide implementation.

## Essential Information

As the implementation date nears, state agencies, including the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, the Department of Corrections, and other partners are actively coordinating to prepare and support social service staff, law enforcement, attorneys, and service providers. Efforts underway include:

- Drafting guidelines that will inform intake processes, reporting, placement, and services.
- Documenting the service array available to the impacted population and their families.
- Developing learning and training opportunities.
- Creating communication channels to provide timely updates on implementation.
- Assessing opportunities for the legislature to further refine the code and invest in the juvenile system.

## Organizations Currently Involved in Implementation Efforts

- Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)
- Minnesota Departments of:
  - Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)
  - Corrections (DOC)
  - Health (MDH)
  - Human Services (DHS)
  - Public Safety (DPS)
- Minnesota Judicial Branch, Children’s Justice Initiative
- Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC)
- Minnesota County Attorney’s Association (MCAA)
- Minnesota Association of County Social Service Agencies (MACSSA)
- Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties (MACCAC)
- Aspire Minnesota

For more information, please contact the Children’s Cabinet at [childrencabinet.MMB@state.mn.us](mailto:childrencabinet.MMB@state.mn.us).