

## **Community Based Juvenile Justice Programs**

### **Office of the Plymouth District Attorney**

**February 3, 2026**

During 2025, the Plymouth District Attorney's Office (PCDAO) administered twenty-two community-based juvenile justice programs (school safety forums) serving twenty-seven communities in the County of Plymouth. These programs were designed to coordinate the efforts of school systems, law enforcement, the Plymouth County Probation Department, and, as appropriate, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services to develop positive interventions for court-involved and at-risk juveniles. Additionally, their confidential forums may serve to identify those juveniles whose violent behavior could potentially pose a danger to school systems and communities, maintain school safety, and help deter the recurrence of violence.

These collaborative school safety forums have been in place in Plymouth County for several years. The Plymouth District Attorney's Office has taken a leadership role in scheduling these meetings and in facilitating and maintaining open lines of communication between the partner agencies. The Plymouth District Attorney's Office encourages and supports the regular participation of relevant agencies, as appropriate. Partner agencies may choose to explain the specific services and interventions they offer, as well as any relevant criteria and protocols for accessing them. The forums have been an effective venue for agencies to share informational resources. The Plymouth District Attorney's Office assigns an Assistant District Attorney to each confidential forum to ensure consistency with the towns and to assist in communication. This Office initiates discussions about individual cases and invites input from the collaborative agencies regarding individuals whose alleged conduct may pose a threat to the schools, neighborhoods, and communities. These forums also provide information to the Plymouth District Attorney's Office that assists in the effective resolution of delinquency cases, benefiting the juvenile and the community.

These collaborative agencies include Juvenile Probation, the Department of Youth Services, schools, and local law enforcement. The office works closely with School Resource Officers to enhance the Office's understanding of school incidents and to learn the best ways to support schools and juveniles. General school safety concerns, precautions, and perceived trends are also discussed to further support schools and community prevention efforts.

The Plymouth Juvenile Court in Brockton serves six communities: Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, and Whitman. The Juvenile

Session of Wareham serves seven communities: Carver, Lakeville, Marion, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Rochester, and Wareham. The Juvenile Session in Plymouth serves eight communities: Duxbury, Halifax, Hanson, Kingston, Marshfield, Pembroke, Plymouth, and Plympton. The Juvenile Session in Hingham serves six communities: Hanover, Hingham, Hull, Norwell, Rockland, and Scituate.

Currently, the Brockton Juvenile Court has a delinquency session every day. Wareham has a delinquency session once a week. Plymouth has a delinquency session three times a week. Hingham has a delinquency session once a week.

The Plymouth District Attorney's Office provides strategic, targeted prevention, education, and training to our twenty-two communities. In 2025, following a review of our caseload and diversion referrals, we continued to enhance our programming and better utilize the diversion resources available to our office.

The Plymouth County District Attorney's Office Juvenile diversion program takes eligible juvenile offenders with no prior criminal history out of the court system and places them into a diversion program administered by the District Attorney's Office on a case-by-case basis. In lieu of being prosecuted for the alleged offense, the juvenile and their guardians will agree to sign a contract with conditions set by the district attorney's staff. These conditions can include, but are not limited to, community service, educational programming, community support services, restitution payments, and more, depending on the case. If the juvenile successfully completes all required conditions set out in their contract and stays out of further trouble, their cases are disposed of before arraignment, saving them the stigma of a criminal record. If they do not complete the requirements or new charges are issued, they can be brought back into court and prosecuted for the original offenses. The program works diligently to ensure adequate service to the community and to juveniles while holding them responsible for the alleged crime. In the year 2025, there were approximately 15 juveniles in the program. There have been no diversion cases this year that have been removed and prosecuted.

The Plymouth County District Attorney's Office offered the following in 2025:

1. Hosted Cyber Sense Program, educating youth about internet safety. The Cyber Sense Program helps youth and parents identify the dangers and pitfalls of social media so they can be better aware and prepared. During the program, parents and youth are educated on parental controls, identity theft, social media, cyberbullying, sexting, digital footprint, and commercial sexual exploitation. The office did 28 presentations to over 4,100 students.
2. Provided funding to Marshfield Grad Night Live.

3. Hosted two Discovering Justice afterschool programs. Discovering Justice is a nonprofit organization that partners with middle schools to expose the students to the legal profession as a potential career path. Assistant District Attorney volunteers as mentors. The mentors met with the students once a week to share their experience as attorneys, while using a preset curriculum and providing materials to prepare the students to argue their cases. In the spring, the program focused on appellate work, where the student argued a mock appeal. In the fall, the students focus on trial work, including a mock trial. Both programs had about 16 students participating.
4. Provided funding to Hull Parent Teachers Organization
5. Provided funding to Wareham Gatemen Baseball.
6. Provided comfort dogs to police departments and schools. Since March 2021, the Plymouth County Comfort Dogs Program has provided a network of comfort dogs to offer emotional support to students during the day and to the community at night and on the weekends. The Plymouth County Comfort Dog Program will undertake prevention intervention efforts to reduce the harm associated with Adverse Childhood Experiences among individuals who have already experienced them and to support the development of protective factors against potential harmful experiences. The objectives of our project are to (1) enhance the depth and quality of collaboration between law enforcement, service providers and school systems; (2) expand substance use education and prevention programming that connects law enforcement with youth; (3) increase access to drug take back programs for the community at large; (4) conduct evaluation to assess program impact. Both the handler and the comfort dog become members of the Plymouth County Comfort Dogs Program and are required to complete all necessary training to qualify as a comfort and community resource dog. Both the handler and comfort dog are available to assist not only in their community, but in all communities across Plymouth County as part of our regional response team. In total, twenty-four dogs interact with juveniles daily.
7. Provided funding to Brockton Sox, LLC.
8. Provided funding to the New Heights Charter School of Brockton
9. Provided funding for Choices 4 Teens Mentoring.