

**CHARITY R. CLARK  
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February 21, 2025

Jessie Baker, City Manager  
City of South Burlington  
180 Market Street  
South Burlington, VT 05403

Greg Duggan, Town Manager  
Town of Essex,  
81 Main St.  
Essex Junction, VT 05452

Erik Wells, Town Manager  
Town of Williston  
7900 Williston Road  
Williston, VT 05495

Dear Jessie, Greg, and Erik,

As you know Act 180 tasked the Attorney General's Office (AGO) with developing a plan in collaboration with pre-charge and post-charge Diversion providers in Chittenden and other counties to streamline the administration and provision of these services within each county. The law also directs the AGO to grant with "a single municipality or organization to provide community-based restorative justice programs and services in each county." 3 V.S.A. § 163(b) (eff. July 1, 2025). Currently, the AGO funds the Burlington Community Justice Center to provide post-charge Diversion, as well as the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program, the DLS program, and Pretrial Services in Chittenden County.

During the past nine months, the AGO has held many individual and group meetings with the four Community Justice Center (CJC) directors, as well as meetings including town managers and law enforcement representatives of seven municipalities in your county. We have also consulted Chittenden County State's Attorney Sarah George. Everyone agrees on the value of pre-charge Diversion as a quick response to low-level crime and the importance of a strong connection between providers and local law enforcement agencies. We discussed various models, including sub-granting by the Burlington CJC, as well as the AGO funding one, two, or four sites in Chittenden County. Funding uncertainty pending action of the Legislature on the FY 2026 budget adds an additional challenge to these discussions.

The AGO has considered all options within the current context and focusing on the three goals of a coordinated and efficient system, local delivery of services, and maintaining robust ties with law enforcement, has decided the following.

For FY 2026, the AGO will award grants to all four CJs for pre-charge Diversion in Chittenden County, provided the Legislature appropriates funds for this work. During FY 2026, we will work with

representatives of your municipalities and Burlington to ensure a transition to one grantee the following year.

For FY 2027, the AGO will incorporate pre-charge Diversion into the full array of AGO-funded services to one grantee for the county. Because the Burlington CJC is the current provider of Court Diversion and Pretrial Services, as well as providing pre-charge services under DOC funding, we anticipate that the Burlington CJC will be that grantee. The Burlington CJC will work to develop a plan, in collaboration with you, to embed staff in your municipalities' police departments and include county-wide representation, including law enforcement, on an advisory board. All providers statewide will work with our office on the development of policies and procedures per Act 180.

Thank you for the time and energy you and your CJC directors have devoted in the past months to discussing a move to an efficient, accessible, and effective delivery of pre-charge and post-charge Diversion. These services are important for public safety and the well-being of individuals in our communities. We appreciate your collaboration and look forward to continuing our partnership.

Sincerely,



Todd Daloz  
Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs



Willa Farrell  
Court Diversion and Pretrial Services Director

Cc: Erin Jacobsen, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office, City of Burlington