

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To require the Department of Employment Services to establish a peer mediation program for youth to facilitate conflict resolution, intervention, and dispute settlement among high school students, utilizing trained high school student mediators.

BE IT ENACTED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Youth Peer Mediation Act of 2024”.

Section 2: Establishment of the Youth Peer Mediation Program

(a) The Department of Employment Services (DOES) shall establish and administer a youth peer mediation program for high school students.

(b) The law library shall contain a comprehensive collection of legal resources, including but not limited to:

(1) Age-appropriate books, manuals, and guides on juvenile law, rights, and legal procedures.

(2) Educational materials on topics such as criminal justice, civil rights, family law, and immigration law, relevant to the needs and circumstances of detained youth.

(3) Access to electronic databases, online resources, and legal assistance services to facilitate research and information retrieval.

Section 5: Access and Assistance

(a) Detained youth shall have regular and unrestricted access to the law library

39 during designated hours, under the supervision of trained staff or volunteers.

40 (b) Staff members shall provide assistance and guidance to youth in navigating the law
41 library resources, conducting legal research, and understanding legal concepts and procedures.

42 (c) The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services shall collaborate with legal aid
43 organizations, law schools, bar associations, and other stakeholders to facilitate access to pro
44 bono legal representation and advocacy services for detained youth.

45 Section 6: Legal Education and Workshops

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47 (a) The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services shall develop and implement
48 educational programs and workshops to promote legal literacy and empower detained youth to
49 understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

50 (1) Educational sessions may cover topics such as constitutional rights,
51 interactions with law enforcement, court procedures, expungement eligibility, and pathways to
52 reentry and rehabilitation.

53 Section 7: Reporting Requirements

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55 (a) The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services shall submit annual reports to the
56 Council detailing the operations, resources, and utilization of the youth detention law library,
57 including data on access, usage, and feedback from detained youth.

58 Section 8. Fiscal impact statement.

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60 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
61 impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act,
62 approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(3)).

63 Section 9. Effective date.

64 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
65 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of Congressional review as
66 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
67 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813: D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)) and publication in the District of
68 Columbia Register.