Research increasingly confirms that young adults (ages 18–21) subjected to traditional criminal justice processing are at increased risk of recurring arrests and incarceration. One program at The Center for Law, Brain & Behavior (CLBB) focuses upon advancing science to inform juvenile and young adult justice policy and practices. Notable examples reported previously are the publication in January 2022 of a White Paper on the Science of Late Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood, and citation by counsel during oral argument before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to Dr. Robert Kinscherff’s testimony on adolescent and young adult development (Commonwealth v. Mattis, regarding raising the age of full criminal culpability from 18 to 21).

Over the last several months, CLBB has joined with the Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden, the Justice Lab at Columbia University, and two community-based service providers to design and implement a Young Adult Diversion Program (YADP) for persons aged 18–25. The YADP will prevent unwarranted penetration in the criminal justice system. A pilot pre-arraignment YADP will begin in Boston in the Fall of 2023 to prevent the negative outcomes of early criminal justice involvement while supporting increased community safety by reducing recidivism. Media reports of these and other initiatives follow.

