



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2021

2pm-3:30

Zoom Conference Call

Attendance:

Marc Pelka
Rep. Anthony Nolan
Christina Quaranta
Erica Bromley
Macklin Roman
Janeen Reid
Mr. Hector Glynn
Martha Stone
Rep. Robyn Porter
Judge Patrick Carroll
Judge Bernadette Conway

Gary Roberge
Tais Ericson
Atty Christine Rapillo
Brian Casinghino
Angel Quiros
Desi Nesmith
Amy Marracino
Lisa Sementilli
Stacy Schulman

Chief Joshua Bernegger
Sarah Eagan

TYJI Staff:

William Carbone
Erika Nowakowski
Kelly Orts
Danielle Cooper
Donna Pfrommer
Lorenzo Boyd
Susan Cusano

Welcome and Introductions

Undersecretary Marc Pelka filled in for Deputy Secretary Kostas Diamantis of OPM.

Erika Nowakowski announced that applications are open for the Tow Youth Justice Institute's Transforming Youth Justice Program. The program will run from September 2021 to June 2022 at no cost to the accepted applicant. The goals of the program are to build the capacity of the current and aspiring justice reformers to implement best practices in youth justice reform.

Acceptance of Minutes for JJPOC

Representative Nolan asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the April 15, 2021 meeting. The motion to accept the minutes was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

CIYPR Training Objectives

Dr. Danielle Cooper and Dr. Lorenzo Boyd introduced themselves and the Connecticut Institute for Youth and Police Relations. The main goal of this institute is to provide monthly training to police officers in the Greater Hartford area to help more effectively interact with youth and young adults. During the training, multiple points of engagement are offered so they can bridge the gap to help them understand youth development and perspectives of youth. This type of training is done in a



variety of ways, including bringing in community partners, such as the Connecticut Justice Alliance, AFCAMP, and different trainers with relevant backgrounds and knowledge.

There are 14 police officers participating from 7 different police departments. Keeping the classes small is important for educational and training purposes. The cohort includes officers that help serve the youth, ranging from officers who are school resource officers to officers in elementary/high school. The cohort also includes officers from cities that purposefully do not have school resource officers and work in different positions.

The goal is that this multi-month process provides structure where officers are able to come, build, learn and get feedback. The program coordinates resources so they can support and challenge them and how it will tie back to their job and their community that they will be engaging in. This training helps officers think of how they can help their community and consider what it takes for us to provide more supports related to the sustainability of community engagement with their department, their leadership, and their community. By the end of this project, the outcome is to see more police officers fully engaged with the community and also with different agencies and organizations. There are five stages; stage one, it is important for getting the Cohort members to understand where we are trying to go, and some of the things that are being done, the officers need to understand that it is a collective job. Stage two, the officers need to understand the lived experience and we need to build levels of trust, and after an eight-hour session, they are expected to go out and implement some of the things that have learned. During stage three, developing the community engagement, what it's going to look like and how it's going to work while even including spending time outside of the class. Emailing, zoom calls, phone calls trying to help the officers get a handle on different levels of diversion, how to better address young people dealing with authority. During stage four, there will be a graduation ceremony where the officers will present the community engagement project that they are working on. They present to everybody, including other officers so they can also see what is going on and are able to address the strengths and the weaknesses. However, after graduation, there is aftercare, which involves reaching out to the officers, including site visits, to make sure the engagement is fully operational. After they leave the program, what is expected of them is to be able to create relationships. It was emphasized that during stage five, after a full cycle of the CIYPR year, their work is not done. One of the main criticisms of police efforts is how are they evaluated. In addition to pre and post-tests, there are monthly assessments, and outcome and process evaluations. Finally, there was a point made about how there are a few officers from each department that are involved in the program, but when they leave to go back to their departments, they are talking to other officers about what is happening which creates a snowball effect.



There was further discussion on what the age range of youth are that they are training police on how to interact with. During this program, they are already trying to frame for them as nuanced as they can, that their work requires for them to see that children are in a growth space and that many times adults are not often framing that growth. This training is trying to get the officers to understand a restorative process, they explain the racial battle fatigue that a lot of people are dealing with, the different triggers in the community and vicarious trauma. There is a two-part process, the proactive part is going out and building relationships that did not exist and the reactive part is acknowledging where relationships have been broken and trying to restore those relationships.

Update on IOYouth Recommendations

The Council of State Governments and Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division partnered with the Improving Outcomes for Youth (IOYouth) Taskforce over the last year to conduct an assessment of Connecticut's juvenile justice system from diversion through re-entry. This partnership resulted in a set of presentations to the IOYouth Taskforce around findings and areas for improvement in terms of better aligning system policies and practices with research and what works to improve outcome for youth. In addition, a set of consensus-based recommendations approved by the IOYouth Taskforce in a variety of areas. The focus over the last nine months and moving forward is on the implementation of the recommendations. They have been working with the Tow Youth Justice Institute to help support moving those recommendations forward, as well as making sure that the work is coordinated with the work of the JJPOC.

The first goal is to ensure that court diversion and case handling decisions are based on a youth's assessed risk of reoffending and needs, rather than the nature of the offense. Currently, when a child is arrested, case handling decisions are based on the Connecticut practice book which is offense driven and does not take into consideration the child's rest to reoffend or their individual needs. A lot of time was spent discussing the importance of every child's different needs, therefore, the practice book changes are necessary to achieve this goal. The process of proposed language changes has already been started and will be considered by the Rules Committee in September to be voted on next June. A workgroup has met consistently to talk about what the change would look like, they have examined the current policies and procedures and what it would take to implement those changes. In addition, they also have consulted with their academic partners at Central Connecticut State University and expanded their existing consultation services around their validated risk assessment tool. The validated risk assessment tool, called the PREDICT, and is used to develop and validate a new risk and need screening tool, which is referred to as the PREDICT S. When looking at the data, they found that different constellations of the



screening items predicted rearrests for younger and older youth, so two models were developed, one for 15 and younger and another for 16 and older. The goal is to divert low risk youth away from the formal court process into community-based services and resources and preserve the court time and resources for the highest risk youth. There is previous research that states that providing interventions that are not aligned with the youth assessed risk to reoffend is detrimental to their well-being and it's likely to produce poor outcomes such as seeing those kids reoffend and go back into the court system only to become further involved in the court process. CCSU has assisted with developing an objective data informed risk screening process to reduce disparities. Under the new model, the new risk screening tool will help make front-end diversion decisions and help make decisions internally about how the kids match to services. They will also establish a quality assurance measure for ongoing monitoring of the risk and needs process so that they can look at how many kids are referred to the court, what percentage of kids are diverted away from the court to community-based resources, and what's happening when a case goes into the court.

The second goal is to increase family engagement and involvement throughout all phases of a youth's court involvement. The main focus involves establishing a family and youth partnership. They have consulted national leaders in family engagement, what works for them, and what they find to be most effective to engage families. They have also engaged representatives from youth and family advocacy groups, Department of Children and Families, Public Defender's office, and CSSD staff. There have been focus groups with former system-involved youth and families and establishing a guide and key principles for youth and family engagement in juvenile probation. They are looking for ways to partner with agencies who can serve as a bridge and ensure that they are helping families and the clients are benefiting from their policies and procedures. Another deliverable is to develop a child and family teaming and safety planning procedure before seeking a taken-into-custody order for violations of court orders. One of the last things they are looking to do is to establish a quality assurance measure for ongoing monitoring of their efforts. They want to amplify their voice and find ways to better engage families, to make sure families still feel the same level of support even if they are not involved.

CSSD also wants to make sure that their programs are keeping pace with the evolving landscape of juvenile justice and Connecticut, which means they are making sure they have the right service array. They also need to make sure that outcomes are being achieved, including recidivism reduction, improvements in family functioning, school attendance, or performance of kids, young adults getting jobs, and substance use going down. A document is being developed to show a landscape view across their entire continuum of programs, which allows them to measure strengths and weaknesses.



They also want to ensure that the procurement/ contracting process is functioning optimally for the acquisition of juvenile programming. This is bifurcated into two different domains, one is an internal process, making sure that the RFP writers are being trained to be clear on the services that are being aimed to acquire through the procurement exercise. The second is an external process, which explores the possibility of offering generic training to potential bidders and other stakeholders, to make RFPs known to small, grassroots organizations, and provide general information about preparation.

The last goal is to identify strengths as well as issues/barriers that exist for vendors working with Judicial Branch CSSD to serve the juvenile population with particular focus on treatment matching, client engagement/ dosage, coordination of care and the service array. Focus groups were being conducted with the directors of current juvenile programs to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

Residential Services-led Projects

The goals of the projects related to residential services is to ensure that the Detention Risk Screening Instrument is functioning correctly and addressing RED. CCSU is going to focus its analysis on detained youth and the questions that are most predictive of a public safety risk or if some questions need to be changed. Once the final tool is created, it will be automated into the case management information system so that the data is readily available to be analyzed and will ensure all the data is being captured.

They are also developing alternatives to the detention matrix or decision-making guide to safely divert from detention by mitigating risk to public safety. CSSD also wants to expand alternative intervention options through better utilization of existing resources and cross-system collaborations, to help address a domestic violence or family violence situation between a child and parent or their oppressor; or a situation where the family does not want the child in the home any longer, but the child isn't presenting a public safety risk that would warrant attention. Lastly, they are partnering with Law Enforcement and DCF to safely divert from detention or arrest. Through this partnership, it will become apparent what resources are needed to safely divert kids from the system.

Detention data dashboards are intended to be used internally to better align operations and policy outcomes across the three juvenile units within CSSD, which are residential services, probation services and programs and services. The dashboards will inform the stakeholder ad hoc data requests and the annual report will be posted to the judicial website which will provide additional



information on the population that is in pre-trial detention on an annual basis, what services they are receiving, and what their needs are.

There was further discussion on how CSSD will be analyzing the programs and services, looking at race, ethnicity, and gender. They have been able to desegregate their process and outcome data and information by race and gender. They also have a small business intelligence unit that is proficient, but they are moving towards self-service analytics where everybody can pull data that helps them make informed management decisions based on that data. Engagement with academic partners at CCSU helps them understand what conclusions can be reasonably drawn from the data that is known.

Next meeting: June 17th, 2-3:30PM

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm