

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development

Minutes of Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Jessie Parker Building, Starkweather Room
Des Moines, IA 50319

Present:

Steve Michael, Chair, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Ashley Arnold, Iowa Workforce Development
Lily Glenn, SIYAC
Mitch Hoyer, 4-H Youth Development
Joe Wernau, Child Advocacy Board
Doug Wolfe, Iowa Department of Human Services

Others Present:

Kayla Jabre, Iowa Youth Congress
Jill Padgett, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Kayla Powell, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Julie Rinker, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Sonya Streit, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development
Lyric Sellers, Youth Action Squad, DHR AmeriCorps Member
Endi Montalvo-Martinez, Youth Action Squad, DHR AmeriCorps Member
Andrea Dencklau, Iowa Aces 360
Kristie Oliver, Coalition for Family & Children's Services in Iowa
Kamryn Ryan, Volunteer Iowa
Isidro Gonzalez, Volunteer Iowa
Josh Pedretti, Families First Counseling Services
Kristina Seier, Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa

● **Welcome and Announcements**

Steve Michael welcomed all in attendance at 2:01 p.m. Introductions were made. A quorum was not present.

Michael provided information on the purpose of ICYD and its members. A recent approach has been towards authentic youth engagement.

● **Approval of 3/23/22 Minutes**

Due to lack of quorum, the minutes were not approved.

● **Youth Initiatives**

● **SIYAC (State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council)**

Lily Glenn, Chair, reported that SIYAC has 21 members throughout Iowa, ages 14-21. The purpose is to identify youth issues and advocate for changes through legislative



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position statements and service projects. There are five committees: Education, Health, Equity, Service, and Agriculture and Environment. They will utilize Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) principles for research activities.

Kayla Powell added that the ICYD Council will be reviewing Executive Branch youth initiatives. One of the goals in the three-year action plan is to create resources for all agencies to develop partnerships between youth and adults. She asked members to think about what resources their respective agency would need to develop or expand these partnerships.

- **Iowa Youth Congress**

Kayla Jabre reported that there are eleven districts this year. She provided further details, on research/position topics, by district. These topics include college prep, personal finance education, sex education, mental health, disability education, student representation on school boards, voter registration, and inclusivity training for teachers. Position statements are due in October in order to prepare for Mock Congress on November 7. Powell encouraged ICYD members to assist with Mock Congress.

- **AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential)**

Doug Wolfe provided an historical overview of AMP, a youth council comprised of current and former foster youth. The program began as “Elevate” in the early 2000s.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) convened a policy group, named Activating Youth Engagement, that includes HHS policy staff, AMP members and other stakeholders. Members meet quarterly to provide support to each other, conduct policy work, and learn about state policies, data, and legislation. Wolfe provided examples of changes that resulted from the Activating Youth Engagement’s efforts:

- recommendation to the Director of the Department of Human Services, the \$237 yearly clothing allowance was raised.
- HF2252 was passed in 2022 and extended foster care services to age 21. AMP members are involved in drafting administrative rule language.

Powell celebrated that AMP recently hired two young adults with lived experience.

- **Youth Justice Council**

Powell reported that the Youth Justice Council (YJC) is a subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council. The YJC began in December 2021, and is comprised of youth/young adults with lived juvenile justice experience.

YJC has been a very active group, working on their own initiatives and ways to change juvenile justice in Iowa. Powell provided examples of their efforts thus far:

- assisted with the Talking Wall;
- partnered with Drake University Law School to provide youth in detention and out-

of-home placement with access to period products and hair/skin products for youth of color;

- planned and participated in the annual family and youth engagement summit;
- presented at three national conferences to demonstrate how to involve youth;
- testified to state legislative committees;
- serve on the Chief Justice's Juvenile Justice Task Force to reform the juvenile justice system; and
- creating a Bill of Rights for youth in the juvenile justice system.

- **Youth Action Squad**

Michael reported that during the pandemic in 2020, two issues arose—the effect of COVID and racial injustice. Two 25-member squads were formed to focus on these issues and develop reports. In 2021, the second year, one squad was formed and 10-12 action plans were developed by youth members.

This year, we want to involve more youth at a local level using the current YAS model and YPAR approach while also developing a toolkit for use by other communities.

Lyric Sellers and Endi Montalvo-Martinez presented information related to their 2020 report which focused on racial disparity, the Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS), the school-to-prison pipeline, and the replacement of school resource officers with a restorative justice plan. Their efforts addressed equity commitments from school districts, the need for more ethnic courses and teachers of color, and white-washed curriculum changes. As part of their strategy, they focused on community-centered school safety, lived experiences, qualitative and quantitative data, the cost of school resource officers, school administration and community buy-in, and support from school board members. They used data to underscore findings on student of color removals and referrals to juvenile court.

As a result of their efforts, the DMPS school board voted to remove school resource officers and implement restorative justice programming and services. They are now students at Iowa State University and are in the process of a similar effort with regard to campus police. They are developing a toolkit for other communities to mirror.

Jill Padgett noted that when comparing the DMPS 2021-22 school year to 2018-19 (pre-COVID), there was a 79% reduction in juvenile complaints (109 compared to 535). However, racial disparity still exists.

To sustain the work, DMPS held a two-week, 6 session, summer retreat for middle and high school students. Teams were developed in each middle and high school. Workshops were led by community members. Attendees identified topics and developed action plans on mental health support groups, racial equity training for educators, etc.

Powell encouraged other state agencies to create similar opportunities for change through youth partnerships.

- **Volunteer Iowa's Youth Service Learning**

Kamryn Ryan reported that her office oversees volunteer programs including AmeriCorps and Mentor Iowa. As they work to engage youth in volunteer service, they are looking to use service learning to reach youth and turn learning into a project-based style so that youth can give back to their communities, as well as provide youth volunteer opportunities with non-profit agencies. They are currently working to connect communities, develop a city-level curriculum to involve youth volunteers, and provide compensation. Partners would include communities, schools, non-profits, and youth.

To support this effort, they have partnered with the Department of Human Rights and the Iowa Afterschool Alliance through a grant from Youth Service America. They have also partnered with youth groups such as SIYAC, IYC, Silver Cord students, and other youth connections.

Isidro Gonzalez provided information on service learning in schools, tying skills to a community need, and youth participatory action research (YPAR). Youth determine what is important to them. Outcomes include academic/personal benefits and community building. Local efforts include youth volunteer boards, allowing youth to address needs in their communities.

Ryan noted that a toolkit has been created. Audiences include schools, conferences, career-based learning educators, youth organizations, after-school programs, and non-profits. Her preference is to work one-on-one with the various audiences. She would also like to connect with AMP and the Vision Council. Wolfe and Oliver offered to facilitate those connections.

Powell noted that some kids are getting school credit through service learning which is a great pathway for further development. However, Silver Cord programs don't always allow credit for court-ordered community service. She also noted the lack of youth representatives on state agency boards and whether Volunteer Iowa could help promote this effort.

- **Vision Council**
 - **Opportunity to Collaborate**

Andrea Dencklau, Iowa Aces 360, reported that the Vision Council began through the Coalition—a group of service providers that worked to create the best services for youth in child welfare and juvenile justice.

As the Department of Human Services prepared to implement the Families First Prevention Service Act (FF), the Coalition worked to provide input on implementation. After reviewing data and opportunities, the group started a larger vision—all kids and families in Iowa are safe, healthy, and well in their communities. Over the past several years, they have tried to align services, programs, and initiatives to create a more holistic Iowa.

They identified root causes that brings entry into systems by creating three subgroups:

- Financial stability/Housing/Childcare
- Substance abuse—how to prevent and better treat families holistically

- Older youth workgroup—improve permanency, placement with kin, and creating systems that are healing and trauma-informed/trauma-centered.

They would like to explore opportunities for collaboration and align efforts. Powell noted the framework for ICYD.

Kristie Oliver added that the Vision Council utilizes a results-based accountability model for meetings. LSI and Dencklau are conducting training on the model. She would like to align efforts, work on strategies.

Jill Padgett would like to develop strategies, identify resources and connections with state agencies, and identify gaps.

Dencklau added that one strategy is to establish an Office of Youth Development to strengthen efforts by state agencies.

Steve Michael provided an historical overview of ICYD—a network of state agencies with programs that involve youth, how to address youth needs and promote youth development across state agencies. For some time, the focus was education. We are now looking to promote the positive youth development model within state agencies. He would be interested in discussing ways to expand to other entities.

Wolfe would like to have further discussions with the Vision Council, as well as have ICYD meet to address its vision and scope of work and how we can capitalize by aligning efforts.

Padgett noted that the end user is youth and children across the state. She suggested addressing opportunities and gaps, and develop a strategy to reach goals.

There was consensus to learn more about strategies, identify ways to work together, what needs to be done, and develop next steps.

- **Agency Updates**

Michael asked for agency updates that align with youth engagement:

HHS—Wolfe reported that a focus has been on utilizing federal funding for teens in foster care and youth aging out of the system to support them since the pandemic. Stimulus payments during pandemic helped to support child care, food, housing, and transportation. HHS is now supporting social, cultural, and developmental connections for youth with their community, family, or tribe using stimulus funds to pay for things such as guitar lessons, family trips, vehicles, bicycles, YMCA memberships, etc. He noted how this has helped to promote engagement between caseworkers, youth, and families.

Iowa Workforce Development—Ashley Arnold reported that their state Workforce Development Board recently started back up with their Youth Services Committee. They will have their second meeting next week, although there are no youth on that Board. Their Title I youth program helps youth ages 14-21 who experience barriers to education and employment. There is assistance available through the Iowa WORKS centers.

SIYAC—Lily Glenn reported that position statements will be finalized by December and members will begin meeting with legislators. They have been working to collaborate with other organizations. “Make It Okay” is part of Iowa’s “Healthiest State Initiative” on mental health. They will have a focus on youth and SIYAC is learning more about this effort.

DHR—Michael reported that there are a number of youth programs. He provided information on pre-charge diversion, juvenile reentry, and “Youth-Centered Planning Meetings”—a youth-led effort for youth in placement to develop plans for their return home—employment, education, housing, etc. Youth Justice Council and Youth Action Squad members have presented at two national conferences.

- **Technical Assistance – Talking Wall**

Powell asked for input regarding the development of technical assistance materials to advance authentic youth engagement and positive youth development.

Members suggested the following:

- Develop a blueprint on youth engagement for training consistency—driving principles, list of practices, compensation, mentoring, volunteering, etc.
- Adults need to be trained to engage youth
- Prepare youth on discussion topics that might trigger past trauma(s)
- Recruitment strategies and ways to engage youth

Powell voiced concern regarding buy-in from state agencies. Only four out of the twelve ICYD member agencies have staff present at this meeting—Volunteer Iowa, 4-H, IWD, and DHR. She was concerned with creating technical assistance information if there is no buy-in. Michael suggested following up with those eight agencies.

- **Review Next Steps on 3-Year Plan**
 - **Activate the Technical Assistance Team**

Michael reported that we will continue to look at opportunities to collaborate.

- **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rinker
Administrative Secretary