



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

**JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL
IOWA TASK FORCE FOR YOUNG WOMEN**

One purpose, one passion - transforming systems to empower every girl.

MEETING MINUTES

November 5, 2021

Present: Lori Rinehart; Tiffany Berkenes; Andrea Dickerson; Mandy Engel-Cartie; Bethany Kohoutek; Julie Martin; Danielle Masten; Marissa Schuster

Staff: Kathy Nesteby; Scott Musel; Jill Padgett; Kayla Powell; Julie Rinker

Others: Evan Johnson; Kelsie Kuhnert; Laurie Nash

Introductions/Announcements

In the absence of Jennifer Tibbetts, Chair, Lori Rinehart, Co-Chair, welcomed those in attendance. The meeting was held virtually via Google Meet. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

- August

The minutes were accepted as presented.

**JJAC/CJJP/COVID Update
DMC Update**

Jill Padgett reported that three juvenile re-entry navigators will assist with employment and job skills training for eligible youth who are returning from placement. Funding for the navigators was secured through Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation.

Padgett invited members to attend the next DMC Subcommittee on November 10. A sub-group of that committee continues to meet regarding Black girls. The group has prioritized prevention and supports for Black girls in the juvenile justice system. LaTasha DeLoach chairs the workgroup.

Other work includes research on the age of culpability, demographics, and minimum age of referral to juvenile court. More information will be shared as the information is compiled.

Two discretionary grants are still awaiting approval from OJJDP. The grants focus on delinquency prevention/pre-charge diversion and reducing risk for Black girls in the juvenile justice system. More should be known by the end of the calendar year. If awarded, the girls' grant will be \$425,000 over three years plus \$52,000 in JJAC funds. The delinquency prevention grant would expand pre-charge diversion efforts and would be \$1.5 million over five years.

Nestebly noted that the grant approvals are unusually late. If approved, funding would go to local communities through a competitive bidding process and be used for female and culturally responsive programs. A review of evidence-based programs is being conducted. She welcomed suggestions for programs that have proven to be effective.

Joint Meeting Project

Nestebly reported that due to other activities, the joint project has lapsed. However, some work was done over the summer. This work includes healing-centered engagement training and disrupting the school-court pipeline.

Padgett added that members of the Youth Action Squads were successful in instituting a restorative justice model and removal of school resource officers in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids schools. Meetings have been held with ACLU representatives regarding complaints that originate in schools. Although data show the number of complaints originating on school grounds, there is no way to track by officer. The ACLU's national platform focuses on the school-to-prison pipeline and has made recommendations regarding law enforcement in schools. A toolkit and recommendations for schools is being considered.

Nestebly reported that other joint project ideas included best practices for LGBTQ youth in the juvenile justice system and a parent partners program to help parents navigate the system. A meeting was held with DHS' Parent-Partners Program and CASA to see if a juvenile justice program was feasible. While the Parent-Partners Program was a better fit, it would be a huge lift to create a mentoring infrastructure. Nestebly suggested recommending Juvenile Court Services consider something similar. She will continue to provide updates and advocate for such a group.

Bethany Kohoutek asked why the hesitation by Juvenile Court Services. Nestebly responded that while there are similarities between child welfare and juvenile justice, it had everything to do with logistics to create such a program. Padgett added that to be successful, such a program would require a firm foundation/structure, funding, and oversight.

Mission/Vision Discussion

- *New option: The ITFYW exists to advise, make recommendations and take action to address juvenile justice issues, particularly as they pertain to gender. The ITFYW is made up of passionate volunteer subject matter experts who are invested in comprehensive system improvement that reflects valuing and empowering every girl no matter her circumstances.*

Nestebly shared a link to the draft document and asked for approval of the mission and vision statements.

After a brief discussion, there was consensus to remove 'volunteer'. Members also discussed whether 'girls' should be changed to 'females' or 'young women'. It was noted that while used interchangeably, 'young women' tends to 'adultify' girls, especially Black girls. There was consensus to keep 'girls' in the mission statement.

- *Vision reflection: What words would you use to describe what Iowa's juvenile justice system would look like in the future that made the work of the ITFYW obsolete?*

Nestebly asked for suggestions for the vision reflection.

The following were suggested:

- Holistic
- Healing
- Restorative
- Empowering
- Accountability
- Responsive, flexible and intentional supports, services and communities
- Fair
- Equitable
- Just
- Advocacy
- Shared power between youth and the system

Members were asked to add additional suggestions throughout the meeting.

Return to In-person Meetings Discussion

Members discussed preferences in how future meetings are held. Some preferred in-person, while others preferred a hybrid option. More information will be shared at a later date once a location with WiFi has been secured.

Julie Rinker asked members to notify her regarding their attendance preference so a meeting room with ample space and WiFi can be reserved for the February 4 meeting. Danielle Masten offered to reserve a meeting room at the Polk County Justice Center.

Detention Trend Data

“The Deep End” report

Nestey reviewed detention trend data and average length of stay for girls from 2010-2020. This information was prepared for a meeting with Chief Juvenile Court Officers. The data include 2014 (the closure of the Girls’ State Training School) and 2020 (the first year of the pandemic).

Nestey noted that 2017 was the beginning of the current DHS group care contract which required youth be held close to home. She thought the spike in the use of detention and length of stay was due to the closure of the Girls’ State Training School coupled with a diminishing number of available group care beds due to facility closures.

Nestey noted disparity—Black girls make up 40% of this cohort of girls, while only 3% of the general population. Nestey added that detention is to be used short term, however, length of stay has increased more for girls than in the past.

Martin asked for information on the decreased number of QRTP beds. Nestey responded that, in 2017, there were 650 beds for both boys and girls in child welfare and juvenile justice. In 2018, it dropped to 550 beds. In 2019, it dropped again to just under 500. By the end of 2021, there will be 364 group care beds—almost half since 2017. Nestey also noted the changes required by DHS through group care contracts, stating that facilities are required to treat a variety of issues when in the past, there were more specialized settings. With the closure of several group care facilities, the issue has compounded and has risen to the attention of leadership in DHS and Juvenile Court Services.

Martin also mentioned she would like to look at demographics and disparity in pre-charge diversion—it needs to be proportionate with the rate of youth of color population. She added that the DST scores are affected by disproportionately diverting youth.

Padgett discussed pre-charge diversion and that demographic information is available for those who complete diversion programming. She noted, however, that there may be pre-charge diversion programs that are not part of our data collection efforts. She asked members to advise if they know of a pre-charge diversion program in their area.

Dickerson provided information on Marshalltown's MPACT program. Two community advocates with YSS assist law enforcement with non-violent calls and make referrals when needed. Referrals include everything from homelessness to food instability, mental health services, etc. When necessary, juveniles may be referred to YSS. Dickerson suggested that someone contact the Marshalltown Police Department to track outcomes and partner with Juvenile Court Services for pre-charge diversion.

Laurie Nash reported that Iowa City has developed a shoplifting diversion program through efforts by the Iowa City Police Department, United Youth, and local HyVee management. The program focuses on younger kids and provides family mediation, youth counseling, after-school programming, etc. of which families can take advantage. The program began in early 2020 before COVID and has been pretty successful thus far.

Nesteby reviewed the number of detention holds for girls who would have been eligible for placement at a state training school if one were available. She noted the lack of services available for this cohort of girls and lack of available beds in group care settings. Nesteby thought these two factors correlated to the increase in length of stay in detention. Additionally, a number of child welfare kids are getting charges while in group care and becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. The matter has risen to the attention of JCS and DHS leadership. She asked for comments.

Danielle Masten noted concerns with girls being housed in detention due to the fact that they are being either denied placement or lack of services. Consideration is given to adjudication so they can qualify for independent living. Girls' court does provide an opportunity to serve girls.

Nesteby commented that DHS has received considerable feedback on the need for specialized settings for certain juvenile justice youth. Consideration is being given to piloting two sites aimed at boys. These decisions were based on facilities/beds.

Nesteby provided information on an upcoming data report on girls. Prior to starting the report, a cohort of girls was shared with JCS. JCOs were asked to review and identify only the girls who would have been recommended for state training school placement. The data report will focus on the latter group to further identify traits and needs of this cohort of girls. Nesteby provided more specific details that will be included in the report.

Find Our Sisters

- Volunteer for next meeting

Mandie Engle-Carter volunteered to find someone to present information at the February meeting.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: *Make the experiences and needs of girls who are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system (i.e., black, native, and LGBTQ+ youth) central to all ongoing work.*

- *Objective A: JJAC/CJJP uses racial and gender equity lenses intentionally throughout all of its work.*
 - *Generate a tangible method for assuring implementation.*
 - *Use council funds and leverage additional funds to support gender and racial equity training.*
 - *All JJAC members and sub-committee members are trained in the use of gender and racial equity lenses.*
 - *Collect data about any training received.*

Nestebly noted that Goal 1, Objective A had been met through the training held earlier in the year on mitigating racial and gender bias. She added that there is a possibility that the training will be held again, however, a primary focus will be aimed towards JJAC members. Nestebly encouraged members to think about the modules that were presented and how that information could be further shared with JJAC members.

Tiffany Berkenes voiced concerns with holding attendees accountable. She did not want the training to be 'one and done'. Rinehart and Nestebly agreed.

- *Objective B: Continue collaborative work with the DMC subcommittee.*
 - *Continue annual joint meeting.*
 - *Establish a joint project/activity/goal (e.g., school to court pipeline).*

Rinehart and Nestebly reported that work continues with the DMC Subcommittee, however, a joint project(s) has yet to be identified.

- *Objective C: Complete revamp of cornerstone publication, "Healing Justice".*
 - *Continue workgroup meetings.*
 - *Solicit reviews by outside subject matter experts.*

Rinehart and Nestebly reported that work continues on the publication. Recent workgroup meetings have centered on group care concerns. However, the next meetings will return the focus to the publication utilizing a multi-cultural lens.

- *Objective D: Support the implementation of recommendations related to gender and race from the IDA validation report.*

Nestebly explained the use of the Iowa Delinquency Assessment (IDA). She noted that recommendations from the most recent validation cited concerns with the weighting of certain categories related to race and gender. While these recommendations have not been implemented, the Task Force will continue to monitor progress.

Goal 2: *Establishment of a specialized setting(s) for serious, violent, and chronic offenders as well as systemic measures to reduce the need for such a setting as outlined in the recommendations of the "Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Female Offenders" report.*

- *Objective A: Select a small number of recommendations from the report to elevate.*
 - *Review report recommendations.*
- *Objective B: Engage legislative and/or other leadership champions interested in establishing this level of care.*
 - *Revisit talking points.*
 - *Make use of DHR Legislative Day on the Hill.*

There was consensus that Goal 2 was already addressed during the above discussion. Nesteby will develop a list of talking points for DHR's Day on the Hill.

Goal 3: Fill the gaps and improve the quality in the continuum of care for girls in both residential and community-based service settings with well-defined options that allow for differential responses based on culture, risk level, development and needs.

- *Objective A: Document what options/opportunities girls have compared to boys throughout the system to demonstrate any need for capacity building.*
 - *Use information from service inventory.*
 - *Assess and review service data side by side with males.*

Nesteby noted that more work needs to be done related to this objective.

- *Objective B: Explore ways to leverage DHS FFPSA work to fill service gaps for girls.*
 - *Identify any evidence-based services for JJ girls to replicate.*

Nesteby reported that due to the establishment of the FFPSA (Families First Prevention Services Act) and its requirements, it will take some time to identify service gaps. Other work relates to the feds establishing a list of services.

- *Objective C: Explore ways to study low risk/high need girls under JJ supervision.*

Nesteby reported that more work needs to be done on this objective. Berkenes thought mentorships and service groups are key. In addition, more resources are needed for families. Berkenes noted the importance of social programming/peer activities to bring girls together.

New Membership

This item will be moved forward on the next meeting agenda.

Old Business—There was no discussion on this agenda item.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rinker, Administrative Secretary