



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

## Recommendation to the Commission

**Party Submitting Recommendation:** Juvenile Violence Subcommittee

**Date of Submission:** 8/24/2022

**Type of Action Requested:**

Legislation     Administrative Rule or Policy     Resolution of Support or Endorsement     Professional/skills development

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the Commission's Strategic Priorities does this Recommendation help advance (check all that apply):**

Child Health and Safety     Juvenile Justice and Cross-system Youth  
 Mental Health and Substance Abuse     Educational Outcomes

**Summary of Recommendation:**

Endorsement of [Cure Violence](#), [Project BUILD](#), and [Credible Messengers for Justice Involved Youth](#)

**Background of Recommendation:**

What is the need or problem, and how does it impact disparate populations?

Violent acts by juveniles were on a downward trend leading up to the pandemic, but there were still more than 300 cases of violent offenses committed by juveniles per year. From the data collected, we see that youth of color are found guilty or adjudicated at a higher rate than non-youth of color. Utilizing the data, prevention and intervention efforts can be targeted specifically at the most disproportionate youth. While targeted, it be anticipated that there would be spillover to other populations as well.

What data, research or other information did the recommender consult to formulate this proposal?

The Juvenile Violence Subcommittee (JVS) examined patterns, trends, and commonalities in juvenile violent offending, in order to present viable prevention strategies that fit the needs in Indiana and find partners in community organizations, law enforcement, and academia to partner with in statewide prevention efforts. In order to collect the appropriate data, the JVS determined it was necessary to have a clear definition of what crimes should be targeted for these prevention

efforts, based on the strategic goal for JVS. To this end, JVS reviewed various definitions of violent crime by entities such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency & Prevention (OJJDP) for JVS to focus attention on for prevention efforts.

**Definition:**

Serious violent offending is any act committed by someone under 18 involving violence against another person while using a weapon or resulting in moderate or serious injury. This would include the offenses of murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, level 5 or higher felony battery, criminal recklessness as a level 5 or 6 felony, pointing a firearm, any other felony enhanced for involving a deadly weapon or moderate or serious bodily injury and attempts of all of these acts.

JVS reviewed the Juvenile Justice Equity Plan FY20, which was inclusive of statewide totals for juvenile contacts for referral, diversion, pretrial detention, secure confinement, and transfer to adult court. JVS also reviewed the arrest dashboard which included the number of arrests on school property, by school corporation, offense type, and race/ethnicity. JVS gathered statistics for Petitions filed for these charges as well as adjudications/convictions of these charges for anyone under the age of 18 at the time of the commission of offense. Additionally, JVS decided to gather and review data for carrying a handgun (35-47-2-1) and dangerous possession (35-47-10-5) statistics that informed our prevention decisions. However, JVS *did not* include those charges alone as being a serious violent offense.

After reviewing the above data, JVS reviewed the National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the University of Colorado website which included programs as “effective, promising, and model programs”. From this research, JVS chose twenty-two (22) programs to take a deeper dive into – which, after review of each program, informed our decision on identifying and encouraging adoption of effective programs to prevent youth violence.

What disproportionality did the data reveal?

The data reviewed illustrated the racial and ethnic disparities of youth charged with a serious violent offense. There was an overrepresentation of youth of color. Additionally, the disproportionality between males and females, with males being more represented within the data sets reviewed. The disproportionality and racial disparities in Indiana are not unique to Indiana, rather they are result of systemic issues. This can only intensify once youth enter the system. African American youth are 3.5 times more likely to be referred to court and Hispanic youth are 1.5 times as likely to be referred to court than their white peers.

What is the current response to the problem by the State of Indiana?

There are local communities that have awarded grants to address juvenile violence prevention. However, there is currently not a statewide framework nor endorsement for a specific juvenile violence prevention program/initiative. Due to there not being a statewide framework or endorsement, initiatives addressing juvenile violence are vastly different throughout the state.

What solution is the recommender proposing, and how does it affect disparate populations?

We ask today that the Commission on Improving the State of Children (CISC) endorse Cure Violence, Project BUILD, and the Credible Messenger Mentoring for Justice Involved Youth programs/initiatives. We also ask for the Commission to

consider potential funding opportunities for these programs/initiatives. When implemented, these programs have been shown to reduce violence, and the data from Indiana shows this is needed.

How does the solution address the disproportionality in the data?

Violence prevention and intervention initiatives are a powerful way to interrupt the revolving door for youth in the justice system. All of the programs/initiatives recommended have the potential to transform the way we address youth violence in Indiana.

**If a legislative request, cite the current relevant code and specify what change is being recommended.**

N/A

**If a policy request, cite the current relevant policy and specify what change is being recommended.**

N/A

**If the recommendation involves an endorsement or public promotion of a specific initiative or statement, attach the document of which you are seeking the Commission's support/endorsement/promotion.**