



Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Meeting Minutes from April 4, 2025

The Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force met on April 4, 2025, from 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Minutes were prepared by Payton Bowling and Blane Cook.

Members Present:

The following members of the Committee were present via Zoom:

- ☒ Nancy Wever, **Co-Chair**, Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS)
- ☒ Steve Balko, Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)
- ☒ Amber Becker, Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA)
- ☒ Ann Davis, Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy (IARCA)
- ☐ Terrie Decker, Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC)
- ☐ Hon. Kimberly Dowling, Delaware Circuit Court #2
- ☐ Rae Feller, Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS)
- ☒ Tracy Fitz, Indiana Prosecuting Attorney's Council (IPAC)
- ☒ James (Mike) Goodwin, Indiana Department of Child Service (DCS) Sullivan County
- ☒ JauNae Hanger, Children's Policy and Law Initiative (CPLI)
- ☒ Waylon James, Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS)
- ☐ Jill Johnson, Marion County Public Defender Agency, Juvenile Division
- ☐ Samantha Lewis, Wayne County Probation
- ☐ Josh Nichols, Indiana Juvenile Detention Association (IJDA)
- ☐ Kiarra Pearson, Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA)
- ☒ Leah Pezzarossi, Open Door Youth Services
- ☐ Kaylee Price, Youth Representative
- ☐ Kate Province,
- ☒ Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS)
- ☒ Ellen Sheets, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI)
- ☒ Joel Wieneke, Indiana Public Defender Council (IPDC)

Staff/Guests Present:

Blane Cook, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana; Payton Bowling, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana.

Meeting Objectives:

- Subcommittee reports
- Executive Director update

- Announcements and updates from membership

Welcome and Introductions:

Members and guests introduced themselves and shared their experiences with the recent storms.

Review and Approve Minutes:

Minutes from the February 2025 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved on motion by Amber Becker and second by Tracy Fitz.

Action Items from Last Meeting:

- Prepare and distribute 02/07 meeting minutes
Person/Group Responsible: Nancy Wever
Status: Completed
- Recruit representative from DCS policy team
Person/Group Responsible: Waylon James
Status: Waylon reported that Legislative Director position had not been filled. There is an interim Director and Waylon will check with them about attending or waiting until the position is filled.
- Child Advocates presentation to CISC
Person/Group Responsible: Nancy and Mark
Status: Nancy advised that she made the request to Mark and is still awaiting next steps.

New Business/Presentations:

N/A

Sub-Committee Reports:

Objective #1 - CSEC: Blane Cook reported that the sub-committee met recently. Judge Dowling is happy to continue serving as co-chair. The committee discussed alternative funding to continue producing quick indicator cards, which police use to screen for possible signs of human trafficking. These cards have been going fast and members of the task force were asked to consider exploring potential funding options to restock them. Blane will advise when he knows the approximate amount of funding needed.

Objective #2 - Status Offense: Tracy Fitz and Leah have had several meetings together and estimate that they are about two-thirds done writing their report. They are going to meet one more time and then present it to the Status Offense subcommittee to make sure it looks good. They are then hoping to present it to the TF in June.

Objective #3 – Children with an Incarcerated Parent: Joel shared that they have divided into subgroups for report writing and have added three members from adult DOC for their expertise and guidance. There are interesting ideas for improvement, including DCS involvement in the prison system. A member with lived experience of re-entry has been working for a long time on a phone application for re-entry, after their experience in Indianapolis of having been given a list of resources only to find they were all out of date. Joel Wieneke wants this and other ideas presented

to CISC so that the ideas can get some attention, as well as to discuss who would maintain the app. Nancy Wever asked if there is any connection between their idea for the app and the work that NICJR presented on at the NCJFCJ Conference. Michelle Daniel with Constructing our Futures has connections in New York and Indiana and is leading this project. Nancy suggested that if the incoming CISC interns are interested in project-based work, this sub-committee and helping with the app may be a good opportunity for them.

Objective #4 – Child and Adolescent Development into the Justice System: JauNae Hanger reported that the sub-committee is working on two areas: minimum age of juvenile court jurisdiction and access to family for youth in detention. NYJN put together a compendium of minimum age statutes across the nation and the sub-committee will review at their upcoming meeting to determine which states they might focus on to use as a model for Indiana. They have been looking at data from the report CSG did a couple of years ago as well as probation reports regarding referrals. One important theme that has come up is services: if these children are not served by the youth justice system, how will they get what they need? There has been work done by YJOC and the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission on youth with high acuity; JauNae wants to talk with them further to see where work intersects. The sub-committee hopes to be ready to present to the task force by fall. Regarding family access in detention, they're ready to share with the task force, hopefully by June, and hoping to present this to the Commission by September. They are hoping to move it into legislation by 2026. JauNae will let Nancy know after the sub-committee's next meeting when she is ready to make the connection with ICJFCJ.

Executive Director Update:

Commission Bills: CISC's two bills (HB 1098, Youth, Family and Caregiver Engagement and HB 1403, Juvenile Justice Matters) have both passed in their respective committees and will likely be heard in the last Appropriations meeting of the legislative session, the coming Thursday. As long as they get a hearing, they are expected to pass without problems.

Announcements:

Amber Becker advised that DMHA's new director is Sarah Sailors. Joel shared details about an upcoming presentation at the RFK conference in San Diego. Waylon asked Joel to include him and DCS in any work involving dual status.

Action Items:

Send out minutes

Objective #2 Sub-Committee (Status Offenses) – Continue working on report

Objective #4 Sub-Committee (Adolescent Brain Development) – JauNae to let Nancy know if/when ready to connect to ICJFCJ; plan for presentation to TF in June on Family Access

Adjournment and Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 10:31am. Next meeting will be on June 6.