



Youth Justice Oversight Committee

Transitional Services Workgroup

Minutes from August 17, 2022, Meeting #1

The Transitional Services Workgroup of the Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) met on August 17, 2022, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in the Indiana Office of Court Services at 251, N. Illinois St., Indianapolis, IN 4605. Terrie Decker and Magistrate Vann chaired the meeting.

1. Members Present: The following members of the Committee were present:

- Co-Chair Terrie Decker, Indiana Department of Corrections
- Co-Chair Magistrate Robert Vann, Lake County Superior Court, Juvenile Division
- Deb Johnson, Pierceton Woods/Spencer Home LLC
- Jill Johnson, Marion County Public Defender's Office
- Susan Lightfoot, Henry County Probation
- Bart Doan, Indiana Department of Workforce Development
- Kevin Elkins, Lake County Probation
- Victoria Jennings, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority
- Heather Savage, Indiana Youth Institute
- Chris Dixson, Indiana Department of Corrections
- Kate Schedel, Indiana Department of Health
- Andrea Ayietta, Keys2Work

2. Members Absent: The following members of the Committee did not attend the meeting:

- Josh Martin, Shelby County Community Corrections
- Lindsey Devine, Shelby County Community Corrections
- Janet Bohner, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Amber Becker, Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction

3. Staff: Joseph Fischer, Tyler Mason, and Leslie Dunn attended in-person as staff from the Office of Judicial Administration.

4. Welcome and Introductions: Co-Chairs Terrie Decker and Magistrate Vann welcomed the members and thanked them for agreeing to serve. Members and staff each introduced themselves and noted where they are from. Some briefly described their history in this field.

5. Electronic Access Policy: Leslie Dunn summarized the public Open-Door Law requirements and the electronic communication attendance policy, previously provided. The Open-Door rules are to

be applied to the YJOC and all workgroups, but not to subgroups which may be formed. Fifty percent of committee and workgroup members must attend in person. Susan Lightfoot moved to adopt the policy. Magistrate Vann seconded the motion. The policy was adopted unanimously.

6. **Legislative Review and Expectations:** Co-chairs briefly reviewed the deliverables, purpose, timeline, and goals of this workgroup. A handout was provided to members which define the role of this workgroup under HB1359 and breaks down what should be accomplished by month from the first meeting through July of 2023.
7. **Review of Current Practices:**
 - a. **Current IDOC Transitional Services Funding:** HB1359 requires the IDOC, Division of Youth Services (DYS) to spend transitional fund money on youth who are released from incarceration that meet certain conditions. There is already a practice in place for youth that are 90 days from their identified release date.
 - b. **Intake:** A 14-day intake process, including a risk assessment, is performed at Logansport intake facility. Youth are then sent to one of three facilities based on gender, risk, past behaviors, and if the youth is incarcerated as an adult. DYS does not oversee youth detention centers but does audit them.
 - c. **During incarceration:** Youth are provided with education and services intended to help them rehabilitate, modify behavior, and reintegrate into their home and community upon release. Services begin on day one, where a plan is built to help youth eventually transition out of IDOC. Youth work through a level system based on points and progress. This process generally takes approximately nine months on average. Actual release time varies depending on completing their program levels, behaviors, and staff recommendations.
 - i. **Services available:** Education, Substance Abuse Treatment, Moral Reconation Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Transition of Restrictive Placement services, and Sex Offender Management.
 - d. **Release:** Upon release there are three possibilities:
 - i. **Discharge:** Youth walks out of the door with no continued monitoring, no services, no transportation and is done with IDOC and county justice system.
 - ii. **Probation:** Youth who are released to probation are returned to county supervision. This relies on the originating court's willingness to resume jurisdiction. If the court refuses jurisdiction, then the youth is discharged. Many courts will not reassume jurisdiction. Magistrate Vann spoke on the need to resume jurisdiction for continued support and oversight of these youth.
 - iii. **Parole:** By, policy, youth that are high risk and INSOMM are released on parole. The services under this category of release can be paid for through the IDOC Division of Youth Services transitional fund.
8. **Open Discussion:** The chairs opened the floor for discussion and brainstorming for the workgroup to identify specific areas of need.
 - a. **Parental Engagement:** Parental involvement with incarcerated or released DYS youth is extremely low. Family Case Management is available for incarcerated youth, but participation is the exception rather than the norm. IDOC has no method to make parents be involved, unlike CHINS cases. Increasing information supports should be a goal.
 - b. **“The Deep End”:** The members noted that in some ways probation, and all post release supervision, is designed to look for violations and to punish technical violations rather than focus on the bigger picture. This can lead to youth being repeatedly violated for normal age-appropriate regressions. We must show empathy and provide a light at the

end of the tunnel. A violation finding also requires a showing that it is in the youth's best interest. But this is usually up to broad interpretation.

- c. **Mental Health:** Mental health is a growing area of concern. Terrie Decker notes that a mental health unit at one of the facilities is being organized at DYS to hopefully address these issues more proactively throughout incarceration. This unit should work with transitional service providers to ensure continuity of mental health care and treatment.
 - d. **Workforce Development:** Most traditional schools will not take these youth back (though required). IDWD has resources available for these youth, but very few are in contact upon release. Additional contact between IDWD and the youth prior to release would help with the educational piece of their transition. Vocational skills currently are not available in IDOC for youth.
 - e. **Geographic Limitations:** There are many rural counties that do not have the access to services that larger communities have, simply because of the population size. Several members noted that funding cannot by itself solve this issue. The group discussed some solutions such as the possibilities of transportation services and regional providers.
 - f. **Timing the Beginning of Transitional Services:** Transitional providers should all be meeting with the youth significantly more often prior to release. Currently when there is a pre-release meeting, it is less than 60 days prior to release. This should happen sooner so the youths know who their point of contact will be, and so DYS may be more actively engaged in transition. This gives the coordinator more time to ensure a smooth transition.
 - g. **Additional Topics:** Other topics and suggestions included Dual Status, Collaborative Care, sharing data on release statistics, if additional funding might be required, other individuals who can be brought in as a support for these youth, the importance of mentoring services, other groups which should be represented in this workgroup, and working collaboratively with other workgroups.
9. **Future meetings:** The workgroup agreed that future meetings will be held every third Wednesday from 10:00AM-12:00PM (Eastern Time) at the same location, if available.
 10. **Closing:** Co-Chairs thank workgroup members for their input and travel. We will meet next on September 21st, @ 10:00 AM. Calendar invite will be sent out. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 PM.