



Youth Justice Oversight Committee

Screening and Assessment Work Group

January 20, 2023

Minutes

The Screening and Assessment Workgroup of the Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) met on January 20, 2023, from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Indiana Office of Court Services – Fuse Conference Center. Shannon Chambers chaired the meeting.

1. **Members present in-person.** The following members of the workgroup were present in-person:
 1. Shannon Chambers, Johnson County Probation, Chair
 2. Brittany Simmons, Indiana Office of Court Services/JDAI
 3. Kevin Elkins, Lake County Probation
 4. Jordan Morris, St. Joseph County Probation
 5. Nichole Phillips, Bartholomew County Probation
 6. Miriah Anderson, Tippecanoe County Probation
 7. Lindsey Grossnickle, Whitley County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
 8. Senator Jean Breaux, Senate District 34
2. **Member present electronically.** The following members of the workgroup were present electronically:
 1. Judge Andrea Trevino, Allen Superior Court, Co-Chair
 2. Jennifer Sturges, Decatur County Public Defender's Office
 3. Rob McComb, Allen County Probation
 4. Kory George, Wayne County Probation
 5. Marc Kniola, Indiana Department of Correction
3. **Members absent.** The following members of the workgroup did not attend the meeting:
 1. Alison Cox, Porter County Detention Center
 2. Judge Kim Dowling, Delaware Circuit Court 2
 3. Don Travis, Department of Child Services
 4. Rachel Patterson, Clark County Probation
4. **Staff.** Michelle Goodman and Leslie Dunn attended as staff from the Office of Judicial Administration.
5. **Guests.** Julie Whitman, staff of the Commission on Improving the Status of Children (CISC), J. C. Barnes, University of Cincinnati.
6. **Welcome and introductions.** Shannon Chambers called the meeting to order and welcomed the workgroup members.

7. **Approval of November 2 & 30, 2022 minutes.** The workgroup reviewed the minutes from the November 2 & 30, 2022, meetings and no amendments or corrections were offered.
8. **Presentation on IYAS.** Shannon Chambers introduced the workgroup to J.C. Barnes, Professor and Director of the School of Criminal Justice, University of Cincinnati, who agreed to provide information to the workgroup on risk assessment research and to answer questions to help the workgroup in its work. In addition to background on the development of the IYAS, he emphasized the foundation to good policy and practice is evidence. The use of validated risk and needs assessments help bring to scale the ability to promote public safety while helping youth in addressing the individual situation or circumstance. He explained the importance of reliability (consistent rating of risk and needs by assessors completing the instruments), and validity (how well the instruments predict the outcomes) of risk and need instruments. The IYAS instruments are valid instruments, which is supported by the current validation study. Key features of current validated tools use objective scoring to reduce bias and focus on measurable, dynamic factors. The use of statewide validated tools provides a common language across jurisdictions to more efficiently allocate resources and mitigate against providing unnecessary programs or services to youth who need lower levels of intervention. He also reminded the workgroup that the results of the assessments are not the final answer or decision since other information and considerations as well as professional discretion are still part of the overall decision-making process.

The workgroup inquired about looking at differences among county sizes to reduce justice by geography, and he reported that if the data is available this type of analysis can be done. He noted that since the risk factors are stable there should not be large differences between rural and urban jurisdictions. There was also a discussion on the thresholds of the risk levels and the current recidivism literature, the use of the tools at the proper decision point to make decisions, and the use of IYAS within the JDAI framework. The workgroup also inquired about bias with tools. There is a continuous need for ongoing research to monitor for such impacts and identify opportunities for improvement, and the current validation study does not show overwhelming evidence of major issues with IYAS. At the conclusion of the presentation, the workgroup was invited to attend or watch Mr. Barnes' presentation during the February 8, 2023, Youth Justice Oversight Committee meeting.

9. **Discussion on gathering stakeholder feedback.** Judge Trevino reported that outreach submissions are still being provided to staff for compilation. Of the information received so far, there is a wide range of responses, and it highlights areas where additional work and support are needed. The workgroup was asked to summarize their takeaways from this effort, including that some stakeholders were unaware of the provisions of HEA 1359-2022 and that it was already enacted, and many stakeholders were unable to answer questions on the IYAS, did not know how to use the results or even request the results when not provided. Some members also discussed there is some with a lack of trust in the results or hesitation in relying on results then negative outcomes occur. Another topic that was mentioned included the workload for staff in completing assessments and those who are trainers for the tools with IOCS. The workgroup recognized that HEA 1359 contains specific requirements related to assessment results within the court order. In addition, JDAI counties are encouraged to provide the IYAS-DET results on their DST so that it can be considered in the decision-making process. The workgroup concluded that more education for all stakeholders is warranted to explain why these tools are important, why they should be used, and provide practical examples to improve the use of the available tools. The workgroup also highlighted the need for more resources to support quality improvement and booster sessions for staff conducting assessments.

- 10. Discussion on workgroup deliverables.** The workgroup received an updated draft action plan with the information included from prior meetings as well as information regarding the dispositional decision as it relates to IYAS. The workgroup was asked to review the document for any additions or corrections. The draft materials will also be provided to the YJOC at their next meeting for additional input and feedback.
- 11. Report on Probation Standards Committee.** Shannon Chambers reported that the Probation Standards Committee continues their work on the supervision standards related to risk assessment and probation condition, specifically in separating out adult and juvenile requirements, addressing informal adjustment conditions, use of assessments, and incentives and sanction policies. They are also working on standards related to case planning to incorporate family engagement. The committee would like to have some volunteers from this workgroup to join part of their committee to address areas of overlap between the work of these groups. The following members volunteered to participate: Shannon Chambers, Brittany Simmons, Nichole Phillips, and Lindsey Grossnickle.
- 12. Discussion on educational materials.** The workgroup was reminded to review the stakeholder education materials previously provided and submitted additional suggestions that can be incorporated into the recommendations.
- 13. Youth and Family Advisory Group invitation.** The workgroup was advised that the Youth and Family Advisory Group has requested members of the workgroup attend their March 18th meeting via Zoom to provide information on screening and assessment and receive input from their group on our work. The workgroup was asked to develop questions that they would like to propose to the advisory group. The following members volunteered to participate in the March 18th meeting: Shannon Chambers, Judge Andrea Trevino, Sen. Breaux, Jordan Morris, and Brittany Simmons.
- 14. Other business.** The workgroup received a draft case process flow chart that was requested at a prior meeting to help facilitate our work. Miriah Anderson also volunteered to send her local case process chart to staff. The workgroup was asked to review and propose additional content.

The workgroup also received a proposed outline for the report containing key points and activities. There are some areas where the workgroup can consider whether any data should be included. The workgroup was asked to review the outline and provide input at the next meeting.

- 15. Future workgroup meetings.** The workgroup confirmed the following meeting dates for 2023:

- Friday, February 10 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 10 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 21 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Friday, May 12 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, June 2 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.