Youth Justice Oversight Committee
Data Work Group

Minutes from June 10, 2025 Data Work Group Meeting

The Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) Data Work Group met on June 10, 2025 from 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Indiana Office of Court Technology. Dr. Matt Aalsma and Chris Biehn chaired the meeting.

1. **Attendance**
   Members Present:
   - Dr. Matt Aalsma, Indiana University School of Medicine, Chair
   - Chris Biehn, Indiana Office of Court Services, Co-Chair
   - Kristi Bruther, Johnson County Juvenile Detention Center
   - Kaitlyn Christian, Management Performance Hub
   - Judge Paul Felix, Indiana Court of Appeals
   - Morgan Leever, Indiana Department of Child Services
   - Melanie Pitstick, Marion County Juvenile Probation
   - Christine Reynolds, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute
   - Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services

   Members Present Electronically via Zoom:
   - Todd Albin, Indiana Department of Child Services
   - Traci Lane, Madison County Juvenile Probation
   - Corajean Medina, Department of Child Services
   - Olga Volokhova, Indiana Youth Institute

   Members Absent:
   - Judge Sarah Mullican, Vigo Circuit/Superior Court 3

   OJA Staff Present:
   - Lisa Thompson, Indiana Office of Court Technology
   - Leslie Dunn, Indiana Office of Court Services
   - Brendan O'Connor, Office of Judicial Administration
   - Nancy Wever, Indiana Office of Court Services, JDAI

   Guests Present:
   - Katie Schwartz, Indiana University School of Medicine

Todd Albin is retiring at the end of the month, so this will be his last meeting with the YJOC Data Work Group. Corajean Medina will be replacing Todd on the committee.

2. **Approval of Minutes from April 8, 2025 Meeting**
   Committee members were provided with a copy of the April 8, 2025 meeting minutes prior to today's meeting. Melanie Pitstick made a motion to approve the minutes; Colleen Saylor seconded the motion. The work group members unanimously approved the April 8, 2025 meeting minutes.

3. **Discussion of Diversion Report**
   Dr. Aalsma briefly mentioned that his team has a draft of the Diversion Report, but would like to spend the time in today's meeting reviewing the Data Evaluation Project. A final Diversion Report will be made available at the next meeting.

4. **Update on Data Evaluation Project**
   Katie Schwartz provided an update on the ongoing Data Evaluation Project. She noted that while data experts can sometimes get lost in the details, the team has made strong progress. Surveys and interviews related to diversion have been fully collected and are now being compiled into a comprehensive report. Additionally, administrative data has been gathered from all 24 counties involved in the project.

   The team is currently conducting a more detailed analysis of the data. Katie and her team are working closely with Lisa Thompson (SRS) and Kristi Bruther (Quest) to confirm patterns and findings. Some changes were requested for data tables, which Dave Williams was able to address for SRS. Similar updates may be necessary for the Quest data. One of the core efforts is assessing the overall quality of the data—determining how much is usable in its current form and identifying areas where standardization is needed moving forward. Katie emphasized that while perfection is not expected, the team must consider how much error is acceptable to ensure meaningful and reliable insights.

   A major goal of the project is to ensure that juvenile records can eventually be linked with other data sources. This raises complex questions about resolving definitional inconsistencies within administrative data, specifically, how to balance accurate documentation of diversion efforts without unnecessarily retaining a youth's name in the system. This challenge is central to defining what successful outcomes look like in legal system interactions.

   Katie shared updated data counts, revealing 35,135 unique youth in the dataset—a decrease of roughly 3,000 compared to previous figures. Although Quest only includes 6 counties, it accounts for 46% of the referrals, whereas SRS serves as the primary data source for the majority of the remaining counties. Interestingly, each county's contribution to the data does not align proportionately with its total population, prompting the suggestion to instead compare against the county's youth population specifically. At the last meeting, the team had mentioned a subset of youth in the sample

with no corresponding referral. Upon further review with Quest, it was determined that these were youth IDs connected to adults, suggesting the IDs don't always represent actual juveniles. Additionally, 407 youth were duplicated in the SRS data but each had only one referral. These cases involved youth who had moved and transferred probation supervision during the study period. Because address information was not collected and no other indication was provided, these transfers were not detected. This has highlighted the lack of a formal post-dispositional case transfer process. Melanie Pitstick proposed that the Probation Officers Advisory Board (POAB) develop official procedures for both predispositional and post-dispositional juvenile intrastate transfers.

The team also analyzed demographic and offense patterns. Race data appeared comparable between SRS and Quest, though Marion County skewed the Black youth cohort in the SRS data. As expected, larger counties showed greater diversity. Quest counties reported slightly higher numbers of female youth. Offense data varied by county; for example, Harrison County had more status offenses, Marion County had more felonies, and Allen County had more misdemeanors. The number of charges per referral varied significantly, with some referrals containing no charges at all. The team discussed possibly excluding these incomplete records from certain analyses, pending a count of how many cases would be affected. On a positive note, the number of referrals per youth remained consistent across counties.

Data quality continues to be a significant area of concern. Key issues identified include missing data fields, obvious entry errors, and a lack of harmonization between systems. The team examined missing Social Security Numbers (SSNs) by county, age miscalculations due to erroneous dates of birth, and the greater flexibility in Quest's system, which requires more harmonization. It was noted that while correcting historical data is more feasible, building future harmonization needs into the processes remains a challenge. Quest currently has some internal data mapping that allows agencies to add more variety to the system, but these mapped values were not used in this data pull (original values were used instead, causing greater variety).

Regarding diversion data, the team acknowledged ongoing challenges with consistency. Currently, the data is looking primarily at informal adjustments, comparing the Referral Outcome field to the supervision Case Type. The way counties record diversion varies widely, as reflected in survey and interview responses. This inconsistency was visualized in a bar chart, but the results were too varied to be reliable or actionable.

Katie outlined several preliminary recommendations to address the challenges identified. First, efforts should focus on cleaning the existing data to reduce review burdens and enhance data linkage capabilities. Where SSNs are unavailable, systems should include an option to indicate the reason. Second, data management best practices should be implemented, including identifying a "data champion" and ensuring that counties are appropriately represented in planning and feedback processes. Third, a data quality audit tool should be developed to flag potential errors and outliers, along with standard

operating procedures (SOPs) for resolving these issues. Fourth, the team recommended establishing a common data model that would streamline and standardize input. For example, limiting data entry options based on case types could reduce inconsistencies. They also suggested creating a separate diversion module, outside of Informal Adjustments, and incorporating active/inactive statuses to better capture "wait and see" referrals.

Looking ahead, the team plans to analyze court data next. Efforts will also continue toward the completion of the full report, which will consolidate all findings and recommendations from the project.

5. **Other Discussion Items**
   At the next meeting, we plan to take a deeper look into the need to add a "Diversion" option for Referral Recommendation and Referral Outcome. We will review the data to assess how this data point could enhance overall data quality and utility. The goal is to prepare a formal motion to propose its inclusion to Probation Quarterly Reports at an internal IOCS meeting in September.

6. **Next Meeting**
   The next YJOC Data Work Group meeting will be on **July 8, 2025 from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm** via Zoom; in-person meetings for this work group are no longer required.

   The next Youth Justice Oversight Committee Meeting is **June 12, 2025 at 10:00 am** at Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room A, 402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN. There will be a live webcast of this meeting available on the Youth Justice Oversight Committee website: www.in.gov/youthjustice.