



Youth Justice Oversight Committee

Data Work Group

Minutes from September 9, 2025 Data Work Group Meeting

The Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) Data Work Group met on September 9, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. Chris Biehn chaired the meeting.

1. Attendance

Members Present:

- Chris Biehn, Indiana Office of Court Services, Co-Chair
- Melanie Pitstick, Marion County Juvenile Probation
- Kristi Bruther, Johnson County Juvenile Detention Center
- Kaitlyn Christian, Management Performance Hub
- Olga Volokhova, Indiana Youth Institute
- Corajeon Medina, Department of Child Services
- Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services
- Traci Lane, Madison County Juvenile Probation
- Judge Paul Felix, Indiana Court of Appeals

Members Absent:

- Dr. Matt Aalsma, Indiana University School of Medicine, Co-Chair
- Morgan Leever, Indiana Department of Child Services
- 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
- Nancy Wever, Indiana Office of Court Services, JDAI
- Brendan O'Connor, Office of Data Governance and Analytics

Guests Present:

- Katie Schwartz, Indiana University School of Medicine

*Christine Reynolds is no longer with the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. Chris Biehn will contact Doug Huntsinger to see who may be able to replace Christine on the Data Work Group.

2. Approval of Minutes from August 12, 2025 Meeting

Committee members were provided with a copy of the August 12, 2025 meeting minutes prior to today's meeting. Traci Lane made a motion to approve the minutes; Melanie Pitstick seconded the motion. The work group members unanimously approved the August 12, 2025 meeting minutes.

3. Update on Diversion Additions to Probation Quarterly Report

As a follow up from last month's meeting, Lisa Thompson presented updated definitions for the two new Referral Recommendations for the Probation Quarterly Report. Discussion was held regarding the revised language and practice examples that were shared with the work group members prior to today's meeting.

All agreed with the new language presented for "Diversion by Prosecutor". This description refers to the statutory definition of Diversion and addresses the requirement of the IYAS Diversion Tool, while also addressing the referral and preliminary inquiry process in the practice example.

Discussion on "Diversion by Policy" focused on the statutory requirement to prepare a Preliminary Inquiry report for every referral. Concerns were raised about the potential workload impact, while others noted that some jurisdictions already prepare Preliminary Inquiry reports for every referral. The group acknowledged the distinction between conducting a preliminary inquiry and producing a formal report, emphasizing the importance of documenting decision-making for accountability and compliance purposes. Suggestions included use of a short-form report, though there were concerns this may not meet new requirements of the Preliminary Inquiry Report that were effective July 1, 2025. Additional clarification should be made to ensure these new options replace the use of "Dismissal," which many agencies have historically used to report Diversions.

Lisa demonstrated the revised Quarterly Report Worksheet to show how referrals are currently recorded and disposed. The group suggested emphasizing the preliminary inquiry process rather than the report itself to allow more flexibility but ultimately agreed on the importance of consistency with statutory requirements and maintaining data quality. Further edits will be made to clarify the "additional criteria" section before final publication.

New definitions with current edits:

(1) Preliminary Inquiry with Recommendation for Diversion by Prosecutor

Enter the number of Preliminary Inquiry reports that include a recommendation for the prosecutor to refer the youth to a diversion program.

"Diversion by Prosecutor" refers to the process outlined in IC 31-37-8.5-1 where the prosecutor reviews the Preliminary Inquiry report recommendation for referral to a diversion program to decide how to dispose of the referral. The Preliminary Inquiry

report must include the results of the IYAS Diversion Tool. After submitting the Preliminary Inquiry report to the prosecutor, the probation department awaits communication of the prosecutor's decision before taking any action. Local policy and practice will dictate how information is exchanged between the prosecutor and probation department and the level of court oversight.

Practice Example:

Step 1: Probation receives a request for a Preliminary Inquiry report from the prosecutor or a referral for an allegation of delinquency.

Step 2: Probation completes the Preliminary Inquiry report and sends it to the prosecutor.

Step 3: Prosecutor reviews the Preliminary Inquiry report and concurs with a recommendation for diversion.

Step 4: Prosecutor notifies probation of decision for diversion.

Step 5: Probation directs the youth to a diversion program.

(2) Preliminary Inquiry with Recommendation for Diversion by Policy

Enter the number of Preliminary Inquiry reports that include a recommendation to refer the youth to a diversion program in accordance with local policy that does not require further prosecutorial review.

"Diversion by Policy" refers to the process where the probation department prepares a Preliminary Inquiry report that includes a recommendation for referral to a diversion program, and by local policy, has authority to dispose of the referral without exchanging additional information from or seeking additional approval by the prosecutor. The Preliminary Inquiry report must include results of the IYAS Diversion Tool. The probation department's authority to dispose of a referral without further approval by the prosecutor should be documented in policy¹ that includes the alleged offenses and circumstances that enable and limit that authority.

Practice Example:

By policy of the court and prosecutor, the probation department conducts preliminary inquiries without awaiting direction from the prosecutor. If the Preliminary Inquiry report results in a recommendation for referral to a diversion program and the policy's criteria are met, the probation department directs the youth to a diversion program. The documented policy should clearly define the criteria and circumstances for appropriate use of this process. Criteria may include:

- applicable offenses (e.g., status, low-level misdemeanors, specific allegations)
- legal history (none, limited, or specific period of time since the last referral)
- factors mitigating the need for supervision by the court (risk for re-offense, school and community connections)

¹ In accordance with section 1.3 of the Indiana Probation Standards, each probation department must establish and maintain documentation of policies. Contact the Indiana Office of Court Services for examples of diversion policies.

Step 1: Probation receives a referral for an alleged offense that is identified in the policy.

Step 2: Probation completes the Preliminary Inquiry report and determines diversion criteria is met.

Step 3: Probation recommends diversion per documented policy.

Step 4: Probation directs the youth to a diversion program.

4. Pilot Counties Discussion

Chris Biehn reported that the follow-up survey was sent to the 24 counties outlining expectations for the next stage of the pilot. Ten counties expressed strong interest, and three indicated moderate interest. Chris will work with Dr. Aalsma, the IU team, Lisa, and Nancy to narrow the selection to five counties. Kristi Bruther asked whether participation would be limited to five counties. Chris and Katie explained that expansion may be possible, but funding constraints and the level of involvement from JDAI strategists as county liaisons will be determining factors.

5. Other Business

Katie Schwartz reported that there is no significant update on the data analysis, as the IU Data Manager is still drafting the final report.

6. Next Meeting

The next YJOC Data Work Group meeting will be on **October 14, 2025 from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm** via Zoom.

The next Youth Justice Oversight Committee Meeting is **October 9, 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.