

North Carolina's Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

OPENING

The third meeting of North Carolina's Juvenile Reentry Reform Task Force was called to order at 9:30am on May 29, 2015 at 3010 Hammond Business Place, Room 144, Raleigh, NC 27603 by Billy Lassiter, Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice.

PRESENT

Task Force Members: Antonio Gardner, Dave Hardesty, Buddy Howell, Anne-Marie Iselin, Billy Lassiter, Mary Murray, Martin Pharr, Cindy Porterfield, Mike Rieder, and Nicole Sullivan

Other Attendees/Guests: Catherine Anderson, Sadric Bonner, Venecia Carr, Kenya Beyah-Murphy, Duane Cogdell, Debbie Dawes, Tamara Flinchum, Dale Floyd, Felicia Gray-Watson, Michelle Hall, David Hard, Megan Howell, Kim Howes, Rachel Johnson, Diana Kees, Henry McLaughlin, Lisa Partin, Paulette Pearce, Ken Perry, Jesse Tall, and Angela Taylor

OPEN ISSUES

After review of the meeting agenda, Deputy Commissioner Billy Lassiter opened the meeting with project updates. Dr. Jean Steinberg will replace Dr. Julie Singer as the Project Director, given Dr. Singer's resignation. The RFP for implementation programs was released by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and calls for proposal submissions by June 23, 2015 rather than late July as anticipated. Deputy Commissioner Lassiter turned the meeting over to Ms. Cindy Porterfield to provide a summary of the Council of State Governments' (CSG) findings from its assessment of NC's current reentry process.

Before Ms. Porterfield's summary, Ms. Megan Howell provided an overview of the logistics of the CSG site visit. Ms. Howell described the wide variety of juvenile justice practitioners who were interviewed by the CSG staff, including judges, court counselors, court counselor supervisors, chief court counselors, area administrators, multipurpose group home, detention center, youth development center, transition home, and short-term residential staff, parents of youth in a youth development center (YDC), a Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) chairperson, Division of Health and Human Services (DHHS) staff, and Commissioner Guice of the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice. Over the three-day site visit, the CSG site visit team also toured two judicial district offices, the Chatham Youth Development Center, and the North Hills Transitional Living Home.

In opening her remarks about CSG's reentry assessment findings, Ms. Porterfield reminded Task Force members of the planning grant's goals, objectives, and priority areas (e.g., comprehensive service plan, workforce development and education, family engagement, and data quality). Ms. Porterfield identified strengths of NC's juvenile justice system, including management information systems (NC-JOIN and NC ALLIES), ongoing measurement of recidivism, the use of evidence-based practices, the use of structured decision-making tools (e.g., risk and needs

assessments, detention screening tool, disposition matrix, comprehensive service plan), the practice of matching juveniles to services based on risk and needs, appropriate diversion of low risk youth, and partnerships with CSG, SAS and RTI. Within this context, Ms. Porterfield reviewed CSG's assessment findings and recommendations. These include the need to (1) develop a standardized case plan to ensure youth get services matched to their risk level and key needs during placement and in the community; (2) develop a more effective and consistent supervision practice model and provide training and supports to juvenile court counselors on case management practices, motivational interviewing, and family engagement; (3) improve coordination between facility staff and juvenile court counselors to develop a service plan prior to discharge that matches youth to appropriate community-based services; (4) develop a structured decision matrix to inform length of stay decisions; (5) re-norm the risk assessment tool; (6) develop a full range of educational and workforce development opportunities in the community; (7) re-enroll youths in appropriate school settings based on their needs and goals; (8) develop formalized tools, resources, and supports for families of youth in YDCs and other placements; (9) establish clear performance measures for family engagement; and, (10) collect key reentry performance and quality assurance measures, and connect recidivism data to other youth outcome data (e.g., education, employment, behavioral health).

Debbie Dawes (RTI) walked the Task Force through each of the four subgroup's recommendations to reform juvenile reentry. Ms. Dawes explained that the recommendations presented are those which will be included in the proposal to OJJDP to request implementation funds for the first year of the reform initiative. If NC is successful in winning an implementation award, there may be additional funding available next year to support other subgroup recommendations planned for implementation in subsequent years. The Year 1 recommendations include:

(1) implement the Comprehensive Service Plan (partnering with SAS to finalize the comprehensive service plan tool); designing training curriculum and other supporting materials about the comprehensive service plan and service planning assessment tool; rolling-out training sessions on the comprehensive service plan and service planning assessment tool to Juvenile Court Counselors, Court Counselor Supervisors, Chief Court Counselors, facility staff, and offering training to judges, public defenders, district attorneys; implementing comprehensive service plan and service planning assessment tool; implementing fidelity monitoring procedures for the service plan and service planning assessment tool; ensure ongoing monitoring; developing juvenile justice services inventory by county; and exploring the development of community planning teams);

(2) increase family involvement (administering YDC parent survey; developing or adapting training curriculum on family engagement; rolling-out training sessions on family engagement; exploring the Parent Involvement Management System (PIMS) as a parent engagement tool);

(3) develop workforce/educational opportunities (exploring the reclassification of positions from YDC closures to create community development specialist positions; Workforce and Educational Opportunities subgroup continues to meet to develop strategies to increase workforce development and employment opportunities within facilities and in the community); and,

(4) increase data quality (finalizing the implementation/performance measurement monitoring plan; tracking and analyzing implementation/performance measures; collecting data

in PRS plans, YDC pre/post assessments, JCC case notes; partnering with SAS to obtain data on juvenile outcomes for the baseline study sample; analyzing baseline outcomes).

Task Force members suggested and discussed two additional recommendations for Year 1: (1) address gang involvement and build positive peer relationships, and (2) open more transitional living homes (as planned in the Facilities Strategic Plan) as a way to increase job training and employment.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Shannon Tuzo (Methodist Home for Children) gave a presentation on multipurpose homes and transitional living homes operated by Methodist Home for Children. Ms. Tuzo briefly explained the history of the multipurpose homes – to reduce the use of detention and youth development centers – and the target population – 10 to 17 year old, high risk Level 2 or step-down Level 3 males and females. The program components include assessment, use of an evidence-based cognitive behavioral model, social skills development, life skills training, education (online, public school, GED track, community college, and university), family services, and aftercare. To track progress, a Risk and Protective Factors instrument is administered at admission, discharge, and 6-months post-discharge. An outcome survey is also administered 6- and 12-months post-discharge. Ms. Tuzo then presented on the two transitional living homes. These homes are designed to assist youth as they transition from YDCs to the community, and target those who are moving to independent living or those for whom moving back home is not an option. One home was opened in 2011 in Craven County; it serves males aged 16 to 18. The second home was opened in 2014 in Raleigh (North Hills); it serves females aged 16 to 18. Program components include assessment, the use of an evidence-based cognitive behavioral model, social skills development, education, life skills assessment and training, vocational assessment and training, education (online, GED, community college), higher education support and scholarships, and aftercare. Every youth is required to be in school and/or working; all youth volunteer. Youth are experiencing success in these homes. For example, 82% of the participants in the Craven County home and 70% of the participants in the North Hills home were employed and remained employed through discharge. With respect to recidivism, only 19% of the participants in the Craven County home had a new adjudication or adult conviction 6-months post-discharge. (Recidivism data are not yet available for the North Hills home.)

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

At the next meeting, subject matter experts (TBD) will present.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am by Billy Lassiter. The next general meeting is planned for June 26, 2015 but may be re-scheduled depending on guest speakers' availability. The meeting will be held at 3010 Hammond Business Place, Room 144, Raleigh, NC 27603.

Minutes submitted by: Debbie Dawes, MPA
Approved by: Billy Lassiter