

Appendix F:
Consensus Report by the Institute for Health and Public Justice

Introduction

In June 2011, the Louisiana Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution 120 which authorized the Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission (JJIC) to assess the current state of juvenile justice in Louisiana, evaluate improvements made during the preceding five years, and issue recommendations for a five-year plan for juvenile justice reform. The JJIC then commissioned the Institute for Public Health and Justice (IPHJ) to conduct the study on its behalf with a final report due before the 2013 Louisiana Legislative Session.

Since being commissioned, IPHJ has been gathering available data, conducting analyses, and developing a draft of the report findings and recommendations. The study findings and recommendations were grouped into six key areas of the juvenile justice system – Informal FINS, Juvenile Detention, Probation, Placement and Parole, Services, and Availability and Use of Data.

IPHJ worked with key leaders to schedule and conduct three regional consensus-building meetings in September of 2012. These meetings had three main goals: (1) to present the draft findings and preliminary recommendations from the study, (2) to identify the recommendations that the group could rally around and agree to, and (3) to facilitate connections across the juvenile justice system by engaging a diverse group of leaders.

Reform in the juvenile justice system takes everyone involved working towards common goals – even those with differing perspectives and duties. The IPHJ sought to bring these groups together in order to reach a shared vision for reform towards which all parties could collectively work. This shared vision for ongoing reform, especially for those areas where there is consensus, offers an excellent chance of achievement. Much has been accomplished and much remains to be done. This process and report offers a starting point for the next five years.

Framework and Process of Meetings

The Institute proposed a wide range of preliminary recommendations grounded in available data and research gathered over the past five years. These meetings were supported by the MacArthur Foundation, a long-standing partner of the Institute to further juvenile justice reform in Louisiana.

In September 2012, the Institute hosted three regional consensus building meetings. The Institute worked with juvenile justice leadership who invited attendees from various aspects within the juvenile justice system. Among the attendees included District Attorneys and Assistant District Attorneys; Public Defenders; Juvenile, Family, City, and District Court Judges; Louisiana Juvenile Detention Association President; State and Local Juvenile Justice Administrators; and JJIC members and staff. The invitation list and the number of attendees were limited to best facilitate a “think tank” meeting and provide a format that was conducive to open feedback and input. The Institute’s vision for the consensus building meetings was to discover the common ground for juvenile justice reform.

The following meetings were held in three different regions of the state to ensure broad representation from different constituencies: North/Delta, Central/Southwest, and Southeast. Participants were limited to attending a meeting in their own region, so that the discussion resulted in regional view points, which was desired by the participants.

| Date | Location | Attendees |
|--------------------|--|-----------|
| September 18, 2012 | Louisiana Tech Ruston, LA | 31 |
| September 20, 2012 | IberiaBank Lafayette, LA | 37 |
| September 25, 2012 | Baton Rouge Area Foundation Baton Rouge, LA | 40 |

The Institute's Director, Debra DePrato, MD, served as the host and moderator for each meeting. As part of their support, the MacArthur Foundation provided national and in-state juvenile justice resources to the Institute to assist with the development and delivery of the consensus meetings. These presenters and facilitators included:

- Debra DePrato, MD, Director, Institute for Public Health and Justice
- John Morris, Technical Assistance Collaborative
- Stephen Phillippi, Ph.D., Assistant Clinical Professor, LSUHSC School of Public Health
- Patricia Puritz, Executive Director, National Juvenile Defender Center
- Annie Salsich, Director, Vera Institute's Center on Youth Justice
- Gene Siegel, Senior Research Consultant, National Center for Juvenile Justice

The Institute worked with these resource organizations to develop a presentation for the three half-day meetings. The presentation was divided up into three parts. Part one addressed where in the JJ system the youth are located and trends on local and state levels over the past five years. These areas included: Families in Needs of Services (Informal FINS), Detention, and Probation and Post-Dispositional Placement. Part two described the services available to youth in the various parts of the system including five-year trends where available, and local/state challenges and advances. Part three showcased the data available, or not available, for these points in the systems and for the services.

Since the ultimate goal of the meetings was to discern and build consensus, the Institute devised two feedback mechanisms post-presentation to gather attendee input. First, the attendees were divided into small groups based on their judicial district. The groups were then asked to prioritize their needs and challenges on a state and local level and report their results at the end of the meeting. Second, each attendee was provided with a Rankings Worksheet that listed the priority areas and preliminary recommendations. The attendees were asked to complete the anonymous worksheet with their personal preferences.

Summary

These consensus building opportunities from a regional perspective were invaluable in gathering input from a group of front-line professionals in the juvenile justice system and in fostering cohesion between these diverse groups of professionals. Despite their different viewpoints in the juvenile justice system, these meetings show there is a clear agreement from the leaders for priority next steps in juvenile justice reform.

The top priority area was in the area of “services.” In the past, the need was always described as generally “more services.” However, this group helped to further clarify this recommendation by calling for better access to services, timeliness of services, and clear linkages to the right services for certain populations of at-risk youth and juvenile justice youth. In other words, one size does not fit all when it comes to screening, assessment, and effective intervention. The following are the areas of collective agreement from the consensus building meetings in the area of services.

- Improving access to services (clear linkage to the right services for youth in the juvenile justice system; a path to referral that is well known to all participants in the system)
- Greater availability of specialized services for distinct juvenile justice populations (participants were clear that they want the right services for the right youth; that is, services that work and are appropriate for the level of need for the youth and point in the juvenile justice system)
- Creation of services where gaps exist, such as crisis or respite care (clearly there are gaps where youth are not being served, and instead the juvenile justice system is the fall back; these include Informal FINS youth whose family is having a crisis, youth who cannot be at home, but there are no other options than detention or long-term placement, when respite would be more appropriate)
- Ensuring youth with mental health needs are appropriately diverted to the mental health system (Louisiana has traditionally high rates of youth with mental illness in the juvenile justice system, sometimes as a way to access services, and also because there is no clear way for youth to get effective mental health services prior to their involvement with the juvenile justice system; there was a clear desire to correct this problem)
- Work with DCFS to identify “crossover youth” to decrease penetration into the juvenile justice system (concern was raised regarding the number of youth who end up in FINS and delinquency system who were formerly involved in the child abuse system, and a desire to address this issue of “cross-over” youth, so that the reasons are addressed and corrected)

The group heavily endorsed continuing the development of local and state level best practices in the juvenile justice system. In general, participants have seen that local areas of reform have produced good results. They have seen state reform efforts aimed at best practices succeed, such as the post-adjudication best practice assessment process. The group desires to spread proven local reform to other areas of the state, as well as adopt new practices in areas where work has not yet begun, such as a true step down system for youth leaving secure care. Participants realize that it takes technical assistance and partnerships to create these models and hoped for long-term resources to help improve the state, as reform is a never ending quest.

These areas of Juvenile Justice Best Practices were seen as high priorities by all participants.

- Status Offenders System Reform (Informal FINS)
 - Intake and triage process outside of court system for status offenders
 - Immediate family crisis response, availability of respite when needed
- Juvenile Detention Reform inclusive of Alternatives to Juvenile Detention
 - Detention risk and mental health screening at all facilities
 - Alternative to detention interventions state-wide
- Statewide study of Juvenile Detention for overall “fit” in juvenile justice system
- Graduated Sanction Model for Probation and Aftercare (Parole) System
 - Implement a tiered, graduated sanctions-based probation system
 - Case management track for Formal (Adjudicated) FINS
 - Develop and implement an aftercare system that is a gradual and well-planned “step down” process from secure care to structured therapeutic programs
 - Study for the purpose of a plan for development of an aftercare system with OJJ and key stakeholders

The group identified the need to establish an infrastructure that would serve as a resource for ongoing juvenile justice reform, much as the Institute has provided the infrastructure to support the reform effort to date through Louisiana Models for Change program.

- The Support of a Sustainable Data, Technical Assistance, Training and Monitoring Resource
 - A juvenile justice data repository to store and utilize data and work with localities and state to improve their systems based on the data
 - A resource for best practices
 - A guide to create partnerships with higher education and the juvenile justice system
 - Perform studies and monitor progress of juvenile justice reform
 - Continued regional consensus building and input sessions

Appendix: Meeting Results

Institute staff recorded the small group reports for later analysis. Overall areas of consensus emerged and are as follows.

- Improved services and service delivery in the juvenile justice system
- Further development of juvenile justice best practices for:
 - Status Offenders (Informal FINS)
 - Detention Reform – particularly Alternatives to Detention
 - Graduated Sanction Model for Probation
 - A true “post-placement” Aftercare System
- Support for ongoing data and training resource for juvenile justice system
- Sustained levels of funding for an effective juvenile justice system (a.k.a. Missouri Model)
- Reinvestment in community and local resources

At the end of each meeting the completed Rankings Worksheets were collected for analysis by Institute staff. The following charts show the priority areas and top recommendations.

General Priority Areas: Attendees were asked to rank the priority areas in order of preference.

| | Ruston | Lafayette | Baton Rouge | All |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| Services | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Informal FINS | 2 | 3 | 3 | T – 2 |
| Juvenile Detention | 3 | 2 | 6 | T – 2 |
| Probation | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Placement and Parole | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Availability and Use of Data | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 |

Priority Recommendations

Attendees were then asked to individually select their top three preliminary recommendations for each issue area. The following are the preliminary recommendations chosen.

NOTE: The following charts list only the top preliminary recommendations that were the most preferred across all meetings. Some areas have more than three recommendations listed due to a numerical tie.

| | Ruston | Lafayette | Baton Rouge | All |
|---|--------|-----------|-------------|-----|
| Priority Area: Screening and Assessment | | | | |
| Entities tasked with Screening/Assessment mandate best practices and support with technical assistance. | X | X | | X |
| Sustain ongoing best practices through state and locally supported technical assistance. | X | X | X | X |
| Establish a central repository to collect, analyze, and report risk and need information consistently to regions in order to assist with service development decisions. | | X | X | X |
| Priority Area: Intervention and Treatment | | | | |
| Increase the timely delivery of services and address waiting list issues (e.g., kids reoffend while waiting for services they need). | | X | X | X |
| Establish alternatives for more effectively intervening in the mental health needs of juvenile justice youth prior to, or without, the necessity to detain them. | X | X | X | X |
| Direct federal, state, and local dollars to services that work. Services should be monitored and demonstrate quality, produce outcomes, and be cost-effective. | X | | | X |
| Address barriers in access to treatment such as transportation, adequate reimbursement, and provider support to grow services. | | X | | X |

| | Ruston | Lafayette | Baton Rouge | All |
|---|--------|-----------|-------------|-----|
| Priority Area: Informal FINS | | | | |
| Intake and triage processes should be provided by a service outside of the court system, with youth entering court only when all else fails. | X | X | X | X |
| Ensure, and document, that schools have utilized all in-house responses to a youth's behavior prior to making a FINS complaint. | X | X | | X |
| Ensure there are immediate crisis responses along with respite and evidence-based interventions available in all regions of the state. | | X | X | X |
| Priority Area: Juvenile Detention | | | | |
| Reform efforts, such as the required use of detention screening instruments and mental health screening, represent best practices and should be mandated on a statewide basis. | X | X | X | X |
| State, regional, and local leaders should ensure that the mandates in the detention standards are fully implemented and funded accordingly. | X | | | X |
| The state should work collaboratively with local leaders to plan, and explore funding options to create alternative-to-detention interventions in jurisdictions where those services do not currently exist, drawing on successful models in some sites. | X | X | X | X |
| The state should enact legislation that disallows or limits FINS youth from being placed in detention and should specifically develop alternatives to detention for this population. (At a minimum, FINS admissions and length of stays should be monitored via data collection by the LIDA, and via monitoring of the facilities.) | | X | X | X |

| | Ruston | Lafayette | Baton Rouge | All |
|---|--------|-----------|-------------|-----|
| Priority Area: Probation | | | | |
| Adjudicated FINS should be placed outside of delinquency probation with a plan to meet the different needs of these youth and families. (Calcasieu Parish FINS system should be considered by localities and the state as a best practice.) | X | X | X | X |
| Length of probation should be driven by the progress of the youth on probation; re-assessment of the youth should take place every six months. | X | | X | X |
| In line with best practice, local and state probation departments should develop graduated response grids for technical violations of probation, along with individualized interventions to reduce recidivism. | X | | X | X |
| Priority Area: Placement and Parole | | | | |
| Study the juvenile parole system and develop a collaborative plan to develop a juvenile-centered aftercare model that is about services and support as well as supervision. | X | X | | X |
| This aftercare model should include a gradual and well-planned "step down" process that will enable youth to be released from secure care to different levels of structured therapeutic programs available across the states, such as: Day treatment and Independent living that can better assist them in their transition to their home, their neighborhoods, and their schools while maintaining public safety. | X | X | X | X |
| Develop graduated intensive services for youth prior to placement in both secure and non-secure facilities. This process should involve studying the needs of youth in placement, with a focus on status offending youth and any youth scoring low on the SAVRY. | X | X | X | X |
| Priority Area: Availability and Use of Data | | | | |
| Do you support a statewide juvenile justice repository/data warehouse requiring dedicated funding to support: (1) Data analysis, report dissemination, and information sharing; (2) Produce data for policy/practice development; (3) Guidance to local and state automated system development efforts; (4) Facilitate consensus around common data elements, reporting requirements, and cross-system compatibility? | YES | YES | YES | YES |

Appendix: Representation at Meetings

Organizations

- Lafayette City Court
- Louisiana District Attorney's Association
- Louisiana House of Representatives
- Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice
- Louisiana Public Defender Board
- Louisiana Senate
- Vidalia City Court
- Ware Youth Center
- CIP – Anne Simon

Judicial Districts

- 1st JDC
- 2nd JDC
- 3rd JDC
- 4th JDC
- 5th JDC
- 7th JDC
- 9th JDC
- 10th JDC
- 12th JDC
- 14th JDC
- 15th JDC
- 16th JDC
- 18th JDC
- 19th JDC
- 21st JDC
- 22nd JDC
- 23rd JDC
- 24th JDC
- 25th JDC
- 26th JDC
- 31st JDC
- 32nd JDC
- 36th JDC
- 37th JDC
- 41st JDC