

**Iowa Girls Justice Initiative  
Meeting Summary  
August 5, 2016  
10:00am – 2:00 pm**



**Polk County River Place – Room 2  
2309 Euclid Ave.  
Des Moines, IA**

**Working Group Members:**

Kristen Corey, *Iowa Department of Human Rights*  
Susan Cox, *5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District*  
Latasha DeLoach, *Johnson County Social Services*  
Kim Denning, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Andrea Dickerson, *Youth and Shelter Services, Inc.*  
Ruth Frush, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Evelyn Garrison, *Achieving Maximum Potential Facilitator*  
Nicole Hart, *Achieving Maximum Potential*  
Stephanie Hernandez, *Family Resources, Inc.*  
Lori Rinehart, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Tom Southard, *Juvenile Court Services*  
Jennifer Tibbets, *ITFYW Chair and Catherine McAuley Center*  
Monica Stone, *Iowa Department of Human Rights*  
Julie Walton, *Scott County Attorney's Office*

**Guests**

Beth Rydberg, on behalf of Iowa Disability Rights  
Jen Sievert, on behalf of Iowa Coalition for Family and Children's Services

**Staff**

Gracie Brandsgard, *SPPG*  
Arlinda McKeen, *SPPG*  
Kathy Nesteby, *Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning*

**Welcome and Overview of the Day**

Arlinda McKeen called the group together at 10:14 a.m. Members of the working group introduced themselves to the two guests who were substituting for two other working group members. McKeen gave an overview of the day's meeting with a review of the gap analysis survey in the morning and a continuation of last month's discussions on consensus items and plan structure in the afternoon.

## **Review Gap Analysis**

Gracie Brandsgard presented the gap analysis survey conducted in June and July of 2016 and its results. The Gap Analysis survey was sent to JCO IVs across all regions of the state, they were asked to respond to questions related to current services available to girls in the juvenile justice system and specifically high-risk high-need girls. Twenty of 26 JCO IVs participated in the survey.

Key findings of the survey included:

- It is more difficult for JCO IVs to access services for deep end girls than for girls in general.
- Few JCO IVs are highly satisfied with various aspects of services available. The two characteristics with which JCO IVs were the Most Unsatisfied were public safety and available space.
- The service respondents felt was most lacking in Iowa for girls was a State Training School/locked facility and alternatives.

Survey respondents were also asked to list service providers they prefer in delivering services to girls. Two of the services available have closed in the last couple of months: Farrand House and the Fort Dodge facility. In Fort Dodge the schools didn't want to sign the 28E Agreement to provide educational services. Farrand House was small, new, and would be unable to compete given the new Iowa Department of Human Services RFP with no eject/no reject policy.

The working group discussed the subject of state training schools at length. The working group first discussed the purpose of a state training school and the two models of thinking when developing services: the treatment model and the punitive model. In a state training school, kids are kept at the facility for a length of time dictated by a judge, whereas in a treatment facility the child remains there until they have met their treatment goals. Working group members discussed whether deep end girls would be sent to a locked and/or secure facility because they needed services or because they had received a sentence. The group also discussed the role that public safety plays in determining a girl's placement. One working group member added that a state training school keeps juveniles out of the adult system and without a placement of last resort for girls in Iowa, there are fewer buffers between them and the adult system. The per diem at the Iowa State Training School for Boys is \$360-380, and includes education and treatment. By comparison, residential treatment facilities charge a per diem of \$137.50.

The working group discussed the importance of reentry for kids back into their home communities. One member noted that many kids get stuck in the system because their homes are not stable and cannot support the progress the kid has made while in an out of home placement. The group agreed that an integration piece of any placement of last resort was critical for a child's long term success. If the family, home, or community hasn't changed, how do kids reconcile that when they've gone through a new program and have whole new set of skills and goals?

The need for foster homes for deep end girls was a common response in the gap analysis survey. The working group discussed the gap and the need, and some potential best practice programs. Foster families often will not take girls who are pregnant, making these girls difficult to place in a least restrictive setting. A working group member suggested a program that targeted recent empty nesters to be foster parents. The program would include a subsidy that parents could use for their kids who are currently in college. There are several kids in the juvenile justice system who are ages 15 and 16 and would need a foster home for a short amount of time, this could coincide nicely for empty nesters while their kids are away at college. Another working group member informed the group about the STAR program that trained and supported therapeutic foster homes.

### **High Level Plan Content Outline Draft for Discussion**

McKeen reviewed an updated targeted audience list and definition of “deep end girls” with the group, two items the group had reached consensus on at the previous meeting. McKeen also reviewed the working outline of the plan and high level content sections. The plan will include a report and then additional materials to be written for various audiences that include simplified language and infographics to get the attention of readers. The executive summary could be a section appropriate for public dissemination.

### **Recommendations Discussion and Consensus – Deep End Focus**

Last month the working group began its discussions on the list of elements of a system for deep end girls. These discussions are focused on achieving consensus on each element. McKeen presented an refined list that reflected the previous discussions and additional discussions among Brandsgard, McKeen, and Nesteby to focus more clearly on deep end application. Nesteby added that as the group goes through the consensus discussions it is important to maintain the group’s focus on deep end girls. Many of the consensus items could be applied universally to the juvenile justice system, so it is important to think how they would specifically impact the deep end.

Discussion began on whether the planning group will recommend there be a state training school level of service for girls, meaning a residential facility.

- It seems like we are working on two different documents – what do we do with girls who are at the end of the road, and how do we prevent other girls from getting to the end of the road?
- In addition to the list of recommendations, we could have a pot of ideas that could act as next steps. The pot would include other ideas that we discussed here, but don’t directly apply to the deep end girls.
- We need a “post plan” to address where girls go when they leave, what they need to do to get out of placement, how long they can be in the deep end, and how they get integrated back into the community. The planning group, if we agree there will be a placement of last resort, will need to agree on how the girls get out of the institution.
- Our plan should be giving the judge an alternative for girls who have exhausted all other placements. It would allow us to extend the jurisdiction to age 19 1/2.
- We could have regional placements, a specialized unit at Forest Ridge.

- There has to be a place they can't fail out of.
- Forest Ridge and Four Oaks are really good placements. We need something like Forest Ridge for deep end girls.
- You need to have the capability to lock at the facility.
- Can we say a state training school level of care?
  - The placement needs to be something that meets the Iowa Code requirements.
  - It's DHS' duty to figure out the logistics of the facility – if it's a new building, where it's located, etc.
  - We should identify what that level of care looks like – a secure piece, psychiatric care, mental health, etc., with extended jurisdiction.
  - You should take what the Code says the what the State Training School for Boys should be, and we should double check that that's what we want in the girls state training school.
  - Code revisions would be a next step. Right now with what the working group has been charged with, we don't have the capacity to make Code change recommendations.
- It is not just about services, it is also about system changes (i.e., Girls' Court).
- The recommendations provided by the working group do not need to be tied to a location, but the group does need to reach consensus on the issue of a facility.

After much discussion, the group concluded that making a decision on the group's stance on a placement of last resort for deep end girls was a necessary before moving on to further discussions on plan recommendations and structure. The group reached consensus that their recommendations will include a residential placement option for girls that meets state training school requirements. One member noted now the group can move forward and come up with something innovative rather than being stuck on the discussion of a facility.

The group moved on to a discussion of the elements to be included in recommendations. For each item they discussed whether it was a systems-level or a facility-specific recommendation as well as realistic and idealistic options. Consensus was sought and reached for each.

*#1. Specialized foster homes with foster parents trained in working with high risk high need girls and higher levels of support and respite for both the foster parents and girls.*

- Systems change.
- The realistic step is that they are already looking at training for specific populations.
- Idealistically, it could be tied to a Girls Academy. These specialized foster homes could be used as a step-down option post-facility. Example: STAR homes out of the 1<sup>st</sup> judicial district.
- Foster parents would have some kind of knowledge of the adult system.
- There are concerns by foster parents about protecting themselves; they need support as well.

*#2. Sufficient funding to ensure equitable and sustainable services, programming and facilities. In particular, to allow for retention of personnel, higher education and experience standards for personnel, adequate training, ongoing professional development and a higher ratio of staff to girls.*

- Both system and services (facility). The first sentence is systems-related and the second sentence is facility specific. It was suggested to make that item into 2a and 2b.
- You want adequate funding for all services. Can we get data to show the discrepancy in daily rates between a state-funded bed and a privately funded bed?
- The facility will need to be state-funded, not Medicaid funded.
  - When kids are in the state training school they lose their Medicaid eligibility.
  - Medication is a huge cost. MCOs will want to dictate the length of stay if they cover treatment costs. Can Medicaid cover medication?

*#3. Validate all assessment tools by race and gender and given preference to assessment tools that are female and culturally responsive, trauma informed, and developmentally appropriate.*

- Both facility and systems related.
- Make sure the assessment tool has a component of identifying who needs a facility-level of care.
- Require the assessment indicates a certain level of risk in order to place a girl in a facility.
  - The exception would be female sex offenders who almost always show up as low risk but they are an obvious threat to public safety.
- IDA has already been validated by race and gender.
- There are a lot of providers who don't know about the IDA.
  - There are a lot of assessment tools – have they all been validated based on race and gender?

*#4. Single gender environments for services and placements.*

- Both facility and systems related.
- The facility should be single gender.
- We need more research on what single gender means, and examples of single gender services or programs currently in place.

*#5. Professional training on female-responsive, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate best practices for those working with girls in the juvenile justice system.*

- Both facility and systems related.
- This is a must for facility staff. Professional training indicates a higher level of training. Facility staff should be experts, but realistically providers don't need to be experts though they should still receive training.
- This is not a high cost recommendation. The Iowa Task Force provides training for free.
- In a facility of last resort, it is a requirement. At the realistic system level you strive for everyone to get training.
  - When we start watering it down, that's how we get girls into the deep end of the system, we ignore those parts. When we don't have training, that's how girls of color get to the deep end of the system, because they weren't valued, their culture and their perspectives weren't valued.
- Our recommendations should reference resources that are needed to make this happen.

- We need to ask our target audience members, high level policymakers, for help.
- DHS and other funders audit service providers; part of the audit consists of looking at and verifying that specific training took place.
- RELIAS is an online training curriculum available through DHS and is competency-based.

*#6. Continue one family, one judge for deep end girls, and provide Girls Court for moderate or high risk girls with delinquency charges as possible.*

- Right now the focus of “one family, one judge” has been on CINA cases; they try to use it on the delinquency side of things, but it’s not as universal.
- The State Court Administration has offered to look at our recommendation and offer guidance.
- Change “continue” to “extend” or “support” or delete the word.
- Make Girl’s Court its own recommendation.
- The one family, one judge is the realistic step, Girls Court is the idealistic step.
  - Girls Court is about doing things differently, and taking a different approach – anyone can do it.

*#7. Make education credits easily transferable from one school district to the next. Develop and implement uniform basic education requirements and establish universal standards for number and type of credits required for graduation.*

- System only.
- This can be an issue for all kids, whenever any student transfers school districts.
- There is a State of Iowa diploma, it has lower credit requirements than some of districts. So kids could work towards the State of Iowa diploma, rather than trying to meet a specific school district’s diploma. That could be the more realistic recommendation.
  - Would they need to have access to a community college? No, they don’t need to be.
  - Does that impact school districts’ delinquency dollars?
  - Concern was expressed that there would be a loophole where kids with one semester left to graduation could opt to get the State of Iowa diploma instead of the school diploma if they don’t want to work hard. However, that is already an option, but students just don’t know about it.

*#8. Integrate treatment and education to ensure girls have access to education while in treatment commensurate with their non-placement education.*

- Facility-specific.
- Ideally there would be access to higher level and college entrance level classes, better vocational programs, and access to curricula that students in non-facility settings have access to.
- Extracurricular activities should be available.
- Vocational training should be equitable and build skills that will help girls get a job with a livable wage.
- Access to the same curriculum as the school district where the facility is and access to distance learning for higher level classes.

#9. *The highest level of care should have a no reject, no eject policy as well as clear standards which narrowly define who will be served at that level.*

- This recommendation includes the Code that provides eligibility standards for state training schools.
- Are we revisiting the Code and making recommendations for Code changes? Do we want our facility to have the same standards that exist in the Code for state training schools currently or do we want to adjust eligibility requirements?
  - It's not realistic to change the Code.
  - Are we going to trust policymakers to rewrite the Code the way we want it changed? There is a process for a state agency to draft a bill and present it to the legislature.
  - If we changed the Code, would we also need to change the standards for boys as well, to keep it fair?
  - Can we make a recommendation that there be a study group be put together to look at potential Code revisions? There was a concern that the study group would be duplicating the efforts of this working group in an inefficient way and the working group would be giving up part of its ownership of this work by delegating part of it, the Code changes, to study group.
    - Maybe there should be a working group subcommittee to come up with a definition.
    - The study group is the way to go because it's a big can of worms and we need a lot of data to look at it because the impact will be so great.
  - Maybe we could change the rules for how the Code gets implemented, that's an easier process.
  - When you look at the criteria, what else do we want that's different for girls? This will be homework for next month's meeting.

#10. *Extend jurisdiction to age 24.*

- Both facility and systems related.
- How did we land on age 24? This age is concerning when we are thinking about equal protection. Under this new recommendation women could have additional consequences for actions than men. Are we piling on additional consequences to women who are trying to move on from the system?
- Any time you use the word jurisdiction you mean the court can be involved in your life. And I don't think the girls would like that; it can mean jail time, it can mean someone can rule your life.
- It should be changed to "voluntary access to services until age 21", and jurisdiction should be mentioned.
- Change to "extend access to services with commensurate funding until age 21". Lower the age to match what they can voluntarily do.
  - Is it our place to say that?

- There are two concepts we're juggling here: the idea of jurisdiction, and access to services. When you're under 18 they are not different concepts. Changing the language will make that distinction.
- Don't include it as a recommendation. This is supposed to be after the deep end. We should mention this in the report, in our discussion of after supports/transitional supports, but not make it an actual recommendation.
- What services are youth using up to age 21? And how much is it being utilized?
  - Health insurance, Title XIX, housing stipends, education vouchers, and supportive funding.
- Until recently, the State Training School for Boys didn't have access to aftercare money. That's changed now.
  - The money comes with the stipulations, they have to meet with their worker once a week, etc.
  - What services, funds, etc. do boys coming out of the State Training School get, and how do we make sure deep end girls get the same?
    - Is that a benefit to calling a facility a Girls State Training School?
- Any kid who ages out of a placement has the same access to services, regardless of the placement.
  - In detention they don't get it, which is where a lot of deep-end girls have to go.
- Change to "Use existing standards for jurisdiction in the facility setting to 19 ½ and access to services to age 21".

*#11. Ensure the statewide children's mental health system provides timely, consistent, and ongoing access to psychiatric and/or psychological services for high need, deep end girls.*

- Both facility and systems related.
- What about giving dedicated slots for high-needs girls so there are always spots for girls who need them? Could there be dedicated spots at the University of Iowa for high-needs girls?
  - The University of Iowa isn't set up to handle high security girls.
- The idealistic step would be telemedicine, super PMICs, and a separate system at University of Iowa for high-needs girls.
  - A super PMIC is a secure PMIC, and they no longer exist.
- Add something that includes counseling and ongoing therapy in addition to the medication services; add "behavioral health".
- Have staff on campus using evidence-based practices.

*#12. Apply the highest standards and oversight for personal, professional and public safety, including best practices related to isolation and restraint.*

- Facility-specific.
- Add language on oversight of programming; they should be overseen by an outside party and have regular outside evaluation.



#13. *Strengthen the continuum of care of services for girls that includes services, such as individually tailored re-entry service, to diminish the need for a placement of last resort.*

- This could be removed from the list of recommendations and just mentioned in the report.
- Essentially it's trying to say that the previous placement to the facility should improve to improve girls' outcomes so they aren't failing their way to the placement of last resort.

#### Family engagement

- This recommendation would address both the system and facility.
- We need to add a recommendation that addresses family engagement. That's where the girls are failing – they do well in care and then fail when they go back.
- We need to engage the family before, during, and after care.
- Multidimensional family therapy is being implemented in Eldora now. It addresses some of the issues the parents and families are facing such as substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, etc. This would need a lot of funding.

#### **Closing Comments**

McKeen thanked the working group members for their thoughtful discussion and feedback. The group was able to reach consensus on a facility recommendation and continue discussion on the set of recommendations to be put forth by the working group. Next month's meeting will move the group further towards determining the structure of the final plan. The meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.

**Next Iowa Girls Justice Initiative Working Group meeting is September 9, 2016, at River Place, 2309 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines.**