

**Porter County Juvenile Services
Proposal for Health First Indiana Initiative**

Porter County Juvenile Services is comprised of three distinct units: Juvenile Detention (50 staff members), Juvenile Probation (25 staff members) and the Juvenile Court (6 staff members). We operate as one system under the supervision of Judge Mary DeBoer. Our scope of services ranges from prevention programming, to early intervention services, traditional supervision and secure housing. Our work encompasses both juvenile delinquency and juvenile CHINS matters.

Youth are referred for delinquent offenses ranging from status offenses (such as Truancy) to Misdemeanor and Felony criminal offenses. Most of the referrals involve youth ages 12-17 years old. However, we do accept referrals to Project ATTEND from elementary schools for individuals as young as kindergarten. Project ATTEND is an early intervention/diversion program aimed at interrupting early attendance issues and affecting a change before it becomes too problematic and results in a formal referral to the courts as an allegation of Truancy or Educational Neglect.

2023 Juvenile Probation Referrals

Juvenile Probation	Totals
Juveniles Referred	794
Total Offenses Committed	976
Total Violations Committed	270

The juvenile CHINS matters are civil proceedings and most often involve issues of neglect and/or abuse involving a child. In several of these instances, youth may be removed from their home due to the actions of their parents.

2023 Department of Child Services Referrals

Department of Child Services	Totals
CHINS Filings	226
Informal Adjustments	282
Parental Rights Terminations Filed	45

Youth who are referred to Juvenile Services for an allegation of delinquency are typically ushered into the system in two primary ways. Either as an arrest and transport by police to the detention center or as a direct referral to the probation department. Our services include diversion programs like Hold Opens, Mental Health Diversion, VAPE (Vaping Abuse Prevention Education), and Teen Court. These are typically utilized for lesser offenses and first-time offenders. More serious offenses and/or youth who have already been referred are generally processed in more formal ways involving court hearings and court ordered requirements/programming. This may include programming and requirements like VAPE, drug testing, home detention, counseling, groups, Juvenile Justice Jeopardy, community service and pro-social projects like Immersion through the Arts, gardening projects, JDC Family Nights, and First Aid and CPR Certification. For youth who have very serious substance abuse problems, mental health issues, or truancy issues and need more than the standard course of probation, they may be assigned to one of

our Problem-Solving Courts. These courts include a Juvenile & Family Drug Court, Transformation/Mental Health Court, and Truancy Court.

2023 Program Overviews

All programs listed below have an age range of 12 – 18 years old with the exceptions of Project ATTEND, where participants can be as young as 5 years old to 12 years old, and Truancy Court where participants are either youth middle school to high school, and/or their parents ordered through adult Education Neglect.

Program	Total Participants
Project ATTEND	90
Diversion (includes Mental Health, Hold Opens, Diversion I & II)	82
VAPE	25
Day Reporting	82
Home Detention I	51
Home Detention II	159
Home Detention w/Electronic Monitoring	38
Juvenile Justice Jeopardy	129
Teen Court	82
Drug Court	7
Transformation Court	4
Truancy Court	9

Although we are responsible for the case management of all those referred to us, those who are incarcerated are of special concern. These youth become our total responsibility 24/7 and we, in essence, become their custodians.

2023 Juvenile Detention Center

Juvenile Reception Center Intakes (New Charges)	126
JDC Intakes (Detention Orders, Out of County)	97
Detention Risk Assessments Completed	126
Secure Detention	52
Released on Alternative	50
Released to Parent	24
Total Secure Detention Intakes	149

Responsibilities for these youth range from providing nutritious food, clean clothing, hygiene, education, safety, mental health care, and medical care. Upon arrival to the detention facility, many of these youth present with health concerns which sometimes are serious and chronic in nature. Many, if not the majority, of the youth in our care have severe mental health issues. The majority of these youth have prescribed medication and many have special dietary concerns.

2023 JDC Meals Served

Meal Served (Youth Only)	Totals
Breakfast	2934
Lunch	2889
Dinner	2897
Snacks	1911
Totals	10,631
Special Dietary Needs	87 youth

For those who have chronic medical concerns, management of their care both in-house and within the community (appointments with primary health providers, dentists, and such) is important. We have a registered nurse on staff who works Monday-Friday and who is on call 24/7. He is responsible for the management of this care including preparation and administration of medicine, providing initial and ongoing medical assessment, and coordinating the necessary outside appointments/care as needed. Additionally, we have a physician whom we contract. He comes to the detention center once a week to see any youth needing medical attention and he is on call for consultation purposes. Our medical staffing is inadequate. Most shifts do not have a nurse on premises. When the nurse is on vacation or sick, we have no medical presence on premises. Although the medications are prepared by the nurse, the evening and weekend medications are dispensed by detention officers.

Specialized training opportunities will be sought for our staff in cooperation with the Health Department. Initially, this will include Basic Life Support training for various staff members. The Health Department will also assist in ongoing CPR/First Aid training.

2023 Medical Treatments

Initial Medical Assessments	117
Illness Complaint/Treatment	134
Injury Compliant/Treatment	39
Illness Follow Up Treatment	330
Injury Follow Up Treatment	83
Doctor Consultation (Phone)	58
Doctor Consultation/Examination (Face to Face)	87
TOTALS	848

2023 Medication Overview

Residents with Non-Psychotropic Medication	117
Residents with Psychotropic Medication	111
Total Non-Psychotropic Medication Doses Distributed	2928
Total Psychotropic Medication Doses Distributed	4216
Total Medication Distributed	7144

The medical exam room and equipment is outdated and in need of attention or replacement. The building was built in 1994 and most of the equipment is original. For instance, the exam table is thirty years old and in poor shape.

We have been faced with many significant mental health concerns of our residents. We have observed a marked increase in the number of autistic youth referred to us, many of whom end up in detention. Although we have two full-time therapists, there are many shifts without a therapist on duty. They are on call, but not on premises. Our staff is trained in mental health crisis intervention, but specialized, focused training on autism is expensive. Our training budget cannot support this type of training. Traditional therapeutic behavior approaches, such as de-escalation techniques, do not translate to this population.

In addition, many of our youth in the center have suffered significant childhood trauma. These youth along with our autistic population, would benefit greatly from staff members being trained in Trauma Informed Care and utilize the key components of TBRI (Trust Based Relational Interventions). This includes the use of a sensory room with sensory specific supplies (i.e.: weighted blankets, stress balls, essential oils, noise machine) to aid in de-escalation of these youth which equates to a safer environment for youth and the staff.

2023 JDC Mental Health Overview*

In 2023, the Juvenile Detention Center had over 200 incidents with youth involving suicidal threats, assault, and physical aggression stemming from their mental health needs.

Mental Health Assessments	30
Room Confinement	41
Observation Room Use	74
GAIN-SS Performed	173
MAYSI Performed	49
Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale Performed	126
High Suicide Watch Precautions Applied	18
Medium Suicide Watch Precautions Applied	55
Low Suicide Watch Precautions Applied	75

*Note: These numbers are initial overviews and do not depict the actual numbers identified in 2023. Changes made to our database system were made in order to provide more accurate numbers beginning in 2024.

Despite programs and philosophies instituted within the facility, we continue to have youth escalate causing a risk to other youth and staff. Being able to increase training opportunities with the most up to date evidenced-based programs will not only increase staff's ability to intervene more effectively, it will increase the safety for the youth we provide care and the staff we employ. It is our hope to partner with the Porter County Health Department and other community partners to perform several of these training opportunities (i.e.: Trauma Informed Care); however, will need funding to provide training programs not provided by our partners (i.e.: Handle With Care, IBCCES Autism Certification, Peer Support).

Transportation concerns for our families is also a problem and many times presents as a barrier to follow through with court ordered services and/or requirements, and medical/mental health appointments. Some families do not own a vehicle or cannot afford gas. Having gas cards on hand, can aid in getting families continued linkage to services.

Incentives and opportunities for the families we work with are always useful. Our young kids in Project ATTEND respond very well to incentives. They get excited with school supplies. Some families have difficulty affording these supplies. Coats, gloves and hats are needed. School lunch boxes, backpacks, and lunch money is helpful. Gas cards and other gift cards are appreciated.

Aiding our youth in seeking further educational opportunities is also a goal of our system. Many of our youth do not have educational aspirations and experience a lack of support (mental and financial) from their parents. Many times, the combination of the two, holds them back educationally. We are currently working with Ivy Tech to provide guidance to these youth via the use of their Mobile Learning Lab. Our Ivy Tech partnership will be strengthened through programs with the Health Department and Purdue Extension (such as Safe Sitter Classes, CPR/First Aid Certification).

Much like delinquent youth, youth who are designated as CHINS due to abuse and/or neglect, face many hurdles. Many of these youth must be placed in residential facilities and/or foster homes. Funding for our Juvenile Court to aid in transitions between a youth's home and a foster home and/or residential facility would provide a continuity of care. This can come in the form of clothing, hygiene kits, backpacks, suitcases, and books. The Health Department can aid us in some of these items; however, funding for school supplies would be needed.

We are requesting your consideration for approving Health First Indiana funding to Porter County Juvenile Services in the following areas. We feel that these requests align with the core public health services such as trauma and injury prevention, chronic disease prevention and management of health needs, student health and education as listed in the legislation.

Core Public Health Service Areas: Student Health, Referral to Clinical Care, Chronic Disease Prevention and Reduction

1) Two part-time LPN's: \$60,000

Hiring a couple of LPN's was recommended by the Health Department. This will increase our ability to have medical presence on more shifts which will directly benefit our residents and will decrease the possibility of medication administration error. It will not be our intention to fund these positions permanently with these funds. We intend to work with the County Council in an effort to develop a sustainability plan.

2) Medical Equipment and Mental Health Equipment: \$4,000

Various items identified needed to provide care include, but is not limited to:

- Medical Examination Table
- Locked Medication Cart
- Otoscope
- Blood Pressure Cuff (automatic)

- Nebulizer
- Examination Light
- Examination Stool
- Epi Pens
- Sensory Tools

Core Public Health Service Areas: Trauma and Injury Prevention and Education

1) Training for Juvenile Justice Staff: \$9,000

- Specialized Autism Training through IBCCES - 75 staff members to become certified with the building to receive site certification
- Handle With Care - 2 staff members to become Train the Trainers with 75 staff to be certified each year.
- Trauma Informed Care Training - 50 staff members to be trained each year
- Basic Life Support Training through the Red Cross – 1 staff member to become a certified Trainer in partnership with the Health Department and 30 staff members to become certified

Core Public Health Service Areas: Student Health, Trauma and Injury Prevention and Education

1) Training, Education, programming and opportunities for Youth: \$2,000

- First Aid and CPR provided by Red Cross Certified Trainers
- Super Sitter Classes
- Gardening Project Supplies (raised garden beds, vegetable stand)
- Pro-Social Programming and Exposure (Immersion through the Arts, Nana Clare's Kitchen, JDC Family Night, Financial Education Classes)
- Incentives (School supplies, lunch money, school clothes, gift cards including gas cards, comfort items, hygiene kits, suitcases, clothing)
- Art & Music Classes

TOTAL Funding Requested: \$75,000