Youth Justice Oversight Committee
Data Workgroup

Minutes from August 13, 2024 Data Work Group Meeting

The Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC) Data Work Group met on August 13, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the Indiana Office of Court Technology. Dr. Matt Aalsma and Chris Biehn chaired the meeting.

1. **Attendance**

    Members present:
    - Dr. Matt Aalsma, Indiana University School of Medicine, Chair
    - Chris Biehn, Indiana Office of Court Services, Co-Chair
    - Kaitlyn Christian, Management Performance Hub
    - Judge Paul Felix, Indiana Court of Appeals
    - Olga Volokhova, Indiana Youth Institute
    - Nancy Wever, Indiana Office of Court Services, JDAI
    - Colleen Saylor, Indiana Office of Court Services
    - Kristi Bruther, Johnson County Juvenile Detention Center
    - Melanie Pitstick, Marion County Juvenile Probation
    - Judge Sarah Mullican, Vigo Circuit/Superior Court 3

    Members Present Electronically via Zoom:
    - Christine Reynolds, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute

    Members Absent:
    - Sarah Schelle, Indiana Department of Correction
    - Traci Lane, Madison County Juvenile Probation
    - Nikki Ford, Indiana Department of Child Services

    OJA Staff Present:
    - Lisa Thompson, Indiana Office of Court Technology
    - April Dubree, Indiana Office of Court Services
    - Leslie Dunn, Indiana Office of Court Services
    - Bob Rath, Office of Judicial Administration
    - Mark Fairchild, Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana
    - Michelle Goodman, Indiana Office of Court Services

OJA Staff Present Via Zoom:

- Mary DePrez, Indiana Office of Court Technology

Guests Present:

- Judge Dana Kenworthy, Indiana Court of Appeals

2. **Approval of Minutes from July 9, 2024 Meeting:**
   Committee members were provided a copy of the July 9, 2024 meeting minutes prior to today's meeting. Judge Mullican made a motion to approve the minutes; Kristi Bruther seconded the motion. The work group members unanimously approved the July 9, 2024 meeting minutes.

3. **Work Plan Sub-Committee Update**
   Nancy Wever provided an update regarding the tasks of the Work Plan Sub-Committee. Nancy, Chris Biehn, Dr. Aalsma and Lisa Thompson met on one occasion to discuss formalizing the tasks and a timeline for the Data Work Group. A copy of the Work Plan was provided to the committee members; a Gantt chart may be provided at the next meeting. Nancy also plans on reviewing the YJOC Data Work Group Report to ensure no other activities need to be added to the Work Plan. Dr. Aalsma reminded the group that this is just the work for the next two years, which is subject to change. This document should be considered a living document and will be updated as needed. Additionally, there will be changes, additions or amendments made as we wrap up the first two years and begin the long-term analysis work.

4. **County Survey Update**
   Chris Biehn provided an update regarding the survey that went out in the Wednesday weekly message to solicit volunteers to participate in the 20-county data evaluation. Chris reported that even with a short window to respond, there were 23 responses. The counties represent a nice variety with regard to size, location, systems, etc., so it seems there is a great sample to work with. A map was provided to the committee members with the volunteer counties marked. Although we had hoped to select 20 counties to evaluate, a decision needs to be made whether we exclude some counties or evaluate all 23. Nancy Wever mentioned that she had hoped to see Elkhart County on this list due to some data challenges they experienced in the past with their JDAI work and an issue with using three different systems (Odyssey, Quest and SRS). Chris Biehn will reach out to Elkhart County to see if they would also like to participate. The work group agreed that it would be best to evaluate all 23-24 counties if the ability and capacity is there. Discussion was held whether to look at 5 years of data or a different time period, as there is concern that some counties may not have 5 years of data in Odyssey/SRS. Kristi Bruther recommended pulling a certain number of records from each county instead of a period of time (i.e., pull 100 records from each).

5. **Data Elements for Evaluation Discussion**

   Lisa Thompson explained to the work group that in order to begin the data evaluation, we will need to determine specific data points we want to include in the analysis. As a starting point, the committee was provided a list of youth characteristics, case processing events, system statuses, and programming/services that were included in the YJOC Data Work Group Report.

   Discussion regarding the youth characteristics determined that most of the data points listed make sense and are rather easy to obtain, except Educational Achievement, Risk Level, and Disabilities. Educational Achievement will continue to change as the youth ages, and that data isn't always updated especially when the youth's engagement with the justice system ends. Risk Level is subject to change as the youth is assessed using multiple IYAS assessment tools at various points in the juvenile justice process.

   Most counties don't collect Disability information currently, and we will likely need to define what it means (i.e., physical, mental, and/or emotional disabilities), as well as how staff are supposed to collect the information (i.e., self-reported vs. supported with documentation). Quest and SRS both collect Gender separately from Sex, but the Gender field isn't used consistently and with very little training. The options between the two systems do not align either.

   Discussion was held regarding collecting and reporting on Social Security Number (SSN). Although the researchers do not like to have identifying information, MPH could use that information for record linkage purposes, as SSN adds additional weight to matched record.

   The work group agreed that Disabilities and Educational Achievement should be omitted from the initial data evaluation and considered for future data collection. Offense Information and Risk Level should be moved to the Case Processing Events section. Nancy Wever proposed adding Location of Incident and Initial Hearing Date to the list of Case Processing Events as well.

6. **Abstract of Disposition Discussion**

   Dr. Aalsma opened the floor for discussion around the utility of an Abstract of Disposition for juvenile records. He commented that researchers often have a difficult time determining the disposition of juvenile justice cases, so something like this will help in those evaluations.

   Michelle Goodman from the Indiana Office of Court Services attended to explain the history behind the adult Abstract of Judgment project in case there are any parallels with that work. She explained that prior to the criminal code reform, a process evaluation was conducted to evaluate proportionality of sentences and crimes by looking at information gathered from dispositions, plea agreements, and sentences for different levels of crimes.

The evaluation could not be done with data systems because there weren't any standards in place and no central location to store data. At the time, the Abstract of Judgment was simply a DOC form that was filled out by hand whenever an offender was sentenced to the Department of Correction. Interns had to go out into the field to pull physical files and read the documents to fulfill the requirements of the study. OJA then worked with partners at DOC to determine what data points should be captured in an Abstract of Judgment and the technology began with that foundation. In the end, an Abstract of Judgment was required for all felony convictions through statutory and criminal rule requirements. We now have monthly reports that allow for trend analysis, and the legislature now relies upon this data as well to make informed decisions regarding potential statutory changes.

The work group members expressed concerns regarding who is going to fill out the Abstract of Disposition (court staff, clerk staff or probation staff), and the additional burden this would place on staff. Consideration will need to be made as to the number of various forms that are to be filled out for adjudications/dispositions now and how well the court order will translate to the Abstract. Judge Kenworthy recommended looking at what juvenile court staff are already doing to determine if they can put the findings for the dispositional order in the Abstract system, so they are only doing one document instead of two. There may also be opportunities to improve efficiencies and pull data from the PI, PDR or Modification report and/or SRS.

Michelle also cited a great benefit would stem from having just one standard way to enter the Abstract information, and if there are any statutory changes needed, IOCT would only have to make the change in one place. This will ensure everyone continues to use the most up-to-date version.

Kristi Bruther recommended that the work group look at what we need to collect for an Abstract of Disposition to see if we have the capacity to collect this data in the existing systems. Dr. Aalsma agreed that more discussion or a study is needed to see what is feasible.

7. **Next Meeting**
   Chris Biehn and Lisa Thompson are unable to attend the regularly scheduled September meeting. The fall Judicial Conference is also in September, which creates a busy schedule for many. The work group agreed to skip a September meeting and reconvene on **October 8, 2024 from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm** at the Indiana Office of Court Technology.

   The next Youth Justice Oversight Committee Meeting is **October 3, 2024 at 10:00 am** at Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room C, 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.