

Office of the Child Advocate  
Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board  
Community Based Interventions Subcommittee

Tuesday June 15, 2020  
1pm – 2:30pm

**Meeting held virtually due to COVID 19 emergency response**

**Subcommittee Members or Designees Present:**

Michael Glennon (Suffolk County DA's Office)  
Nicole Robbins (Suffolk County DA's Office)  
Kim Lawrence (Probation)  
Brian Jenney (DPH)  
Nokuthula Sibanda (DYS)  
Barbara Wilson (Children's League)  
Migdalia Nalls (CPCS)  
Leon Smith (CFJJ)  
Karin Orr (DMH)  
Stacy Cabral (DESE)

**Other Attendees:**

Melissa Threadgill (OCA)  
Kristi Polizzano (OCA)  
Alix Rivière (OCA)  
Noor Toraif (OCA)  
Jasmine Jackson (CJI)  
Leila Khelfaoui (CJI)  
Naomi Bledsoe (Northwestern DA's office)  
Elizabeth Mulcahy (Northwestern DA's office)  
Kathleen Bitetti (State Auditor's Office)  
Bryan House (Berkshire's DA's Office)  
Members of the public

**Meeting Commenced:** 1:04PM

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Ms. Threadgill welcomed the attendees to the Community Based Interventions (CBI) subcommittee meeting. The nature of this meeting is different due to COVID-19 emergency response shifting the meeting to a virtual WebEx platform. Ms. Threadgill introduced the members on the WebEx and asked the individuals who called in or were not a named member to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Minutes from April and May Meetings:**

Ms. Threadgill asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the April 29 meeting minutes. The group had none.

The minutes for the April were approved.

Ms. Threadgill asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the May 19 meeting minutes. The group had none.

The minutes for the May meetings were approved.

### **Review of Draft Diversion Wrap-Up Guidelines**

Ms. Threadgill shared the draft of the “Diversion Case Wrap-Up” document based on last month’s meeting and conversation. She went through each section of the document and asked the group to provide and feedback they might have. These guidelines suggested successful diversion should be based three criteria:

1. Make meaningful progress on/complete most diversion requirements.

The group had no comments on this section.

2. Show they have reflected on their prior actions.

The group discussed the implications of having this recommendation be a measure of success for youth. Concerns around recording, measuring, subjectivity and purpose were discuss. Ms. Threadgill suggested—and the group agreed—that this section would serve a better purpose in another part of the program manual, and not as a basis for determining success.

3. Avoid other delinquent or harmful activities

The group discussed the use of the words “delinquent or harmful.” It was agreed that the word “harmful” suggests a wide array of connotations. Ms. Threadgill asked if replacing both terms with “unlawful activities” would work, the group agreed.

Finally, the group agreed that celebrating the success of the youth’s completion of the diversion program is very meaningful and should be highlighted in the document. The group discussed how best to celebrate the successful completion of a diversion program, and agreed that youth would probably not benefit from coming back to court for that sole purpose.

### **Review of Diversion Coordinator Job Description**

Ms. Threadgill then opened up the discussion on a template job posting for a Diversion Coordinator. The group suggested adding “increase safety” as a goal of the diversion program.

The sub-committee also suggested adding “and guardians” to “parents” throughout the document in order to better reflect the reality of children’s family and household composition. It was also suggested to add something in the “Essential Functions” section on the Coordinator’s ability to handle confidential information. Finally, Mr. Smith discussed the balance between academic and work experience and pointed out inconsistencies in the ways the Qualifications and Preferred sections were laid out. Ms. Threadgill said changes will be made to reflect the subcommittee members’ suggestions.

### **Discussion of Referrals and Information Sharing**

Ms. Threadgill explained the group had received some feedback regarding information sharing. She proposed a smaller working committee be formed to discuss what legal language should be used for information sharing, drafting MOUs, and records requests.

The group began discussing referrals of youth to diversion programs. Ms. Threadgill presented approaches used by different states (Kentucky, Utah, and Connecticut). Information from referrals should include: youth name, contact information, parents' contact information, alleged offense and description of event, any other persons involved, date of alleged offense, and name of the person referring youth.

Ms. Threadgill asked the group if they thought youth and their families need to agree to participation in a diversion before a referral is made. The group was of the opinion that Diversion Coordinators should be the ones having the discussion with the parents/guardians, as they are the most qualified to explain to the youth and their parents/guardians the implications of the diversion program.

Next, Ms. Threadgill asked the group three questions related to those who refer youth to diversion programs. Do referrers need to know if youth were accepted into diversion? Do referrers need to know what the diversion agreement is? Do referrers need to know if youth was successful or not in completing the diversion program?

Regarding the first question, members of the committee agreed that this would be not only useful but in fact necessary, though referrers do not need to know the specifics of the diversion agreement.

Regarding the second question, members discussed the level of details of the diversion agreement that would/should be shared. Most individuals in the group agreed that some, but not all, the terms of diversion should be shared. Ms. Threadgill suggested keeping this question in mind for a later discussion.

Regarding the third question, the group agreed referrers need to know if a youth was successful or not in their diversion program. One member suggested a letter should be sent to the referrer to explain if and why the youth completed (or not) the diversion program.

Ms. Threadgill then opened the conversation about information sharing and asked when it was necessary and what the purpose of requesting information from state agencies, schools, health care providers and other stakeholders is. Members asked for Family Resource Centers to be added to this list. The group mentioned multiple benefits to sharing information, including figuring out the needs of the youth (services already in place, services needed at school, etc.) so as to avoid duplication of services. Some members proposed Diversion Coordinators should have access to as much information as possible as they need to understand what has caused the youth to act as they have in order to be able to fully support them during diversion. Other members cautioned that information sharing can at times be used to the detriment of the youth.

Given that the meeting was nearing its end, Ms. Threadgill suggested the discussion should be taken up with the newly established information sharing working group specifically on information sharing. Ms. Mulcahy, Mr. Glennon, Mr. Smith and Ms. Nalls volunteered to be part of the group. Ms. Threadgill explained that members of the committee should feel free to email her if they wished to be part of this group.

**Closing Comments:**

Ms. Threadgill discussed the work this Committee will continue to do throughout the summer, including discussions on data, CQI & outcome measurements, as well as reviewing all the documents produced thus far. The working group will meet at a date to be confirmed to continue working on information sharing between agencies and stakeholders.

Ms. Threadgill noted the next meeting will be held virtually on July 7, 2020 from 1-2:30pm. The meeting adjourned.

**Meeting adjourned: 2:31PM**