

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

Wednesday April 29, 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)

Brian Jenney (DPH)

Karin Orr (DMH)

Nokuthula Sibanda (DYS)

Barbara Wilson (Children's League)

Migdalia Nalls (CPCS)

Leon Smith (CFJJ)

Kim Lawrence (Probation)

Other Attendees:

Melissa Threadgill (OCA)

Kristi Polizzano (OCA)

Alix Rivière (OCA)

Jasmine Jackson (CJI)

Leila Khelfaoui (CJI)

Kathleen Bitetti (SAO)

Naomi Bledsoe (Northwestern DA's office)

Elizabeth Mulcahy (Northwestern DA's office)

Members of the public

Meeting Commenced: 1:03PM

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. She explained some general guidelines for the virtual meeting and then introduced all the individuals in the WebEx video conference. Individuals on the phone introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from March Meeting:

Ms. Threadgill held a formal vote on the approval of the previous Community Based Interventions meeting minutes.

The meeting minutes for March were approved.

Meeting Agenda:

Ms. Threadgill explained that there were two primary tasks for the committee today. First, to provide feedback and edits to the draft diversion agreement guidelines from the previous meeting. Second, to discuss questions related to on-going diversion cases management and wrap-up. She reminded the group of the process at each meeting during the development of the diversion Model Program Guide.

Diversion Agreement Guidelines

During the last CBI meeting, the group provided values, guidelines and factors to consider when developing a Diversion Agreement which the OCA turned into a section on “Creating Diversion Agreements” within the Model Program Guidelines document. Ms. Threadgill asked the group for any big picture feedback and edits on the following sections of the document.

Understanding the context of a youth’s life and the situation

The group emphasized the need to include family voice and their history of needs in this section. They discussed how important it was to include youth voice and family voice in these considerations, but thought there could be clarity around *how* Diversion Coordinators would give weight to any given section. There was also discussion on the role of the defense counsel during this stage of Diversion and that youth should feel comfortable sharing with the Diversion Coordinator knowing nothing they say can be used against them in court, but also accountability might require reflection on the alleged

incident. The group added the importance of having a trained victim advocate be the person to interview victims.

Case planning for interventions/services

Ms. Threadgill presented this section to the group. Overall, there was agreement on how this section was written.

Diversion Agreement written development

Ms. Threadgill presented this section to the group. Overall, there was agreement on how this section was written.

Ms. Threadgill discussed the example intervention matrix and diversion agreement template. The goal is to make sure the agreement is accessible for youth, and will discuss how to obtain feedback from youth on the JDAI county subcommittees. There were suggestions to add the idea of “reflection” to the diversion agreement, so youth understand the accountability and intervention measures are directly related to the alleged incident. The group thought that was important and cautioned that some youth may understand that quickly and others will take longer to process.

Case Management & Diversion Case Wrap Up

Ms. Threadgill asked the group the following questions to start to understand how a Model Program Guide can provide guidance on diversion case management and wrap up.

How do we determine length of diversion?

The group discussed the need to tailor the diversion program to each youth taking into account individual risk and needs. The Model Program Guide should provide general guidance on a timeframe (around 3-6 months) but explain the factors Coordinators should consider when determining a specific length of time. The group named some examples like wait lists for certain programs, length of time to enroll in behavioral health services and quick interventions like writing a letter of apology that could all play a role in determining length of time. Ms. Threadgill explained that the group could provide Diversion Coordinators with some guidelines for situations that might require more or less time to complete the program.

What does diversion “supervision” entail?

Ms. Threadgill presented the next set of questions that all aim to answer what case management should look like. Again, there was support for individualized programming based on the risk and needs of the youth. The group discussed how often coordinators should be in communication with programs/services and the youth. Individuals with diversion expertise commented that some youth require a lot of checking in and have the means to communicate (their own cell phone, texting, etc.) while other youth do not have those abilities. The group cautioned about over supervision, and suggested using the risk/need tool to help determine how often Coordinators should check in on youth. The group also discussed some potential challenges youth may face on Diversion and the need for Diversion Coordinators to work with youth and families to problem solve when possible and give youth as many opportunities to be successful on diversion.

Closing Comments:

Ms. Threadgill mentioned that the OCA would take these recommendations and draft a “case management” section for the Model Program Guide. The rest of the questions the group didn’t get to today, she’d leave for next meeting. She would also send out an updated “Diversion Agreement Guidelines” based on this meeting’s discussion. She reminded the group that the goal of all this is to create a program guide for whatever agency hosts the Diversion Program. She asked the committee to review the 2018 *Guide on the Disclosure of Confidential Information* for the next meeting Ms. Threadgill reminded the group of the next meetings’ topics and thanked everyone for their participation today.

Ms. Threadgill noted the next meeting will be held on May 19, 2020 from 1-3:00pm. This meeting will also be virtual. The OCA will update the calendar invite with information on how to join. The meeting adjourned.

Meeting adjourned: 2:29pm