

Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board

CBI Subcommittee

Virtual Meeting
February 17, 2022
1:00-2:30pm

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review/Approval of November meeting minutes
3. Next Meeting – Proposal to Move to March 24th, 1-2:30
4. Diversion Learning Lab Updates
5. Continued CRA Discussion
6. Next steps

Review of What We've Learned: CBI Presentations

Where We've Been....

- Crossover Youth Fundamentals
- CRA Process Foundation Setting & Data
- Alternatives to the CRA: FRCs & MHAP for Kids
- CRA Probation Case Management
- Truancy Deep Dive
- CRAs in Other Jurisdictions
- Summary of OCA interviews
- CAFL Role in CRAs
- DCF New Congregate Care Models

Where We're Going...

- Youth & Family Focus Group Results
- CRA case file review
- **Proposed recommendations for improvement**

Review: Overarching Takeaways

- CRA system is currently serving a lot of kids/families with extremely high needs
 - But not ALL kids/families with CRAs fall into that category
 - More extreme cases are more “salient” and more memorable
- Almost no one thinks the system is “working well”
 - Almost everyone can point to situations where a CRA was a waste of time and resources (i.e. there could have been a more efficient way of helping family)
 - Many can share examples of when CRA process was actively harmful to youth
- Almost everyone can point to situations where a CRA was helpful, too
 - BUT: not always clear if there was anything special about the *CRA process* vs something special/helpful about the *people who got involved because the CRA was filed*

Review of What We've Learned: Strengths in MA CRA System

- A means of case conferencing & case management
- A way to “escalate”/take concerns more seriously as a “last resort” option
- A means to obtain out-of-home-placement
- As an alternative to addressing needs if a youth is already involved in the delinquency system

Review of What We've Learned: Weaknesses in MA CRA System

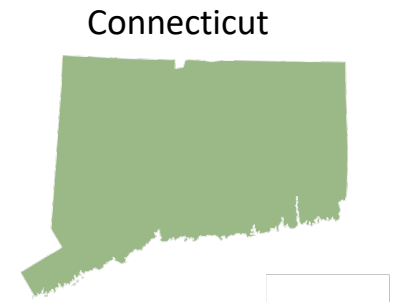
- There are inconsistencies at every stage of the process across the state
- Many myths/miscommunications surround the process & ability of the court to connect youth with appropriate, timely services
- General concern that Black & brown families pushed toward CRA more often
- Services – in theory – could be provided by another state agency, and the child-centered approach to the CRA makes it difficult to solve family concerns
- Process for getting connected to services is slow, and there is a lack of available services
- Potentially brings more youth into juvenile court than is necessary, and the traditional “adversarial” court process is not the best fit

What is Success?

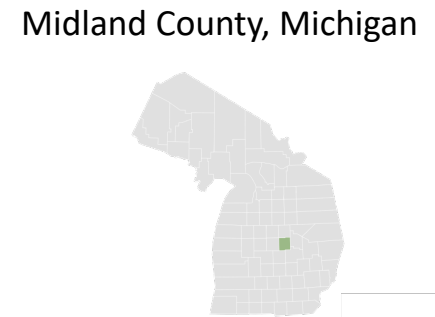
- There is no shared understanding of what CRAs are for:
 - What's the end goal?
 - What does success look like?
 - When should they be used?
 - When *shouldn't* they be used?
- As a result, progress is impossible to measure.
- **Limited data on outcomes** of youth in CRA system compounds this problem.

Review of CRAs in Other Jurisdictions

- Requiring **evidence that a family has engaged with a community services prior to filing a petition** (and facilitating that engagement as needed, such as through a pre-filing conference) OR **eliminating Juvenile Court jurisdiction** over these matters



- Requiring **schools to demonstrate evidence of engagement with families**, including referral to a community service provider, prior to filing a petition OR **eliminating the ability of a school to file a CRA-like petition** altogether



- Creating **greater “up front” clarity about situations that may result in out-of-home placement**, such as creating a special petition type



What *should* the overall goal of the CRA system be?

What does success look like?

When should CRAs be used?

If you had a magic wand and could change anything about the CRA system, what would you do?

“Magic wand” responses fell into six general categories

Expanding Prefiling Interventions

Promoting Inter-agency Collaboration

Restructuring Out-of-home Placement Options

Reducing/Changing Size & Scope of CRA System

Data & Administrative Changes

Expanding Services & Workforce

Five of which we'll discuss today

Expanding Prefiling
Interventions

Promoting Inter-
agency
Collaboration

Restructuring Out-
of-home Placement
Options

Reducing/Changing
Size & Scope of CRA
System

Data &
Administrative
Changes

Expanding Services
& Workforce

“Magic Wand” Responses: Expanding Pre-filing Interventions

- Mandate referrals/proof of engagement with the FRC before a CRA is filed
- Provide additional information on immediately available services (e.g., emergency services, respite, mobile crises, etc.) prior to accepting filing & promote better communication with parents at the filing stage of what to expect and what is/is not possible with a CRA
- Increase in school interventions, including truancy prevention programs, attendance meetings and re-engagement meetings
- Increased availability of educational advocacy and supports for youth, especially those whose PCP has diagnosed them with a disability and/or youth with IEPs/504's
- Increased education to schools, therapists, doctors, etc. on what the CRA system is for and when to refer or not
- DYS should expand diversion program to accept pre-CRA referrals

“Magic Wand” Responses: Increase & Promoting Inter-agency Collaboration

- Formalize/require case conferencing and team meetings at each stage: *pre-filing*, *informal* and *formal*. This could include representatives from:
 - Providers
 - Schools
 - FRCs
 - DCF
 - DDS
 - DMH
 - Probation
 - Youth
 - Parent/caregiver
- Judge should have to hear from current providers before making a decision

“Magic Wand” Responses: Restructuring Out-of-Home Placement Options

- No congregate care placements (for *all* or *certain* CRA petitions), and when out-of-home placement is necessary, youth are placed with foster parents with a limited number of kids in the home
- Expand use of DCF Voluntary Placements*
- Placements should not be able to refuse a youth with a CRA

“Magic Wand” Responses: Reducing/Changing Size & Scope of CRA System

- Triage cases: “formal” CRA process should be reserved for out of home placements only; everything else “informal”
- All CRAs should be categorized as “informal”
- Anything before the fact-finding hearing should happen outside of a courtroom
- No CRA filings should be allowed if youth/family already is involved with DCF
- Re-structure statute to mandate family/parental services in addition to youth
- Limit the number of re-filings possible
- No school-initiated filings allowed
- Eliminate CRA system entirely

“Magic wand” Responses: Data & Administrative Changes

- No record (paper or electronic) /nothing to expunge, or implement automatic expunging
- Mandate increased data collection and reporting on youth with CRAs (e.g. services received, re-filings, filing initiations by school district, expungement)

Next Meeting Date

March 24 (?), 2022

1:00pm-2:30pm

Virtual Meeting

For virtual meeting information, email Morgan Byrnes at Morgan.Byrnes@mass.gov

*2022 CBI Subcommittee meetings are on the
3rd Thursday of the month 1:00pm-2:30pm.*

Contact

Melissa Threadgill

Director of Strategic Innovation

melissa.threadgill@mass.gov

617-979-8368

Kristi Polizzano

Juvenile Justice Program Manager

Kristine.Polizzano@mass.gov

617-979-8367