**Safe and Thriving Communities Grant**

**Working Group Recommendations**

**MISSION**

End youth crime by initiating a community-wide engagement effort that furthers the Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement, and Re-entry strategies that Journey and Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (JSO) use to address juvenile crime.

**VISION**

Every child will become a successful, productive, happy member of society. Peace and prosperity will exist in every home, on every street, and for every citizen.

Principles of Review and Implementation

Family Driven

Youth Guided

Culturally/Linguistically Competent

Community Based

**Arrest & Release Working Group**

Objectives:

1. Review for process improvements
2. Determine if there are advantages to moving booking back to Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)
3. Increase space available to conduct interviews /assessments at JAC
4. Memorandum of Understanding
5. Civil Citations
6. Terms for situations where Civil Citations can automatically be offered by JSO &JAC
7. Public Defender’s Office & State Attorney’s Office Liaisons to assist staff at JAC
8. Legal Rights – Continuing to ensure the protection of the child’s rights
9. How does a child know they have rights?
10. Public Defender’s Office & State Attorney’s Office Liaisons to assist staff at JAC
11. Assessments
12. Are we using the best assessments, initial and secondary?
13. How do we ensure all youth who needs secondary assessments receive them?
14. Increase number of rooms available to conduct assessments?
15. Would an assessment of the juvenile’s home environment provide useful information?

**Arrest & Release Working Group Key Findings**

With the goals of Civil Citations, improving the assessments outcomes, and maximizing the effectiveness of Juvenile Assessment Center, and putting more emphasis on legal rights for youth, the Arrest & Release (AR) Working Group established the following key findings.

**Key Findings for Juvenile Assessment Center**

Juveniles are currently booked at the Pretrial Detention Facility (PDF), which is run by the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (JSO). The working group found that juveniles are simply processed at PDF and then wait for transport to the JAC.. They are not housed with other inmates or juveniles who are being held for Direct File as an adult, nor do they ever have contact with adults. Also, the cost of this is not astronomical because it is already part of the work conducted at PDF. The final determination of the working group was that this item needed more in depth review to accurately determine the cost/benefit of changing the current process.

**Key Findings for Civil Citations**

The working group also reviewed the process that should take place when a juvenile is detained by a law enforcement officer for a potential violation of the law. While the working group was meeting an reviewing this issue, the State Attorney’s Office and the JSO agreed to a new Memorandum of Understanding related to civil citations. The essence of this agreement allows for JSO to make determinations of a youth’s eligibility for a civil citation without individual concurrence from the SAO on every citation issued, so long as the terms of the MOU are followed. It was also stated that training would be a part of the new civil citation process, and that enforcement would be best handled by Teen Court and Neighborhood Accountability Boards. There will be a narrative that will accompany the civil citation if a youth is not eligible and signed off by a JSO supervisor who reviewed the file. The youth will receive the civil citation on the spot if eligible, if he/ she want to be a part of the program, with date when to appear in court. The working group took a look at other counties use of civil citations an. Also, the working group looked at the issuance of civil citations by race and by crime. This data was based upon issuances under the previous agreement. While we are still waiting to see the effects of this new MOU, there is resounding agreement that this MOU was a large step in the right direction. As the MOU is implemented, the data regarding the use of civil citations will need to be monitored to ensure fair application and identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of this tool for youth and their families.

**Key Findings for Legal Rights**

As the working group looked through the process for youth the noted that that not all youth are at an education level where they can read and understand policies and rules of court. So, as the working group looked at the rights of youth they identified the need to tailor the information for the youth’s education or reading level. Also, the working group noted the need for the information be in multiple languages, and if they have youth with disabilities that must be acknowledged and staff must always have someone there, such as a parent, guardian, or advocate for the youth. The working group found that there should be a bill of rights that is put into place for the youth relating to youth privacy, there also was talk about having a linguistic line so if a youth or family does not understand the language then they would have access to an interpreter. Additionally, there was discussion of the JAC staff using text communication since some youth are using voice minutes on their cell phones and they run out. This would allow the youth ant their families to still get the information regarding court dates and other essential information. There was also talk about ensuring the JAC is ADA compliant and that it is being looked at currently. Finally, the working group discussed the need for staff to have more cultural awareness training and to be trained more on the difference types of abuse, if reported, whether physical or emotional..

**Key Findings for Assessments**

While looking at the assessments conducted and the outcomes of the programs, it became clear there is room for improvement in this area. First, while our JAC does offer a barrage of assessments, both required and voluntary, there is opportunity for review of current practices. The working group identified the need for increased partnership with JAC staff and increased inclusion of service providers, as well as, determining opportunities to better educate parents on their rights and the process, perhaps through involvement of the faith community. Specifically related to assessments, now is a good time to reevaluate to ensure the assessments meet the needs of the community related to desired juvenile justice outcomes, that the assessments are continually conducted properly and consistently, that the assessments are utilized in determining treatment, and that appropriate follow up is conducted to ensure the treatment plan or program is being followed to completion. Additionally, the working group noted that a different assessment may be needed for the girls given the developmental differences from boys. Finally, the working group discussed the need for case management, as well as training on the assessments used to ensure the are used correctly and completely.

**Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the Arrest and Release (AR) Working Group was tasked with identifying challenges & issues within their area of focus. The policy recommendations identified are ways the community can focus on improving its juvenile justice system. Specifically, those recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: **Focus JAC how to improve the process for the youth**

1. Due to lack of complete information on the cost effectiveness of moving booking to the JAC, the working group recommends further review this more with appropriate parties. This review should consider implementation of the future map of how a youth is processed (refer to the “Mapping of Future”).
2. All juvenile justice procedures need to be uniform wherever possible and communicated with all stakeholders and, more importantly, youth and their families, and consistent and understandable way.
3. Review of times when crimes are being committed, such as when school is out, or Christmas break, and what types of crimes are being committed, should be conducted using historical data to determine the need for additional programing.
4. Review how different resources can be housed in the JAC for easier access for families and youth.

Recommendation 2**: Improving Civil Citation for Youth**

1. The working group supports the new MOU regarding civil citations and encourages their use. Additionally, the working group strongly encourages constant monitoring and regular review of data to ensure effectiveness of the tool.
2. The working group recommends training for all officers so that there would be no bias as to youth being eligible for civil citation.
3. The working group recommends allowing parents to give permission over the phone without being present to sign off on civil citations.
4. Addition of an unbiased parent to the Teen Court and Neighborhood Accountability Boards.

Recommendation 3**: Legal Rights for Youth**

* 1. Review of how a youth goes through the juvenile justice system, and if and how the youth understands their rights.
  2. Creation of a youth bill of rights, and a companion guide for youth and families that explains that juvenile justice system, its terminology, processes, involved parties, and other information necessary for youth and their families to successfully navigate the juvenile justice system (example; North Carolina Guide). Language, education, literacy, and disabilities should be taken into consideration.

1. Review usage of new technology to overcome language barriers (i.e. getting a linguistic line for people that speak another language), additionally, review use of text message communication for courts dates, appointments, and other important information.
2. Review need, cost, and ability to provide advocates for youth and families with disabilities.
3. Increase staff training on policies and procedures as it relates to youth right.

Recommendation 4: **Assessments for Youth**

* 1. Recommendation was mention that youth and families maybe be referred to resources close to or in their neighborhood or geographic area so that they can make the appointments.
  2. Include a family/environmental assessment to identify needs related needs.
  3. Review why the youth are not making the first initial appointment.
  4. Review assessments to ensure they provide information necessary to reach desired outcomes, and that treatments and placements are aligned with assessments.
  5. Implement procedures to identify reasons youth did not attend treatment so court can determine willingness of youth to participate versus other issues such as transportation.

1. Review ways to improve/increase case management.

**Support of Youth Working Group**

Objectives

* 1. How do people know what programs are available?
     + People including, families, judges, State Attorneys, Public Defenders, private attorneys, other service providers and program directors
  2. How do we ensure service provider alignment with agreed upon data driven outcomes?
  3. How do we promote alignment and data sharing?
  4. Identify gaps in service and other possible programs that could be included
     + Those currently offered in Jax
     + Programs offered in other Cities that aren’t offered in Jax
  5. How can we use technology to overcome the identified challenges?
  6. How can we promote alignment amongst the various committees focusing on juvenile justice within the City?
     + Do any duplicate efforts? Are there gaps?
     + How do they communicate their mission, objectives, and work?
     + Can/should any be combined/eliminated?

**Support for Youth Working Group Key Findings**

With the goals of increasing knowledge of services and programs available to youth and families, increasing collaboration within the juvenile justice sector, esp. between social service providers, and improving alignment and data usage within the sector, the Support for Youth (SYP) Working Group established the following key findings.

**Key Findings for Outreach**

Outreach is imperative when discussing social service resources. Social service agencies have the potential and ability to have a positive lasting impact on communities. Knowledge of and accessibility to resources are crucial when discussing how change can be made in a community. Communities do not have access to or awareness of their local resources and as a result the resources are underutilized. This underutilization has an impact on families, youth, schools, employment rates, juvenile involvement with DJJ, recidivism and the community as a whole. Communities are in need of resources that address their specific needs and the resources need to be accessible to every individual.

**Key Findings for Alignment**

There is a need for an increase in provider communication. Communication will allow continuity of services as youth transition through young adulthood. As a youth transitions into adult hood, services available to him/her change based on age at the time of need/offense. An increase in communication will increase the accessibility of services to young adults and their families. This will have an impact on the community as a hole as well as increase outcomes for providers. Additionally, there is a need for an increase in evidence based practices. The resources provided in the Jax Journey zip codes need to be based on data and outcomes.

**Key Findings for Data and Technology**

Technology is a valuable resource that can enhance the utilization of services. There is a need for a universal system that would allow service providers to communicate regarding client services. Transportation also can be addressed in the universal system. The system will promote alignment, increase access to services, increase utilization of services and decrease juvenile involvement with DJJ.

**Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the Support for Youth (SYP) Working Group was tasked with identifying challenges & issues within their area of focus. The policy recommendations identified are ways the community can focus on improving its juvenile justice system. Specifically, those recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: **Identify and provide outreach to underserved youth and families.**

1. Through interagency and faith based organization collaboration, increase access to and awareness of resources and services available, especially mental/behavioral health resources and especially in high crime areas such as Jax Journey zip codes.
2. Increase family driven community resources especially within Jax Journey zip codes.
3. Increase community based resources that are culturally/linguistically competent.
4. Create a collaborative partnership between youth, families, partner organizations, and the community.

Recommendation 2: **Improve and ensure alignment amongst providers.**

1. Expand the implementation of data driven and evidence-based intervention practices.
2. Improve system coordination between providers.
3. Through a collaborative partnership, implement strategies that increase the utilization of resources.

Recommendation 3: **Improve systemic implementation of data and technology.**

1. Increase data sharing between agencies that interact with youth/families and the community.
2. Provide education for agencies in best practices for data collection and sharing.
3. Utilize a universal intake platform.
4. Utilize data gathered on disparities/disproportionalities through agency collaboration.

**Youth, Family, and Community  
Responsibility & Engagement  
Working Group**

Objectives:

1. Alignment
   * + How do we as a community determine the needs of our youth and their families?
       - Needs including:
         * Healing from the trauma of violence
         * Stopping youth gun and gang violence
         * Access to services, including employment
     + How should we determine the needs of our youth and their families?
     + How can we improve this model and track performance?
2. Data
   * + To what degree do the community partners use data in decision making?
     + How could they better use data to improve their desired outcomes?
     + How could they better use data to show impact on community wide objectives?
3. Family and Community Involvement
   * + How families and the community are currently engaged in the community-wide conversation?
     + How can we improve the involvement of youth in the conversation about the issues they face, and the effort to address these issues?
     + How can we improve the involvement of families in the conversation about the issues our youth face, and the effort to address these issues?
     + How can we improve the involvement of churches and community partners in the conversation about the issues our youth face, and the effort to address these issues?

**Youth, Family, & Community Engagement & Responsibility Working Group Key Findings**

With the goals of striving to engage youth, families, and their community, determining the needs of the youth and their families, and promoting acceptance of responsibility for the outcomes within each of these groups, the Youth, Family, and Community Engagement & Responsibility (YFC) Working Group established the followying key findings:

**Key Findings for Alignment**

One of the initial, yet often overlooked steps in aligning services is ensuring from the youth and family that there are needs to be met. From identifying trauma-induced behaviors to providing resources relative thereto, it is imperative that sources and impact of trauma be appropriately addressed. A direct result of identifying trauma in families such as unsafe neighborhoods, unemployment, underemployment, low levels of education, poverty, lack of appropriate medical interventions and the inability to afford day care have been determined to have a direct impact on youth in the community. As a result, youth have reported having guns in order to feel safe (not necessarily to cause harm to others).

A missing piece of the framework that enables communities to be more sustainable is the lack of access to resources. Many families report being unable to travel to the location of service providers, and as a result opt to forego receiving the necessary services. These services include employment as well as social services. Co-location of services would enable the resources to be housed periodically within the communities, allowing the residents ease of access to the services most needed. Agencies communicated an interest and willingness to periodically co-locate at faith-based organizations within the targeted communities.

**Key Findings for Data**

There is a need for a system of updating and providing resource information across agencies platforms. Many of the agencies, families and faith-based organizations have a limited plan for maintaining up-to-date databases for referrals and rely on relationships that have been developed independently. Many times, this has been shown to be out-of-date and ineffective, as agency contacts tend to change. There is a need for a more efficient and positive manner for agencies involved with children and families to stay up-to-date on resource information. It was discovered that faith-based organizations, while serving the families in the at-risk communities, have little to no knowledge of the wide-range of resources available to the families they serve (both congregants and at-large community members).

**Key Findings for Family and Community Involvement**

As a community comprised of an at-risk population of youth, it has been determined that one of the first obstacles to overcome is engaging the community members to be responsible for their community. Blight and poverty tend to lead to feelings of hopelessness which in turn, lead to disruptive behaviors. Developing programs that engage families and encourage a sense of community wholeness will go a long way in restoring hope into the targeted communities. As related to targeted intervention for youth, it is also imperative that the family be engaged in the process in order to eliminate the challenge of an empowered child returning to a home or family that has been unchanged.

**Recommendations**

Recommendation 1: **Involve faith-based organizations in the strategy to support families with children who have been detained by law enforcement and transported to the JAC.**

* 1. Many of the members of the faith-based community in the targeted areas have expressed an interest in partnering with the JAC to provide a sort of Red Cross model of emergency assistance.
  2. The faith-based leaders would be on-call or on-site to provide families with information and direction as they begin the work of helping their youth through the juvenile justice system. This help would be limited to providing faith-based support and assistance, along with attendance at court proceedings if requested.
  3. The faith-based leader would capitalize on the respect given to them and be tasked with maintaining a data trail of individuals connected with, assistance provided, and any other information that would be needed to support them from a faith-based perspective.

Recommendation 2: **Involve faith-based organizations in in the co-location of services**

* + 1. Determine resource provider needs as related to co-location of services; space requirements, facility agreements, staffing needs
    2. Determine location of churches with capacity to meet the needs of resource providers willing to have a physical presence in the designated communities.
    3. Convene a meeting of the resource providers and faith-based organization leadership to iron out details for co-location of services.
    4. Develop marketing strategy to inform neighborhood and other community members of the relationship being established and other details as necessary.
    5. This facility and the relationship that will be developed between the parties should be capable of housing resource providers in a manner that would benefit the immediate community. This presence would allow community members to attend appointments without the need to travel outside of their community, making them more likely to attend.

Recommendation 3: **Involve community schools in the development of neighborhoods hubs**

* + 1. Determine resource provider needs such as space, privacy and staffing needs.
    2. Review of schools in target communities to determine feasibility and capacity to accommodate service agency presence.
    3. Convene a meeting of the resource providers and schools’ leadership to iron out details for co-location of services, including choice of community school location.
    4. Develop marketing strategy to inform neighborhood and other community members of the relationship being established and other details as necessary.
    5. This facility and the relationship that will be developed between the parties should be capable of housing resource providers in a manner that would benefit the immediate community. This presence would allow community members to attend appointments without the need to travel outside of their community, making them more likely to attend.

**Data & Evidence Working Group**

Objectives:

1. Indicators of JJ system health and success
   * + Overall
     + Sub-indicators for different aspects of JJ system and for specific items (such as attendance at first appointment for a mental health referral)
2. Data sharing

* Info Needs of partners (JAC, JSO, SAO, PD, DCPS, Community, & Program)
* Tech Challenges (differences of systems and other tech barriers)
* What are other cities doing?
* Legal hurdles

1. Air Traffic Control – Can we create a system to help connect providers to families, and families to information and services, as well as alert stakeholders when a youth becomes at-risk or justice involved so they can intervene as early in the process as possible.

* What do other cities have?
* What products are currently available?
* What resources do we have locally to assist?
* How do we get involvement from providers, community partners, families/youth?
  + - * Waivers?

With the goals of improving understanding, usage, and access to data, and to investigate the possibility and feasibility of a universal system to monitor youth progress within the juvenile justice system, the Data & Evidence (DE) Working Group established the following key findings.

**Key Findings on**

**Key Findings on :**

**Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the Data & Evidence (DE) Working Group was tasked with identifying challenges & issues within their area of focus. The policy recommendations identified are ways the community can focus on improving its juvenile justice system. Specifically, those recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: **Development of a dashboard and improvements to data sharing**

* 1. Develop an understanding of the Jax Journey system’s goals and outcomes
  2. Further develop the roadmap of the Jax Journey process
  3. Identify metrics that indicate the healthy, successful juvenile justice system; i.e., tie to system goals and outcomes
  4. Promote/publicize and train stakeholders on these metrics and how they can play a role in positively influencing those outcomes
  5. Identify trends and indicators that predict when a youth is at risk of being justice involved.

Recommendation 2: **Improving community data usage and sharing**

1. Train non-profit and faith-based organizations on basics of all data; importance, benefits and best practices
2. Establish data-sharing agreements necessary to provide information needed for data dashboard and Universal Intake Platform

Recommendation 3: **Implementation of a Universal Intake Platform**

1. Determine customizations to the UIP necessary to support needs of the initiative
2. Identify initial partners, timeline, funding and goals
3. Determine needs, timeline and costs for full implementation