



American Youth Policy Forum

Surveying the Field: Mapping a Path Towards Better Outcomes for Systems-Involved Youth

An AYPF Discussion Group
1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20036
March 29, 2019
1:00pm-4:30pm EST

The landmark Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDP A) reauthorization provides new opportunities to strengthen support services for systems-involved youth through the use of evidence-based programs and practices. As organizations, advocates, and other stakeholders work to develop resources that can support the new legislation and states prepare for implementation, it is critical to assess how these policies will impact older youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare system and the role that organizations are playing in developing resources to complement the new policies.

This discussion group will bring together government and nonprofit organizations with the intent of strategically mapping and identifying resources that are currently available and being used, as well as identifying new tools that are needed to help promote better outcomes for systems-involved youth. We will hear from state child welfare and juvenile justice leaders. The speakers will lay out their approach for implementation and discuss both the challenges and exciting opportunities for states to reform their systems. We will end with an interactive mapping exercise to identify current and future products that are needed and collectively identify the resource gaps within the child welfare and juvenile justice system. We will have a graphic recorder present to capture our journey and help organize our thoughts and next steps.

Goals of this discussion group include:

- Hear from state leaders and organizations about the greatest challenges and opportunities within the FFPSA and the JJDP A.
- Take inventory of the current resources available to states and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the FFPSA and the JJDP A.
- Identify gaps in resources and potential tools that could help states and stakeholders implement the new federal legislation.

Agenda

- 1:00pm-1:10pm** **Welcome and Framing**
Samaura Stone, Senior Policy Associate, AYPF
- 1:10pm-1:20pm** **Introductions**
Jesse Kannam, Policy Associate, AYPF
- 1:20pm-1:50pm** **State Presentation#1: Preparing for the Family First Prevention Services Act: How Connecticut Safely Reduced their use of Congregate Care**
- Speaker: Linda Dixon, Ph.D., Administrator, Family, Adolescent, and Children’s Services, Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Hartford, Connecticut**
- Connecticut has worked tirelessly to reform their child welfare system by expanding community-based services, family supports and decreasing the number of youth in congregate care. The Department activated multiple transformation drivers of change to create results, such as implementing the Strengthening Families Practice Model, creating internal policy changes, working in collaboration with their state legislators, and focusing on racial equity. Since January 2011, the Department has been able to decrease the percent of youth in care in institutions from 30% to 7%. Also in this timeframe, the number of youth in out of state programming has dropped from 364 to 9.
- 1:50pm-2:20pm** **State Presentation #2: Utilizing a Multidisciplinary and Collaborative Approach to Child Welfare Transformation: A Three Branch Model**
- Speaker: Carl Ayers, Director, Division of Family Services, Virginia Department of Social Services, Richmond, Virginia**
- The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is leading a multi-system and community-based approach to the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act. VDSS is utilizing a Three Branch Model, which is a collaborative team approach, comprised of all three branches of the government, several state and community-based agencies, and advocates to respond to the needs of children and families, redefining the responsibility of child welfare to all agencies who serve children and families. The Three Branch model serves as a successful leadership group to enact legislative, financial, and policy changes to improve the child welfare system.
- 2:20pm-2:30pm** **Break and Refreshments**

2:30pm-3:00pm

State Presentation#3: New Opportunities to Strengthen Racial Equity through the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act

Speaker: Betsy Tolentino, Executive Director, Pre-Adjudication Services and Reform, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, Baltimore, Maryland

For several years, Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) has focused on embedding racial equity into their work and reducing the disproportionate number of youth of color that come into contact with their system. The department adopted Sensitivity to Disparate Treatment as one of their six hallmarks to juvenile justice reform. So far, they have implemented a Race Equity Training Series to increase dialogue, assessment and policy practices; routinely monitor decision point data for youth of color to assess progress and use a Racial Impact Assessment Lens (RIAL) to vet their assessment and treatment policies. DJS has also taken steps to reduce the population of youth charged as adults in adult jails. Through juvenile detention reforms, DJS has been successful at safely reducing the juvenile detention population and as a result has been able to accommodate youth charged as adults in juvenile detention facilities around the State.

3:00pm-3:20pm

Reflections from the Judiciary and Technical Assistance Perspective

Speakers:

- **The Honorable Hiram Puig-Lugo, Judge, Board of Directors, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**
- **Julie Breedlove, Managing Director, Communities and Priorities, Capacity Building Center for States**

After hearing from states about their reform efforts in preparation for JJDP and the FFPSA, the group will discuss implementation efforts more broadly from the perspective of technical assistance providers and judges.

3:20pm-4:20pm

Resource Mapping and Group Discussion

Participants will have the opportunity to engage in an interactive activity that will allow us to organize and map the various resources and tools available to support juvenile justice and child welfare policies.

4:20pm-4:30pm

Key Takeaways and Closing

4:30pm

Adjourn