



HB 1359 YOUTH & FAMILY  
ADVISORY GROUP

# Impact Report



2022-2023

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# Introduction

## **VOICES – History, Philosophy, & Impact**

**For over a decade, VOICES has leveraged their expertise in juvenile justice, social work, and education to meet the needs of over 3,000 youth and families. In September of 2022, VOICES was given the opportunity to recruit, train, and facilitate a Youth and Family Advisory Group with community members across the state of Indiana. In partnership with the Youth Justice Oversight Committee and the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana.**

Through this process, 30 members were selected to participate in the Youth and Family Advisory Group to help guide and advise on the work of HB 1359 and the YJOC.

Youth and Family Advisory Group members held committee elections after completion of the six-week training, and Members were elected to Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary.

Over the course of eight months, the Youth and Family Advisory Group met with YJOC committee members and were asked to provide feedback on recommendations and strategies.

Members formed small work groups to take a deep dive into policy and made informed recommendations to the YJOC.

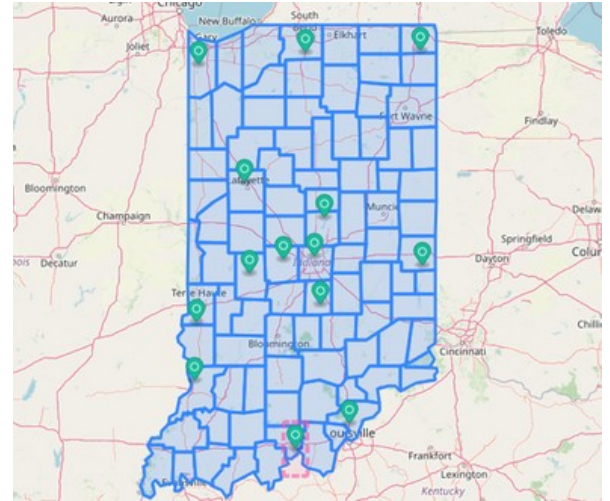
Members were charged with the following three guiding questions:

- How can Indiana have some statewide consistency while respecting local counties' authority (limit "justice by geography")?
- How can Indiana shift culture and mindset in the youth justice system from a punitive approach to one that is developmentally appropriate, more effective, and more cost-effective?
- How can Indiana improve equity and reduce disparities in outcomes for youth involved in the justice system?



# Recruitment

- Youth and Family Advisory Group members were recruited from across the state of Indiana in partnership with multiple youth service agencies/entities.
- Participants were selected based on age, and level of system involvement.
- 44 participants applied and 30 were selected.
- 9-month commitment
- 14 Indiana Counties represented.



Participants  
successfully  
completed  
workgroup  
requirements.

73%

# Demographics

1

## Age

- 32% under the age of 18
- 32% between 18-25
- 36% over the age of 25

2

## Income

- 35% Under \$10k
- 27% Under \$30k
- 20% under \$50k
- 18% over \$50k

3

## System involvement

85% had direct system involvement.

4

## Race/Ethnicity/Gender

- 50% Black
- 22% White
- 14% Bi-racial
- 14% multi-Cultural
- 65% Female
- 35% Male

# Training

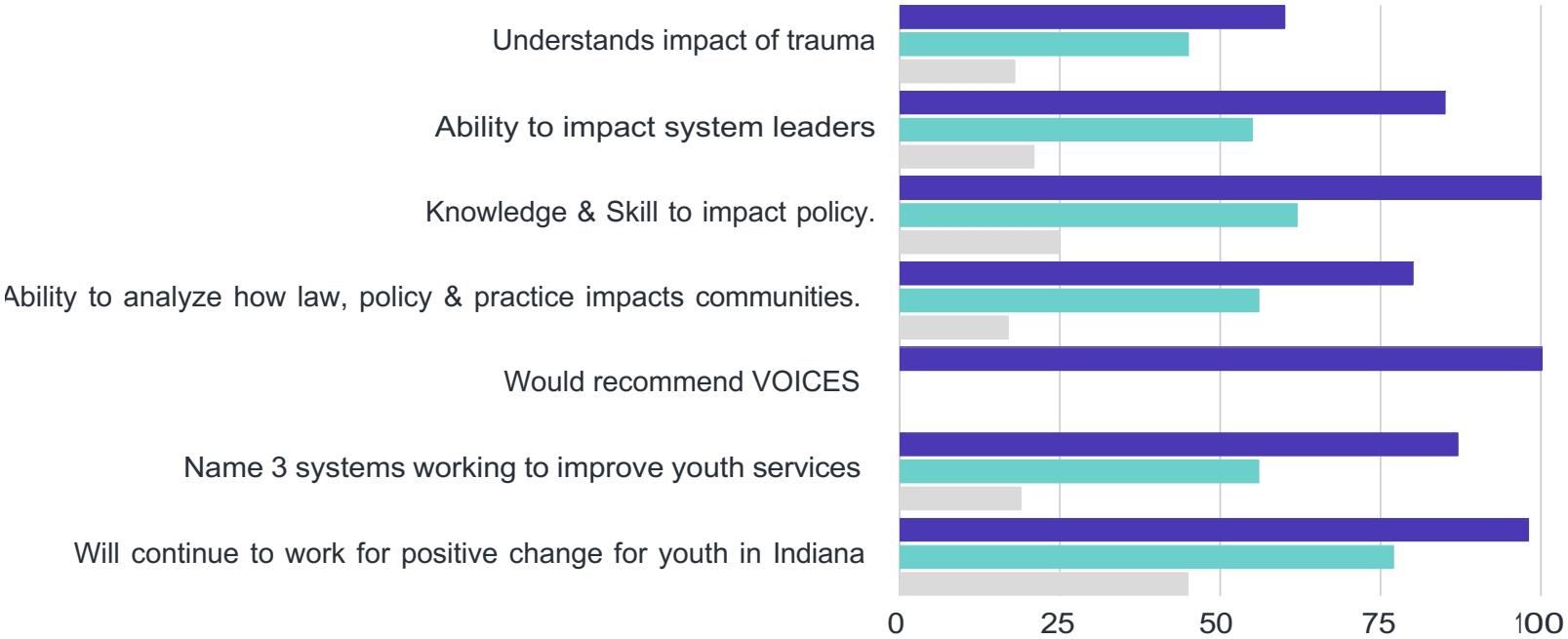
Youth and Family Advisory Group Members received 12 hours of training prior to meeting with YJOC Committee Members on the following topics:



- ♦ Healing Centered Engagement
- ♦ Asset Based Community Development
- ♦ Advocacy through Story Telling
- ♦ Public Speaking
- ♦ Trauma and the impact to communities
- ♦ Current policies/ process landscape of Indiana Juvenile Justice
- ♦ Social Change Ecosystem
- ♦ Preparing a Presentation
- ♦ Systems of Support in Indiana



Youth and Family Advisory Group members were assessed at three points throughout this process: Pre-evaluation survey(grey), Mid-Point check-in survey (teal), and Post program completion (purple).

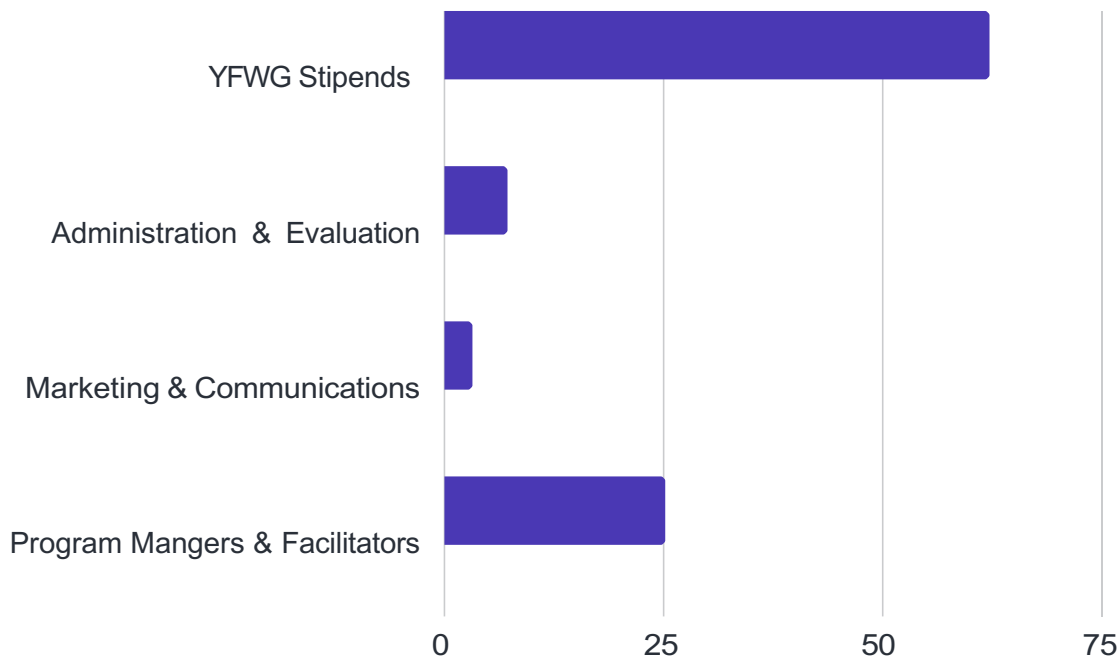


# 30

Youth and Family  
Advisory Group  
Members

# \$50,000

Funding to support Youth and Family  
Advisory Group



## Funding Breakdown

- Youth & Family Stipends: \$32,200
- Administration & Evaluation: \$3,500
- Marketing & Communications: \$ 1,500
- Program Manager (1)/Facilitators (2): \$12,800



# Recommendations

## Screening & Assessment (March 18, 2023)

Presented	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for reviewing existing and developing policies, protocols for statewide implementation</li> <li>• The Indiana Youth Assessment System (IYAS) is the current tool used by all Probation departments</li> <li>• Current policy does not mandate sharing of information with youth/families</li> <li>• Contracted with University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute for reliability study</li> <li>• Should IYAS be updated to include more factors that recent version</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide results to youth and families</li> <li>• IYAS should not be the only tool used for evaluation</li> <li>• If only tool used, more cultural factors should be used</li> <li>• Required staff training on the use and policies in place for IYAS overrides</li> </ul>

## Diversion (Feb 18, 2023)

Presented	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to provide the option for regional partnerships to meet the unique and diverse needs of each youth</li> <li>• Mechanism should be available for counties to partner or jointly apply and receive grant funding</li> <li>• Encourage communities to develop and implement diversion programs that are data informed and directly responsive to local needs</li> <li>• Provide options to use grant funds at all decision points (point of arrest and at or after the point of referral to the system)</li> <li>• Clearly defined target population and referral process before implanting any program</li> <li>• Develop and use of a wide network of community-based providers and build systems of support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth and families are most comfortable working with community-based organizations who already work with/have experience with youth.</li> <li>• The need for clear explanations of the process and program options so youth and families build trust and understand expectations.</li> <li>• Parent/family involvement. Consideration of how the family as a whole is impacted, including working through barriers around transportation and childcare.</li> <li>• More robust diversion options are needed around mental health and therapy resources, timely and accessible programming and non-judgmental providers with trauma informed training.</li> <li>• More youth/peer support for youth</li> </ul>

	<p>going through the system/currently in a program. (A lot of valuable feedback about Teen Court and restorative practices involving peer-led/peer focused programs and pro-social activities.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal Adjustments should be less like standard probation and more focused on specific needs of the youth involved and engaging in pro-social activities.</li> </ul>
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### Behavioral Health (February 4, 2023)

<b>Presented</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth can be held for 21 days in DOC for assessments, psych evals etc. Quickest way for full diagnostic assessments</li> <li>• Most current youth in the systems have not been properly diagnosed and most parents are ok with the hold due to them being off the street</li> <li>• Little to no information comes with a child to DOC</li> <li>• Only 2 facilities in Indiana perform the assessment requiring youth to be taken out of home to another part of the state</li> <li>• Better system coordination is needed</li> <li>• How can a multidisciplinary team work together to intervene sooner</li> <li>• Need to look at the utilization of Telehealth and provide broadband access for counties</li> <li>• Would like to maximize diversion and minimize interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide results to youth and families</li> <li>• IYAS should not be the only tool used for evaluation</li> <li>• If only tool used, more cultural factors should be used</li> <li>• Required staff training on the use and policies in place for IYAS overrides</li> </ul>

## Juvenile Probation Standards (March 4, 2023)

Presented	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared historical and current information probation standards. Had 4 guiding questions:</li> <li>• How can PO's best engage youth and families?</li> <li>• What does positive youth development look like?</li> <li>• Would utilizing incentives would have motivated youth to make positive behavior choices?</li> <li>• Do you agree with using incentives to motivate positive behavior?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase training hours required for PO's annually to 20.</li> <li>• Family Navigator position should be mandatory for all Probation Departments</li> <li>• Partnerships with schools and community-based organizations should be mandatory for all Probation Departments</li> <li>• Increase funding to ensure that all youth placed on Probation are assigned a mentor</li> <li>• Incentives should be based in trust and individual passion of the youth and tied to decreased probation time</li> <li>• Self-care should be more intention for PO's and supported by departments</li> </ul>

## Transitional Services (April 1, 2023)

Presented	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed to require review hearings and for youth to keep all previous services during the time of commitment to DOC</li> <li>• Referring county will make the decision on who the youth is released to: Probation, Parole, or Discharged</li> <li>• DOC can not financially assist released youth that are not on Parole with services such as mentoring, case management etc</li> <li>• Youth can be held until the day before 21<sup>st</sup> birthday</li> <li>• Recommends that the Courts to decide on what happens after</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete review of DOC policies- as they stand, they are building resentment between youth/families towards systems</li> <li>• Increase human centered/trauma informed practices</li> <li>• TRP should be mandatory for all counties</li> <li>• Case planning with each entity prior to release (DOC, Parole, Probation, Service Providers, Family)</li> <li>• Mandated communication pathways between DOC, Parole, Probation and sharing of data</li> <li>• Close the gap of service delivery</li> </ul>

<p>discharge and for DCS to provide services to youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a county loses jurisdiction of a case, youth becomes a ward of the State</li> <li>• Only 3 counties in Indiana has TRP (Transition from Restrictive Placement) services</li> <li>• Feels re-entry should start at entry</li> </ul>	<p>by requiring DOC to maintain responsibility for youth for up to 1 year after release</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional/skill development mandated for all youth in DOC</li> <li>• Youth Navigator assigned to each county responsible for career/pro-social pathways</li> <li>• Family involvement should be mandated</li> </ul>
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Data (April 15, 2023)

<b>Presented</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data can be a great indicator of need/change</li> <li>• Cultural data needs to be measured as well</li> <li>• Data is not being shared across the state</li> <li>• Different types of data collected in each county –there is not consistency in how it is collected or used</li> <li>• How do systems establish enough trust to gather accurate data?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research should also measure youth experiences with the system</li> <li>• Outcomes should be developed that measure youth thriving not just recidivism</li> <li>• Increase data collection on police interactions</li> <li>• Results of research should be given back to communities</li> <li>• Incentives should be provided for research projects</li> <li>• Local organizations should be responsible for collecting data</li> </ul>

# Grants (December 3, 2022)

<b>Presented</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judge Schein presented three categories of grant funding being considered</li> <li>• Discussion held on youth and family personal experiences with community-based programs</li> <li>• Partnering with law enforcement to implement a program to divert a child from formal court proceedings</li> <li>• The YJOC recommends a funding formula based on county population. The formula allots a base amount of \$37,500.00 per grant per county. Additional funds in the amounts of \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$15,000 are added to the base amount based on county population, with smaller counties receiving more funding to comply with statutory requirement of focus on rural counties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs should operate from a strengths-based framework and should support youth and family empowerment through skills and job training. Specifically, the solicitation should avoid deficit-based language and the process should encourage application by non-governmental organizations.</li> <li>• Programs should include opportunities for joint participation by youth and families.</li> <li>• Develop or expand partnerships with local community-based organizations such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs.</li> <li>• Providers need to have specific training regarding serving youth</li> <li>• Support peer mentoring programs that are focused on advocacy</li> </ul>

# What is next?

**Youth and Family Advisory Group members would like to continue to engage and be involved with YJOC Members and continue advocacy work in Indiana.**

## Members are:

1. Committed to continuing to meet monthly for extended engagement and have expressed interest in staying connected to YJOC members and related workgroups
2. Two members are working with VOICES and the Casey Foundation on national Juvenile Probation Experience Project
3. Four Members have committed to participating in the VOICES Youth Media Project
4. Two members are leaving for college in the Fall

We thank you for your ongoing support of the Youth and Family Advisory Group and VOICES Corporation

## Acknowledgements

VOICES is grateful and values the effort and support that was put into this project by many people. We remain hopeful that the trajectory of system impacted youth and families is on the rise.

### Those responsible for **concept and coordination**

Justice Steven David

Sirrila Blackmon- FSSA/Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction

Julie Whitman-Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Nancy Wever-Indiana Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

Leslie Dunn-Deputy Director, Children & Families Division, Indiana Supreme Court

YJOC Committee Members

Youth and Family Advisory Group Members