

Community Reintegration Meeting 4/3/20, 10am

Attended:

Mike Freysinger (Maine Youth Court), Rachel Talbot Ross (Maine Legislature), Atlee Riley (DRM), Margot Fine (MIO), Hailey Virusso (Opportunity Alliance), Lindsay Rosenthal (Vera), Erica King (USM), Mara Sanchez (USM), Jill Ward (MCJPAL), Mike Whitney (YAP), Victoria Morales (Maine Legislature), Christine Thibeault (Cumberland County DA Office), Mary Bonato (GLAD), Kelsey Park (RJ), Julia Sleeper (Tree St), Margaret McCollichick (RJPM), Osgood (Portland Outright), Joseph Jackson (MPAC), Michael Kebede (ACLU), Anwar Whiting (DOC), Colin O'Neill (DOC), Autumn Magee (YAP)

Welcome, Frame Purpose of Meeting and Roles

- Jill provided a brief introduction and background/context.
- Group Introductions, brief reports on good news/places where progress is being made toward building the community reintegration we want for young people
- **Community Integration Gaps and Overlaps:** What is working about how we are leveraging existing resources across systems and communities? What are the resource gaps and needs?
 - ITP capacity expansion
 - Return home with YAP supports
 - Other?
- Erica King stated that she had a call recently with Victoria Morales and others about expanding independent living transition housing. Two young people recently out of LC have gone into a transitional living situation. Would be interested in hearing Hailey Virusso from Opportunity Alliance and Mike Whitney/Autumn Magee from YAP discuss what they have seen.
- Hailey Virusso stated that there have been a couple young people in the past 6 months who were able to go into placements with non-family members, but reality is that everyone is operating in scarcity and trying to figure out best options. Erica asked how was the issue of guardianship dealt with in placements with non family members. Hailey said that when youth are 16+ and with McKinney-Vento law, there is a way to bypass guardianship issues. There is a lot of energy around host homes right now.
- Autumn Magee stated that it would be helpful in reintegration planning to have a Plan B. Mike Whitney added that contingency plans will be critical in coming months.
- Jill Ward asked whether there is a template for transition planning that DOC or YAP uses. **Mike W. said he would send Jill the template he's using.** Michael Kebede asked in chat to see the YAP template as well.
- Margot Fine asked in chat: "Hailey what is age range and criteria for referrals and what the best language is for referrals?" Hailey responded in chat: "CBHH: 2-21 with mental health dx (we can do the assessment) and needs Mainecare / High-Fi Wraparound: 12-21 with mental health dx (we can do assessment) with juvenile justice involvement, no Mainecare needed / Homeless Youth Services: 6-21, at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness, no Mainecare or diagnosis needed / Intake for all three: you can call 523-5049 or email: intakescheduling@opportunityalliance.org."
- Victoria Morales asked in chat for language for McKinney-Vento. Hailey provided in chat the McKinney Vento change:
http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/bills_129th/chapters/PUBLIC206.asp Revised statute: <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec1503.html>.

II. Build reintegration resources at the pace that COVID-19 threatens public health and safety

- Erica framed the categories of needs to be discussed, including emerging need for a technology fund for those youth leaving facilities. Supportive Housing, Health, Food Security, Access are Autumn stated that at YAP they like to meet with the families before the young person is released to get a sense of what the needs are. A lot of families don't like to take 'handouts' and say they are fine but after talking with young people, YAP finds out there are needs. More structure is needed to get phones and laptops activated and ready for kids.
- Victoria Morales asked in chat: "are there any school counselors or social workers on this call?" Mara Sanchez responded in chat: "No, Victoria, there are not any school counselors or school social workers on this call. Victoria responded in chat: "Right now, schools are identifying youth who are not able for many reasons to be connected to their education. it would be important for them to be at the table."
- Colin O'Neill acknowledged Jill's earlier point about looking at needs for every case. Right now there are 22 kids left committed at LC and those are all unique cases. Would like to see a grand rounds approach to these cases.
- Jill proposed a plan to put a resource list together as a result of the call. Stated that we need to operationalize this to pull in the "non-usual suspects," as in more people who can contribute, and this is a moment in time to engage the community to get more resources and ideas to the table. Collin agreed and proposed to break it down by region and develop a collaborative in each of the three regions that can focus on kids returning to those regions. Jill proposed to also include alternatives beyond what has already been used in previous reintegration plans in those regional plans. Discussion on how to operationalize.
- Julia Sleeper stated in chat: "I agree. I think clarifying what groups we are focusing on at what time. (I.e Just Longcreek recently kids, kids already on community supervision, at risk kids who are disappearing or not connecting to education or places) would be helpful to clarify each conversation."
- Victoria offered to help with getting landlords on board with reintegration.
- Autumn responded that Victoria's suggestion to reach out to landlords is great, but need to streamline with one point of contact.
- Kelsey Park stated in chat: "It would be helpful to know some point people. RJIM can definitely help with the community building part and repairing relationships but need points of contact for the long term care and support. Also is anyone from region 3 on the call?"
- Margaret stated on chat: "Services on this call seem focused on southern areas of state. What is available for central and north?"
- Jill brought up the concept of a case expeditor and proposed the need for a community liaison. Colin said that DOC internally goes through this exercise regularly to review these types of issues and identify needs. Colin stated that what DOC needs is additional help and support, not a whole new process. They have a process in place just need to add on a regional component and more support.
- Margaret Micolichuk stated in chat: "In the midcoast RJP has 40 youth in open cases. We are fundraising to get phones, minutes, food and ways to provide contact. An issue arose about not having minutes on family phones to talk. Also for many face to face has been the most successful - what else is there?"
- **Christine Thibeault stated in chat: "JJAG can help support phones and other essential needs. We can allocate up to \$5,000 to any nonprofit that is providing services to justice-involved youth. "**

- A lot of support in the group about the idea of a “grand rounds” style approach to community reintegration. Margot stated in chat: “A grand rounds approach is a great idea and bringing all of these great minds to the table! Just want to note - We need to make sure the youth are the drivers of their needs and desires and need to also operationalize how their voice is at their table so to speak. As we heard from YAP, we know plans need to be adaptive overtime, and so having the youth feel centered on their team is key.”
- Hailey stated that the wraparound services are intended to fill the role of being that one point of contact. Erica asked if wraparound is assigned for the remaining 24 kids in the building. Hailey replied that none of them had been referred, and that they are happy to support in Region 1, 2, and even 3.
- Osgood stated on chat: “In LGBTQ+ youth advocacy we’ve been doing this type of creative, community-level transition planning and resourcing for a long time. Including young people leaving Long Creek. Just want to elevate that there are folks in this call who have had a lot of success in doing this over time (in large part through having peer/mentors, in addition to DOC and DHHS supports). Community orgs will also likely know the places to get food, the supportive peer to call, etc etc. We just don’t need to totally reinvent the wheel with a protocol or model.”
- Jill asked how to set up these regional community teams, acknowledging that everyone on the call wants to play a role but it needs to be set up. Colin stated that every kid at LC has a psych social worker who is responsible for much of this work.
- Colin stated that he liked the idea of delegating it out to regional RCAs and organizing kids regionally to identify needs. Biggest challenge is managing public safety, public health, and personal health and safety with these kids. If plan is to make a collaborative in each regions, can do case consultations for kids in each region. Erica mentioned the tribal triage community collaborative as a longstanding model of communities coming together to resource the needs of its children. Erica proposed the next step to split planning teams/expedited resource development to young people into counties and/or regions.
- Margaret stated on chat: “Another resource within LC is the new RJ Coordinator, Megan Dvilinsky, who has responsibilities to youth reentry and transition to the community. She will be developing strategies in the coming months.”
- **Colin requested someone make an attempt to create a list of transitional resources needed. Jill proposed that Jill, Mara, and Erica can be responsible for that. Jill made a proposal to have either Jill, Mara, or Erica on each reintegration call and be responsible to bring community partners in on each one of the calls and document.** Autumn agreed that this would be helpful for YAP.
- Lindsay Rosenthal proposed facilitating sharing out the resources in real time with all stakeholders. Jill responded that this is the role of the Place Matters project. **Lindsay responded that it would be useful to have a more regular communication of resources. Jill asked to see a model of that from other states.**
- Margot Fine stated on chat: “MIO has a large resource list that we have compiled in the past weeks.” Lindsay responded on chat: “I suspect others have too, so maybe we can support compiling in a way that would be helpful for everyone.”
- Lindsay stated on chat: “We don't have time to discuss on this call, but sitting with NYC-- we know it's important to ask the question what supports are in place to protect the health of kids exposed to covid in residential settings that may be serving as transitional resources--- as well as exposure for families. As we know that kids in the system and their families fall into groups that are at high risk, with asthma, diabetes, heart conditions and with families, elderly caretakers.”
- Margaret asked on chat: “I think we should also be considering those youth we have sitting in various diversion cases and summons - how do we keep them from progressing toward LC?”

- Erica stated that on the chat there was discussion around the many community organizations that have been providing on the ground support for a long time, unfunded.
- Erica asked whether there was convergence, by show of thumbs, of the plan to create regional teams. A few put their thumbs up.
- Christine asked how many kids were detained at LC and how could they be moved immediately. Margot Fine stated in chat that there are 33 kids at Long Creek currently and asked what type of resources would they need to get out? Colin responded that detained kids had been assessed and there were a number with serious crimes with no right to release from judges. LC is down to 11 detained kids and tried to release one a week ago and that young person was found several days later in a car with guns. There are one or two that might be able to be wrapped up but public safety risk is a challenge.

Closing & Next Steps (as well as those in bold above)

- Colin stated that he had to leave the call early but fully supports moving forward with a plan to create care teams that include other systems. Erica stated that there are 70 kids on probation that need these supports. Colin acknowledged Atlee Reilly's point that there are kids in ERs and RT placements that need supports, and how to keep those kids out of the justice system as safely as possible. If we can create this process in micro with DOC we can extrapolate out to other cases. DOC recently met with MIO to discuss this.
- **Colin stated that as his next step he will let his leadership team know about this call and will develop a template to present those cases to a wider range of folks for input and feedback.** Erica stated that this is for supporting and helping the DOC. Jill requested to add to the data dashboard and break out committed vs detained numbers. Colin stated that it's on his list for today.
- **Erica stated that as his next step she will follow up with the DOC on how to move forward with three regions.**
- Erica stated that there was a recent conversation with Victoria, Preble Street, and other housing stakeholders recently about supportive housing. Need to acknowledge that many of these kids cannot go home, need to have a reentry housing program, and need funding for that. There are funding streams for foster care youth and homeless youth but justice involved youth don't always fit into those categories.
- Victoria stated that this conversation needs to be brought to others like in the private sector. There are housing models for adults and veterans already. There is the preble street program, which is a great model. Models are out there and can be tweaked with input from others on this call and beyond. Victoria stated that Cullen Ryan, who is not on this call, is very interested in being involved, and when the legislature goes back into session housing issue could be on the agenda.
- Autumn asked whether there is a list of requirements for young people to be eligible for different housing programs.
- Hailey stated that those housing conversations are happening in many places but not quickly enough to help the current population.
- **Erica asked the group to send Mara, Jill, and Erica thoughts/recommendations on who should be involved on future calls for each region.**
- **Jill asked the group to send examples or templates that they would like DOC to pull from. Stated that the goal is to pool different interests together. If everyone can provide what they are doing formally and informally for community reintegration, we can pool that information together.**

- Margot asked on chat: "Is it useful for DOC to partner with a subcommittee of this group to make a template? How do we ensure cultural responsiveness? Youth Voice?" Julia responded on chat: "Agree with this concept." Jill asked on chat: "What's out there already? We should draw from examples and make sure it works."
- Kelsey asked on chat : "Also, is there anything in writing about how DOC currently approaches transition?"
- Margot stated on chat : "MIO has gotten 3 kids enrolled in the new DHHS FHA housing voucher for foster youth - they have many more spots right now."
- Osgood stated on chat: "Outright had a shared HUD grant with Preble for a few years, placing LGBTQ+ young people in apartments. We were able to get a few young people into them right from LC. It only ended due to funding cuts federally. Happy to share what worked from that model."
- Kelsey stated on chat: "We're also thinking some offline convos specifically with the community based folks to codify thoughts before stepping into spaces where doc is also at the table?"
- Jill proposed convening next Friday at 10am to follow up.
- Jill proposed connecting JJAG with Friends of Long Creek (FOLC) to create a technology fund. Atlee added that the JJAG had an idea to get funds right to flex funding to DOC could go above 5K limit and then each regional could have more funds to pay for needs. Amber mentioned that finding the technology itself is hard, like for example, Staples is out of stock. Erica and Jill suggested buying in bulk and going directly to supplier. Erica is on a national network that is tracking some of the things that are happening as a result of COVID and in NY there are already corporate donors. Jill has experience working with Dell and getting technology. Should add to resource document, all the choices. Rachel Talbot Ross stated on chat: "We have also been working on technology needs and are trying to get funding."
- Kelsey stated on chat: "I can help connect with region 3 folks!"
- **Atlee as next step is going to reach out to DOE for a point person for the regional groups once they are formed.** DOE is involved with mass purchasing technology as well, it might be an easy role to play.
- **Jill as next step will reach out to Ana Hicks who is the Children's Cabinet staff person to make sure she is aware of this conversation to update her.**