

Community Reintegration Meeting

5/1/20, 1pm

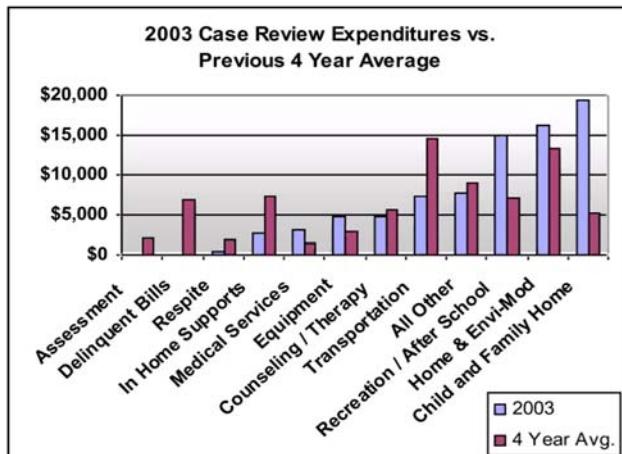
Attendees:

Betsey Boardman (AOC), Mara Sanchez (USM), Anne Sedlack (Maine Law), Linda Barry-Potter(JJAG) Samantha Fenderson (DOL), Katrina Ringrose (DRM), Hailey Virusso (Opportunity Alliance), Bonnie Porta (JJAG), Jay Pennel (JJAG), Galan Williamson (DOC), Asia Bowman (Vera), Erica King (USM), John Coyne (DOC), Autumn Magee (YAP), Jill Ward (MCJPAL), Andrew Kirkman (YAP), Shannon Sidelinger (DOL), Helen Hemminger, Megan Dvilinsky (DOC), Margot Fine (MIO), Osgood (Portland Outright), Anwar Whiting (DOC), Robyn Thurber (DOL), Julia Sleeper (Tree Street), Atlee Reilly (DRM), Christine Thibeault (JJAG), Mary Bonauto (GLAD), Margaret Molicichek (RJP), Kelsey Park (RJIM)

Discussion

1. Welcome & Overview
 - a. Jill framed up quickly the purpose of the meeting as capitalizing on this COVID moment to create new opportunities to resource community reintegration for young people.
 - b. Erica stated that youth detention is down and that is something to celebrate. Erica walked through agenda for meeting and posted it in chat.
 - c. Everyone introduced themselves and their role/agency.
2. Proposed Regional Community Care Teams
 - a. Galan spoke about moving forward with regional care teams. Meeting earlier this week among RCAs, Colin O'Neill, Mara, Erica, and Jill. Challenge is adapting each team to each region's unique needs. There has been a lot of discussion about how to best empower local collaboratives that have been identified in each region. In Region 3 alone we have identified 6 collaboratives. Goal is to lean on the local collaboratives as a starting point and thinking along the lines of the regional children's cabinet structure, which worked well for us with local community care teams, with regional care teams above that, and then a statewide group so policy and legislative issues could be escalated to higher levels. Accomplishes a number of goals, foremost of which is to utilize local collaboratives, but also will hopefully improve communication and ability to resolve cases with low cost and no cost options and generate more resources to support them.
 - b. John agreed that he shared Galan's vision. Want to exhaust all possible options for all possible youth. There have been great strides but there are too many incarcerated still. The teams will hopefully help with catching options that have been missed by other groups. We can always do more for the youth that we are working with and feel that youth will be served better by doing this process.
 - c. Galan added that this is a vehicle to carry out the recommendations that were in the Task Force report. The report well represented many stakeholders, even in Region 3. Felt the recommendations in that report that were unique to various regions, so with this vehicle can address those. For those who were around for it, there was a real value in the children's cabinet structure to help find options when things got stuck.
 - d. Christine asked whether any consistent barriers or unmet needs have been identified for this group to work towards relatively soon.
 - e. John responded that it is very individualized for those youth that DOC has been able to get out during this time. Detentions have gone down and officers have been able to work in communities to turn over stones that haven't historically been turned over. One major thing is the need for an alternative to detention before youth gets to the point of detention and believes DOC is looking into that.

- f. Galan – there has been a shift with reentry, seeing fewer kids return to their home communities when they go to Long Creek from Region 3. Have had challenges finding housing for youth, particularly with older population. With closure of RISE program had to scramble for housing, programming, educational supports for those youth. Agreed that it is individualized. Erica lifted up that this planning is more than about the crisis, but building supports around young people to make sure they are thriving post release.
 - g. Helen asked in chat: “So are the 2 transitional programs out of Long Creek like Rise closed due to Covid?” John Coyne responded in chat: “Bearings House (arm of Long Creek) was closed temporarily in order to address the needs of staffing at the facility. Those youth were able to transition back into their communities. The RISE program is closed as a result of staffing from The Opportunity Alliance through collaboration with many people those young men were able to get an apartment through Preble Street with programming and support.”
3. JJAG COVID Community Response Funds
- a. Christine shared that JJAG has been allocated 62K for COVID response to be disbursed by September. JJAG would prefer to distribute in a large chunk. JJAG does not have infrastructure to administer that money.
 - b. Atlee suggested that the regional teams could decide where money was distributed. Want decisions to be made in care teams and JJAG does not want to be responsible to individual requests. Would DOC flex accounts work or a community based nonprofit be a possible method to distribute money?
 - c. Christine added that if it turns out those funds are insufficient, there will be additional funds beyond 62K.
 - d. Katrina asked in chat: “Are there any restrictions on what the money can be spent on?”
 - e. Jay responded to group that JJAG funds cannot be used for food, and needs to demonstrate how it removes a child from detention or commitment or how it helps support a child to remain in the community. Need local response teams quickly to handle this money to help people get and stay out, feel behind the eight ball on this.
 - f. Jill suggested that the way that this money is disbursed doesn't necessarily need to be a long term structure of how future JJAG funds are distributed.
 - g. Atlee agreed and proposed that disbursing this 62K is a test run of whether the funds are useful, how much impact can \$1000 have to meet immediate needs, and then hopefully can lead to braiding of funds between state agencies, foundations
 - h. Erica showed a chart from previous children's cabinet regional care teams. There is a precedent for doing this in Maine.



- i. Bonnie asked in chat: "Is/was there anything significantly different for Region 2 that came out of meetings about the teams". John Coyne responded in chat: "RCA Sue Nee from Region II shares similar views with some local flavor that may be a little different."
 - j. Margot asked in chat: "What is an example of a local collaborative that exists that JJAG is looking towards? I heard there were a few in region 3?" Christine asked whether there are collaboratives that already exist doing reentry work and would they be willing to hold these funds to distribute them? Understanding that such an agency would need to document how the funds are used and be willing to distribute it quickly.
 - k. Jay – Maine is the first state in the country to be attempting this, so the feds will be watching.
 - l. Christine proposed that people interested in further discussion about how these funds can be utilized contact her, Atlee, or Ned but include Jay Pennel. Want to get the ball rolling right away. Jill clarified that JJAG is looking for entities that can disburse these funds, not requests for funding.
 - m. Christine – hope is that for the people who have requested fund, they could be redirected to whoever the entity is that will be disbursing those funds.
 - n. Jill offered to take on the responsibility of pulling together the recommendations from this group about how those funds will be disbursed.**
4. Subgroup/ Strategy Updates:
- a. Mara shared from Rachel Talbot Ross: "Quick update on the technology front. Received 70 new laptops yesterday in an effort to address the technology needs of our vulnerable populations. Applying for grants to raise money for:
 - (1) a rapid response fund w an initial goal is \$15k
 - (2) digital/connectivity w the goals of stockpiling laptops/tablets, Wifi/hotspots, phones and (hopefully) providing training to address digital literacy.
 - **Need help if anyone is interested in working together.**
 - 70 Laptops/Chromebooks:
 - 50 - Portland Adult Ed
 - 10 - Maine Youth Justice
 - 5 - WCC/SMWRC (3 are already confirmed)
 - 3 - NAACP MSP (men getting out this month)
 - 2 - Stock
 - b. Erica shared from Victoria Morales that Quality Housing Coalition was not awarded the United Way COVID response award, but encouraged to reapply
 - c. Christine – Lucia Hunt from Pine Tree Legal reached out because they are considering application to OJJDP for girls' needs.
 - d. Mara stated in chat: "The next Vera Workgroup was potentially going to focus on an application to that solicitation. I will follow up with Lucia at Pine Tree"
 - e. Jill shared that Ned Chester is a part of a group of defense attorneys being assigned to the kids in Long Creek and is making those attorneys aware of the larger community reintegration conversation.
 - f. Erica shared that DOC received an OJJDP Second Chance Act award with resources for reentry.
 - g. Jill suggested that anyone who felt compelled could email Senator Collins requesting more resources for youth justice needs. Also suggested that this group meet every other week until process gets clearer. Erica asked the group to share what others want for timing. Christine stated in chat: "I support meeting every other week."

Next meeting: Friday, May 15th at 1pm. Please email Mara if you would like a calendar invite to that meeting.