

2023 Q1

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE JUSTICE

QUARTERLY TRANSFORMATION REPORT



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FACILITIES UPDATE

IDJJ's Transformation Plan includes investing in IDJJ youth centers. These changes prioritize welcoming, dorm-like, youth-friendly spaces. They also strive to create a restorative, family-friendly, community-integrated, trauma-informed, culturally responsive atmosphere.

Transformed facilities allow youth to be placed close to home. This ensures that families have access to their loved ones, and allows youth to be connected with services in the community that can continue upon the youth's release and re-entry into the community. Below are some brief updates on some of the renovations and construction happening at IDJJ youth centers.

IYC Lincoln

Renovations recently began at the site of the new youth center that will be located in Lincoln, Illinois. It will be located at the site of the former Lincoln Developmental Center, and will allow youth from central Illinois to be housed closer to their families and communities.

Highlights of progress at IYC Lincoln include:

- Updates and renovations will begin soon at administrative and programming cottages
- Additional cottages for programming and administrative use will be renovated soon
- Groundbreaking for the newly constructed 27,000 square foot multipurpose building, which will include educational, recreational, and dietary services, is expected to begin this summer

FACILITIES UPDATE CONTINUED

IYC Pere Marquette

An architectural firm has been selected for the IYC Pere Marquette renovations and construction. In February, a site visit was conducted and the first design input meeting with Pere Marquette staff was held. Documentation is being reviewed to determine any potential barriers to construction at the site. Renovations at IYC Pere Marquette will include:

- Renovations of showers & housing units
- Replacement of windows
- New construction of a recreation and therapy building

IYC Warrenville

IYC Warrenville is close to completion of the design phase of renovations. An architectural & engineering firm has been identified and highlights of the plans include:

- Renovation of existing housing units, administration building, and garage
- Medical, mental health and youth & family services offices will be in close proximity
- Plans for new construction of a recreation building are underway

COMMUNICATION UPDATE

IDJJ's Transformation is highly dependent on increased, enhanced, and accurate communication with stakeholders. In the first quarter of 2023, significant progress was made in the areas of communication with staff, family, and community partners.

Staff Communication

Communication with staff is an important part of achieving the goals of the Transformation Plan. In the first quarter of 2023, the following additions and/or enhancements to staff communication efforts have been made:

- Creation of monthly internal newsletter for staff
- Monthly Lunch & Learn WebEx meetings led by various members of Executive Team with time for questions and feedback
- Creation of a new email for staff questions and feedback (djj.suggestions@illinois.gov)
- Investigation and plans for electronic bulletin boards to be placed at each facility
- Computers have been ordered to increase access to email and electronic communication for direct care staff

COMMUNICATION UPDATE

Family Communication

Increased family engagement is a priority of IDJJ's Transformation Plan. In the first quarter of 2023, the newly launched family advisory council decided to move from quarterly to monthly meetings and discussed the possibility of launching an additional initiative that is specifically a support group for families of IDJJ youth.

There is also a dedicated team from across IDJJ, which includes members of the family advisory council, that is working on an updated and more user friendly version of the orientation handbook for families. The handbook should be complete and ready to distribute and post to the IDJJ website in the summer of 2023.

Additionally, "Family Connection", a newsletter for families of IDJJ youth, was recently launched. The electronic newsletter, which will be produced quarterly, includes data, information, and resources for family members.

Communication with Community Partners

Good communication with IDJJ's plethora of community partners is key to advancing the Transformation Plan. Our partner organizations provide essential therapeutic services, recreational programs, educational opportunities, and more. Collaboration with these partners benefits the youth of IDJJ!

COMMUNICATION UPDATE CONT.

Communication with Community Partners Cont.

IDJJ is increasing communication and collaboration with our community partner organizations to increase awareness and positive perceptions of the good work we are doing together for IDJJ youth. Events, story pitches to media outlets, and even mutual engagement on social media mutually benefits IDJJ and community partners. Here are just a few examples of Quarter 1 endeavors with community partners:

- Social media acknowledgment of SkyART's role in First Lady MK Pritzker's visit to IYC Warrenville
- Collaboration with Northern Illinois University's Project Flex on a CBS 2 news story about the athletic/recreational programs at several IDJJ youth centers
- Highlights of Larry's Barbershop grand reopening events at two IYCs
- Recognition of National Mentor Month on social media, thanking, highlighting and tagging specific community partners each week
- Black History Month collaborative event with Storycatchers at IYC Chicago highlighted on social media & in staff newsletter
- Social media acknowledgment of Wheaton College's role in an informational college event at IYC Warrenville

EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES

IDJJ's Transformation Plan includes a commitment to build inter-agency collaboration and expand educational and vocational opportunities for youth. In the first quarter of 2023, the below initiatives were implemented.

State Identification Initiative

IDJJ is partnering with the Illinois Secretary of State to ensure that all youth being released from youth centers, and those in Aftercare being monitored in the community, receive a state identification card. Lacking state ID often presents additional challenges to our youth as they apply for employment, attempt to access medical or mental health services, or enroll in educational institutions. There are many reasons why securing state ID is difficult for youth:

- A substantial number of youth involved in the Illinois juvenile justice system are also involved in the child welfare system (DCFS). This often means youth have moved many times and may have lost track of personal records needed to secure state identification.
- Some youth are unable to obtain their records from family members who are holding them.
- Transportation to a local Secretary of State office where IDs can be secured can be a big challenge for youth.
- The fees associated with getting a state ID can be problematic for youth.

This collaboration with the Secretary of State's office will remove a significant barrier facing many youth!

EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES CONT.

LOOKING AHEAD

University of Chicago Law Class

An eight-week Constitutional Law class taught by University of Chicago Law School's Professor Emily Buss began in March of 2023. The course, titled, "The Constitutional Rights of Young People from Young People's Point of View," includes high school and post high school youth from three IDJJ youth centers and also includes a group of University of Chicago law students.

In addition to the weekly class, each youth receives an hour per week of virtual mentoring with one of the law students. Continuing to expand opportunities for youth to build skills and participate in educational opportunities is important to their success as they are reintegrated into their communities.

As IDJJ continues to make progress toward achieving the goals of the Transformation Plan, leadership will continue to prioritize facilities updates, communication efforts with all stakeholders, and expansion of opportunities for youth. In the second quarter of 2023, IDJJ anticipates significant progress on the site of the new Lincoln youth center, a special collaborative event with SkyART at Expo Chicago, and the addition of electronic bulletin boards for staff announcements in IDJJ facilities. Be sure to check back for the Quarter 2 report in a few months!