

2023 Q3

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE JUSTICE

QUARTERLY TRANSFORMATION REPORT



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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

NATIONAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AWARD



IDJJ's Transformation Plan includes the goal of increasing family engagement in the rehabilitative and therapeutic process of youth committed to the care of IDJJ. In the third quarter of 2023, IDJJ has made substantial progress on family engagement initiatives and celebrated several firsts in the realm of family engagement. This report will highlight new and expanded family engagement accomplishments as the Department increases efforts to accomplish our mission of building youth skills, strengthening families, promoting safe communities, and achieving positive youth outcomes.

IYC Pere Marquette Receives National Award for Family Engagement

In August, IYC Pere Marquette was awarded the 2023 **PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen (BAH) Award** for family engagement. The BAH award is a national award presented annually to one juvenile corrections facility and one juvenile detention facility. BAH recipients must show exceptional progress in their achievement of a self-identified area of growth, and that is exactly what IDJJ's Pere Marquette facility did!

This year's BAH Award for a corrections facility was presented to IYC Pere Marquette for their exemplary work in connecting families with their youth who are currently under the care of IDJJ. Officials from IDJJ accepted the award at the Performance based Standards (PbS) awards gala held in Philadelphia on August 11, 2023. Check out the story that ran in the **Alton Telegraph!**

New IDJJ Clinical Social Work Manager focused on Family Engagement

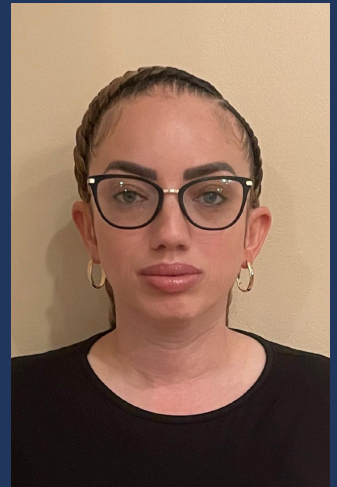
IDJJ is excited to announce a big step forward in transforming our work with families. Last month we welcomed our first licensed clinical social worker that will be focused exclusively on family engagement. Dr. Edrena Davis-Abram, MSW, LCSW, Ed.D. will manage a new Family Support Unit which will serve IDJJ youth and families.

In her new role, Dr. Davis-Abram will soon be conducting clinical mental and emotional health assessments of youth and families to help develop treatment plans and referrals. She will also help expand inclusion of families into the lives of youth while they are in the secure custody of IDJJ. Additional facility visits and activities for families, along with additional training for staff in the realm of family engagement, will play a role in expanding the inclusion of families while youth are in secure custody.

Dr. Abram-Davis is developing approved family engagement activities designed to improve youths' behavior, make families feel more connected, and reduce disciplinary incidents. She is also providing clinical assessments, interventions, and referrals to families who are identified as needing behavioral health services statewide.

IDJJ is so excited to have Dr. Davis-Abram on board and looking forward to reporting on progress made under her leadership.

ADDITION OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK MANAGER



Dr. Edrena Davis-Abram, MSW, LCSW, Ed.D. is helping IDJJ engage families and connect them to resources they need.

Family Advisory Council Update

IDJJ's Family Advisory Council began meeting on a monthly basis over the winter at the request of families who wish for more frequent opportunities to connect with each other and IDJJ staff. The group, which meets virtually, has had speakers and discussions on a variety of topics including mental health, resources for families, visitation experiences and policies in facilities, and more.

The first meeting of the Family Advisory Council was held just over a year ago, with the purpose of providing support to the families and caregivers of justice-involved youth connected to IDJJ. The advisory council welcomes immediate and extended family members, guardians, and mentors of current and former IDJJ youth. The council also presents an opportunity for families to engage directly with a variety of IDJJ's leadership to share their needs and concerns.

IDJJ has increased publicity for these statewide meetings by sending a **reminder email** to families and placing the information on the **Family Advisory Council page** of the website. There are also some smaller, regional family advisory meetings now being held as well!

It has been wonderful to see families connecting with one another, encouraging each other, and having the opportunity to engage with IDJJ staff.

FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE



The flyer is for the Family Advisory Group, organized by the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ). It features the IDJJ logo in the top left corner. The main title is "Family Advisory Group" in a large, bold, white font. Below the title, the date and time are listed: "Thurs. Oct. 19, 2023" and "5:00 p.m." in a smaller white font. A circular inset image shows a young man with curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt, holding a sign that says "WE NEED A CHANGE". To the right of the image, the text "YOU ARE INVITED" is followed by a paragraph: "Is a youth that is important to you residing at an IDJJ youth center, on IDJJ Aftercare, or previously involved with IDJJ? We want to hear from immediate and extended family members, guardians, and mentors of IDJJ-involved youth." Below this, the section "ABOUT THE GROUP" is followed by another paragraph: "This group is a space for those who are deeply invested in the life of an IDJJ justice-involved youth to share concerns and exchange support. It is also an opportunity for IDJJ staff to get a better understanding of the needs of families of IDJJ youth." A blue button with the text "JOIN MEETING" is located below the image. At the bottom, a small line of text states: "This group meets virtually via WebEx. See below for more info." The footer contains contact information: "For more information or to register for the event & receive a link to join, contact Zakee Shahid at 512-655-5219 x4004 or email zakee.shahid@illinois.gov".

Family Advisory Group
Thurs. Oct. 19, 2023
5:00 p.m.

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Launch of Quarterly Newsletter for Families

IDJJ recently launched a quarterly newsletter to increase support to families with justice-involved youth. “Family Connection” has the goal of connecting families to relevant resources and information as they support their child either in an IDJJ youth center or on Aftercare.

The most recent newsletter shared important information on the new school year, the role of the independent ombudsperson, and a brief explanation of the relationship between county juvenile detention centers and IDJJ. It also shared information on the Family Advisory council and had links to important sections of the IDJJ website.

The newsletter has a very good open rate (over 50%), and IDJJ is excited to see that so many families are reading and clicking on links. The Family Connections newsletter will continue to be an important tool for consistently engaging IDJJ families.

Family Engagement Focused Lunch & Learn

IDJJ holds a monthly virtual staff update on the third Thursday of each month during the lunch hour. The July 2023 Lunch & Learn was focused exclusively on family engagement, with the majority of the hour long meeting devoted to hearing from IDJJ parents. This was a first for IDJJ, and hearing from parents firsthand on this platform was powerful! We are grateful for parents who were willing to participate and share openly and honestly about their experiences with IDJJ.

FAMILY NEWSLETTER



IDJJ PARENT TRAVELS TO D.C. WITH IDJJ TEAM



IDJJ Parent Travels with IDJJ Team to Center for Juvenile Justice Reform for Training

An awesome team from IDJJ recently attended the Advancing Racial Justice and Equity in Youth Legal Systems Certificate Program at Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. The most exciting part is that a parent from IDJJ's Family Advisory Council went with them!

The group spent almost a week doing intensive professional development and training designed to support local jurisdictions in their efforts to reduce racial and ethnic inequities in systems of care, particularly the youth legal system, and our IDJJ parent in attendance made great contributions to the team's efforts.

The three primary goals of the Certificate Program are to help system leaders and partners to:

- Gain a better understanding of anti-racist frameworks through a Community Development and Prevention Model;
- Utilize practical skills and tools to enter, engage in, and support work on anti-racism in the youth legal system; and
- Adapt and create strategies to practice anti-racism and to address the overrepresentation and inequities of non-white youth in systems of care.

Including families in important conversations and trainings like the work at the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform is an important part of IDJJ's Transformation!

COMMUNITY HOME VISITS

Youth Home Visits

Starting in late 2022, IDJJ began piloting an innovative process to allow youth to participate in brief visits with family at their home or in another safe community location. This initiative developed out of our awareness that youth who have been in custody for lengthy periods of time frequently experience challenges readjusting to home. The goal is to give youth one or more opportunities to interact with their family in a more natural setting, while still being able to process the experience with their support team at IDJJ.

To participate in the pilot, youth must demonstrate consistent appropriate behavior and develop an “application” with their support team. Staff within the Community Services Division visit the home and meet with the family to ensure it is a safe environment and set expectations for the visit. Initial visits are supervised by IDJJ staff. Some youth are able to progress to visits that are unsupervised by IDJJ staff, but during these visits they wear electronic monitoring equipment to verify their location.

In the first year of the pilot, four youth have participated in home visits, with two of these youth participating in multiple home visits. Two other youth have applications under review. All these visits have been meaningful and safe – the pilot has been a success. IDJJ is currently reviewing the pilot and will be finalizing a policy to guide this initiative for the long term.

LOOKING AHEAD

Emerging Adult Career Site at IYC St. Charles

The 21st Century Transformation Plan includes a more individualized response to youth needs, and the plan to transition IYC St. Charles into an emerging adult site for high school graduates will respond to the unique needs of our young adult population. Keep an eye out for more details coming soon and possibly an event to be held early in 2024 to celebrate the official opening of the new emerging adult site at IYC St. Charles!

Virtual Transformation Plan Update

IDJJ is holding a 90 minute webinar/virtual convening on **Wednesday, November 1** to report on the progress that has been made on the Transformation Plan, and to give some concrete dates for additional key components of the plan. The webinar will be recorded posted to the website for viewing. IDJJ looks forward to continuing to report good news about Transformation progress in a variety of ways and using multiple platforms!