

Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections Systems Standards 180-Day Update Meeting Summary

6, December, 2022

Sedgwick County Public Safety Building

Taskforce Members In-Person

Jazmine Rogers
Lamont Anderson
Tracey Mason, Sr.
Yeni Telles

Taskforce Members via Zoom

Larry Burks
Pastor C. Richard Kirendoll
Dr. Rhonda Lewis
Marie McNeal

Resource Members

- Steven Stonehouse, Sedgwick County Dept. of Corrections
- Kristin Peterman, Dept. of Children and Families
- Dee Nighswonger, Dept. of Children and Families
- Jennifer Wilson, COMCARE
- Chief Joseph Sullivan, Wichita Police Department
- Captain Dan East, Wichita Police Department
- Interim Chief Troy Livingston, Wichita Police Department
- Elora Forshee, 911 Emergency Communications
- Russell Leeds, County Manager's Office
- Nicole Gibbs, Dept. of Strategic Communications

Greeting and Welcome

Commissioner Sarah Lopez

- Commissioner Lopez gave an update regarding the legislative agenda and the work being done to support the taskforce's recommendations at the state level.

911 Center/COMCARE Mental Health Update

Elora Forshee, Emergency Communications

- "Embed qualified mental health providers with the 911 system"
 - The position has been posted, and several applicants have applied.
 - Elora anticipates interviews to begin in the next couple of weeks, and is looking for input from taskforce members regarding potential interview questions.
 - Elora and her team have worked with the DEI Specialist at Sedgwick County to ensure the interview included questions regarding diversity and cultural sensitivity.
 - The team has developed a flow chart to ensure that those taking calls have access to mental health resources, even if the mental health person is not in at the time.

- There have been concerns from staff regarding when it is appropriate to use mental health resources in lieu of, or in addition to, law enforcement intervention. Elora is confident the flowchart will assist staff in making these decisions.
 - Elora is also working with county staff to address the HIPPA issues that may be present when working with a mental health emergency, and is working on a training system for the oncoming mental health-focused staff member.
 - This position is expected to be fully on staff by mid-to-late January 2023.
- Community Advisory Board
 - Elora is currently working with the Sedgwick County Legal Department to outline the bylaws for the Community Advisory Board.
 - The positions on the board are expected to become open after the first of the year.
- Community Education Campaign
 - Lastly, Elora mentioned a renewed Community Education Campaign beginning in 2023. She is looking for suggestions regarding different community organizations and neighborhood associations that may benefit from additional 911 information.

Questions from Taskforce Members about 911 Communications

- Tracey C. Mason, Sr., asked how the HIPPA regulations may present an issue for 911
 - Elora responded saying that there are other Sedgwick County departments who have learned how to operate in compliance with HIPPA regulations, and that she is working closely with them to develop a plan.
- Jazmine Rogers asked how call types are determined, and how the mobile mental health response team is being deployed.
 - Elora is hoping to work with the integrated Mental Health professional on additional data collection to refine the different call types. She also mentioned that they are doing ongoing training with their staff to determine when mental health responders would be the preference over law enforcement.
- Jazmine also asked for additional details regarding the improved pay plan approved by Sedgwick County.
 - Elora stated that all levels of staff throughout the 911 team have received a pay increase. The starting wage for call takers is now \$18.46, which is helping with the lack of recruitment seen in the months prior to the pay increase.
- Dr. Rhonda Lewis asked what the requirements are for the joining the board.
 - Elora responded that they are trying to keep the positions as low-barrier as possible, while keeping in mind the need for diverse perspectives. The only firm guideline is that the individuals on the board cannot have been charged with a felony, as this would prevent them from being able to visit the 911 center per federal regulation.
- Yenni Telles asked how they plan to ensure diversity amongst the members.

- Elora mentioned that the bylaws mention specifically that the board is intended to be diverse. From different size communities, rural and urban, along with different genders and races to best ensure that these criteria are being met.
- Lamont Anderson asked how audit information would be made public.
 - Elora stated that the 911-call center is deploying a new CAD system, which has several public facing audit functions. While the system has not yet been implemented, she says that the public resources will be made available when the system is in place.

Jennifer Wilson, COMCARE

- Mobile Crisis Response
 - COMCARE is collaborating with the Wichita Police Department on a proposal to expand the number of teams. They are working to achieve 24/7 accessibility, but this is a matter of funding.
 - These teams will be built of two social workers, one master's level and one bachelor's level.
 - The two departments have not yet reached the planning stage, and are still working through the Memorandum of Understanding.

Questions from Taskforce Members about COMCARE

- Tracey asked why the MOU between COMCARE and the Wichita Police Department had not yet been completed.
 - Jennifer mentioned that they want to ensure this program goes smoothly and that they have taken adequate time to work through possible scenarios.
 - She also stated that once the funding has been approved, COMCARE will get the positions posted and begin interviews as quickly as possible. Jennifer said that COMCARE has seen an improvement in recruiting, and anticipates these positions to be filled rather quickly.

DCF – Foster Care Update

Dee Nighswonger and Kristen Peterman, DCF

- Kristin Peterman, Foster Care Program Administrator, started by mentioning their active solicitation of feedback from families, service providers, and various other entities surrounding the foster care system.
 - The findings from this feedback will then be shared with the state legislature during their 2023 session.
- Kristin then went on to mention the work that DCF is doing with the Capacity Building Center for States regarding the root cause of children entering foster care. This work is being focused on the instability experienced by youth when entering the foster care system, as well as what DCF can do to reduce this instability.
 - Together they are trying to determine how DCF can best support children and families to improve the chances of children being able to remain in their homes.

Questions from Taskforce Members about DCF

- Tracey asked how this group of service providers is being selected, and how are grassroots organizations going to be involved in the process.
 - Steve Stonehouse, Dept. of Corrections, responded that the first meeting of the primary service providers is this Friday. The group is working with the Community Engagement Institute at Wichita State University to outline the concerns, and develop a list of solutions. He went on to say that as this process develops, grassroots organizations will be contacted for their input.
 - Part of the plan for this team is to develop an established IJP (Individual Justice Plan) that all service providers in the area use when dealing with kiddos who have mental illness or disabilities.
- Jazmine asked if these group meetings will be public, or if reports will be made public.
 - Steve mentioned that at the state level, a report is presented annually giving information about youth in the criminal justice system. Eventually this will include an “operational group” which will include families, youth with lived experience, and various service providers to ensure that goals are being met and policies are being reviewed.

Wichita Police Update

Captain Dan East, Wichita Police Dept.

- Completed-
 - The centralized database of grassroots organizations has been finalized and made public.
 - It was noted that this database is a “living document” and will continue to be updated.
 - WPD has developed an updated curriculum for all new recruits, to include trauma-informed training and science based interviewing methods. These trainings will be disseminated through all active officers.
 - The MOU between WPD and JIAC honoring the 2016 US Attorney General’s Opinion has been completed and signed.
 - This is in reference to the documentation that must be completed by WPD officers prior to the youth being release to JIAC.
- In Progress-
 - WPD is actively working with COMCARE to develop a funding plan for the mobile mental health unit and ICT One. The goal is to attain enough funding to provide 24/7 access to these specialty units.
 - There has been ongoing collaboration with Dept. of Corrections to provide CIT and Mental Health First-Aid to all staff.
 - WPD has hired an outside firm, Jensen Hughes, to interview and survey WPD staff to develop an improved culture within WPD.

Questions from Taskforce Members about WPD

- Jazmine asked if the report completed by Jensen Hughes would be made public.
 - Captain East mentioned that it was his understanding that the report would be made public upon completion.
- Jazmine also asked when the Jensen Hughes report would be completed.
 - Captain East said that he expects it to be complete sometime in January 2023.
- Jazmine also asked for additional clarification regarding the bodycam policy, and why officers shut their cameras off while completing incident reports the night of Cedric Loftons death.
 - Captain East noted the battery life of the body cams, and stated that officers will typically shut off their cameras while completing incident reports to maintain battery life throughout their shift.

Dept. of Corrections Update

Steve Stonehouse, Dept. of Corrections

- Department of Corrections has updated the JIAC policy 8.810 – Use of Force – to include the recommendations as listed in the April 2022 taskforce recommendations list.
- This policy has now been approved by the BoCC and Team Justice. This policy will now go to one final review with Kansas Dept. of Corrections.
- Steve requested additional input from the taskforce members regarding their request to develop a Citizen’s Review Board for JIAC and JDF.
 - He mentioned that they did develop a board to review all use of force instances, but was not sure what else the board was wanting this group to look at.
 - It has been determined that a board with this structure could not obtain quasi-judicial powers as they are not reviewing court cases.
- CIT training has been developed for JIAC and JDF staff, and they are working on attaining a BJA grant to deliver services once the child has been released.
- The Dept. of Corrections is currently working with a sound engineer to improve audio recording capabilities within JIAC and JDF.

Questions from Taskforce Members about Dept. of Corrections

- Tracey asked why the audio project was not yet completed.
 - Steve mentioned that due to the concrete structure of the building, and the general noise of both facilities, typical microphones were not able to pick up quality sound.
- Jazmine requested additional information regarding the success of the calming rooms.
 - Steve mentioned that while formal data has not been collected, staff says that they use it nearly every day.
- Jazmine also asked if they would consider developing additional calming rooms.
 - Steve said that this is likely a consideration in future budget cycles.

Annual Update- The annual update meeting will be held on April 25, 2023. Taskforce members will then have the opportunity to discuss next steps.