

IOWA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

A newsletter brought to you by the State Rehabilitation Council and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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BREAKING BARRIERS



Finding solutions. Generating success.

This newsletter highlights our partnership with Juvenile ReEntry Systems (JReS) and provides additional information behind the IVRS budget request for an additional \$250,000. This money will match federal dollars in the amount of almost \$1 million dollars. Our plan is to partner with JReS to create three contracted positions that will directly expand the capacity to improve transition and community integration as individuals exit the institutional setting and return to their local communities. These positions will help meet gaps in the current delivery of services and assist individual job candidates in follow-along services integrating them into existing community resources and services. The goal is to connect individuals into career pathway and support systems reducing recidivism and expanding access in obtaining financial independence through competitive integrated employment. The targeted population would be individuals eligible for vocational rehabilitation services - individuals with disabilities having dual barriers of their juvenile correction experience. This is a population at high risk needing expanded connections and ongoing supports. IVRS will provide 100% of the monies to fund the three positions and provide contract oversight to the process ensuring compliance with the expenditure of federal and state monies, the positions will be integrated into the JReS system providing effective use of already established promising practices and improving collaboration and coordination. We will pilot the project for three years, monitoring data and quality, to determine sustainability of the program.

What is JReS?

The Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR), Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) oversees the Juvenile Reentry Task Force (JRTF) in the development and implementation of juvenile justice reentry systems and supports. Multiple state agency partners are assisting with standardization and/or development of policy, procedure, and structural elements of Iowa's Juvenile Reentry Systems (JReS). The goal of JReS is to reduce recidivism rates and to improve other youth outcomes through implementation of comprehensive system-wide reforms to juvenile

JRES Support

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) is a critical partner in Iowa's Juvenile Reentry Systems (JReS) efforts. The proposal by IVRS to enhance career pathway supports is a promising practice that will increase positive connections for juvenile justice system youth exiting placement. The three positions will provide support and fill gaps in the existing services to assist youth be successful during the transition home to their communities, and beyond. This intentional career support is a vital step for youth to become independent and self-sufficient. As a part of JReS efforts, multiple collaborative partners are working together to standardize the services and opportunities available to youth and their families transitioning from placement with the end goal of reducing recidivism, improving positive outcomes, and for all youth to be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood. The proposed expansion by IVRS is a noteworthy complement to the progress underway and will be a welcomed addition to the overall work of JReS.

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reentry policies and processes which include: enhanced cross-system coordination, utilization of quality and effective programming, and prioritization of resources.

In particular, the JReS effort seeks to increase family engagement, and improve/intensify case management.

Consultants from the National Reentry Resource Center and the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform are presently administering an assessment/survey to staff working at Juvenile Court Services (JCS) and in group care facilities and the Boys State Training School (STS) to identify strengths and challenges in those agencies effort to engage families and provide case management.

WHY THE WORK IS IMPORTANT

One main goal of reentry is to reduce recidivism for youth returning from group care facilities. Data compiled for the past five fiscal years shows recidivism is 57.8% for youth returning from group care and 68.8% for those discharging from the boys State Training School (STS).

There is not currently a standardized reentry process in Iowa's juvenile justice system. JCS offices in Iowa's eight judicial districts, STS, and group care facilities operate with some level of autonomy in regards to program and service provision to juvenile offenders. As a result, the availability and dissemination of reentry services and subsequent experiences of youth reentering from group care and STS varies.

COVID-19 has affected the overall functioning and service provision for youth in Iowa's juvenile justice (JJ) system. JCS and the facilities have found new ways to serve youth through technology and innovation. A recent [survey](#) was conducted to generalize responses on "what's working".

HOW IT ASSISTS WITH TRANSITIONING YOUTH FROM AN INSTITUTION INTO THE COMMUNITY

By coordinating services and agencies through JReS, we can:

- ◆ Advance efforts to capture quality data and better understand the breadth of programming/contacts in planning for youth reentry from placements.
- ◆ Increase quality contacts and connections between service providers, youth, and families in planning for reentry and providing extensive aftercare support.
- ◆ Ensure standardized reentry practices that lead to positive outcomes for youth.

Current efforts to collect additional JReS data/ improve planning:

Group care facilities, Juvenile Court Services, and the State Training School are currently being surveyed regarding the extent of case planning and family engagement in planning for discharge and reentry.

DATA TO SUPPORT JReS EFFORTS

Improvement in data collection is one of the areas of opportunity with JReS. For example, in our case management system we do not currently collect information about the number/ duration/ dosage rate for services provided in reentry efforts in group care facilities.

Data and resources

Detailed recidivism reports are provided to the nine participating JReS facilities.

CJJP is working to collect YTDM data, but limited data is currently available.

IVRS is collecting information on youth involved in Pre-ETS in the participating JReS facilities.

[JReS collaborative partners](#)

[Schematic of state agency collaboration](#)