

# JUVENILE JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE

## NATIVE AMERICAN FOCUS GROUP

### May 17, 2016 Meeting Summary

On May 17, 2016 the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Initiative Native American Focus Group met in person, in Pierre. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the results from a recently distributed survey, share what was learned during program site visits, and to begin discussing potential recommendations based upon the Focus Group's goals.

#### Survey Data Presentation

In February 2016 a survey was distributed to 373 participants. The purpose of the survey was to gather information related to the Focus Group's goals, understand current programs and practices, identify what practices are working well and where they are being utilized, and identify gaps and additional information needed to further inform the discussion and future recommendations from the group.

A total of 174 surveys were returned from participants in 57 counties and 7 tribes. The Focus Group reviewed the major findings of the survey and discussed how this information pertains to the goals of the group, as well as how the findings may inform next steps.

#### Key Data Findings:

##### COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- 73.5% of respondents have referred a Native American youth involved in the state juvenile justice system to a program based in the community
- The most common reasons for not making a community-based program referral is lack of available programs and not meeting youth needs
- Lack of available programs and not meeting needs are the most common

reasons for not making a diversion referral

- Over half of respondents have not referred a Native American youth to a diversion program
- The most common reason for not making a diversion referral is lack of available programs in the area
- The most common barriers limiting participation in community-based programs are transportation and family issues
- 43.5% of respondents have not received a program referral for a Native American youth

##### COMMUNICATION

- 45.0% of non-state agency respondents are required to communicate with state agencies
- 54.0% of non-tribal court/tribal agency respondents are required to communicate with tribal agencies
- Tribal agencies were least commonly selected as entities to communicate with when working with youth living in tribal communities
- State agencies were most commonly selected as entities to communicate with when working with youth not living in tribal communities
- No response and lack of contact information are the most common barriers to communication

##### JOINT SUPERVISION

- 5.3% of respondents' agency/tribe participate in joint supervision with SD Department of Corrections

- 15.2% of respondents' agency/tribe participate in joint supervision with SD Unified Judicial System
- Limited collaboration between tribes and the state was the most often identified barrier to a joint supervision program
- Numerous benefits identified if a joint supervision program was established in the juvenile justice system
- The majority of survey respondents are not aware of the Tribal Parole Program in adult corrections
- Survey respondents are interested in learning more about the Tribal Parole Program
- Over one-third of respondents think a similar program could be developed for Native American youth
- Very few (6.3%) of respondents are aware of any partnerships between the state and tribes in South Dakota that involve Native American youth in the state juvenile justice system

#### **Program Site Visits**

Janet Jessup from the Department of Tribal Relations, Sadie Stevens from Governor Dugaard's Office and Tessa Upin from the Crime and Justice Institute, completed eight informational visits with program providers identified by survey respondents. These providers included the Dakotah Pride Center, Keystone Treatment Center, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Behavioral Health Counseling Services, Capital Area Counseling, Behavior Management System, Rosebud Sioux Tribe Probation and Detention staff and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Defending Childhood Initiative staff, Lutheran Social Services and the Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center. The purpose of these visits was to gather more detailed information about programs that were identified in the survey as serving Native American youth in the community involved in the juvenile justice system.

#### *Key Takeaways:*

- Range of services delivered in outpatient, inpatient, individual and group settings accessible to Native American youth
- Various cultural programming components including Wellbriety curriculum
- Few programs following cognitive behavioral curriculum to teach new prosocial skills related to reducing delinquent behavior

#### **Small Group Discussion**

The Focus Group divided up into small groups to brainstorm about ways to improve upon existing programming for Native American youth in the community. Or, if additional programming for Native American youth should be developed and what needs to be considered. The group discussed the importance of maintaining cultural and traditional values in community-based programming, probation supervision and DOC custody. The group identified needs of Native American youth in the juvenile justice system including drug and alcohol treatment, educational and vocational training, sex offender services, suicide prevention, and recreational activities.

The Focus Group also discussed staff and employee dynamics and how to improve upon that to strengthen programming and service delivery to Native American youth. The discussion included speaking about the value of having staff that are Native themselves which may contribute to better relationships and improved outcomes with the youth being served in the state juvenile justice system. Additionally, members discussed the idea of standardizing cultural competency training across all state agencies including a curriculum on South Dakota's Native American tribes to educate staff on traditional ceremonies, family environments, spiritual values, and the history of Native heritage.

### **Next Steps**

Begin drafting potential recommendations based on Focus Group discussions to date; complete additional analysis on survey data to answer questions raised by Focus Group members; and, gather, share and discuss information on programs and practices in other jurisdictions working with justice-system involved Native American youth. The next Native American Focus Group meeting will be held July 12, 2016 via teleconference.