

North Dakota

Dual Status Youth Initiative

Goals

Goal:

Change the trajectory of alleged abused and/or neglected children from entering the Juvenile Justice System by establishing child and family-centered multi-disciplinary policies and practices.

Target Population:

Youth with an “open assessment” or “services required” finding and an unruly/delinquent referral.

Recommendations

- Implementation of a protocol to ensure reliable, early identification of dual status youth;
- Development of a multi-agency agreement or Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate necessary data and information sharing;
- Standardized, cross-system practices (including, where appropriate, Multi-Disciplinary Team Processes) to assess, plan and manage multi-system cases;
- Improved training and workforce development of child welfare and juvenile justice practitioners, as well as collaborate with field partners such as school personnel, law enforcement and school resource officers; private non-profits

Action Strategy – Tier One (Immediate Action)

- ✓ Continue Executive Committee to oversee implementation and sustainability;
- ✓ Create an Implementation Team
- ✓ Execute the information sharing MOU to allow for the identification of dual status youth and communication between the Juvenile Court and DHS
- ✓ Disseminate policy and provide training;
- ✓ Generate regular data reports to monitor progress through a research agreement.

Action Strategy – Tier Two (Short-Term Goals)

- Finalize and disseminate Multi-Disciplinary Team policy and practice, including Family Centered Engagement – Child Family Services
- Enhance access to targeted, evidence-based interventions, particularly those that address trauma and prevention/early intervention; - Behavioral Health
- Integrate data to allow for the analysis of educational needs and concerns of dual status youth (in the aggregate);
 - ✓ Develop a plan for evaluation of the implemented dual status youth policies and practices;
- Obtain endorsement of a dual status youth bench card;
- Court Improvement Project

Action Strategy – Tier Three (Long-Term Goals)

- Address the need for more behavioral health services; - Behavioral Health
- Consider strategies for reducing the rate of out of home placement, and explore concerns with the mixing of youth populations;
- Explore the use of officers in schools and incorporate restorative justice practices into schools and facilities;
- Incorporate screening and assessment in developing appropriate and effective plans for youth to better match services to needs;
- Child Family Services
 - ✓ Consider the establishment of a state level cabinet/commission that brings together leadership from all youth- and family-serving systems;
- Support the development of a statewide data repository; - CFS/CIP
- Consider policy to provide for one family/one judge in juvenile cases;
 - ✓ Renew efforts of Senate Bill 2046 (services for tribal youth);
- Develop an MOU to incorporate information on tribal youth into FRAME.

Questions? Concerns? Comments? Suggestions?

- **Leadership Team:**

- Justice Lisa McEvers – North Dakota Supreme Court
- Lauren Sauer, Asst. Director – DHS Children and Family Services Division
- Lisa Bjergaard, Director – DOCR Division of Juvenile Services
- Terry Traynor, Chair – ND Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group

- **Executive Committee Chair:**

- Cory Pedersen– CIP

