

Justice-Involved Youth Subcommittee Notes

January 16, 2026

Participants shared updates and requests regarding initiatives for justice-involved youth. Erika Lippmann reported on successful presentations by Raji at the North Iowa Regional Services Detention Center, which facilitated positive transitions for some individuals into the Iowa Works Center. She also announced an expungement clinic scheduled for February 26 in Waterloo, emphasizing the need for registration. Additionally, Erika discussed the potential for creating a network of employers willing to hire justice-involved youth, indicating plans to collaborate with the business engagement team for further resources.

Raji Sljivo highlighted the importance of building long-term relationships with justice-involved youth and expressed concerns about the gap between their aspirations, such as pursuing music careers, and the practical steps necessary for achieving stability. Marla Loecke emphasized the need for collaboration with juvenile court officers in Dubuque to enhance support services for youth, suggesting regular meetings to facilitate information sharing among professionals. Raji also proposed evolving presentations to focus on youth aspirations and career guidance beyond Title I, while Brian Foster stressed the significance of personalized plans and common goal-setting tools.

The discussion included the importance of mental health and mentorship programs, with Erika and Ashley Neuendorf exploring the potential expansion of the Credible Messenger program to other districts. Erika initiated a conversation about where youth are likely to disengage after their involvement in the justice system, with Raji sharing insights on challenges during the transition phase, including family pressures and feelings of isolation. TC emphasized aligning goals with the aspirations of justice-involved youth to ensure their engagement and success, noting that imposed goals often lead to failure.

Concerns were raised about gaps in services, particularly in transportation and mental health. Raji called for tangible solutions to the barriers faced by justice-involved youth, while Ashley highlighted challenges in finding housing for young males required to register as sex offenders. The conversation also addressed employer fears regarding hiring justice-involved youth, with Brian advocating for tailored support and education to change perceptions. The meeting concluded with a focus on following up with youth to ensure their feedback leads to meaningful changes in the system, and Erika indicated plans for follow-up emails to further develop the strategic plan based on the discussions.