



Quarterly Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2021
WebEx Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

JJAG Members

Table with 2 columns: Name and Attendance (Y/N). Lists JJAG members and their attendance status.

TOTAL in attendance 17
Required for Quorum 11

Staff and Guests

Table with 2 columns: Organization and Name. Lists staff and guests from various agencies and their names.

Introduction

Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) chair Dr. Eddie Fergus opened the meeting, welcoming members and guests who were attending via teleconference as a result of COVID-19. Chair Fergus introduced Acting Commissioner Rossana Rosado and Chief of Policy and Implementation Tom Andriola introduced new board members Deputy Commissioner Nina Aledort, Heather LaForme and Diana Palmer. The agenda and minutes from the September 14, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted. Motion by Joe Coccozza, second by Brendan Cox. All in favor and approved.

Staff Updates

Federal Funding Status Update

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Bender presented the Title II funding charts and announced that DCJS has received written notification from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) indicating that we're in compliance with SAG membership requirements. We can now receive our 2019 award and are currently preparing to draw down the funds. FY20 funding is pending due to changes in standards and increased requirements. We are currently focusing on developing proposals for larger projects; none are ready to vote on today. Mr. Andriola stated we have (2) two appointments pending for a victim advocate representative and an additional youth member to satisfy the one fifth youth member requirement. Once secured, all awards (FY 19, 20 & 21) can be accepted.

Title II Application

Mr. Andriola indicated that OJJDP is now requiring that all states are now required to resubmit compliance monitoring data. Format and guidance to be released on 12/15/21 at which time we can begin compiling and submitting information; no issues anticipated.

Youth Action Committee

Board member Jason Williams spoke about the committee goals they have been working on. They will create and enhance preventative measures throughout New York to combat high risk factors of entering the justice system, foster positive relationships between the JJAG and communication through YAC involvement while developing the skill set of the YAC members. YAC will allocate 50% to nonprofit grants, 30% to events and seminars and 20% to professional development of members. Board member Niasha Hamilton spoke about the committee's current focus to build their foundation and bridge their work with JJAG and the communities that they serve. Chief of Program Planning and Development Trista Deame added that YAC will move forward on goals and funding ideas after the holiday season. Board member Joe Coccozza asked how the recipients of grant funding would be identified. Mr. Williams stated they would consider groups they've worked with in the past as well as implementing an option to use Google forms to send applications to all interested groups. Ms. Deame added that all grants will need to follow current procurement guidelines and rules. Board member Michelle Diaz stated they will build a process of application and follow all rules to ensure they're giving to the right organizations.

NYC Regional Youth Justice Team

Shalain Garcia introduced Courtney Ramirez of the NYC Juvenile Justice Action Committee (JJAC), which also serves as the Regional Youth Justice Team, to present to the Board how their funding has been utilized and its plans for remaining funding. Ms. Ramirez indicated that they developed a collaborative designed to hear from the youth through their writing as a way to express themselves. Youth writing workshops, summer virtual meetings, an anthology project, video interviews were all held, and training materials were also developed from the funding. Administration and staffing were only utilized to get funding to the recipients. Emily Tow stated this is the kind of work we want to give grants to, impressed with engagement and look forward to seeing its progress. Diana Palmer stated she's thankful that voices of young people match best practices research which can help us direct our efforts. Nina Aledort stated she's excited about the next step in this effort. Chair Fergus stated he noticed that children are highlighting the significance of emotional and cultural safety through this work, and we need to find ways to lift up this sentiment of safety in the coordination of our systems and the framing of our work.

Federal Compliance Monitoring

Mr. Andriola stated we are working with our partners SCOC, OCA and OCFS to ensure compliance with requirements effective 12/21/21. There are two main requirements now in effect. Interest of Justice hearings must be held before a juvenile who is charged as an adult can be detained in an adult jail/lockup while awaiting trial or legal process. Clarifying language is now in the statute that non-residential court holding facilities are in the definition of jail or lockup for adults for the purpose of jail removal requirement which is focused on keeping youth out of adult jails and detention facilities. Failure to comply would result in penalties to Title II funding. DCJS plans to update OJJDP on where things stand in New York before the 12/21/21 deadline. Judge Mendelson introduced members of her team (Anthony Perri, Michelle Smith and Janet Fink) to provide the Board with the court's position on the recent amendments and indicated that they are prepared to hold the necessary interest of justice hearings to ensure compliance, but that the capacity of facilities is a concern. OCA and OCFS are currently in conversations to work out the details so that everything will run smoothly, and an update will be provided to the JJAG at its March quarterly meeting

Strategic Action Plan

Deputy Commissioner Bacote presented the Office of Youth Justice (OYJ) organizational structure and its function and mission as operational support to the JJAG. OYJ is currently looking at how they operationalize the Strategic Plan through JJAG funding proposals in consultation with the JJAG Grants Working Group. Mr. Andriola provided a brief background on the Strategic Action Plan for the benefit of the new members, and Ms. Deame presented and reviewed OYJ's programmatic interpretation of the Strategic Action Plan along with priorities solicited through a survey conducted by the Youth Justice Institute (YJI). Meagan Armstrong and Shalain Garcia followed with presentations on some projects that are currently underway that align to the Plan, including the Rural Communities of Practice and Healing Centered Engagement initiatives.

Chair Fergus stated that the themes need to live across all programmatic areas and current list is a springboard to work from what is currently being worked on and began brainstorming for areas of potential funding. Ms. Deame indicated that the presentation was intended to provide some examples of what was being done and what could be done, but that it wasn't meant to be exhaustive. Dr. Coccozza stated the presentation was extremely helpful in that it highlights the importance of ensuring that next steps include ways to assess and integrate components into similar work being done in other agencies. Heather LaForme stated that Native American and tribal communities should also be highlighted in each theme/program area. Meredith Ray-Labatt appreciated the presentation and highlighted efforts of PYJ and OMH which have a myriad of initiatives as opportunities to address issues. Brendan Cox stated this is great work OYJ has done and hopes that a mapping across the state

down the road could be done to determine how to get a program implemented in other areas. Emily Tow stated that the current racial and ethnic disparities issue plagues the youth justice system and would love to see the JJAG be a national leader in this area. Chair Fergus stated we need to produce a litmus test to see if the disparities have been decreased by our efforts. Judge Mendelson stated that she is leading a new Equal Justice in the Courts initiative to address issues of racial bias within the New York State court system, and that dozens of reforms have already been implemented, are underway, or are in the planning stages. She will pass on materials about the initiative to Mr. Andriola for distribution to members. Ms. Deame stated NYS has an R.E.D Advisory committee that meets quarterly which has identified priorities of equity over the next few years.

Chair Fergus stated next steps to emerge will be this conversation and organization of what OYJ presented which will be discussed at the next Grants Working Group meeting focusing on the JJAG's Strategic Action Plan priorities. Diana Palmer asked if broadband has been a part of the discussion for rural communities. Chair Fergus stated nothing specifically has been discussed in the past year and a half. Meagan Armstrong indicated broadband has come up in the Rural Communities of Practice initiative, but that the teams decided to place funding in other priorities to date.

Wrap-up and Next Steps

Motion to end meeting by Member Brendan Cox, second by Michelle Diaz. All in favor.

The next JJAG meeting will be held Tuesday, March 8, 2022: 10:00am – 1:00 pm by WebEx