



Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

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Julie Whitman

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Dear Juvenile Justice Stakeholder:

Thanks to a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., the Children's Commission is pleased to announce a new data-driven juvenile justice reform initiative.

Beginning this month, the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana is partnering with the [Council of State Governments \(CSG\) Justice Center](#), a national nonpartisan organization, to conduct a preliminary assessment of Indiana's juvenile justice system. The preliminary assessment will result in a roadmap for Indiana to conduct a more comprehensive analysis and identify policies and practices to protect public safety, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and improve outcomes for youth in contact with the juvenile justice system.

To oversee and guide the preliminary assessment, the Commission has established a task force, chaired by Representative Wendy McNamara and Senator Michael Crider, and composed of designees from the highest levels of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, in addition to key juvenile justice stakeholders from across the state. The task force will include representatives from multiple counties, including probation chiefs, juvenile judges, and school district officials, among others.

Additionally, throughout the duration of this 6-9 month project, there will be multiple opportunities for county leaders and staff to participate in focus groups and interviews and share their collective feedback on current challenges and opportunities to improve youth outcomes. Given that so much of the juvenile justice system in Indiana is locally run, engaging and securing the buy-in of county leaders and front-line staff across the state in this process is critical. And, we want to ensure that the assessment and resulting plan incorporate the diverse experiences of people in all of Indiana's counties.

Please keep an eye out for additional emails requesting your assistance, as the CSG Justice Center will be conducting virtual focus groups with various stakeholders in the next few months. We will also continue to update you as the project moves forward. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please contact Commission executive director Julie Whitman at Julie.whitman@courts.in.gov.