

# 2023 Annual Report



**iowa**collaboration  
for**youth**development

**State of Iowa**  
February 1, 2023



February 1, 2023

Dear Governor Reynolds and Members of the General Assembly:

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council respectfully submits its Annual Report, as required by Iowa Code Section 216A.140.

The ICYD Council is committed to providing the Legislature and Governor with information, data, and recommendations to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by continuing to:

- coordinate youth policy and programs across state agencies;
- increase the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services for youth;
- support, adopt, and apply positive youth development practices at the state and local level.

This year's ICYD Annual Report spans an exceedingly interesting year that has demonstrated the value of collaboration to enhance efficiencies during crisis. In 2021 and 2022, the focus of ICYD Council shifted to authentic youth engagement. Multiple strategies are being developed that will provide state agency staff the skills to recruit and engage young people with lived experience on specific topics that will provide additional insight and contribute to policy decisions. The ICYD Council hopes to embed youth voice in decisions affecting youth issues and work together as a team by making the best use of existing resources to maximize efficiency in state government in order to create substantial and lasting positive changes for Iowa's youth. In addition, learning new ways to work smarter became commonplace.

The ICYD Council continues to leverage grant funding and in-kind staff support to implement many of the recommended actions without increased funding. However, as the state continues to invest in Iowa's youth, ICYD will continue to prioritize actions where that investment may be directed to maximize positive outcomes. These include formalizing positive youth development and expanding authentic youth engagement opportunities in state and local governments, along with funding for youth to participate in more state-level initiatives. In addition, as pilot projects are completed (currently funded with grants), there will be a need to incorporate effective programs into current agency structures that facilitate expansion to other areas in the state.

We look forward to working with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to promote authentic youth engagement and positive youth development in Iowa. The ICYD Council will continue to keep you informed of the progress made toward that goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this information.

Sincerely,



San Wong  
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council

State of Iowa  
**Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council**  
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<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/criminal-juvenile-justice-planning/councils/iowa-collaboration-youth-development>

**Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development Council Members**  
February 2023

San Wong, Director, Department of Human Rights  
Steve Michael, ICYD Chair, Division Administrator, Department of Human Rights  
Julie Hibben, Department of Health & Human Services  
Gary Niles, Chief Juvenile Court Officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District  
Debbie Nistler, Iowa 4-H Program Leader  
Jay Pennington, Bureau Chief, Department of Education  
Lily Glenn, State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC)  
Ashley Sandwell, WIOA Program Coordinator, Iowa Workforce Development  
Mary Sheka, Iowa Mentoring Partnership Director, Commission on Volunteer Service  
Steffani Simbric, Administrator, Child Advocacy Board  
Shanell Wagler, Facilitator, Early Childhood Iowa  
Doug Wolfe, Department of Health & Human Services  
Dale Woolery, Director, Office of Drug Control Policy

***Acknowledgments***

The ICYD Council thanks all of the staff who contributed to producing this report. A special acknowledgment is extended to Lily Glenn, Kayla Jabre, and Lakshanyaa Sudhakar, who represented the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC) and the Iowa Youth Congress (IYC) and Laticia Aossey and Samantha Marlatt who represented Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP), and provided unique perspectives and important contributions by sharing their thoughts, ideas, expertise, and youth voice. In addition, we want to thank Brianne Messer, Bri Deason and Davianna Herring, the AmeriCorps members whose tireless dedication provided guidance and assistance to the SIYAC, IYC, Youth Action Squad, NYTD Ambassadors, and Youth Justice Council members during 2022.

A special thank you to the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation and the Forum for Youth Investment. The financial support and guidance provided has been invaluable as ICYD shifts and goes “all-in” on authentic youth engagement, Youth Participatory Action Research, and our Opportunity Pathway.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – ICYD COUNCIL 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council members are leaders of 12 state entities with the vision that **“All Iowa youth will be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood.”** The ICYD Council oversees the activities of a growing number of youth-led initiatives and has sought input from these youth in the development of more effective policies, practices, programs, and this Annual Report. In 2009, legislation passed formalizing the ICYD Council in Iowa Code §216A.140.

The ICYD Council has shifted from the very specific goal of increasing the high school graduation rate, to focus on creating an *Opportunity Pathway* through positive youth development and authentic youth engagement.

Specific recommendations to support the ICYD Council are to:

- Support the ICYD Council in adopting the recommendations from *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth* report from The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The summary is at CJJP’s website: [https://humanrights.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/media/4%20-%20Promise%20of%20Adolescence\\_2page\\_highlights.pdf](https://humanrights.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/media/4%20-%20Promise%20of%20Adolescence_2page_highlights.pdf). The downloadable book: <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25388/the-promise-of-adolescence-realizing-opportunity-for-all-youth>.
- Support the ICYD Council in developing new strategies to incorporate authentic youth engagement (AYE) and positive youth development principles into state-level policy and practice, which include training staff, and engaging youth on state boards and commissions, and creative ways to involve youth.
- Provide resources to support state-level youth opportunities and youth-led initiatives (e.g. State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, Achieving Maximum Potential, Iowa Youth Congress, and Youth Action Squads), which include participating in Youth Shadow Week, participating in meetings with youth, reviewing their priority areas and provide guidance to assist them in achieving the goals.
- Identifying new and better ways to provide services and supports to Iowa’s youth and families by encouraging multi-agency approaches in the development of innovative strategies and to incorporate federal initiatives.
- Provide resources to continue and expand evidence-based practices and programs as they are developed and identified and for the continued review and study of services for youth, through the collection and analysis of data.
- Support the continued use of research in the development of strategies and actions.
- Continue to develop ways to share information among agencies to address issues affecting youth who receive services and supports from multiple agencies.
- Support the continued use of state agency staff time to implement activities that meet the goals of the ICYD Council.

## I. OVERVIEW OF THE ICYD COUNCIL

This is the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) Council's annual report to the Governor and General Assembly. The report provides information on the:

- Purpose, goals, 2022 accomplishments, and emerging activities for 2023;
- Membership of the ICYD Council, the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), and expansion of state-level youth initiatives;
- Development of the 3-year action plan; and
- Recommendations for action in 2023 to the Governor and General Assembly.

In 2009, legislation passed placing the ICYD Council and SIYAC in Iowa Code §216A.140. Prior to becoming "codified councils", both ICYD and SIYAC operated as non-statutory entities. The ICYD began in 1999 as an informal network of state agencies from 10 departments serving as a forum to foster improvement and coordination of state and local youth policy and programs.

The ICYD Council's vision is: ***"All Iowa youth will be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for adulthood."***

The ICYD Council meets quarterly to receive reports from state agencies and SIYAC, review progress of current activities, review data, and establish priorities and recommended actions on many issues affecting youth. The ICYD Council has shifted from the very specific goal of increasing the graduation rate, to focus on creating an *Opportunity Pathway* through positive youth development and authentic youth engagement. During 2021, the ICYD Council finalized a three-year action plan to ***Improve the status of Iowa youth through shared accountability and systemic collaboration, coordination, and authentic youth engagement.*** Each agency on the ICYD Council has a role in achieving this goal.

ICYD has historically participated in a variety of state and national youth initiatives and has been recognized nationally (e.g. National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, federal Interagency Working Group for Youth Programs, Forum for Youth Investment, and Children's Cabinet Network) for its work in coordinating youth development efforts. The ICYD Council provides a venue to enhance information and data sharing, develop strategies across state agencies, and present prioritized recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly that will improve the lives and futures of Iowa youth.

The Department of Human Rights is the lead agency and oversees activities for the ICYD Council.

### **ICYD Council's Purpose**

The ICYD Council strives to improve the lives and futures of Iowa's youth by:

- Adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels;
- Increasing the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of opportunities and services and other supports for youth;
- Improving and coordinating youth policy and programs across state agencies.

## ICYD Council's Membership

The ICYD Council's membership includes the director or chief administrator (or their designee) of 11 state entities and SIYAC. The ICYD Council has the ability to expand membership to include others that will assist the Council in achieving its purpose. In addition to each agency's director (or designee) serving on the ICYD Council, many of the agencies have additional staff that actively participate in meetings and complete tasks as directed by the ICYD Council. Below are the agencies and members of the ICYD Council:

### ICYD Council Members – February 2023

<b>Department of Human Rights</b> San Wong, Director  Steve Michael, Division Administrator Chair of ICYD Council	<b>Early Childhood Iowa</b> Shanell Wagler, Facilitator
<b>Child Advocacy Board</b> Steffani Simbric, Administrator	<b>Iowa Workforce Development</b> Ashley Sandwell, WIOA Program Coordinator
<b>Commission on Volunteer Service</b> Mary Sheka, Iowa Mentoring Partnership Director	<b>ISU Extension and Outreach, 4-H Youth            Development</b> Debbie Nistler, Iowa 4-H Program Leader
<b>Department of Education</b> Jay Pennington, Bureau Chief – Bureau of Information and Analysis Services	<b>Judicial Branch</b> Gary Niles, Chief Juvenile Court Officer 3 <sup>rd</sup> Judicial District
<b>Department of Health &amp; Human Services</b> Doug Wolfe, Program Planner	<b>Office of Drug Control Policy</b> Dale Woolery, Director
<b>Department of Health &amp; Human Services</b> Julie Hibben, Bureau of Substance Abuse	<b>State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC)</b> Lily Glenn, Chair

## II. THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN – YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PATHWAY

Based on the graduation and dropout data, the ICYD Council recognizes that minority youth, migrant youth, youth in poverty, and youth with disabilities need additional and specific supports and services.

ICYD strives to engage these youth and provide opportunities to remove barriers so these students are able to graduate from high school and have life-long opportunities.

The ICYD Council is shifting from the very specific goal of increasing the graduation rate, to focus on creating an *Opportunity Pathway* through positive youth development and authentic youth engagement.

During 2021, the ICYD Council finalized a three-year action plan to:

***Improve the status of Iowa youth through shared accountability and systemic collaboration, coordination, and authentic youth engagement.***

The Council developed overarching values that will SHAPE our work together:

- **Shared Accountability:** To achieve maximum results, we will engage leaders across boundaries of various state agencies and sectors towards shared results and will share accountability for the progress toward that result through aligned actions and sharing of resources.
- **Healing-Centered:** Trauma is a collective experience that must be met with holistic supports. For solutions to be effective, actions must address root causes, address harm, and restore well-being by shifting from a culture of harm, discipline, punishment, and confinement to restoration, hope and healing. We must advance the conditions to make systems healing-centered (including addressing mental models, moving from transaction to transformational relationships and connections, power dynamics, resource flows, practices and policies).
- **Authentic Youth Engagement:** The perspectives and expertise of young people are critical in understanding the issues governments are called upon to address, and essential in creating solutions that work.
- **Progress:** ICYD state agencies will continue to intentionally collaborate and show progress on the issues of equity, authentic engagement, healing-centered engagement and shared accountability.
- **Equity:** Historical inequities cannot be corrected by ignoring them. For statewide solutions to be effective, marginalized voices must be included, data must be disaggregated (by race, geography, gender and other relevant variables) and policies and programs must be responsive to the particular needs and strengths of each community and group of youth in Iowa.

## **BLUEPRINT TO ACHIEVE AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

Youth engagement is a powerful way for community-based organizations and government agencies to involve the young people they serve to improve the system. The young people provide opportunities to make challenging actions to create positive social change. Youth engagement offers the expertise and partnership of young people, helping adults fully understand what it is like to grow up in a rapidly changing world while navigating the various systems and policies impacting the lives of youth each day. Youth provide a valuable and unique perspective to address issues due to the “way they think” (brain development) and they are closer to the problems and know more about the issues – their lived expertise.

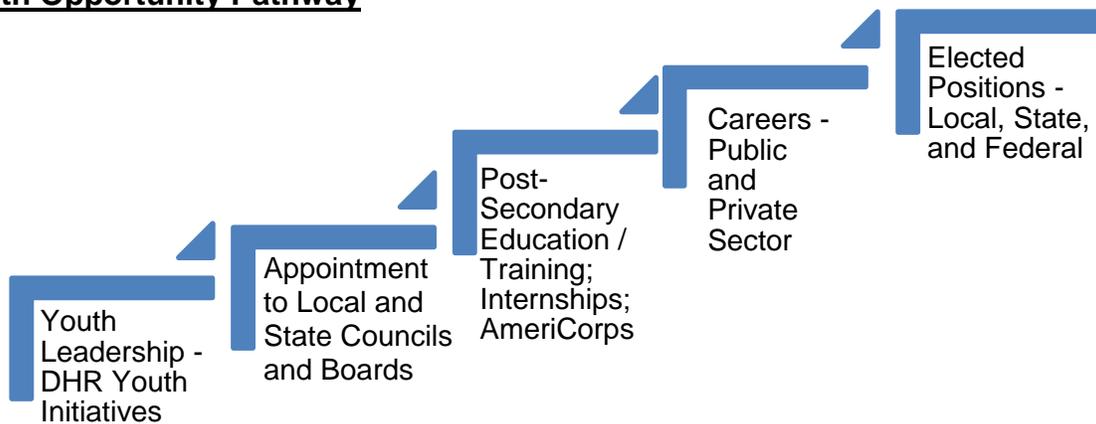
The approach has started with the development of an interactive youth leadership and civic engagement curriculum and set of strategies, which has added structured training, coaching, and education for youth to utilize these new skills to successfully advocate on local, state, and national issues. The process provides topical training on positive youth development (PYD) and brain development, advocacy, leadership, and youth participatory action research (YPAR). In addition, expert panels provide specific information on the issues. Another unique aspect of this approach is that youth are the facilitators/trainers of the curriculum and are leading the process.

The goal is to fully develop a Youth Opportunity Pathway that will:

- Intentionally recruit diverse youth to participate on the Opportunity Pathway
- Provide advocacy and leadership skills to youth
- Establish opportunities for youth to become leaders and decision-makers
- Provide training and technical assistance for state agency staff on authentic youth engagement (AYE) and PYD strategies

As the skills are built and opportunities expand, youth will be prepared to follow a path of additional opportunities of public service and to a career of their choosing.

## Youth Opportunity Pathway



### Completing the Youth Opportunity Pathway

The ICYD Council leads the PYD and AYE implementation and coordinate the trainings of youth and state agency staff, and is the clearinghouse for information and resources.

The following strategies are being implemented:

- Training and technical assistance for ICYD Council agencies on PYD and AYE that will lead to authentic youth voice in policy making and decisions.
- Identify additional opportunities for youth and ensure youth have access to be engaged with government agencies. ICYD Council will create / enhance clearinghouse of opportunities on the website, and provide guidance on connecting youth with appropriate opportunities.
- Involve youth in continuous quality improvement process to improve services for youth.
- Intentionally recruit diverse youth to participate, including youth with lived experience. Lived experience is “representation and understanding of an individual’s human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one’s perception of knowledge, based on one’s own life”.<sup>1</sup>
- Identify and highlight current youth engagement activities in state agencies.
- Local service agencies and community entities will be encouraged to implement PYD and AYE approaches.

Youth Opportunity Pathway project’s goals:

- *Connect* the voices and expertise of youth directly affected to decisions that impact their well-being and dignity
- *Connect* initiatives driven by the community and those most impacted by challenges to existing assets and resources

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<sup>1</sup> Skelton-Wilson, Syreeta, Ph.D. et.al. (2021). *Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience, Improving Federal Research, Policy, and Practice*. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1bb6cd68f81e1bb74e3bf30e1085a354/lived-experience-brief.pdf>

- *Connect* data and research *to* meaningful action
- *Connect* system-focused policies and practices *to* collaborative and equitable approaches implemented with cultural humility
- *Connect* strategies *to* knowledge that children live in families and families live in communities
- *Connect* decision makers *to* greater understanding of root causes and solutions.

Youth engagement is most successful when it is authentic and supported by youth-adult partnerships. The question is, what makes the engagement “authentic”? Throughout the decades, agencies, organizations, and boards have struggled to authentically engage and create decision-making positions for young people. The failure so often begins when adults and youth are inadequately prepared to work together as equal partners as a result of pre-existing attitudes of both adults and young people.

Authentic youth engagement is achieved when young people experience the following:

- Are respected for their ideas and opinions and are free to state them;
- Are working in an environment that facilitates their engagement, and they are involved in a meaningful way as teachers as well as students;
- Are equal partnership in all aspects of their own individual planning and decision-making;
- Are equal partners in making decisions and determining the direction of programs and activities, including the creation of the agency’s policy, the program or service itself, the training curriculum, and delivery of the program or services;
- Expect to, and receive, consistent opportunities to set goals, devise strategies, and act;
- Participate in challenging experiences, with the necessary support to help them succeed; and
- Thrive when adults listen to them, respect them, and engage them in meaningful programs and activities.<sup>2</sup>

It takes time for adults and youth to fully embrace and create a culture and environment that will foster authentic youth engagement. This time of norming allows adults and youth to feel comfortable with one another, to agree on areas of importance, and to come to decisions that are agreed on by both partners. While the idea is simple and the process laborious, the benefits of ensuring authentic youth voice and participation are invaluable for all.

The ICYD Council is embarking on new strategies to incorporate authentic youth engagement (AYE) into state-level policy and practice. The new approach started in 2021, with the development of the initial Youth Action Squads (YAS) that focused on racial justice and COVID-19 effects. The groups of 25 youth (14-24 years of age) receive structured training, coaching, and education that includes Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is providing them with the skills and opportunities to

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/Youth%20Voice.pdf>

successfully create and implement an action plan and advocate on local, state, and national issues.

In order for these opportunities to be available and successful, state agency decision makers must receive training and technical assistance on positive youth development (PYD) and AYE.

Long-term goals:

- State agencies have a commitment for authentic youth engagement that includes partnering with youth to create and deliver improved services and resources.
- Youth are active members on state boards, commissions, and councils.
- Youth are participating in authentic state agency decision making.

What it will take to make it happen:

- ICYD to lead the PYD and AYE implementation and coordinate the trainings of youth and state agency staff, and be the clearinghouse for information and resources.
- State agencies commit to the need for authentic youth voice in policy making and decisions on services.
- Identify additional opportunities for youth
- Ensure youth have access to become engaged with government agencies.
- Involve youth in continuous quality improvement (CQI) process to improve services.
- Intentionally recruit diverse youth to participate in trainings.
- Identify and highlight current youth engagement activities in state agencies.
- Local service agencies and community entities are encouraged to implement PYD and AYE approaches.

There are multiple state- and local-level youth initiatives providing leadership opportunities for youth. The multiple initiatives need to be better aligned and coordinated to attract more youth to participate and to specifically seek more diverse youth. Many of these initiatives target underrepresented youth. All of them promote opportunities for youth to engage state and local leaders, discuss issues affecting youth, and develop leadership skills.

The ICYD Council is leading the coordination effort of the multiple agencies and organizations that support state-level youth-fueled councils and initiatives. The goal is to effectively remove barriers for historically underrepresented youth by empowering them to realize their leadership capabilities and by challenging adults to recognize and engage youth. The effort will equip youth with the tools to communicate their vision, inspire collaboration, and make significant contributions that result in positive change.

Once the foundation of PYD and AYE are incorporated in state agencies, specific topics will be selected to prioritize, study, and develop strategies to improve. Identified priorities are:

- Mental health access;
- School culture and climate – ensure schools are safe;

- Educational, vocational, and personal development opportunities to enhance the successful transition to adulthood.

Currently, the ICYD Council and the Department of Human Rights oversees the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC), the Iowa Youth Congress (IYC) and the Youth Action Squads (YAS). For some youth this experience is the first step of a very long journey on the Opportunity Pathway.

## **STATE OF IOWA YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (SIYAC) – PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES**

The purpose of SIYAC, as stated in Iowa Code §216A.140(8), is to “foster communication among a group of engaged youth and the Governor, the General Assembly, and state and local policymakers regarding programs, policies, and practices affecting youth and families; and to advocate for youth on important issues affecting youth.” SIYAC’s mission statement is: “to raise awareness of issues that affect young Iowans by providing civic opportunity and to inspire youth to create a better future for Iowa.”

Originally established in 2001, SIYAC was formalized in Iowa Code in 2009 as an avenue for youth to inform state leaders and local communities on issues important to young people. SIYAC consists of 21 youth aged 14 to 20 who reside in Iowa. Members serve two-year staggered terms that begin in July. SIYAC meets biweekly over Conference Call and quarterly in-person.

In the fall, SIYAC conducts research across the state to identify issues impacting their peers. Information collected from surveys, focus groups, feedback walls, interviews and from other existing data sources (like the Iowa Department of Public Health’s Iowa Youth Survey) is used to identify the key areas SIYAC will focus for the year. Members’ garnered nearly 1,000 responses from youth across the state of Iowa. SIYAC identified youths’ concerns about education, health, equity, environmental and agriculture issues, youth opportunities, service and education. As a result of the data collected, SIYAC formed the following committees: Service, Health, Education, Agriculture and Environment, and Equity. Members of each Committee determine how to best address each issue using 3 main strategies: advocacy, service and public awareness. The committees and descriptions of the topics are below:

### **Agriculture and Environment Committee:**

- Proposing a position statement to implement greater restrictions for application rates of fertilizer, especially as a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) waste disposal and redistribution method due to the detrimental effects on Iowa’s water quality.

### **Education Committee:**

- Proposing a position statement to modify Iowa Code 279.50 “Human Growth and Development Instruction” to mandate the inclusion of age-appropriate progression in

refusal skills training, reporting and anatomy of Iowa's K-12 sexual education curriculum.

**Equity:**

- Increasing public awareness on issues relating to racial equity through a podcast called, "What's Not Clicking?"
- Serving on multiple state-level boards and commissions to ensure the perspectives and expertise of youth and young adults are included.

**Health Committee:**

- Proposing a position statement to ensure period products are provided in one-half of bathrooms of all public schools serving students grades 6-12 to improve the health and safety of students.
- Proposing a position statement to allow three (3) excused absences for mental and behavioral illness for any school-aged minor attending primary or secondary public education.
- Working with schools and mental health organizations to improve mental health in schools.

**Service Committee:**

- Collaborating with Volunteer Iowa to address barriers to and increase opportunities for youth service-learning in Iowa.
- Completing both a statewide group service project and individual service projects across the state.

SIYAC members participate in ICYD Council meetings. The ICYD Council oversees the activities of SIYAC and seeks input from these youth leaders in the development of more effective state-wide policies, practices, and programs. SIYAC members also serve on various other committees and councils, including Volunteer Iowa's Service Learning Committee and current member Reyna Roach was appointed to be the youth representative on the Commission of Native American Affairs. Past member Soomin Koh has been appointed by Governor Reynolds to serve on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council.

Notable SIYAC accomplishments during 2022:

- SIYAC was awarded the Governor's Volunteer award.
- Trey Voeller is serving as the President of his FFA (Future Farmers of America) Chapter.
- Jemma Bullock raised over \$700 in a week to allow their school to have free period products in all female bathrooms.
- Lulu Roarick won the Scholastic Gold Key for her Art and Writing.
- Lily Glenn made the 2022 Fall Term Honor Roll at Indian Hills Community College and was selected to be on the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (in the top 10% of students at Indian Hills).

**2022-2023 SIYAC Members (Alphabetized by last name):**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Held</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>
<b>Volta Adovor</b>		Ankeny	Polk
<b>Jemma Bullock</b>		Ankeny	Polk
<b>Jordy Cambara</b>	<i>Health Committee Chair</i>	Sioux City	Woodbury
<b>Hannah Dillehay</b>		Council Bluffs	Pottawattamie
<b>Rhett Ellerbroek</b>		Waverly	Bremer
<b>Tate Giesemann</b>		Bellevue	Jackson
<b>Lily Glenn</b>	<i>Chair</i>	Ottumwa	Wapello
<b>Achinteya Jayaram</b>	<i>Vice Chair</i>	Bettendorf	Scott
<b>Eric Johnson</b>		Rock Valley	Sioux
<b>Brenda Koumondji</b>	<i>Equity Committee Chair</i>	Cedar Falls	Black Hawk
<b>David Lee</b>	<i>Service Chair</i>	Ames	Story
<b>Drake Luong</b>		West Des Moines	Polk
<b>Cody Messer</b>		Mediapolis	Henry
<b>Cleah Phillips</b>		Davenport	Scott
<b>Sophia Polking</b>	<i>Public Relations Chair</i>	Carroll	Carroll
<b>Reyna Roach</b>	<i>IDEA Chair</i>	Iowa City	Johnson
<b>Lulu Roarick</b>	<i>Education Committee Chair</i>	Iowa City	Johnson
<b>Nevaeh Stover</b>		Muscatine	Muscatine
<b>Trey Voeller</b>	<i>Secretary, A&amp;E Committee Chair</i>	Prairie City	Jasper

## **YOUTH JUSTICE COUNCIL (YJC) – PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES**

The Youth Justice Council (YJC) was established in December 2021 and is a subcommittee of Iowa's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, composed of youth and young adults ages 16-28 who have either direct or proximate experience to Iowa's juvenile justice system. Members of YJC serve an one-year term and must live in Iowa.

In 2022, YJC focused on the below priorities and activities:

1. **Increasing access to hygiene and period products for youth in out-of-home placement.** YJC members worked with Drake Law School students to co-created administrative rule recommendations for both detention centers and group care placements to ensure youth have access to these items. They also assisted with the rewrite of the detention center administrative rules and championed topics related to shower time, contact with family members, and required and encouraged trainings.
2. **Creating a Bill of Rights for youth in the juvenile justice system.** YJC members started brainstorming what rights should be included and discussed their ideas with legislators.
3. **Developing recommendations for the Supreme Court's Juvenile Justice Task Force.** YJC developed 17 recommendations for the Chief Justice of Iowa's Supreme Court and the Director of Juvenile Court Services. These recommendations were accepted and embedded in the final Task Force vote and report.
4. **Leading trainings for system professionals.** YJC members attended and presented at 3 national conferences in Tacoma (WA), Omaha, and Washington, DC about ways to better partner with youth in the system. They also helped plan and emceed Iowa's second annual Family and Youth Engagement Summit.
5. **Serving on state-level boards and councils.** Multiple YJC members served on the following boards and councils to ensure the perspective and expertise of those with lived experience were included in decision-making processes: Supreme Court's Juvenile Justice Task Force, Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, Family and Youth Engagement Summit Planning Team, Healing-Centered Engagement training team, Iowa Task Force for Young Women and Midwest Region's Juvenile Justice workgroup.
6. **Advocating to legislators.** Multiple members of the YJC testified on various legislation in 2022, including changes to Iowa Code 232 and 234. Members also joined the Juvenile Court Officer's Association for their Day on the Hill and spoke directly to over a dozen legislators in two hours.

In the Fall of 2022, YJC conducted research through the Talking Wall project to identify the current needs of youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Nearly 500 youth participated across the state. The Youth Justice Council themed the information collected at their annual Retreat at the beginning of January. They identified five priority areas for Calendar Year 2023:

1. Prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system.
2. Draft recommendations for standards for youth's support teams.
3. Provide education to youth.

4. Finalize Bill of Rights for youth in the juvenile justice system.
5. Enhance the quality of life for youth in juvenile justice.

#### Specific YJC Member Accomplishments:

- YJC was awarded the Governor's Volunteer Award.
- Adriana Espinoza was awarded two state-level awards: Spirit of Youth Award from Juvenile Court Services and the Sandy Lint Equity Award from the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Taylor Parle graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in Criminal Justice and is now working at a juvenile detention facility.
- Melvin Gaye was selected to represent Iowa at the 2022 Youth Leadership Institute through the Annie E Casey Foundation.
- Arminta Damken-Navarro, Ava Palmer and Adriana Espinoza were appointed by the Chief Justice to serve on the Supreme Court's Juvenile Justice Task Force.
- Arminta Damken-Navarro became a mom! Her and her husband welcomed Romeo in December.
- Pieper Lewis designed jerseys for the Iowa Wolves team for Women's History Month.
- Zoie Points earned her driver's license.

### **IOWA YOUTH CONGRESS – PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES**

The purpose of Iowa Youth Congress (IYC) is to enhance opportunity and broader representation of all Iowans in the government process. IYC also provides students the knowledge, abilities, and direction to advocate and enact change in their communities and at the state level for issues affecting youth.

Through the IYC experience, students attain a variety of skills including:

- public speaking
- problem-solving
- political debate in multicultural leadership settings
- advocacy
- developing a deeper understanding and application of democratic decision making, government, and public engagement

Established in 2006, IYC was created to provide youth of all backgrounds the opportunity to gain hands-on education in the subject areas of state government, democracy, advocacy, and civic engagement. Iowa Youth Congress consists of up to 100 high-school-aged youth who reside in Iowa. Members begin their term in July and meet quarterly to identify issues affecting youth, discuss community needs, form partnerships to meet those needs, draft positions on youth issues, and communicate those positions with legislators. IYC presents information and recommendations on youth issues in the form of position statements to the Iowa General Assembly during the legislative session. Additionally, some IYC members also participate in ICYD Council meetings.

Notable IYC accomplishments during 2022:

- Iowa Youth Congress earned the 2022 Governor's Volunteer Award.
- In August, Iowa Youth Congress members met with their districts to set the issue areas they would focus on during the 2022-2023 IYC term. Eleven position statements outlining the issues were then created.
- IYC's annual Mock Congress was held in November and emulated the House of Representatives. During this time, each position statement (or "bill") was introduced, debated, and voted on. Those that received a majority vote became official IYC legislative priorities. Seven out of the eleven position statements received a majority vote and became official positions of the Iowa Youth Congress.
- In December, IYC held their 2nd Quarterly Meetings in committees via Zoom. At this meeting, members continue to deepen their knowledge of the legislative process and met with subject matter experts related to their position statements. Speakers included:
  - Gabby Guerra, Please Pass The Love
  - Mikala Williams, Please Pass The Love
  - Alex Karumara, Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (IowaCASA)
  - Kelly Marie Meek, Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (IowaCASA)
  - Kelli Soyer, DMPS School Board Member
- On January 17th, 2023, IYC and the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (SIYAC) held their Legislative Prep Day at the State Capitol. Youth scheduled meetings with legislators, learned how to call legislators out of session, attended committee and subcommittee meetings, and informed legislators and other professionals at the Capitol about the youth programs and issues impacting youth in Iowa.
- In February 2023, students will have the opportunity to shadow members of the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branches of government. IYC is coordinating this week-long event for other DHR youth programs and councils.
- In partnership with the DHR, IYC will participate in the DHR's Day on the Hill on March 2nd, 2023 to meet with legislators and community leaders in order to advocate for their youth-focused position statements.

During the Mock Congress in November 2022, IYC approved seven issue area priorities for the 2022-2023 year and developed five committees: Sex Education, Civic Engagement, Student Voice, Mental Health and Equity. IYC has prioritized the following diverse issues to advocate for during the 2023 Legislative Session:

**Civic Engagement Committee:**

- Voter Registration: Clarify and reinforce Iowa Code §48A.23 to expand youth voter registration.

**Mental Health:**

- Mental Health Training For Teachers: Require bi-yearly mandatory training for all educational personnel on student mental health.

**Equity Committee:**

- Disability Education: Require educators to educate on developmental and intellectual disabilities to dismantle the lack of awareness and knowledge surrounding students with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- Inclusive Training For Teachers: Require specific training to school faculty to promote diversity in the classroom.

**Sex Education Committee:**

- Sexual Violence Prevention and Awareness: Incorporate the addition of sexual violence awareness and prevention into the current K-12 sexual education curriculum.
- Inclusive Sex Education: Require sex education to be inclusive to all students and include information about all types of contraceptive methods.

**Student Voice Committee:**

- Student Representation: Require all Iowa schools to allow a minimum of one non-voting student member on school boards throughout Iowa to increase student voice and transparency in schools.

**2022-2023 IYC Members:**

The following IYC members received notable recognition for their individual achievements over the past year:

- Member Jack Baumann, was accepted into the Virtual National Security Language initiative.
- Member Kayla Jabre, was accepted into Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.
- Member Lexi Duffy was one of two Iowa high schoolers selected to participate in the 2022 United States Senate Youth Program
- Members Kira Strashko and Madeline Parrott were accepted as Iowa Legislative Pages.

## **YOUTH ACTION SQUAD – PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES**

In 2020, two crises dramatically impacted youth and young adults in Iowa--racism and COVID-19. These crises also began to intersect with other issues impacting Iowa youth, proving a greater need for intentional and aligned community action through shared power and partnership with young people. Realizing the toll of racism and a global pandemic on the well-being and potential of young Iowans, the ICYD recognized an opportunity to engage youth and give them a voice to current issues.

This realization, coupled with the findings from the Promise of Adolescence<sup>1</sup>, mobilized the ICYD, with oversight from the Iowa Department of Human Rights, to take part in a grant opportunity with the Forum for Youth Investment, an action tank working with national, state and local leaders to change the odds that all young people are ready by 21. The grant opportunity allowed us to respond to the crises in partnership with young people to create the Youth Action Squad (YAS), and was driven by the belief that those closest to the issues are the ones closest to the solutions but farthest from the resources and power.

The YAS was initially created to resource 50 Iowa youth and young adults who have been marginalized from government due to discrimination and historical exclusion, through participatory action research and community organizing. YAS members were supported and empowered to take actions on issues most important to them with solutions they created through intentional training and coaching on advocacy, research and organizing, proximity to major decision-makers, access to information and resources, a safe space to talk through issues and solutions, weekly coaching check-ins to assess progress and barriers, and financial compensation for their time.

The YAS operates under the following philosophies:

1. Young people are the experts on the experiences and needs of youth.
2. Adolescents are capable of high-level action.
3. Lived experience is a critical asset for adolescents seeking to make change at any systems level.
4. Those closest to the issues are the ones closest to the solutions, but farthest from the resources and power

There were two cohorts of the 2021 YAS, one for Racial Justice and one for COVID-19. In 2022, there was one cohort of 30 youth. YAS members had agency to identify the issues they were most interested in after conducting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative research. Members created and implemented an action plan in their communities, either individually or with other YAS members.

In 2023, Ames, a local community was selected to conduct a YAS at the community-level. Youth and Shelter Services (YSS) will facilitate the process.

### Notable achievements in 2022:

- The Youth Action Squad collected data directly from their peers about issues most important to them, resulting in over 1,000 youth voices being uplifted and amplified by YAS members.
- The Youth Action Squad was awarded the 2022 Governor Volunteer's Award.
- Abby King, the first YAS cohort's facilitator, became an AmeriCorps member coordinating the third cohort of Youth Action Squad.
- Brenda Koumondji and Clowey Tyler, members of the first YAS, were hired by DHR to be the YAS Facilitators for the 2021-22 Cohort.
- Hifaa Adam, Nzobaho Ngirweneza, and Bella McDonald spoke directly with the Director of the Department of Education about how school districts should respond to racism.
- Vania Madrigal, Kenya Gomez, and Ramika Sharma co-created a Holocaust Exhibit at their local library.
- Charleyna Falcam planned and implemented an International Women's Day event at their school.
- Lyric Sellers and Endi Montalvo-Martinez successfully petitioned the Des Moines Public School Board, in coalition with other Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) students and community stakeholders, to eliminate the use of School Resource Officers at all DMPS campuses, and to implement a restorative justice model in the schools. YAS members requested data from DHR on school arrests to use for this action plan. Lyric and Endi are now AmeriCorps members at DHR, developing a toolkit for other students and school districts to use to examine their contributions to the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Four YAS members continued on with DHR as Iowa Youth Congress and State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council members.
- YAS members have presented their data and action plans at other councils, conferences and events, including: the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, Justice Advisory Board, panelists at Prevent Child Abuse Iowa's annual conference, speakers at Youth Action Hour's Youth Address the Nation event, panelists and partners for Iowa's Healing-Centered Engagement work, and actors for the Iowa Department of Public Health's Iowa Youth Survey video campaign.

### **YOUTH SHADOW WEEK – PURPOSE AND IMPACT**

The purpose of Youth Shadow Week (YSW) is to provide youth an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and experience of the careers of those who work in state government. Youth participating in DHR programs had the opportunity to shadow a state leader in the judicial, executive or legislative branch for a day. ICYD helped connect youth and state leaders by interests. Twenty-eight youth and twenty-eight state leaders participated for this inaugural year. Of the youth who participated,

- 100% reported they are more likely to engage with state leaders as a result of YSW
- 89% see themselves working in state government as a result of YSW
- 100% better understand how decisions are made in government
- 100% built relationships with state leaders they can use in the future

- One of the youth who participated was selected to be a 2023 Communications Intern at the State Capitol as a result of the connections he made during YSW

Of the system professionals who participated:

- 95% better understand the influence youth can have within the state
- 91% are more likely to engage youth within their professional role as a result of YSW
- 100% believed youth gained a greater understanding of state government

The 2023 Youth Shadow Week will be held in February.

### III. RESEARCH AND DATA

The ICYD will continue to utilize research and data to identify issues and measure results. Multiple sources of data and ongoing collection of research by national experts continues to be utilized to provide guidance to relevant topics. Below are ongoing efforts to assist ICYD's efforts.

#### **Adolescent Brain Research and Implications for Youth Programs**

*The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth (2019)* report from The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has found that changes in brain structure and connectivity that happen during adolescence (10-25 years of age) provide young people with unique opportunities for positive, life-shaping development, and for recovery from past adversity. The report has recommendations for multiple systems (education, health care, child welfare, and justice) to capitalize on the opportunities and for addressing inequities.

Economic, social, and structural disadvantage along with racism, bias, and discrimination shape life-course trajectories during adolescence, by reducing opportunities and supports that are available for other youth, and increasing risks that other youth do not experience.

Investments in programs and interventions that capitalize on the brain's capacity to change during adolescence can promote shifts in young people's life trajectories, for youth who may have and are facing adverse experiences.<sup>3</sup>

*Recommendations for the education system:*

- *Rectify disparities in resources for least-advantaged schools and students.*
- *Design purposeful but flexible pathways through education.*

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<sup>3</sup> Medicine., National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and, Richard J. Bonnie, and Emily P. Backes. *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth*. Washington, District of Columbia: The National Academies Press, 2019.

- *Teach practical knowledge and nonacademic skills, such as decision making, adaptability, and psychosocial skills.*
- *Protect the overall health and well-being of each student.*
- *Foster culturally sensitive learning environments.*
- *Help adolescents and families navigate the education sector.*

*Recommendations for the health system:*

- *Strengthen the financing of health care services for adolescents, including insurance coverage for uninsured and under-insured populations.*
- *Improve access to comprehensive, integrated, coordinated health services for adolescents.*
- *Increase access to behavioral health care and treatment services.*
- *Increase the number of adolescent health care providers and improve their training and distribution.*
- *Improve federal and state data collection on adolescent health and well-being, and conduct adolescent-specific health services research and disseminate the findings.*

*Recommendations for the child welfare system:*

- *Reduce racial and ethnic disparities in child welfare system involvement.*
- *Promote broad uptake by the states of federal programs that promote resilience and positive outcomes for adolescents involved in the child welfare system.*
- *Provide services to adolescents and their families in the child welfare system that are developmentally informed at the individual, program, and system levels.*
- *Conduct research that reflects the full range of adolescents in the child welfare system.*
- *Foster greater collaboration among the child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and health systems.*
- *Provide developmentally appropriate services for adolescents in the child welfare system.*
- *Foster greater collaboration among the child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and health systems.*
- *Provide developmentally appropriate services for adolescents who engage in noncriminal misconduct without justice system involvement.*

*Recommendations for the justice system:*

- *Reduce disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability status, and sexual orientation or gender identity and expression among adolescents involved in the justice system.*
- *Ensure that youth maintain supportive relationships while involved in the justice system and receive appropriate guidance and counsel from legal professionals and caregivers.*
- *Implement policies that aim to reduce harm to justice-involved youth in accordance with knowledge from developmental science.*

- *Implement developmentally appropriate and fair policies and practices for adolescents involved in the criminal justice system.*
- *For those youth in the custody of the justice system, ensure that policies and practices are implemented to prioritize the health and educational needs of adolescents and avoid causing harm.”<sup>4</sup>*

The ICYD Council will study systemic policies and practices that disproportionately have negative impact on minority youth, and work together to implement strategies to support the *Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth* recommendations.

### **Interagency Data Sharing Agreement**

A data sharing agreement between the Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Department of Human Rights – Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, and the Judicial Branch – State Court Administration – Juvenile Court Services has been created to share relevant information on children who are subject to court jurisdiction under Iowa Code Chapter 232. The result will be improved outcomes regarding safety, education, family stability, and reduce the likelihood of further abuse, neglect, delinquency, and criminal conduct.

### **National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)**

Iowa NYTD is a federal mandate for the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to collect outcome information (via a standardized survey) from current and former youth in foster care or another out-of-home placement. DHS contracts with CJJP to collect the survey information from youth aged 17, 19, and 21.

Outcomes are derived from survey questions that measure youth across six domains:

- Educational attainment,
- Financial self-sufficiency,
- Access to health insurance,
- High risk behaviors,
- Experience with homelessness, and
- Positive connections with adults.

In FFY2022, Iowa NYTD met federal compliance by surveying 64% of the 19-year-old population and providing a required data report highlighting outcomes<sup>5</sup>. A data report summarizing the information collected from that cohort of youth is available on the DHR website.

From October 1, 2022 through September 2023, Iowa NYTD is completing surveys and obtaining outcomes from a cohort of 17-year-old youth formerly in foster care.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/media/FFY22%20NYTD%20Annual%20Report%20%283%29-merged.pdf>

In addition to collecting survey results from these youth populations, Iowa NYTD will continue to positively engage youth in foster care and juvenile justice through additional outreach activities:

- “The Talking Wall”—An activity that empowers youth to contribute to system change by sharing their experiences and visions for change. In 2022, the Talking Wall was hosted at 48 different locations, included voices from 434 youth, and produced 1,802 post-it notes. Main themes from youth and young adults included: longer and more frequent phone calls and visits with family members, access to quality of food, access to enough food, having adequate sleep, having access to hygiene products, wanting a better court experience that was more easily understood, having fair consequences, and ensuring workers are responding to youth in a timely and respectful manner.
- Iowa Youth Resources Website<sup>6</sup>— The site features seven videos and other resources designed to help youth who are transitioning to adulthood. The videos focus on employment, education, housing, medication, and other resources. Although the information is aimed at youth who are exiting the foster care or delinquency systems, the resources provided can be used by all youth, parents, or others who work with youth. The site was created through a collaborative effort by Iowa NYTD, CJJP, the Juvenile ReEntry Systems Task Force, Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP), the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Boys’ State Training School, and other state agencies.
- Annual Creative Expressions Art Contest—This contest is open to youth and young adults who have experienced juvenile justice, foster care or other out-of-home placement. It invites youth to submit artwork that captures the given theme of the contest. Entries include a variety of art media. In FFY2022, the theme was “Trust Your Voice and Voice Your Truth..” A total of 118 youth contributed 126 pieces of art into the contest.
- Partnerships—Continue to strengthen partnerships with the Department of Corrections, Iowa Foster Care Youth Council (AMP), the Iowa Aftercare Network, Iowa College Aide, provider agencies, Juvenile Court System, social workers, CASA/FCRB and other state and local entities.

The outcomes collected through the NYTD survey and the Talking Wall provides information on areas for improvements to the foster care system to better serve youth transitioning to independence. Here are some ways NYTD has been used by system leaders:

- In the process of modifying administrative rules to ensure youth of color have access to the hair and skin products they need while in out-of-home placement
- In the process of modifying administrative rules to ensure youth have access to the period products they need while in out-of-home placement
- In the process of modifying administrative rules to increase the clothing allowance for youth in foster care
- Created a pathway for youth in detention to work on their Hi-SET (currently being piloted in a detention center)

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<sup>6</sup> <https://sites.google.com/a/iowa.gov/dhr-youth-services/>

- Beginning the creation of the Juvenile Justice Bill of Rights for youth
- Creating a Guide to Court for youth in child welfare and juvenile justice
- Mobilized capacity building work around healing-centered engagement
- Inspired the Family and Youth Engagement Summit, that was more well attended this year than its first-year last year. A third Summit is being planned for August 2023.
- Developed a toolkit on how schools can partner with youth to address the school-to-prison pipeline that was created by youth
- Presented over 40 times to various organizations

Overall, NYTD strives to center the lived experiences of youth through compiling and publishing the survey results and providing other creative avenues for youth expertise to be heard and acted upon by decision makers.

### **Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™)**

The goals of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™) are to reduce recidivism of juvenile offenders, increase public safety, and eliminate costs for services that do not work. Additional long-term positive effects are improved family and peer relations, alleviated mental health symptoms, and consistent school attendance by ensuring that ***the right youth receive the right service at the right time.***

The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) in the Department of Human Rights has coordinated the activities. The SPEP™ diagnostic tool assesses the likely effectiveness of services in terms of recidivism reduction by examining four domains:

- Service Type
- Amount of Service
- Quality of Service
- Risk Level of Youth

Service providers receive a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) at initial and subsequent scorings with recommendations related to recidivism reduction. Services are intended to be rescored to assess performance no more frequently than 18-month intervals. This allows for sufficient time to make programmatic changes, the results of which would then be reflected within future cohorts of youth receiving the service.

It has always been the intention to expand usage of the SPEP™ tool into all judicial districts and a two-part plan to broaden the usage of SPEP™ emerged.

- 1) CJJP has made participation in the SPEP™ process a requirement for any services receiving federal funding that passes through CJJP and is distributed to the judicial districts. This creates the potential for the SPEP™ to be present in all eight judicial districts, but on a smaller scale. CJJP will also target residential settings identified as either being prepared for or having a need for evaluation of their services and will continue to revisit services that have already been evaluated for ongoing re-evaluation.

- 2) The creation of a statewide service inventory with the assistance of Juvenile Court Services will allow all community-based services to be “SPEP™ ready” at all times. A similar inventory will be created for residential services as well, using information directly from providers and compiled and maintained by CJJP. Juvenile Court Services in the eight Judicial Districts and CJJP is in the process of finalizing the necessary information for the database and has also created a web application to facilitate access to the programmatic information about various services. This web application will allow users to search for services in a number of different ways (e.g. location, service type, provider name, population served, etc.).

System officials will be able to utilize aggregate and individual results from the service inventory to make more informed decisions about resources and services for justice-involved youth. They will also be better equipped to formalize statewide evidence-based practices and improve the overall functioning of the juvenile justice system. Additionally, organizations which provide these services will have access to a research-based tool and evaluation results which they can use to improve the services available to youth in terms of recidivism reduction.

A decision matrix has been developed with the purpose to act as a structure for juvenile court decision making, weighing youth risk to reoffend (including offense severity) as well as other relevant variables in order to assist system officials with determining the most appropriate level of supervision and type of services for youth, thereby reducing recidivism and improving outcomes.

The decision matrix is currently being piloted in Polk County and Johnson County Juvenile Courts. An advisory team continues to oversee the development and implementation of the matrix.

## **Iowa Youth Survey**

The Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) is a collaborative effort led by the Department of Public Health's Division of Behavioral Health with assistance by the following agencies:

- Department of Education,
- Department of Human Rights' Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning and Statistical Analysis Center, and
- Department of Human Services.

In the fall of 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2021 students in 6th, 8th, and 11th grades across the state of Iowa answered questions about their attitudes and experiences regarding alcohol and other drug use and violence, and their perceptions of their peer, family, school, and neighborhood/community environments. In 2008, the survey was administered online for the first time.

IYS reports list responses to every survey question and provide total percentages and breakdowns by grade and gender. Thirty-four constructs within nine framework domains are included.

Reports are available in the following categories:

- State of Iowa
- Counties
- Judicial Districts
- Department of Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Planning Regions
- Area Education Association Regions

The 2021 IYS reports are posted online at <https://iowayouthsurvey.idph.iowa.gov/>. Individual school district reports can be accessed by contacting the respective district. Also available online is the Iowa Youth Survey Trend Report. The survey was not given in 2020, due to COVID-19.

### **Family First Prevention Services Act**

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) was signed into law on February 9, 2018. This Act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams (Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act) to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. Family First will restructure how the federal government spends money on child welfare to improve outcomes for children. It will prevent the need for removal by strengthening families with evidence-based family preservation services.

Family First shifts focus and resources from out-of-home placement to keeping families together and preventing children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for community-based services, such as mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and Juvenile Court Services partnered in the development of the Family First plan, to ensure qualifying services for youth in the juvenile justice system were included in the plan.

Family First will allow funding to:

- Provide family reunification services for children in foster care and after their return home;
- Recruit and retain high-quality foster families;
- Address opioids and other substance abuse and provide services to prevent child maltreatment as a result of substance abuse;
- Provide supports for youth transitioning from care;
- Extend independent living services to assist former foster youth up to age 23 and extends eligibility for education and training vouchers for these youth to age 26.

#### IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IN 2023

The ICYD Council is strengthening the authentic youth engagement activity among the ICYD agencies by developing training materials for staff to be able to recruit and prepare youth for opportunities serving on councils, participating in meetings, and making presentations. These are the first steps of the *Opportunity Pathway* strategy.

The ICYD Council seeks support from the Iowa Legislature and Governor's Office to develop innovative ways to authentically engage youth and utilize their expertise and wisdom craft state policies on youth issues and providing resources needed to achieve this pathway.

Specific recommendations to support the ICYD Council are to:

- Support the ICYD Council in adopting the recommendations from *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth* report from The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (pages 22-24). The summary is at CJJJ's website: [https://humanrights.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/media/4%20-%20Promise%20of%20Adolescence\\_2page\\_highlights.pdf](https://humanrights.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/media/4%20-%20Promise%20of%20Adolescence_2page_highlights.pdf). The downloadable book is at: <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25388/the-promise-of-adolescence-realizing-opportunity-for-all-youth>
- Support the ICYD Council in developing new strategies to incorporate authentic youth engagement (AYE) and positive youth development principles into state-level policy and practice, which include training staff, and engaging youth on state boards and commissions, and creative ways to involve youth.
- Provide resources to support state-level youth opportunities and youth-led initiatives (e.g. State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, Achieving Maximum Potential, Iowa Youth Congress, and Youth Action Squads), which include participating in Youth Shadow Week, participating in meetings with youth, reviewing their priority areas, and provide guidance to assist them in achieving the goals.
- Identifying new and better ways to provide services and supports to Iowa's youth and families by encouraging multi-agency approaches in the development of innovative strategies and to incorporate federal initiatives that will eliminate the educational achievement gap for underrepresented students, and racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system.
- Provide resources to continue and expand evidence-based practices and programs as they are developed and identified.
- Provide resources for the continued review and study of services for youth, through the collection and analysis of data that provides information to determine the effectiveness of the services.
- Support the continued use of data and research in the development of strategies and actions.
- Continue to develop ways to share information among agencies to address issues affecting youth who receive services and supports from multiple agencies.
- Support the continued use of state agency staff time to implement activities that meet the goals of the ICYD Council.