Scott County | Listening Sessions

Over the summer of 2018, community perspectives on the needs of young people in Scott County were captured through two efforts.

Focus	Issues Concerning All Youth	Juvenile Justice
# of voices	500	125
focus	**Issues impacting young people** and their families and what youth need to thrive	**Vehicle thefts** by young adults and youth running from group care settings
facilitator	**Davenport Mayor's Office**	- **Center for Coordinated Assistance to States** - **Iowa Department of Human Rights** - **Iowa Juvenile Court Services**
participants	Service providers, grassroots programs, community members, youth and family service agencies, local elected officials, youth and parents, judges and judicial staff, law enforcement, school staff and administrators, victims, and businesses	

Notes are categorized to capture perceptions of young people, roadblocks, suggested solutions, and group care challenges. To enhance understand, three categories emerged – Overarching (community and/or system-wide), Process (procedural points of moving a youth through the juvenile justice system), and Services (programs, services, and interventions). This overview focuses on youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

The Young People Involved

The first step in understanding the challenges facing the young people of Scott County is to know who they are. Below are the community's perceptions of at-risk youth in the Quad Cities.

Families Challenges	Youth face difficult situations such as poverty, trauma, incarcerated parents, and inadequate supervision. Challenges cause embarrassment, overwhelmed parents, criminal behavior, and school disengagement.	**Risk-Taking Culture**	Thrill-seeking has become a game, amplified by social media, peer/family influence, fearlessness, and viewing arrest as a badge of honor.
Lack of Trust	Fear, poor system-community relationships, and "street justice" reduce youth and families' willingness to trust that justice will be provided by the system.	**Delayed Accountability**	Consequences for their behavior is delayed leading not understanding the harm done and being told they won't get into trouble by other youth.
Lack Alternatives	Prosocial options to fill free time, explore interests, find belonging, and have fun are needed. Available activities are too far away, too expensive, or unknown to the youth.	**Little to Lose**	Youth lack of positive role models and supportive, consistent relationships. Youth seem hopeless; often not seeing a future for themselves.

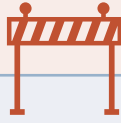| Roadblocks	Suggested Solutions
Overarching	
It's a Royal "we" Problem All neighborhoods are impacted. There's hunger for a solution causing providers to feel pressured to be punitive. The community is afraid behaviors will become more severe and dangerous.	**Cultural Humility** Explore and acknowledge implicit bias and the disproportionate impact on youth of color.
Schools Need Support Schools closing impacts community engagement and pride in schools. Teachers need support and training.	**Schools at the Center** Schools provide identity, connect people, increase pro-social involvement, and address challenges early. Open schools on Saturday or convert empty schools into a community centers.
The Village is Missing A lost sense of shared morals, values, citizenship, and community was lamented. There's no understanding of youth's reality. Practical opportunities to contribute and volunteer are needed.	**Awareness Building** Educate those in and outside the juvenile justice system about trauma, poverty, best practices, system processes, CINA vs. juvenile justice, and the community support/service network.
Families are Disengaged Families don't trust providers or the system; and must be empowered and engaged. Schools and services want enhanced in-home services and greater connections/communication with parents.	**Shift towards Prevention** Engage families early and often through more funding for serves that support basic needs, address behaviors early, and build families to enhance trust in the system and keep youth at home.
Process	
Fragmented Relationships Services lack a common strategy for coordination, awareness, specialization, and communication. Relationships between police, communities, and families/youth are strained.	**Bust Silos** Build a community collaborative of juvenile justice, child welfare, police, schools, youth, community leaders, families, services, clergy, private sector, etc. to plan and raise resources.
Prevention System Missing Early intervention to meet basic needs is challenged by gaps in current policies, such as inconsistent school policies excluding youth from activities, funding, and no incentives for community partnership and volunteering within	**Focus on Youth** Identify ways to reduce caseload for JSO's, intake, and other service staff by adding staff, developing specialized roles, developing support positions, and/or establishing juvenile police positions.
Delayed Accountability Intake and court processes take far too long, with youth waiting months for a hearing. The system is over capacity and bogged down by paperwork, resulting in delayed assessments and reports.	**Enhance Alternatives** Build alternatives for a targeted group of youth to provide accountability, enhance community connections, and address underlying causes, while reducing detention use, court burden, and paperwork on police and juvenile services.
Punishment Focus: An increase of felony charges excludes youth from diversion, increasing the use of detention and expensive monitoring. Young, low-risk youth are learning from high-risk, older peers in detention.	**Adjust Responses** Right-size the system's response to youth by using assessments to match need with services/consequences, training programs to address criminogenic thinking, creating a violators' program, and increasing the use of crisis response.

> "They know if you're coming out to address them as a problem or to come out to help them address their problem."

Roadblocks	Suggested Solutions
Services	

Roadblocks	Suggested Solutions
Trauma & Mental Health Undiagnosed mental health needs and trauma leads to behavior. Community awareness is needed. A lack of practitioners has resulted in youth not having medication, evaluations, and counseling.	**Prioritize Relationships** Elevate connections to supportive people through peer mentorship and prosocial opportunities within schools and communities. Enhance training, incentives, and opportunities for volunteers.
Services are Overwhelmed Funding continues to shrink, and waitlists grow. Services and placements struggle to meet the needs of juvenile justice youth. Transition and aftercare is insufficient. Police play too many roles.	**Illustrate Opportunities** Promote hope through extracurriculars, access to jobs, and exploring entrepreneurship by reducing/eliminating costs and connecting volunteers.
Lost in the Shuffle Youth workers are overwhelmed, bogged down by paperwork, glitchy technology, and focused on the most at-risk youth, leaving them without time to build relationships with the youth and families.	**Invest in Community** Providers need to exist within, connect to community leaders, and look like the communities they serve to be relatable to youth and families.
The Road is Long Getting to services, court, and opportunities is difficult due to a lack of transportation, despite efforts by city transportation to open busses to students.	**Restorative Practice** Aid youth in understanding and repairing the harm caused via integrating meaningful and accessible restorative justice efforts into schools and juvenile court services.
 " Not every kid is going to be successful, but we have to take the risk. "	**Support Transitions** When placed out-of-home, help the youth be safe on home visits and support the transition home with aftercare and family services. Adjust when going home isn't best.
	Assessment Center Establish a two-pronged assessment center to (1) use multi-faceted, psychosocial assessment to speed up accountability, and services; and, (2) provide preventative connection to resources.

Group Care Concerns

Group care came up often and is a part of the juvenile justice system. Key concepts are categorized below.

In-District Placement Due to placement requirement changes, youth are in facilities ill-equipped for their behavior, alongside rival and fellow gang members, and with co-offenders; resulting in more staff assaults.	**Missing from Placement** Youth are running from facilities or not returning from home visits putting them at increased risk of trafficking and reoffending. The 14-day hold policy complicates the run-placement cycle.
Capacity With out-of-home placement usage increasing, youth are awaiting placement in detention or being placed in the first available bed. This results in a mismatch between youth needs and facility programming.	 " People are accountable when they own something; when they believe they belong. "