

United States Virgin Islands Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare Systems Integration Initiative

**“A Collaborative Response To Better Serve
Children & Families ”**



Presented by
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Assistant Commissioner
Department of Human Services

YOUTHS IN THE USVI

- ❑ Faced with limited resources
- ❑ Exposed to the same risk factors as mainland youths





USVI JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- *Juvenile Justice is administered under the Department of Human Services (DHS)*
 - *There is vacant “Administrator” of Juvenile Justice position available. . .*
 - *There are two District Managers (one in STX and one in STT) with social workers and a Probation Officer that work in each district*
 - *There is one juvenile detention facility for the Territory called the Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC) that accepts ALL youth remanded*
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HISTORICAL DATA

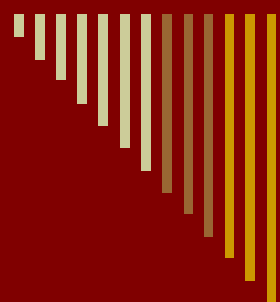
- USVI Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Symposium entitled “Strategies & Solutions for the Virgin Islands” conducted in June of 2006 (6/14- St. Croix & 6/15-St. Thomas) by the Law Enforcement Planning Commission (LEPC)
- Addressed concerns of a broad group of community entities in the success of youth in the Juvenile Justice System (JJS) & those at risk



HISTORICAL DATA



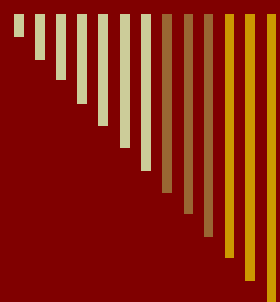
- Set the stage for gathering information on how to intervene & ensure effective programming
- Information collected provided the basis for research & data collection specific to the USVI



PROGRESSION OF INITIATIVE

September 2006, follow up meeting held, hosted by USVI Superior Court, Family Court Judge, Marjorie D. Steele, facilitated by SAG Member, Kimberley C. Gomez, & CWLA Consultant, John Tuell.

Attendees agreed to form a coalition, Virgin Islands Systems Integration Executive Committee, to examine and make improvements in integrated program development, policy development & service delivery for children, youth & families served by child welfare, juvenile justice, & related youth serving systems.



PROGRESSION OF INITIATIVE

- Three primary subcommittees were established:
 - 1) Data Collection & Information Management
 - 2) Resource and Assessment
 - 3) Legal & Policy



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

□ Data Collection & Information Management:

Conducted a Point-In-Time Survey (St. Croix District only) for all open child welfare/juvenile justice cases at the Department of Human Services (DHS) for June 29, 2007



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

Data Collection continued....

Point-In-Time Survey : Social Workers at
DHS/Division of Children, Youth &
Families (CYF), the Youth Rehabilitation
Center (YRC), & Virgin Islands
Behavioral Services (VIBS) were asked
to complete a six page survey

SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES



Data Collection continued....

Point-In-Time Survey Form
detailed:

- 1) Child's name & demographics
- 2) Abuse & juvenile justice history
- 3) School history
- 4) Mental health & substance abuse history



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

Each case was entered into a database to determine any duplication of cases (i.e. those cases that existed at both YRC and DHS), to determine which cases had entered the JJS, & to identify all of the current dual jurisdiction cases (youth entering the JJS with a history of maltreatment)



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

Data Collection continued....

Point-In-Time Survey data findings:

- Females in the JJS were disproportionately affected by abuse, representing 27% of all youth with a history of abuse, but only 12% of youth with no history of abuse
 - Over 60% of all dual-jurisdiction youth are CURRENTLY living in ether Foster Care or at YRC. 80% of all dual-jurisdiction youth have a HISTORY of living in Foster Care, at YRC or both
 - 86% of dual-jurisdiction youth are either in school or currently enrolled in GED training. Over 95% have a history of ongoing problems at school
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SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

Data Collection continued....

Point-In-Time Survey data findings:

- DHS had 347 open cases in the St. Croix District on June 29, 2007
- Of the 347 cases, 123 cases had youth who entered the Juvenile Justice System (JJS)(35.7% of all open cases)
- 19 cases of substantiated maltreatment among the 123 youth who entered the JJS. There were an additional 47 cases of unsubstantiated maltreatment, creating a total of 66 youth with a history of maltreatment (53.7% of all open JJS)
- Females in the JJS were disproportionately affected by abuse, representing 27% of all youth with a history of abuse, but only 12% of youth with no history of abuse



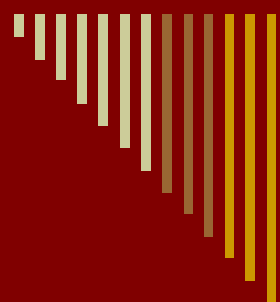
SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

Data Collection continued....

Point-In-Time Survey data findings:

- Close to half of all dual-jurisdiction have a history substance abuse and/or a mental health diagnosis.
- A total of 34 youth were incarcerated at YRC. Of the 34 youth, 21 had a history of maltreatment, representing 62% of YRC's population.
- YRC residents represented 32% of all dual-jurisdiction youth.
- There were 45 youth on probation, representing 68% of all dual-jurisdiction youth.

(Note: See handouts- Appendix A)



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

□ Resource and Assessment:

Researched & documented current assessment instruments, resources and services available to youth

Completed an inventory of existing services & resources for dual-jurisdiction youth

Completed a flowchart that maps the service delivery process in the JJ & CW systems

(Note: See handouts- Appendix B and C)



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

Resources & Assessment continued....

Identified gaps in services and staffing

Prioritized existing and needed services

Made recommendations for micro-level &
macro-level change in the child welfare &
JJS



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

□ Legal and Policy Subcommittee:

Conducted an analysis of existing federal and local statutes regarding confidentiality, sharing of information, and parental responsibility.

Completed a flowchart that maps a juvenile case court process.

Researched and collected information regarding the specific confidentiality policies of relevant government agencies (i.e. Department of Education, Attorney General's Office, DHS).

(Note: See handouts- Appendix D & E)



SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES

□ Legal and Policy Subcommittee continued:

These analyses revealed the existing laws and policies that will allow for the development of a multidisciplinary team to address the case management and sentencing recommendation needs of dual-jurisdiction youth.

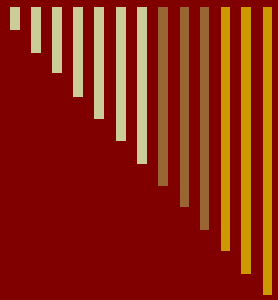
These analyses revealed parental responsibility provisions are vague and should be strengthened to mandate real consequences for neglectful parents.

(Note: See handouts- Appendix D & E)



SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

- ❑ Improved cross-system understanding of roles in child welfare and juvenile justice
 - ❑ Data-driven Decision Making – promoting efficiency and effectiveness across systems
 - ❑ Improved understanding case characteristics
 - ❑ New grant is submitted with support from the SAG for additional funds to further the work
 - ❑ Construction of protocol to ensure steps in new practice
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