

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2024

2:00 pm ET

Via Zoom



Preliminary Business

Call to Order

Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (RDEI) Committee Chair S. Jones (MD) called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm ET.

Roll Call

Executive Director Underwood, National Office, called the roll and a quorum was established.

Voting Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. Sherry Jones (MD), Commissioner, Chair
2. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner, Vice Chair
3. Brooke Montelongo (CO), Commissioner
4. Jessica Wald (ND), Designee
5. Felicia Dauway (SC), Designee
6. Charles Frieberg (SD), Commissioner

Non-Voting Members in Attendance:

1. Teecara Richardson (FL)
2. Rhonda Turner (FL)
3. April Simmons (IN)
4. Ashley Hodges (KY)
5. Abbye Tyler (MD)
6. Kimberly Heywood (UT)

Members Not in Attendance:

1. Latosha Mallory (AL)
2. Tasha Hunt (CT), Commissioner
3. Lisa Bjergaard (ND), Commissioner

National Office Staff in Attendance:

1. MaryLee Underwood, Executive Director
2. Amanee Cabbagestalk, Training and Administrative Specialist
3. Jenny Adkins, Operations and Policy Specialist
4. Joe Johnson, System Project Manager
5. Kirsten Wade, Logistics and Administrative Specialist

Agenda

C. Frieberg (SD) made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. F. Dauway (SC) seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Minutes

- F. Dauway (SC) made a motion to approve the May 20, 2024, meeting minutes. M. Casey (DE) seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (RDEI) Committee Chair Jones (MD) led a check-in activity, asking members to share one word to describe how they feel today.

Unfinished Business

Recap from Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Presentation

- Chair Jones (MD) opened the floor for members to share their feedback from the presentation on working with tribal nations presented by Marcia Good from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).
- C. Frieberg (SD) said that the training was excellent, especially regarding how to work with tribal entities and form and foster relationships. He shared that representatives from OJJDP will be in South Dakota later in the month to meet with leaders from the Oglala Sioux Tribe to discuss diversion opportunities.
- M. Casey (DE) said that reinforcing and understanding cultural differences was very important.
- C. Frieberg (SD) shared that the South Dakota Unified Judicial System diversion coordinator, Annie Brokenleg, meets monthly with eight of the nine tribes located within the borders of South Dakota to collaborate regarding juvenile treatment. He said that this collaboration provides assistance with ICJ runaway cases.
- Chair Jones (MD) added that one of the most important takeaways for her was meeting people where they are and showing respect. She also said that making connections with the OJJDP and tribal nations is very useful for collaborating on cases. She reminded committee members that even if their state does not have a reservation, they can still encounter these youth.
- J. Wald (ND) agreed and said that they will do whatever they can to help supervise those youth. She agreed that awareness is necessary to understand how to best provide culturally appropriate treatment.
- Chair Jones (MD) encouraged committee members to review the minutes from May meeting which included the presentation.

New Business

New Tableau Report Demonstration – J. Johnson (National Office)

- J. Johnson (National Office) provided a demonstration of a Tableau dashboard that showed the capabilities to provide race-related information about ICJ cases from the UNITY system.
- The dashboard includes the racial demographics related to returns, broken down by return type (absconder, accused delinquent, accused status offender, escapee, or non-delinquent runaway), gender, human trafficking, and facility. He shared that the dashboard includes a date filter for selecting specific date ranges.
- Chair Jones (MD) said that disparities are apparent between African American and white youth, and suggested such disparities are often due to how the cases are processed (runaway verses accused status offender, for example).
- Director Underwood reviewed data from 2022 and noted race-related disparities appear to be growing. It is not clear whether the changes are statistical significance.
- A. Tyler (MD) suggested it would be interesting to see the data presented by offense type and race.
- J. Johnson (National Office) said that the “offense” data field in UNITY is a text box and is not standardized, making data presentation by offense more difficult. He explained the gender and race report, indicating that the percentages listed are of the grand total of returns in UNITY rather than percentages of national populations, by gender or race.
- Director Underwood said that the 2022 data was presented slightly differently than it is in the new dashboard.
- J. Johnson (National Office) suggested that the committee determine what the standard should be moving forward. He highlighted very little data is available about human trafficking in ICJ cases because the field is optional in UNITY and very few states are opting to enter related data.

- Chair Jones (MD) said when states work with federal agents, they sometimes receive confirmation after the fact that the youth was a victim of human trafficking. Then, the ICJ Offices can work together to confirm that the youth was a victim of human trafficking in UNITY.
- Director Underwood said that a UNITY enhancement request was previously submitted to make entry of human trafficking information mandatory. However, the enhancement was not made. This committee could use this data to support efforts that request.
- J. Johnson (National Office) said that the field can be edited until the case is closed. He added that the technology vendor will be providing a quote for that enhancement so that the committees can understand the fiscal impact. He said 4,924 return cases in UNITY are missing human trafficking data.
- J. Wald (ND) expressed her support for making the human trafficking field mandatory in UNITY. She said that oftentimes, ICJ Offices work on these cases for such a short time, but they may be missing the details and circumstances of the case, especially regarding missing indigenous people. She encouraged the committee to advocate for this enhancement.
- Chair Jones (MD) emphasized that it is part of our mission to ensure youth are returned safely. Human trafficking information is very important for ICJ Offices, to reduce the likelihood of youth being not revictimized by potentially being released to their perpetrators.
- M. Casey (DE) noted that missing information can lead to speculation that may or may not be correct. He said that he noticed less data for Black youth than other groups. It is important to ensure that all groups of youth are screened for potential human trafficking.

Discuss Racial DEI Committee Projects for the Future

- Chair Jones (MD) opened the floor for the committee to discuss projects for the upcoming years. She suggested recommending a UNITY enhancement related to the human trafficking field.
- Director Underwood suggested exploring that data from an implementation science perspective, such as exploring why UNITY users are not completing the human trafficking information in UNITY. She said making the field mandatory would be a technical solution, but the issue may be more adaptive in that states may not know how to answer the question. For example, some ICJ offices might not know who conducts screenings. She also encouraged the group to expound upon the recommendation related to requiring the human trafficking field and consider other ways to educate the Commission about the important of this data.
- Chair Jones (MD) noted that the committee completed all of their goals for the preceding year. She expressed a need for a secondary contact at the OJJDP for collaborations with tribal nations.
- A. Simmons (IN) added that they have seen an influx of undocumented youth and suggested reaching out to consulates to make connections to ensure the youths are returned safely.
- Chair Jones (MD) said that Maryland has a program for these youth who need host families.
- M. Casey (DE) suggested the committee might explore whether the definitions in the ICJ Rules, such as “escapee” and “absconder,” lead to some confusion which affects the return data; for example, some youths may be defined and categorized incorrectly.

Next Steps

- Chair Jones (MD) thanked the committee members for their work on the committee this year and encouraged them to remain focused on the Commission’s mission.

Adjourn

RDEI Committee Chair Jones (MD) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 3:05 pm ET.