

11/7/08

**Recommendations to the Statewide Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents
(CFIP) Advisory Committee
from the CFIP Data Subcommittee**

Summary of accomplishments

The data subcommittee has been meeting regularly for approximately nine months, bringing together data, research and analyst staff from multiple state and non-state agencies to work collaboratively to answer questions as to the population of children of the incarcerated in this state, and the services they receive. Much of the work done has fallen into two categories; data for research and data on service provision and for service coordination. In tandem with related efforts, participants in the subcommittee have expanded and strengthened the data-share agreement between the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Corrections (DOC). Additional work has been done to develop the groundwork for a data-share agreement with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Currently, due to staff and research capacity, DSHS is housing the data shared from DSHS and DOC for this project and providing analysis to DSHS and other agencies, including populations and services. Data-sharing is essential due to the fact that currently no data system tracks whether children have an incarcerated parent. It is necessary to match data across systems (while protecting that data using standard safeguards) to determine where children of the incarcerated are, what services they receive, what their needs are and therefore how they can be served more effectively.

The recommendations below were developed by the data subcommittee, which includes participation by DSHS, DOC, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), OSPI, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Washington State Department of Veteran's Affairs (WDVA), Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), and others.

Recommendation 1:

To strengthen and continue data-share work on CFIP for the purpose of research

Reason: E2SHB 1422 requires the agencies to collect data on children of the incarcerated and services they receive. Collecting this data over time has the potential to inform when and how services are provided to families affected by incarceration.

State agencies	Support needed from the Legislature
1) State agencies named in E2SHB 1422 should continue to work on creating and improving data-share agreements for the purpose of	Legislators should consider providing additional resources to the state agencies working on

<p>research, in order to have a clearer idea as to the population of children of incarcerated parents, what their needs are, and what services are effective in reducing negative health outcomes (including incarceration and poor school outcomes) for children and parents. This includes the creation of a data-share agreement between the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and possible data-share agreements between DSHS and the Administrative Office of the Courts and/or Washington State Department of Veteran’s Affairs. All databases created by the fusion of data from more than one agency will be made accessible for research by the agencies who added data into the database.</p>	<p>this issue in order to bolster and strengthen their research capacity and enable the work described.</p>
<p>2) In relation to the data-sharing work described above, merging jail data and related information from the Washington Association of Sheriff’s and Policy Chiefs (WASPC) would enable state data projects on Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents (CFIP) to more accurately describe the population affected by parental incarceration, and include data from jail inmates and their families. Jail inmates represent the majority of those who experience incarceration.</p>	<p>In order for this to occur, RCW 10.98.130 would need to be modified by legislative work to allow the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to be the conduit of jail data to agencies other than DOC and include in the range of permissible uses the sharing of identified booking and release data with DSHS staff for service planning, program planning, program evaluation, and research purposes.</p>
<p>3) To the extent possible, aggregate data reports from agencies on CFIP populations and services should break out data by population, including region/county, race/ethnicity, and type of crime committed by the parent(s) in order to examine the ways in which certain communities may be disproportionately impacted by parental incarceration. Data reports should also include, to the extent possible, services provided to parents by multiple agencies (including programs and services to offenders and offender’s families),</p>	

to children and to their caregivers.	
<p>4) Although the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is not a named agency in E2SHB 1422, WDVA is working to assist incarcerated veterans, and is exploring ways in which they could also provide information and referrals to their families. To that end, WDVA will work towards providing data reports to the CFIP data subcommittee and advisory committee from their incarcerated veteran’s projects with county jails, potentially including data on families affected in order to gain a clearer picture of how veterans and their families are impacted by parental incarceration statewide. WDVA will also explore with DOC the possibility of updating the data match between WDVA and DOC to gain a current count of the number of veterans served by the DOC system.</p>	

Recommendation 2:

To strengthen and continue data-share work on CFIP for the purpose of service-level data sharing to coordinate and provide services to families

Reason: It is clear from initial data that children and families affected by parental incarceration come to the attention of and receive services from multiple state and non-state agencies and service providers. However these services are not systematically coordinated, and confusion as well as multiple federal and state laws leads to a situation in which care providers often do not reach across agency lines to share basic information and allow for the care coordination that can occur under existing laws. Increased coordination of services has the potential to reduce the cost of services overall and meet needs more effectively, since some services may be duplicated and some families may not be referred to the services they need in order to stabilize.

State Agencies	Support Needed from the Legislature
<p>1) State agencies named in E2SHB 1422 should create one or more questions in their data systems to pick up on whether a child that is being served has a parent who is currently or historically incarcerated, and/or determine</p>	<p>Legislators should consider providing additional resources to the state agencies involved in this effort so that the agencies are able to consistently add</p>

<p>whether a parent that is incarcerated has a child, and if so where that child is located and the child’s age or date of birth. Agencies should create trainings for staff to help staff appropriately ask these questions without increasing stigma, with the aim of assessing needs and providing or referring the family to needed services provided by state and non-state agencies. Answering such questions should be optional, and services provided by the agencies to families should not be contingent on answering the question.</p>	<p>questions into their data systems and provide related training to staff.</p>
<p>2) As required by SB 6538, state agencies should ensure that they are utilizing a common Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-compliant release of information form with clients in order to allow for the exchange of protected information between staff at different agencies, to allow for service provision to be coordinated and provided by multiple agencies. State agencies should also ensure that staff is aware of the need for cross-agency coordination and the utilization of common release of information forms.</p>	<p>Due to the fact that utilizing a common release of information will not unto itself completely address the issue of service-level data sharing, legislators should consider establishing a cross-agency committee with legislative authority to bring together all of the existing service-level data sharing agreements between agencies and related legislation, determine where gaps exist, and formulate/implement an overarching agreement between key agencies involved in this effort to allow for and encourage the sharing of information for the coordination of services within the limits of state and federal law.</p>