POLK COUNTY DECATEGORIZATION

FY23

CHILD WELFARE & JUVENILE JUSTICE

SERVICES PLAN

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

**“To promote a cooperative and collaborative planning process that strives to provide and support an efficient and effective continuum of service delivery to Polk County children and families.”**

* **Project Name: Polk County Decategorization**
* **Participating Counties: Polk**
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* **Date of Report: August, 2022**

Staff & Contractors

* **Teresa K.D. Burke - Decat Project Coordinator**
* **Veronica Russell - Program Assistant & Resource Specialist**
* **Cassie Kilgore – Projects & CPPC Coordinator**
* **TBD – Restorative Justice & Cultural Equity Coordinator**

**POLK COUNTY DECATEGORIZATION FY 23**

**CHILD WELFARE & JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES PLAN**

**Demographics and Other Relevant Polk County Data**

The Polk Decategorization Board and Staff is always reviewing and strategizing on ways to meet the needs of our County. Observing certain data points annually is one way we can ensure that we are focusing on the most effective strategies for the most appropriate demographics. Below is a summary of the composition of our population including Child Welfare abuse and neglect reports, Education statistics, Early Childhood information, Juvenile Justice data, and more, which will, in part, guide our work into FY23.

* **Population:** The estimated population of Polk County as of July 1, 2021, was 496,844 from the U.S. Census Bureau, although the World Population Review reflects 498,817 for 2021. The demographics are: White Non-Latino – 84.1%, Black or African American alone – 7.7%, Native American Indian/Alaska Native - .4%, Asian alone – 5.2%, native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - .1%, Two or More races – 2.6%, Hispanic or Latino – 9.1%. *(Census.gov.)* The estimated 2020 child population for Polk County is 122,180, or 16.8% of the state’s child population. *(2020 Woods & Poole Population Information.)*
* **Child Welfare Numbers:** The total number of Assessed Reports of Child Neglect and Abuse in CY2021 for Polk County: 949 went through the Family Assessment, 2,986 were Unconfirmed (compared to 2,404 in CY2020), 195 were Confirmed (compared to 176 in CY2020), and 1,014 were Founded (compared to 880 in CY2019), for a total of 5,144, which is 759 reports higher than 2020. The most frequent Type of Abuses reported, in order of highest occurrence, was Denial of Critical Care (Neglect – 1,453), Exposure to Dangerous Substance (564), Physical Abuse (183), Presence of Illegal Drugs in the Child’s System (240), and Sexual Abuse (88). *(DHHS CY2021 Child Welfare Data Report.)*
* **Education:** The Des Moines Independent Community School District (or Des Moines Public Schools or DMPS) is the state’s largest school district, with an enrollment of 31,026 students in the 2021 - 2022 school year, (compared to 31,621 in the 2020 – 2021 school year and 32,545 students in the 2019 - 2020 school year.) Approximately 76% of the children in the Des Moines Public Schools received Free or Reduced Fare lunches in the 2021 - 2022 school year. Most inner-city schools now have 100% of their students receiving Free or Reduced Fare lunches. The demographics in the Des Moines Public Schools continue to become more diverse. Whites make up 34.7% of the schools’ population while 29.2% are Hispanic, 20.6% are African American and 8.1% are Asian & Pacific Islander. There are over 100 different languages and dialects spoken in the Des Moines Public Schools, with 22.7% of the students being English Language Learners. Children identified as Special Education make up 14.9% of the DMPS population. *(DMPS Website, Facts & Figures.)* Preschool enrollment for children ages 3 to 4 is 43.1% in Polk County. *(Data Center, KidsCount.org.)* Polk County, overall, experiences a Free or Reduced Fare Lunch eligibility of 47.15% in the 2021-2022 school year for those schools that report to Heartland AEA. Average daily attendance for Des Moines Public School students is 87.3% for the 2020-2021 school year. The next lowest attendance rate in Polk County for the 20-21 school year is the Saydel district at 93%. West Des Moines and Johnston districts had the highest Polk County public school attendance rates at 96.6%. The 2021 4-year cohort graduation rate for Des Moines Public Schools was 75.2% while the 4-year cohort graduation rate for Polk County (Heartland AEA) was 87.44%. North Polk district had the highest 4-year cohort graduation rate at 99.3% in 2021. The 4-year cohort graduation rate for African American students in Des Moines Public Schools was 71.7%, for Latinos was 69.6% and for whites was 78.9% and for Asians was 88.5%. For females, the 4-year cohort graduation rate for Des Moines Public Schools was 78.9% and 71.9% for males. *(Iowa Department of Education website data center.)*
* **Early Childhood:** Polk County experienced a Low-Birth-Weight rate of 7.6% in 2019 compared to 6.7% in 2017 (live births weighing less than 5.5 pounds at birth.) Infant Mortality dropped around 40% between 2016 and 2019, from 8.5 deaths per 1000 of infants before age 1 in 2016, down to 5.2 deaths per 1000 in 2019. The percentage of live births where the mother began prenatal care during the first trimester was 84.6% in 2019. (*Data Center, KidsCount.org.*) The percentage of Polk County children ages 0-17 who lived at or below the poverty level in 2019 was 11.9%, a small increase of .2 percentage points from 2018. The percentage of children ages 0-4 receiving WIC services rose from 21.2% in 2015 to 25.9% in 2016, and to 26.9% in 2017, but fell to 21.6% in 2019. Also, in Polk County in 2019, .6% of individuals received Family Investment Program (FIP) services and 12.5% received Food Assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), both steadily decreasing since 2013. The percentage of families with children headed by a single parent in Polk County is 34.2%. (*Data Center, KidsCount.org.*)
* **African Americans in Polk County:** In 2020, 27.75% of all African Americans in the state of Iowa resided in Polk County, and they comprise 7.7% of the total population for our county. The population of African Americans grew in Polk County from 18,113 in 2000 to 36,623 in 2020. The percent of African Americans living in Iowa who reside in the city of Des Moines is 18.95, which is the largest population of African Americans in any city in Iowa. The median income of African American families in Iowa in 2019 was $35,548, compared to the $61,691 overall median income of families in Iowa. This gap narrowed substantially from the past 3 years. *(State Data Center of Iowa, African Americans in Iowa: 2022.)*
* **Latinos in Polk County:** In 2020, 21.4% (42,477 out of 198,550) of all Latinos living in Iowa resided in Polk County, making it the largest population of Latinos in any Iowa county. *(State Data Center of Iowa, Latinos in Iowa: 2020.)* Although Latinos make up 9.1% of the Polk County general population, they make up 29.2% of the student population in Des Moines Public Schools. *(DMPS Website, Facts & Figures)*
* **Asians and Pacific Islanders in Polk County:** 30.1% (24,510 out of 81,387) of Iowa residents who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander live in Polk County, which is the largest population of this race of any Iowa County. *(State Data Center of Iowa, Asian/Pacific Americans in Iowa: 2022.)* Asian/Pacific Islanders make up 5.3% of the Polk County population and they make up 8.1% of the student population at DMPS. *(DMPS Website, Facts & Figures.)*
* **Polk County Juvenile Law Violation Complaints:** Complaints are law violations that law enforcement refers to Juvenile Court Services (JCS). A single complaint may include multiple violations. In FY21, there were 1234 complaints referred to JCS in Polk County for youth, compared to 1350 in FY20, and 1450 in FY19. Of that number, 459 involved African American youth (compared to 617 in FY20), 562 involved white youth (compared to 486 in FY20) and 84 involved Hispanic Youth (compared to 139 in FY20). The age demographics for Complaints are: 36 for ages 11 and under, 176 for ages 12-13, 377 for ages 14-15, and 623 for ages 16-17. In addition, 864 of the complaints were for Males and 364 for Females. *(CJJP, Polk County Select Juvenile Justice System Planning Data.)*
* **Polk County Juvenile Law Violation Petitions:** The Filing of a Petition represents a request for formal court proceedings. The petition contains allegations of the child's delinquent acts. After the filing of the petition there will be one or more hearings--a waiver hearing and an adjudicatory hearing. There were 301 petitions filed in FY21 in Polk County for juvenile cases (compared to 373 in FY20), 171 of which were cases for African American youth (compared to 208 in FY20) and 79 of which were cases for white youth (compared to 91 in FY20) and 15 for Latino youth (compared to 35 in FY20). The age demographics for Petitions in FY21 are: 25 for ages 12-13, 122 for ages 14-15, and 102 for ages 16-17. Males made up 256 of the petitions while Females made up 45. *(CJJP, Polk County Select Juvenile Justice System Planning Data.)*
* **Polk County Juvenile Informal Adjustment Agreements:** An informal adjustment is an agreement where the child and the child's parents must agree to the terms required in an informal adjustment agreement. The agreement always requires that the child admit the charges. In addition, the typical agreement requires (1) non-judicial probation in which the child is to abide by conditions of behavior imposed under the probation or (2) treatment services. Typically, if a child obeys the conditions of the informal adjustment a petition is not filed, and the child is released from the oversight of the juvenile court. In FY21 for Polk County, there were 203 Informal Adjustment Agreements administered by Juvenile Court Services (compared to 235 in FY20), of which 108 were for white youth (compared to 81 in FY20), 56 were for African American youth (compared to 96 in FY20), and 21 were for Hispanic youth (compared to 39 in FY220). The age demographics for Informal Adjustment Agreements in Polk County for FY21 are: 12 for ages 11 and under, 30 for ages 12-13, 51 for ages 14-15, and 102 for ages 16-17. Informal Petitions for Males for this period numbered 147 and Females numbered 55. *(CJJP, Polk County Select Juvenile Justice System Planning Data.)*
* **Polk County Juvenile Charges/Allegations:** A charge/allegation is a description of a law violation on a complaint. There may be one or more charges/allegations on one complaint. For Polk County in FY21, a total of 1,636 charges/allegations occurred for youth. Noteworthy details for FY21 Charges/Allegations include: *(CJJP, Polk County Select Juvenile Justice System Planning Data.)*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Charges/Allegations** | **All** | **AA** | **White** | **Hispanic** | **Asian** | **<=11** | **12-13** | **14-15** | **16-17** | **Males** | **Females** |
| **Crime Class\*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Felony (all types) | 279 | 138 | 89 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 84 | 150 | 244 | 35 |
| Aggravated Misdemeanor | 248 | 124 | 92 | 11 | 0 | 14 | 11 | 73 | 146 | 201 | 47 |
| Serious Misdemeanor | 416 | 166 | 174 | 38 | 12 | 12 | 49 | 131 | 219 | 266 | 150 |
| Simple Misdemeanor | 602 | 232 | 268 | 39 | 21 | 14 | 100 | 209 | 273 | 386 | 216 |
| **Crime Type\*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Violent | 474 | 200 | 182 | 39 | 0 | 18 | 85 | 169 | 200 | 310 | 164 |
| Property | 591 | 270 | 237 | 34 | 13 | 31 | 79 | 186 | 288 | 435 | 156 |
| Drug | 229 | 69 | 117 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 51 | 169 | 161 | 68 |
| **Crime Sub-Type\*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Assault | 391 | 163 | 158 | 32 | 0 | 15 | 77 | 142 | 157 | 233 | 158 |
| Burglary | 91 | 36 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 57 | 83 | 0 |
| Drug Possession | 198 | 53 | 108 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 143 | 136 | 62 |
| Robbery/Stolen Property/Theft | 323 | 167 | 109 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 41 | 110 | 161 | 226 | 97 |
| Vandalism | 154 | 52 | 76 | 16 | 0 | 12 | 30 | 50 | 60 | 110 | 44 |
| Weapons | 43 | 27 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 40 | 0 |

\*Not inclusive of all Crime Classes, Crime Types, nor all Sub-Types.

* **General Polk County Health:** Following are Polk County Health experiences in 2021, especially the impact Covid had on community health, based on Key Informant and Community Based surveys from a special Community Health Needs Assessment *(2021 Community Health Needs Assessment, PRC Custom Research)*:
  + 28.7% of those surveyed were unable to pay cash for a $400 emergency expense
  + 35.2% surveyed expressed worry/stress over rent/mortgage in the past year
  + 46.8% surveyed expressed difficulty accessing health care in the past year
  + 19.5% surveyed indicated that cost prevented getting prescriptions in the past year
  + 22.1% surveyed had difficulty scheduling doctor appointments in the past year
  + 13.5% surveyed indicated they had 2 or more ER visits in the past year
  + 17.8% surveyed claimed to be victim of intimate partner violence
  + Of those surveyed, 26.3% claimed to have “fair/poor” mental health, 38.6% claimed to have diagnosed depression, 45% claimed to have chronic depression (2+ years), and 22.2% claimed that a typical day is “extremely/very” stressful
  + 38% surveyed reported excessive drinking
  + 45.3% surveyed reported being personally impacted by substance abuse
* **Refugees in Polk County:** Des Moines, Iowa is a Refugee Resettlement Community. Between October 1, 2008, and March 31, 2014, 29,445 Refugees resettled in Iowa, of which 2,704 were resettled in the Des Moines area. Although complete data is not available, it is estimated that there were 5,000 to 7,000 secondary migrant Refugees who moved into Polk County during that same period. Although the State of Iowa is still accepting Refugees for Resettlement, it is difficult to determine how many refugees/former refugees currently reside in Polk County due to secondary resettlement. Most currently, 900 Afghan refugees have made their home in Iowa, a significant portion in Polk County. IBRS is looking to find sponsors for those currently fleeing the Ukraine, which will be the next population of refugees we can expect. *(IDHHS, Bureau of Refugee Services website.)* Although recent numbers of Refugees resettled in Polk County are unknown, many Ethnic Community-Based Organizations have started here to support specific cultural and language groups.

**Overview of Polk Decategorization for FY23**

Polk Decat includes support of initiatives for Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) and the Minority Youth & Family Initiatives (MYFI). Polk County is Iowa’s most populous county and arguably the most diverse. Sometimes it seems as though we must be all things to all people. Since that is not possible, we focus on certain areas, based partly on the demographics described above and which are described in our mission statements, goals and objectives below.

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| **Polk Decat Mission:**  “To promote a cooperative and collaborative process that strives to provide and support an efficient and effective continuum of service delivery to Polk County children and families involved in, or at risk of being involved in, the child welfare and/or juvenile justice system.”  Polk Decat Goals:   * Tailoring services to the individual needs of children and families. * Redirecting funding toward preventive, family, neighborhood and community-based services. * Reducing reliance on out-of-home and out-of-community placements. * Promoting community planning, collaboration, and governance of service systems; and * Developing service systems that more accurately reflect the needs of the children and families within the communities served.   Polk Decat Focus Areas (Objectives):   * Supporting the efforts, communication and outreach of DHHS and JCS in our community * Providing specific resources and supports to DHHS and JCS staff and clients that increase reunification and attainment of independent, safe and stable community living * Strengthening efforts related to the understanding and impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma Informed Services and Building Resiliency * Building and supporting culturally and linguistically appropriate resources for Refugee and Immigrant families and children * Addressing disproportionality of system-involved African Americans in a culturally responsive manner * Supporting youth coming out of group/foster care transitioning to adulthood * Supporting mental, emotional, physical and financial well-being as they relate to building healthy families and children * Supporting community agencies, organizations and individuals who provide services to systems involved families and children, who prevent systems involvement and who build community leadership in these areas * Building and strengthening community collaborations and resources - Connecting people to resources, resources to resources, and people to people * Building and supporting innovative approaches that meet the needs of healthy children and families * Collecting and analyzing data and information from supported services to determine program efficacy * Utilizing data and analysis to inform practice, policy and services * Maintaining contract and fiduciary fidelity |
| **Polk CPPC Mission:**  “Working together to strengthen families and protect kids from neglect & abuse.”  Polk CPPC Goals:  CPPC Four Strategies:   * Shared Decision Making: Provide leadership in collaborative efforts that promote community responsibility for the safety and well-being of children. * Neighborhood & Community Networking: Promote cooperation and form alliances to provide more accessible and relevant informal and professional supports, services and resources for families whose children are at risk of abuse and neglect. * Individualized Course of Action: Genuinely engage families and youth to identify strengths, resources, and supports to reduce barriers and help families succeed. * Policy and Practice Change: Improve policies and practices that reduce barriers and increase accessibility and relevance of service that lead to positive family outcomes.   Polk CPPC Focus Areas (Objectives):   * Investing in and supporting community events, groups, trainings and programs that are free to attend and family friendly, and that focus on the following:   + Parent Engagement, Parent Skill Building, Parent Advocacy   + Trauma Informed, Resiliency Building, Mental Health Awareness   + Neighborhood Leadership, Community Advocacy Groups   + Community Justice, Addressing Disproportionality, Building Equity   + Youth Skill Building, Transitioning Out of Foster Care and/or into Adulthood, Youth Advocacy * Investing in, hosting, and sponsoring community trainings and information-sharing sessions that build the skills of agencies and their team members who provide direct care to the families and children in the community. * Providing a hub of resources online, and at in-person CPPC gatherings, to Social Work and Juvenile Court System Staff, local providers, as well as parents and families in the community. * Seeking constant collaboration, cooperation, and partnership with local agencies who provide services to and are connected with children and families at risk of child abuse or system involvement. The agencies specifically identified by Polk County to be of upmost importance are:   + Des Moines Public Schools   + Des Moines Police Department   + Faith Based Non-Profits/Organizations   + City, County and State Agencies and Officials   + Mental and Physical Health Providers   + Substance Abuse, Domestic Abuse and other Advocacy Agencies   + Refugee, Latino, and African American Advocacy Groups * Addressing disproportionality in both the Child Welfare and Juvenile Court Systems, in conjunction with other Cultural Equity efforts in the Des Moines Service Area. |
| **Polk MYFI Mission:**  “All Polk County Black/African American children and youth who experience an out-of-home placement maintain a sense of belonging to family and community and achieve timely permanency through reunification, placement or guardianship with relatives or fictive kin or other appropriate person.”  Polk MYFI Goals:   * Continuously collaborating with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to analyze the racial and ethnic disparities that exist to constantly improve services and delivery that provide equitable outcomes   Polk MYFI Focus Areas (Objectives):   * Analyzing current practices and policies that may contribute to the continuous disproportionality in the DHHS and JCS system and making the necessary changes to promote a more equitable system * Accelerate efforts to move youth of color to least restrictive, most appropriate level of care * Increase investment in families of color who support and care for youth * Developing and supporting strengths based, culturally responsive and healing-centered culture and workforce at both JCS and DHHS |

Based on the Missions, Goals and Objectives, as well as stated demographics information, FY23 will involve the following approaches and activities:

Polk Decat will continue to diligently monitor and track all contract expenses, especially Wraparound expenses, where there are a variety of types and levels of purchases of services and goods provided to children and families who are DHHS involved, including kinship or fictive kin caregivers, and youth involved in Juvenile Court Services. Wraparound Services involve a labor-intensive process, especially due to the high volume of requests, and it is important to keep up on tracking expenses. In FY19, with the re-procurement of a new Fiscal Agent contract, we were better able to make targeted purchases specific to client and caregiver needs, such as through the ordering, delivery and assembly of beds and cribs (when possible) and on-line purchasing and shipping directly to the persons in need. This has become especially important during Covid with in-person meeting restrictions that ordering and direct delivery of concrete supports are provided safely. The enhanced purchasing and tracking will be continued into FY23.

Issues related to trauma and acclimation to U.S. life of refugees and immigrants in Polk County will continue to be a focus for Polk Decat in FY23, especially issues related to cultural differences in parenting practices which can precipitate involvement in Child Welfare and/or Juvenile Court Services. The Refugee Immigrant Guide (RIG) contract will continue to support this vulnerable population with culturally sensitive and responsive interpretation and culture-brokering services.

African Americans continue to experience the highest disproportionate contact in both the Child Welfare and Juvenile Court Services systems. DHHS and JCS leadership in Polk are teaming with Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines Law Enforcement, and other agency, faith-based and community leaders to collaborate on improving outcomes for African Americans. In FY17, Polk Decat established a combination Restorative Justice & Cultural Equity Coordinator position to synchronize these efforts across sectors and this role will continue into FY23. Activities supported by this role include: African American Case Consultation Team (AACCT, formerly known as the African American Case Review Team) for DHHS and JCS, mentoring, supports and incentives for Social Work college students of color, development and implementation of cultural trainings for staff and community partners, IDI Implicit Bias assessments and follow-up consultation, data comparison and research, plus coordination of action items and initiatives related to the Polk Equity team (formerly the Breakthrough Series Collaborative and MYFI team).

A growing focus for Polk Decategorization and CPPC over the past 6 years has been involvement in the Central Iowa ACEs 360 Coalition and supporting activities related to communicating the causes of Adverse Childhood Experiences, trauma, resiliency, psychoeducation and sharing practical applications of what trauma-informed care looks like. Public-private partnerships have been developed over the past 6 years which provide technical assistance on 2 major projects: Trauma Informed Services in Polk County Detention and addressing Secondary Traumatic Stress/Vicarious Trauma in the workplace. As a member of Central Iowa ACEs, we believe that building capacity and strength in trauma-informed supervision leads to more trauma-informed workers who, in turn, can provide better services to their clients. Polk Decat also has been the main supporter of the ACEs 360 Learning Circles, which brings ACEs and Trauma experts to our community for trainings. These efforts will continue into FY23 with a focus on learning about the impacts of trauma and building competencies on mitigation and responses to various forms of trauma.

Polk Decat contracts provide options for community-based services for system-involved children and families as well as those services that are preventive in nature. The Polk Decat board takes seriously the charge to minimize system involvement, shorten lengths of stays in the system, and maximize wraparound services. This will continue to be a hallmark of our approach in FY23 through many of our contracted services, such as the Re-entry Aftercare services to promote successful integration back into the community for JCS youth discharged from group care and the State Training School, JCS youth transition planning, juvenile community based sex offender treatment, preventive law and guidance supporting civil issues that help lead to safe case closure for Child Welfare clients, early services programming/case management for very young juvenile offenders, community service and sanctions learning, etc.

Community and agency partners are interested in learning more about resources within the community, connecting people to resources, resources to resources and people to people. Polk Decat has traditionally done this through our Connections and Resources Exchange (CAREs, formerly known as Provider’s Advisory), giving space to various resource contacts to present on their services and for networking opportunities. With the reduction in impact of Covid-19 on gatherings, Decat meetings will once again convene mostly in person, with some exceptions based on transportation and convenience. The CPPC and Project Coordinator will also continue to share information on local resources and events to our distribution of over 500 service providers and community members. The Decat Admin Assistant and the Project/CPPC Coordinator will also continue to serve as the hub of resource information and connection for Social Workers and JCOs.

There are more funds in FY23 for Polk Decat than in the previous 7 years. FY21 and 22 State Carry-over funds, as well as some PSSF and MYFI funds, will be used to support the DCAT5-19-001, the Fiscal Agent for Wraparound Services contract, to support supports to families that result from the Child Safety Conferences as well as relative placements in FY23. Polk Decat partners with DHHS Child Welfare and Volunteer Coordination Services to obtain and supply assistance to kinship caregivers within the first 30 days of placement change, when the need is most acute. With the implementation of FFPSA related initiatives, DHHS Child Welfare has made great strides in reducing removals and helping families through Child Safety Conferences. This includes shifting the use of funds to provide wraparound concrete supports so children can stay at home safely.

Polk Decat will leverage the Project/CPPC Coordinator role within the community to assist agency/organization partners in building capacity and coordinating trainings related to trauma informed care and resiliency building, implicit bias and addressing disproportionate outcomes for people of color, build supports for families, and other trainings as requested by the Decat Steering Committee/Shared Decision Making Team.

**Polk Decategorization Structure**

**Executive Committee**

* Chair - DHHS Des Moines Service Area Manager – Jana Rhoads
* Chief Juvenile Court Officer, 5th Judicial District – John Hawkins
* Polk County Community Family & Youth Services Director – Eric Kool
* Polk County Attorney’s Office – Juvenile Division Bureau Chief – Andrea Vitzthum
* Representative from the Decat Steering/Shared Decision Making Committee – Tamra Jurgemeyer, Statewide Director of the Child Advocacy Centers
* Meets the second Thursday of each month

**Steering Committee/Shared Decision Making Team**

* Partnership of community agencies, associations and community members which serves as a shared decision making team
* Representative to the Executive Committee selected every other year
* Monitors Decat funded activities
* Provides transparency to the Executive Board funding decisions
* Assists in developing and continued review of Decat and CPPC focus
* Identifies Requests for Information
* Source for RFP and community grants development and bid reviews
* Meets quarterly “in-person” and reviews small grants and requests as needed via email

**Connection And Resources Exchange (CARE) formerly Providers Advisory and CPPC Neighborhood Networking**

* Comprised of local Service Providers and other interested community partners who wish to learn about local service providers
* Identifies issues, gaps and barriers in the system and in the Provider community
* Develops plan and takes action steps on agreed-upon priority issues
* Highlights resources within the community for mutual edification
* Forum for learning about community resources, trainings and networking/connecting
* Meets the third Wednesday of the month, 9 months out of each year

**Equity Efforts**

* Community and Strategic Planning (CASP) Effort is the Iowa State Court Administrator’s Office state plan addressing disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in the juvenile justice system. The Polk CASP Collaborative has not met for over two years, although it hoped we can reconvene a group in the upcoming months. It has been comprised members from Juvenile Court Judges, JCS Staff, Detention staff, Des Moines Police Department, Des Moines Public Schools, County Attorney and other strategic community members to research, analyze and seek solutions to disproportionality, especially related to Intake and Detention. One outcome of the focus of this group has been the new Pre-Arrest Diversion Case Manager position who works with the Des Moines Police Department on a 3-Tier division approach to keeping first time, low risk offenders from system entry but, at the same time, referring them to local, community services or activities based on their needs and/or interest.
* The Polk Equity Team (a county-specific effort as part of the DHHS state-wide Breakthrough Series Collaborative, or BSC) addresses the disparate outcomes for African Americans in the Child Welfare system. This group consists of system and community partners, re-organized by the RJCE Coordinator in FY20. The group will review pertinent DHHS data as well as recommendations from the AACCT and other local equity efforts, developing strategies and targeting specific areas.
* African American Case Consultation Team (AACCT) coordination and management for both DHHS, although it is currently on hold for JCS. Efforts will be made to gather more information from the results of the case consultations, to share that data and to review how we can use what we have learned to impact implicit bias in every day work based on recommendations from these teams.
* The Student Mentoring project is comprised of a team of volunteers that will assist students of color pursuing social work degrees. Often, students of color attending college are the first generation in their families to continue into higher education. Although the Mentoring program was suspended in FY22 due to lack of mentor involvement, DMACC has recently reached out to determine if we can collaborate again as they now have staff available to assist.
* The Restorative Justice & Cultural Equity (RJCE) Coordinator assists these teams with synchronizing efforts, data, research, trainings and grant funding between the various institutions, agencies, and organizations.

**Funding**

Polk Decat receives DHHS and JCS state, and PSSF carry-over funds to cover the bulk of its contracts. Other funding sources include the annual Polk Decat allocation, CPPC, and Minority Youth & Family Initiatives (MYFI). The funding levels that were effective July 1, 2022, for Fiscal Year 23 include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| DHHS State (FY21): | $527,135.94 |
| JCS State (FY21 & FY22): | $2,152,096.87 |
| PSSF (FFY23): | $8,250.00 |
| MYFI FY23: | $150,000.00 |
| DCAT Allocation (combined FY21, FY22, & FY23): | $872,952.81 |
| CPPC FY23: | $20,000.00 |
| DCAT from Polk County FY23 | $30,000.00 |
| **Total** | **$3,760,435.62** |

**Federal Community Partnerships (CPPC) Funds**

Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) funds are again available for FY23. In tandem with some Decat Allocation and MYFI funds, the following will be supported:

* Community activities/events and trainings specific to addressing disproportionate system involvement & disparate outcomes for people of color, Adverse Childhood Experiences & Trauma-Informed Care, including topic such as Secondary Traumatic Stress & Complex PTSD, and opportunities for learning practical applications for Trauma-informed Care and resiliency building for both professionals and community members at large, and implementation of Trauma Informed Supervision trainings.
* Parent skill-building and engagement activities, with emphasis on expanding Parent Cafes in Polk County
* Community involvement in reducing disproportionality and disparate outcomes for African Americans involved in Child Welfare
* Services and activities related to youth aging out of foster care
* Community events that are family friendly, fostering parent engagement and positive child interactions, and develop community leadership related to these strategies
* Culturally & linguistically appropriate services for refugees and immigrants

**Minority Youth & Family Initiatives (MYFI)**

MYFI funds are specific to addressing and reducing disproportionality of African Americans in the Child Welfare system. MYFI funds are currently used to support this initiative in the following contracts: Restorative Justice & Cultural Equity Coordination Services, Student Support Services in Des Moines Public Schools, Preventive Law & Guidance and Fiscal Agent for Wraparound Services.

**Promoting Safe & Stable Families (PSSF) Funds**

FY23 PSSF funds available to Polk Decat are different than the Reunification PSSF funds provided in the past. The PSSF funds available for this fiscal year can assist in supporting needs identified from Child Safety Conferences that assist families to keep children safely in the home. The PSSF funds will be included in the Fiscal Agent for Wraparound Services contract where the use of the funds can be monitored closely.

**Polk County FY23 Contracts**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Contract #** | **Contract Name** | **Contractor** | **FY23 Funding Level** | **Contract Description** |
| DCAT5-18-001 | Early Services Program (ESP) | Orchard Place | $130,217.00 | To provide case management and coordination of services to young offenders ages 12 and under that include wraparound services that address issues that led to early system involvement and prevent recidivism. |
| DCAT5-18-003 | Trauma Informed Services for Youth in Polk County Detention | Lutheran Services in Iowa | $100,000.00 | Provide short-term trauma-informed programming, such as assessment, somatic therapies, and unit group meetings for youth in Polk County Detention in order to improve self-regulation, especially at court, to address trauma(s) experienced by the youth, and to make recommendations for services post-discharge. |
| DCAT5-18-008 | Sanctions Learning Services | Orchard Place | $145,858.00 | To enable Juvenile Court Services in Polk County with accountability options for clients and programming which helps them learn reasoning skills to avoid further problem behaviors. This includes options for fulfilling Community Service requirements and victim impact learning. |
| DCAT5-19-001 | Fiscal Agent Services | Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Centers | $302,000.00 | Provide fiscal agent administration for DHHS and JCS wraparound Flex Funds which provides concrete supports to clients and caregivers as well as supports that improve & enhance delivery of services |
| DCAT5-19-002 | Psychological Evaluations | Innovative Learning Professionals, LLC | $100,000.00 | To provide psychological evaluations for JCS youth, especially for those in detention, to determine the best and appropriate course of action, treatment and placement. |
| DCAT5-19-003 | Preventive Law & Guidance | Iowa Legal Aid | $65,000.00 | Services aimed to educate DHHS Transition-aged youth and at-risk families on lessening the legal pitfalls that occur in daily living, such as resolving rental disputes, purchasing cell phone plans, cars, etc., seeking Guardianship or Conservatorships, or other legal matters not part of Attorney assistance related to involvement with Child Welfare such as Guardian ad Litem services. |
| DCAT5-20-004 | Criminal Records Checks | Polk County Attorney’s Office | $12,000.00 | Provide Criminal Records checks for the Agency on persons that the Agency is involved with and may be using as possible placements of children |
| DCAT5-20-005 | Diversion & Mediation Services | Polk County Attorney’s Office | $25,000.00 | To provide mediation services in order to divert a family from going to court or to help a family through the court process, as well as consultation with SWs and their families regarding the risks of non-compliance. |
| DCAT5-21-045 | Refugee Immigrant Guide Coordination Services | Visiting Nurse Services, dba EveryStep | $50,000.00 | Coordinate identification, training and dispatch for specialized Refugee Immigrant Guides, or RIGs, who will assist Social Workers and Juvenile Court Officers with system involved families and youth with interpretation and pre- and post-conferencing to facilitate successful case closure. They will also assist at-risk refugee and immigrant families in the community in efforts to avoid system involvement. |
| DCAT5-22-001 | Juvenile Sex Offender Treatment | Woodward Youth Corporation | $246,880.00 | Provide comprehensive assessment and community based treatment services for juvenile sex offenders, including GPS monitoring, polygraph testing, group and individual counseling, safety plan development and pro-social activities. |
| DCAT5-22-112 | JCS Reentry Aftercare Services | Boys Town of Iowa | $262,529.00 | For the provision of evidence-based Reentry Aftercare Services for the 5th Judicial District designed to meet the devised goals of reducing recidivism and helping youth adults maintain stable self-sufficiency and engaging families/caregivers. |
| DCAT5-22-116 | JCS Transition Youth Services | Children & Families of Iowa | $111,830.00 | For the provision of Youth Transition Planning Meeting Facilitation Services for the 5th Judicial District designed to meet the goals of transition planning state requirements. |
| DCAT5-22-121 | JCS Internal Climate Survey & Individual Interviews | Public Policy Associates, LLC | $25,627.00 | To provide to Juvenile Court Services in the Fifth Judicial District services related to creation of an Organizational Climate Survey and one-on-one Individual Interviews, including administration of the survey, data collection, and follow-up consultation on methods to incorporate results of the survey in efforts to improve equity efforts in client treatment and outcomes. |
| DCAT5-22-143 | Decat & CPPC Coordination Services | Polk County, Iowa | $393,791.00 | The purpose of this Contract is to enable the Agency to fulfill coordination Services for Polk County Decategorization Project, CPPC Initiative, Restorative Justice and Cultural Equity outreach and initiatives, and other Decat Projects. |
| DCAT5-22-144 | Restorative Justice & Cultural Equity Coordination Services | Polk County, Iowa | $156,566.00 | This joint venture between DHHS, JCS and Polk Decat covers JCS Restorative Justice activities that provide diversionary and reparative services to youth involved in criminal acts and their victims, as well as coordination of the various DHHS, JCS and Decat efforts to address disparate outcomes for youth and families who are system involved, including the engagement of other institutions, agencies and community members in the initiatives. The service will also include research, technical advisement, training identification and implementation and grant application and monitoring for related activities. |
| DCAT5-22-145 | Pre-Arrest Diversion Services | Polk County, Iowa | $96,855.00 | Case management services for the Juvenile Pre-Arrest Diversion Program which will coordinate, oversee and provide direct services for youth and families participating in the Des Moines Police Department (DMPD) Second Chance Program and promoting to other local law enforcement diversionary and Second Chance programs in Polk County. Case Management will include providing oversight and connecting with first and/or second time no/low-risk youth who commit delinquent acts, ages 10-17, utilizing a research based approach and providing these youth who commit simple and/or some serious misdemeanor level offenses with the opportunity to participate in evidence and prevention based programming. |
| DCAT5-23-141 | Student Support Services | Des Moines Public Schools | $29,000.00 | The purpose of this Contract is to enable the Agency and Juvenile Court Services in Polk County and the Polk Decategorization Governance Board to collaborate with Des Moines Public Schools on the provision of supportive services to youth of color and immigrant/refugee students that encourage youth in academics and academic advancement, community service learning, improving behavior choices, building confidence, and including outreach to parents, in an effort to prevent or mitigate system-involvement. Both the Brother 2 Brother and Sisters 4 Success programs are supported through this contract. |
| V2019-01-05 | Volunteer Coordination | Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Centers | $19,600.00 | Although not technically a Polk Decat contract, Polk Decat funds cover the Volunteer Coordination time related to assisting with services and donations for concrete supports on behalf of relative placements for DHHS clients. |
|  |  | **Total** | **$2,272,753.00** |  |

**Community Planning Process**

The Polk Decat Executive Committee and the Steering Committee/Shared Decision Making Team share responsibility as the “Planning Team” for the development of the annual Polk Decat Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice Services Plan. The Executive Committee is the three-legged stool decision making body including the Department of Human Services, Juvenile Court Services and Polk County (Community, Family & Youth Services and the County Attorney’s Office). Also included in that body is a volunteer from the Shared Decision Making Steering Committee. The Shared Decision Making Steering Team consists of approximately 20 members representing a diverse cross section of the provider and at-large community and meets on a quarterly basis. We will continue to expand membership to include sectors currently not being represented on the team as well as replacing members who have left or are no longer participating.

The organizational structure of the Polk County Decategorization Project consists of several committees and project staff. The committees include:

* Executive Committee (Polk Decat Governance Board)
* Shared Decision Making Steering Committee
* Connection And Resources Exchange – Formerly Providers’ Advisory and CPPC Neighborhood & Community Networking
* Equity Committees (DHHS Equity Committee and BSC annual meeting, JCS CASP Collaborative, AACCT meetings, etc.)

The planning process is on-going throughout the year and not just limited to the months surrounding start and end dates of a fiscal year. Each committee provides input into the development of the annual Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice Services Plan by bringing concerns, issues and trends to the table during the year. The Shared Decision Making Steering Team meets quarterly and discusses current issues, while striving to remain proactive in planning for an efficient Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice service delivery system. The Shared Decision Making Steering team also votes on the use of Decat, CPPC and MYFI funds on small community grants, trainings and activities related to our areas of focus. The Connection And Resources Exchange (formerly Providers Advisory and CPPC Neighborhood & Community Networking groups) provides the forum for learning, connecting, discussion, research and action plans on the service gaps in the local community. The Polk County CPPC FY23 Plan Report is attached for a summary of approaches for this fiscal year.

Polk County has a large number and variety of agencies and associations providing services to our communities. The following chart lists agencies with whom Polk Decat has or currently partners to assist with assessment of needs, resource leveraging and feedback:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Current Partnerships*** | |
| AMP  Beaverdale Books  Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa  Broadlawns  CASA – Child Advocacy Board  Catholic Charities of Des Moines  Central Iowa ACEs 360  Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Centers  Child & Family Policy Center  Children & Family Urban Movement  Congo Progress  Creative Visions  Corinthian Baptist Church  Des Moines Area Community College  Des Moines Public Schools  EMBARC  Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families  EveryStep (Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa)  Ellipsis  Four Oaks  Genesis Inc.  Good Vibes  Home Furnishings, Inc.  Investing in My Future, Inc.  Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault  Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence  Iowa Arts in Education (ArtForceIowa)  Iowa Courts  Iowa Dept. of Human Services  ISU Extension & Outreach  Justice For Our Neighbors  Korean-American Society of Iowa (KASI)  Latino Forum  Lutheran Services in Iowa  Mentor Iowa  Mercy Hospital  Mid-Iowa Family Therapy Clinic  Mid-Iowa Health Foundation  Mount Hebron Baptist Church  Polk County Juvenile Court  Prevent Child Abuse Iowa  Polk County Health Services  Stacie Nessa & Friends, LLC  UnityPoint Health Star Center & Foster Care Clinic  Ujima Community Services  Willkie House  Young Emerging Scientists (Y.E.S.)  YMCA of Greater Des Moines  Youth Justice Initiative  Youth Policy Institute  Yeshua Recovery  Zero to Three | Al Exito  Bikers Against Child Abuse, Iowa Chapter  Boys To Men Youth Programs  Boys Town of Iowa  Can Play  Central Iowa ACEs 360  Central District Baptist Association  Children & Families of Iowa  City Of Des Moines  Child Future International  Community! Youth Concepts  Courageous Access  Dads With A Purpose  Des Moines Housing Agency  Des Moines Police Department  Drake University  Employee and Family Resources  Eyerly Ball  Freedom for Youth  Hip Hope, Inc.  Impact Community Action Partnership  Innovative Learning Professionals  Integrative Counseling Solutions  Iowa Dept. Of Correctional Services  Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association  Iowans for Social & Economic Development  Iowa Legal Aid  Iowa Jobs for America’s Graduates (iJAG)  John R. Grubb YMCA  Joshua Christian Academy  LUNA  Mosaic Family Counseling Center  Oakridge Neighborhood Services  Orchard Place et al  Pursuit of Innovation  Polk County (Health, Behavioral Health Services, Juvenile Detention, Crisis & Advocacy, Family Enrichment Center, Conservation Board)  Prelude Services  Public Policy Associates, LLC  Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa (RACI)  St. Vincent De Paul, Des Moines  Street Collective  Starts Right Here  Thriving Families Counseling Services  United Way of Central Iowa  Urban Dreams  Wesley United Methodist  Woodward Youth Corporation/WCBS  Young Women's Resource Center  Youth Law Center  Zion Lutheran Church |

**Cultural Equity Activities**

Equity efforts that address systemic racial disparities for African Americans will continue in FY23. Polk Decat has actively participated in statewide efforts of DHHS in the Breakthrough Series Collaborative and the JCS Community And Strategic Planning (CASP) Collaborative. Many institutions and agencies currently have related equity efforts, e.g., Polk County and the City of Des Moines have several equity initiatives lead by a variety of agencies and community sectors. The Restorative Justice and Cultural Equity Coordinator organizes and facilitates initiatives that target disparities that exist within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems that black children and families experience. Below are descriptions of initiatives the RJCE coordinator manages and facilitates.

1. Department of Human Services (DHHS) African American Case Consultation Team (AACCT)

* DHHS AACCT is an initiative that reviews open CINA DHHS African American cases.
* The team of professionals on the AACCT consults with social workers on how to effectively engage and work with black families. The team members provide culturally specific resources and information for those families.
* The goal of this team is to provide cultural awareness and sensitivity to DHHS cases and the give social workers recommendations on permanency and creating strategies to get youth reconnected to their community.
* The AACCT made recommendations for the Family First Implementation and got approved to present the recommendations to Polk DHHS administration and the Casey Foundation.
* The Casey Foundation is assisting with enhancement of AACCT protocols and collection of data outcomes

1. Juvenile Court Services (JCS) African American Case Consultation Team (AACCT)

* JCS AACCT is an initiative that reviews open delinquent JCS African American cases. It is currently on hold to organize volunteers and assure continuity with Judicial Brant efforts.
* The team of professionals on the AACCT consults with Juvenile Court Officers (JCO’s) on how to effectively engage and work with black families. The team members provide culturally specific resources and information for those families
* The goal of this team is to provide cultural awareness and sensitivity to JCS cases and the give JCO’s recommendations on permanency and how to get youth reconnected to their community.
* The team consulted 9 cases and in all of the cases kinship, familial and community supports were discussed and considered.

1. Community and Strategic Planning (CASP) collaborative may reconvene in FY23.

* CASP aims to reduce disproportionality in the Juvenile Justice System by analyzing data and creating policy and practices that create equitable outcomes.
* CASP created a new warrant protocol and developed the first stages of the new Pre-Arrest Diversion tier system.
* The goal of this new protocol is to reduce the number of pre-trial detentions and give youth the opportunity to turn themselves in.
* This new warrant protocol has been under-utilized, but since it is new, the CASP team is going to give the protocol some time for JCS to implement.
* The large CASP group decided to focus our efforts on improving the current pre-arrest diversion programs and creating more evidence-based pre-arrest programs to serve more kids, especially our minority youth.

1. Polk Equity Team

* The mission of the Polk Equity team is:
* “All Polk County African American/Black children and youth who experience out-of-home placement maintain or establish a sense of belonging to family and community and achieve permanency through reunification, guardianship and adoption by relatives.
* The Polk County Equity team has been meeting monthly since July of 2019
* All Service Area 5 supervisors and people in leadership took the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment. All JCS supervisors and the implicit bias sub-committee took the IDI assessment as well. The IDI identifies your level of cultural competency. Considering turnover in DHHS Child Welfare and JCS, inventories will be administered to new staff who have previously not taken it.
* The RJCE coordinator and the Chief of JCS conducted a presentation on the DHHS Service Area-5 leadership and supervisors IDI results. This presentation revealed that DHHS-5 scored within minimization. The RJCE coordinator scheduled individual IDI debriefs, as a follow-up, with leadership and supervisors. During this debrief, leadership and supervisors will learn what their individual score means and what they can do to improve their cultural competency. Periodically reviewing IDI activities with Supervisors will continue into FY23 as part of efforts to practice individualized, trauma-informed supervision that infuses a culturally and linguistically appropriate lens.

1. Minority, Youth, and Family Initiative Student Incentive Program

* Serving students of color initially at the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) Urban campus and then Grandview College. This was put on hold because of Covid as well as lack of staff at both locations that were available to assist in the efforts. DMACC has expressed interest in resurrecting this effort and has staff in place to assist.
* The short-term goal of this program is to help provide students with the tools and resources to graduate college and to decrease student debt as much as possible.
* The long-term goal is to produce more social workers of color in Polk County.
* Students are able to earn points through student incentives, which focus on 6 indicators of student success:
* Mentoring
* Advising
* Attendance
* Support
* Scholarship
* GPA.
* By completing incentives, students can earn up to $1,251 a semester.
* Capacity for the program is 12 students

1. IDI Assessment administration which includes the provision of the assessment, facilitating guided discussion regarding individual and group assessment results and reviewing methods to address implicit bias in Supervision and client case work. The purpose of this assessment is not to judge but, rather, to assist us all with learning more about our own world views and gaining understanding of the world view of others we come into contact with.

Juvenile Court Services has made great strides in disproportionality and Polk Decat will continue to participate in those activities, Decat receives funds from JCS to support the Student Support Services programming at Des Moines Public Schools. In addition, the results from the JCS Climate Survey will continue to be addressed with other JCS equity-related efforts for working with staff and clients.

MYFI funds from DHHS are also used in the Student Support Services contract with Des Moines Public Schools, which support their efforts and activities with the Brother 2 Brother and Sisters 4 Success programs, as well as their outreach to Oakridge Neighborhood students and other community events for their students of color.

**Decat Connections to Other Planning Efforts**

Polk County Decategorization (Decat) is currently in its 34th year. Being one of the first Decat sites has provided opportunities to build solid community relationships and coordination.

Polk Decat was designated as a Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC) site in 2003. Polk Decat and CPPC work together to develop strategies that are communicated to the Decat Board and to affect the policies and practices of DHHS and JCS locally. The CPPC project in Polk County has focused on developing approaches to support the 4 core strategies: 1) individual course of action, 2) community and neighborhood networking, 3) shared decision-making, and 4) policy and practice change.

All Decat staff participates actively in other local groups in order to coordinate our activities with theirs, to enhance our outreach and skills and to expand our resources connections. Other groups/committees where Polk Decat, CPPC and RJCE participate include Central Iowa ACEs 360 Steering Committee, Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa (RACI), Collaboration for Self Sufficiency, CJJP Juvenile Re-entry Task Force, Des Moines Public Schools’ Community Conversations, Zero To Three Stakeholders team, Early Childhood, and others.

Polk Decat leveraged relationships in the community to obtain grant funding to support technical assistance for the Trauma Informed Services for Youth in Polk County Detention, a now established approach to de-escalating trauma responses. In FY19, the Technical Assistance was expanded to include systemic approaches that address Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) of DHHS Child Welfare Social Workers and Supervisors. In FY23, the Trauma Informed Supervision Technical Assistance for STS will include on-site intensive trainings for DHHS and JCS Supervisors as well as monthly conference calls to obtain coaching on the Trauma-Informed Supervision skills being learned.

Polk Decat began a special outreach to Refugee and non-Latino Immigrant groups in FY14 based on feedback from community members and agencies on the growing issues within this demographic. That outreach will be continued in FY23 to obtain the best possible results with the Refugee Immigrant Guide Coordination Services contract. The contractor gathers stakeholders from DHHS Child Welfare, JCS, Decat, as well as sub-contractor Refugee Resettlement and ethnic based organizations, to determine the training components for the Refugee Immigrant Guides (RIGs) that are called upon to assist clients of DHHS and JCS navigate and advocate to successful case closure and to assist at-risk families avoid system involvement. The once-per-month staffings each at JCS and DHHS for Refugee cases will be continued to assure they receive the most responsive services possible. Social Worker III’s with refugee cases going through assessment will continue to staff them as needed with Subject Matter Experts from the Bureau of Refugee Services, Visiting Nurse Services dba EveryStep (the RIG Contractor) and a representative from the Family Centered Services contractors. The RIG Contractor continues to engage in Community Conversations of targeted Refugee groups to build their current understanding of DHHS and JCS services, which empowers the parents to understand those parenting practices that they can use and to better comprehend our complicated systems. Understanding that building trust-based relationships with our refugee communities takes time and patience, Polk Decat is committed to making sure the Stakeholders group has representation and/or input from as many language groups as possible to serve this most vulnerable population. Decat personnel participate in the local Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa (RACI) in order to coordinate our efforts with that of other entities working with refugees in Polk County.

Although the community needs assessments from past years tend towards the same issues, gaps, barriers and trends, it is still worthy of our efforts to review the data bi-annually. The Early Childhood needs assessment conducted through the United Way of Central Iowa, Iowa Kids Count, the Office of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, and other agency/institution data warehouses are consulted to ensure we are focusing our efforts on the appropriate populations and issues. Where there are gaps, Polk Decat can initiate procurements or collaborate with other entities on grant funding to support services that address those gaps as well as seeding new and innovative approaches.

**Short Term Plans and Desired Results for FY23**

Polk Decat will work closely with the DHHS Des Moines Service Area Administrator, 5th Judicial District Chief Juvenile Court Officer, the Polk County Director of Community, Family & Youth Services, Polk County Attorney (Juvenile Court Division) and the Decat Steering Committee Chair (who are all members of the Decat Executive Committee) to monitor and measure outcomes in the following areas during FY23:

* Safety, permanency, and well-being (CFSR goals)
* Placement stability (CFSR goal)
* Timely achievement of permanency (CFSR goal)
* Transitioning Youth who are re-entering the community after group or foster care
* Community based treatment rather than group care for youth exhibiting early delinquency tendencies, older delinquent youth and low-risk sex offender youth
* Supports for relative (or fictive kin) placements as well as supports for families who participate in Child Safety Conferences
* Parent engagement through the expansion of Parent Cafes and engaging fathers and positive male role models
* Activities and initiatives related to disproportionate minority contact/ disparate outcomes affecting people of color
* Assistance to system-involved and at-risk refugee and immigrant children, youth and families
* General youth and parent skill-building with the aim of building safe and stable families and preventing system involvement
* Supports for our local agencies that serve DHHS and JCS clients as well as other at-risk families and youth in our community, including seeding new and innovative ideas and projects that could possibly grow into a viable family and youth supportive service
* Restorative and Reparative justice for youth who become, or are at risk of becoming, involved in Juvenile Court Services
* Pre-Arrest and other Diversion services for youth at risk of JCS involvement, which may include connection to resources and activities, education, employment, and community service learning engagement components
* At-large community presentations and trainings related to implicit bias and culturally responsive engagement and interface
* Trauma-informed approaches, trainings and initiatives, especially related to the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and building resiliencies and for youth in Polk County Detention as well as addressing the Secondary Traumatic Stress and Vicarious Trauma of Child Welfare workers and supervisors in Polk County.
* Decat Coordination

The planned FY23 expenditures will reflect the areas listed above.

The contracts awarded through Decat during FY23, as in past years, will include specific performance measures that will be tracked on a quarterly basis and monitored with the Governance Board (Executive Committee) semi-annually, or as the specific contract requires. The results of the quarterly reports will be summarized and shared with both the Decat Steering Committee and the Decat Executive Committee on a semi-annual basis.

The Decat Coordinator and Decat staff will work with the DHHS Des Moines Service Area staff and Leadership Team as well as Polk staff in the Juvenile Court Services 5th Judicial District in reviewing critical service area data and re-adjusting priorities within the Polk County Decategorization Plan as needs and/or gaps in services are identified.

Polk Decat personnel assist in facilitating the MYFI-related activities which include the DHHS Equity Alliance and Polk Equity Team, DMACC Student Mentoring project, DHHS and JCS AACCTs, Cultural Equity Coordination and CPPC initiatives and strategies. The RJCE Coordinator will focus efforts on collecting data that reveals the results of all these efforts, to determine the next courses of action and to measure the degree of success.

We have found that sometimes JCS and DHHS data can be difficult to obtain related specifically to the services that are provided under Decat contracts and initiatives. In FY23, we will continue efforts to clarify the minimum data that we need and identify partners within the system who can help acquire the information. The second part to data collection is dissemination. Assuming that we can validate the data for our efforts, we will be working on a communication plan for sharing the information.

The planning process includes monthly meetings with the Shared Decision Making Steering Committee and Connection And Resource Exchange (CARE) group to discuss issues, gaps and barriers in services and system improvements. Focus areas that have been identified by these groups include:

* Support for children staying at home rather than being placed out of the home
* Resources to provide respite care to families and foster families to prevent children being removed from home or a termination of a foster family placement.
* Assessments and services for trauma, mental health and substance abuse needs
* Working with families so that youth can be successful at home (Parenting Engagement, Skill-Building and supports)
* Identification of resources, especially for basic needs, that are sustainable
* Supports for DHHS and JCS staff in relation to the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and other trauma, cultural responsiveness, and community resources
* Engaging non-custodial fathers in the child rearing process (Fatherhood Initiative)
* Transitioning youth who “age out” of the foster care system
* Outreach to specific groups who need assistance (i.e., Latino, Refugees and other ethnic populations who are experiencing abuse, require services, experiencing trauma, etc.)
* Disproportionality of African Americans in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice systems
* More effective treatments for addressing alcohol and drug dependency
* Restorative and reparative activities for youth involved in criminal activities

Polk Decat is concentrating on 8 priority areas which we hope will assist in improving Iowa’s CFSR outcomes and assist with safety and permanency for children:

* Kinship and Family Connections: Polk Decat recognizes that many kinds of informal and formal supports help relatives provide a home for children who need to be placed out of their own homes. For that purpose, Polk Decat helps inform Social Workers on and provides resources for families to help them afford to care for a relative’s child, child safety conferences, and early prevention services.
* Parent engagement, including Fatherhood and Positive Male Role Models: Polk Decat will encourage programs that are successful at engaging parents in learning effective parenting techniques, and recognize the value of fathers, especially non-custodial fathers, and other men who are important to children and youth and support them positively in that role. This includes promoting family-friendly activities and events in the community.
* Key Transition Points: Polk Decat recognizes that transition points are critical junctures for children. These transition points include moving into foster care or relative placements, changing placements, modification of placements, and transfer from the juvenile system to the adult system. Decat will support activities that help with transitions, including the Youth Centered Planning Meetings (specific to JCS, formerly known as Youth Team Decision Making meetings, or YTDMs), moving from the child welfare and JCS systems to the adult system, and supporting parents, and assisting youth in Detention who have experienced trauma in an effort to reduce detention stays and positively impact their court experience for better outcomes.
* Polk Decat recognizes that moving from group care back to the community can be difficult for youth who have experienced impulse controls. Polk Decat will continue to support the Re-entry Aftercare Services Juvenile Court contract which provides re-entry planning which starts shortly after group care placement and continues for up to 6 months after release from group care, with the aim to continue the good work that youth learn while in group care.
* Disproportionate Minority Representation: Polk Decat will continue to work with local agencies and Community Partnership for Protecting Children providing supports training and mentoring for DHHS, Juvenile Court and providers on disparity issues and developing informal support networks for families. The Polk Equity meetings will continue in FY23 to continue improving strategies that address disparate outcomes in Child Welfare and JCS and to report strategies for change. We also anticipate a resurrection some aspect of the CASP collaborative for JCS hopefully some time in FY23.
* Other Identified Community Priority Areas: Polk Decat will support initiatives which will assist with the safety of children including criminal and child abuse background checks, Mediations to avoid court involvement, and wrap around support for parents and family members. In addition, Polk Decat will continue to support less restrictive environments for treating youth who might otherwise be placed in group care, such as the Sex Offender program for lower risk youth offenders, Sanctions Programming for youth requiring both community service and learning of impulse controls, and Early Services Prevention, committed to reduction/elimination of future delinquent acts by the very young offenders. In addition, the Polk Decat Board identified that Legal issues tend to plague system-involved youth and families and will support the continuation of the Preventive Law & Guidance contract into FY23 to address the legal pitfalls of daily living through presentations to refugee and immigrant groups, legal assessments for transition-aged youth and supports for guardianship and custodial arrangements that provide stability and safe case closure for DHHS children.
* ACEs and Trauma Informed Care: Polk Decat will also continue integration of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) data and information and Trauma Informed response in everyday approaches, networking and the continued support of the local ACEs Community Learning Circles, Technical Assistance related to Trauma Informed Services in Polk County Detention as well as DHHS Child Welfare and JCS Secondary Traumatic Stress training development and implementation.
* Refugees and Immigrants: Polk Decat will assist at-risk refugee and immigrant families and youth through the development of specialized Refugee Immigrant Guides (RIGs) as well as supporting local agencies who provide services to this demographic.

**Other Planning Activities:**

Three Polk Decat contracts will expire at the end of FY23: DCAT5-18-001 – Early Services Prevention, DCAT5-18-003 – Trauma Informed Services in Detention, and DCAT5-18-008 – Sanctions Learning Services. RFP Development committees will be formed for each service to review past experience, discuss desired services and outcomes, and determine appropriate costs to re-procure the services for FY24. Planning will begin late summer with the goal of posting the new RFPs to the Bid Opportunities website in late November or early December.

**Tracking of Results and Outcomes**

Within Polk Decat, significant emphasis is placed on performance-based accountability and fiscal management.

Polk Decat contracts identify specific performance measures for which the contractor is held accountable. Depending on the type of service contracted for, these may include numbers served, measures to indicate success such as percentage achieving a particular result, etc. Where applicable, contractors are required to include participation levels and demographics information within their quarterly reports.

Agencies that have contracts with Polk Decat are required to submit quarterly progress reports, which are reviewed and monitored by the Decat and Project Coordinators. The Polk Project Coordinator enters the performance measure results into a spreadsheet that summarizes the measures for at-a-glance perusal. The Project Coordinator tracks receipt, or lack thereof, of the quarterly progress reports. Reports not received in the applicable time period specified in the respective contracts are reported to the Decat Coordinator. The contractor is contacted and reminded to submit the report and/or report any issues with timely submission. At least twice per year, the Performance Measure spreadsheet is provided for review and discussion to the Executive Committee and the Shared Decision Making Steering team by the Project Coordinator, along with highlights worth noting.

Contractors who are not meeting any or all of their performance measures are contacted by the Polk Decat and/or Project Coordinator(s) to discuss the issues and barriers causing the lower performance and how it can be remedied. The Polk Decat Coordinator also involves the associated JCS or DHHS personnel in the process so all parties can partner in the identification of the root cause of the performance issue and its resolution.

**Monitoring and Maintaining Fiscal Accountability**

**Performance and Results:**

The quarterly reports are recorded not only on a spreadsheet, but a highlight document is created that summarizes notable performance issues and successes.

Those Contractors subject to an on-site monitoring will provide a sampling of their on-site records reviewed to determine the validity of their reported performance measures and compliance with their respective Contract deliverables as stated in the Scope of Work. After the on-site visit, a detailed report of documents reviewed and findings, if any, will be provided to the Contractor along with a timeline for correcting issues and providing clarifications, if required.

For the small community event/activities grants, we reach out annually to obtain from each grant recipient the following:

* A brief description of the event/activity/service
* Noteworthy outcomes
* Number of people in attendance

**Expenditures:**

The monthly GAX from contractors are scrutinized to ensure that the back-up documentation is present, matches the expenses allowable in the contract and that add up to the amount requested for reimbursement on the GAX. Contractors are contacted if the required back-up is not included with the GAX, if the calculations do not equal the reimbursement amount, or if there are unallowable expenses. The Polk Decat Coordinator checks all addition and provides spreadsheets with each GAX confirming that the calculations are correct or corrected if necessary. This is where a bulk of monitoring takes place as most activities and issues are visible with the submission of monthly expenditures.

Monthly GAX amounts are tracked in a contract expenditure tracking spreadsheet, so we know what is spent and remaining per contract and per funding source. This spreadsheet is shared with the Polk Decat Executive Committee at each Board meeting.

High activity contracts, such as the Fiscal Agent contract, are also tracked by the Polk Decat Assistant. Invoices and funding requests are tracked by type of request, funding source, amount and other pertinent data in order to keep the large volume of data organized so at any point in time we can create reports that reflect the status of funds used, who is using them, client usage, and how much we have remaining. Wraparound (Flex) funds usage is reported approximately monthly to Social Worker and Juvenile Court Services Supervisors so they can track the spending levels of their allocations. In addition, we periodically create specialized reports to determine fund usage by client and Social Worker/JCO in order to identify frequent and high-volume users of those funds. Client centered reports can also be used by the Social Workers/JCOs in the court room to substantiate assistance to clients for reasonable efforts.

In FY19 Polk Decat had more options for purchasing goods and some services for families due to the new Fiscal Agent for Wraparound Services contract. These options will continue into FY23. Rather than provide store cards for every need, specific needs are identified, and purchases made and delivered. The Decat Administrative Assistant coordinates the purchases and tracks the expenditures. Once per month, the Decat Administrative Assistant audits the usage of the store cords, bus passes and tokens to ensure that there is not one out of sequence or missing. The Decat Administrative Assistant and the Decat Project/CPPC Coordinator have made great strides in providing information on and connections to community resources for Social Workers, Juvenile Court Officers, and community members. This hopefully lessens reliance on the Flex Funds for system-involved youth and families.

The Polk Decat Coordinator is in constant contact with the contractors in the effort to develop open lines of communications, discuss expectations and to keep up with changes that occur within the contractors’ organizations. Contractors are more apt to divulge when there are problems when they are comfortable in their relationship with the Polk Decat Coordinator. In addition, the Decat Coordinator is in frequent contact with the DHHS and JCS stakeholders to ensure their satisfaction with the services provided and outcomes.

The Polk Decat Coordinator schedules at least one visit with each contractor within the fiscal year to monitor procedures and spot-check back-up documentation to GAX.

At the end of the fiscal year, amounts for all GAX received during that year will be compared to the I3 data to ensure accuracy in expenditures and funds remaining.

**Carryover**

Most Polk Decat contracts are funded based on budgets that project what is needed to carry out the prescribed activities for the entire fiscal year. The FY23 CPPC, FY23 MYFI, and State FY21 Carry-over funds cannot be carried over into FY24 so Polk Decat will monitor the use of those funds closely and will work with the Decat Board and contractors to ensure that those funds are utilized first within the fiscal year. Prior to the last quarter of the fiscal year, if it appears those funds will not be used within their specific contracts, some of the funds can be transferred to or exchanged with funds in other contracts where appropriate to ensure their complete usage. Or those funds can be used to support special projects at the discretion of the Polk Decat Executive Committee (Board).

As authorized by Iowa Legislation, the DHHS, and JCS FY22 State carryover funds and the State FY22 Decat allocation funds can be carried over into FY24. If the contracts have funds left at the end of this fiscal year, Polk Decat plans to carryover the FY22 funds into FY24 that are unused in FY23. Polk Decat will continue to hold funds in reserve to ensure the continuity of core contracts into the next fiscal year so services to at-risk families and youth can continue without interruption.

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