

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PLANNING BOARDS

CYPBs

FACT SHEET

Background

In 2004, lawmakers passed Act 555 as a continuation of the work of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003, which was passed to transform Louisiana's system into a model of holistic support for children and move away from its ineffective punitive approach. Act 555 was about localizing the effort by creating in each judicial district a Children and Youth Planning Board (CYPB) that would work in concert with the state-level Children's Cabinet, which is under the Governor's office. **The CYPBs were to review, coordinate, prioritize, and measure all available local services and programs that address the needs of children and youth.** It would "assist in the development, implementation, and operation of services which encourage positive development, diversion of children and youth from the criminal justice and the foster care system, reduction in the commitments of youth to state institutions," and provide community response to youth criminal involvement. **The CYPBs would report to the Children's Cabinet and in turn the Children's Cabinet would lead the creation of CYPBs, provide them with necessary technical assistance, and hold them accountable.** The work also was supposed to be data-driven to get the most from available resources. (RS 46:1941.2)

The Issue

CYPBs are supposed to exist in each of the forty-two judicial districts (RS 46:1941.2), but today only five CYPBs are functional: Orleans, Jefferson, Calcasieu, Baton Rouge, and Caddo. Due to the lack of allocation of funding, accountability, and coordination of the CYPBs, children are not receiving the continuum of services needed to provide education, job training, community services, and programs that protect them from involvement in the criminal legal system or rehabilitate them. This is another example of the state's failure to prioritize and invest in children.



- **RESOURCES.** Act 555 was never funded. The state did not allocate or mandate the local allocation of resources needed for this critical work.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Act 555 made clear that the CYPBs would report to the Children's Cabinet. But that hasn't happened, either because of bureaucratic inefficiency, lack of political will, or both. No matter the reason, it is unacceptable.
- **COORDINATION.** Acts 1225 and 555 clearly laid out a path of coordination and communication between the Juvenile Justice Reform Act Implementation Commission, (the state entity charged with oversight of the implementation of Act 1225), the Children's Cabinet, and the CYPBs. However, this path of communication and coordination has not been utilized.



FFLIC

CYPBs FACT SHEET

Solutions

In order to ensure that children are truly receiving the services and care they need we must do the following:

- **PRIORITIZE.** Ensure that the Governor's agenda includes functioning CYPBs as a priority to improve outcomes for youth and families.
- **LEARN AND ADAPT.** Assess and review CYPBs, including what didn't work, what's working, and best practices.
- **REINSTATE ACT 1225.** We must recommit to Act 1225 of 2003 in order to reauthorize the purpose and duties of the Children's Cabinet, and implement the coordination and accountability structures set up by Act 1225 and 555, including:
 - JJRAIC's oversight of the work of the Children's Cabinet "by reviewing and commenting on the progress reports submitted to it by the Children's Cabinet." (Act 1225)
 - The Children's Cabinet statutorily mandated "guidance and technical assistance to local communities and governing authorities including but not limited to resource identification, needs assessments, monitoring and performance evaluation, strategic planning and other forms of assistance and support." (RS 46:1941.2)
- **PROVIDE RESOURCES.** We must ensure full funding and resourcing of the CYPBs.

What the CYPBs Would Look Like

According to law, each local CYPB should consist of at least eleven, but not more than twenty-five members, and the members serve for a period of two years. The board is intended to be representative of the community in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and geography, as well as knowledge and expertise. (RS 46:1941.8). The CYPBs were specifically given the following tasks:

- Preventing and minimizing the incarceration of youth by helping local community services to work together to create a safety net for children and youth.
- Actively participate in creating a "comprehensive plan" for services for children and youth and make formal recommendations to the parish government at least once a year regarding the plan and how it is being carried out.
- Report annually by October 1st to the office of youth services and the Children's Cabinet the results of their assessments.

(RS 46:1941.8)

COMMUNITY-BASED
SUPERVISION PROGRAMS
FOR YOUTH COST LESS
THAN CONFINEMENT,
AND THEY INCREASE THE
REHABILITATIVE BENEFITS
TO THE YOUTH, SUCH AS
FEWER YOUTH
REENTERING THE SYSTEM,
BETTER TREATMENT,
REDUCED STIGMA, AND
INCREASED FAMILY
PARTICIPATION.



FFLIC will work to fulfill the promises of Act 1225 to care for our youth and families, and to ensure youth justice reform! Find out more at www.ffmpeg.org.



FFLIC