

United States Virgin Islands

Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice Systems Integration Implementation Charter

Background & Purpose:

The Virgin Islands Systems Integration Initiative (VI-SII) is a collaboration of state and local community agencies and organizations in St. Croix, VI that have come together to examine and make improvements in integrated program development, policy development and service delivery for children, youth and families served by child welfare, juvenile justice, and related youth serving systems. Since January 2007, the initiative has been working to explore and address issues around juvenile justice and child welfare to enhance the level of collaboration and improve the quality of services delivered to youth and families.

The Virgin Islands Systems Integration Executive Committee examined common service populations, methods for delivery of services, available resources, data, prevalence and characteristics of youth populating the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, outcomes for children and youth. During 2007 the Executive Steering Committee and three primary subcommittees, staffed by highly competent and devoted youth serving professionals undertook an analysis of the aforementioned issues. The subcommittees included:

- Resource Inventory and Analysis
- Data Collection and Information Management
- Legal and Policy Analysis

These groups, together and through the direction of the Executive Committee, completed a comprehensive study and analysis and endorsed a set of reform recommendations and action strategies on behalf of the youth and families populating the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The focus in 2008 is directed at continuing implementation of the action strategies and recommendations approved in the plan.

In consideration of the foregoing, the signatory parties agree to the following goals and scope of work:

Goals:

The primary goals continuing through this initiative are:

- To examine services and improve outcomes for dependent and delinquent Virgin Islands children/youth and their families through the involvement of multiple youth serving agencies and organizations
- To effectively implement priority recommendations and action strategies developed and endorsed by the Virgin Islands Systems Integration Initiative, to include the development of a process and outcome evaluation, that will improve

partnerships at the administrative and service delivery levels in support of children and youth served by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and other associated youth serving systems.

- Implement and incorporate endorsed reform measures for the juvenile justice and child welfare systems with the mental health and school systems, as well as all other relevant youth serving systems; these agreed upon reforms include such measures as: developing a set of guiding and unifying principles around which new protocols and practice will be created; creating a protocol that includes a multi-disciplinary team process with identified team members serving on the team and including a set of post-disciplinary guidelines for case management; defining the primary target population for intervention as those maltreated youth (substantiated and unsubstantiated) who are involved with the court and juvenile justice system through a formal petition (including PINS); developing a cross system training for all relevant youth serving professionals; instituting a routine interval to conduct point-in-time prevalence study for youth involved in the dependency and delinquency systems; and, creating a process and outcome evaluation structure to permit assessment of the reform measures on outcomes.
- Identify best practices and evidenced based strategies and coordinate our resources to get the most out of all systems, addressing duplications and gaps, and
- Save funding in the long run by investing up-front in services we can expect will produce results.

Scope of Work:

Each member agency and organization agrees to work with the membership and under the direction of the VI-SII Executive Committee to:

- Refine the inventory of resources in local child serving systems, including: programs and services; identify best practices nationally and locally; determine the appropriate use of assessment instruments; review and analyze the funding to support the services and programs; and create training for personnel in both systems.
- Identify data sets and data points that must be gathered, aggregated, and shared across agencies/organizations and ensure that this information contributes to improved analysis of current trends. Institutionalize the process by which this data can be regularly developed and utilized. This effort will lead to enhanced decision-making, particularly regarding prioritizing the allocation of shared resources among and across agencies/organizations.
- Contribute agency representation to participate in designated subcommittees for the ongoing examination and analysis of issues relating to the implementation of the VI-SII priority recommendations and action strategies. Each representative

shall serve until he or she resigns or a replacement is appointed. The Committee may add additional members at any time.

- Utilize the best available information, research, and practices to guide the process.
- Maintain confidentiality of client information in compliance with federal laws and territorial laws and policies, .
- Assist in the development of a means to track and evaluate the success of the reform measures and protocols.
- Jointly implement subcommittee/taskforce recommendations and action strategies resulting in youth serving system coordination and integration.
- Continue to assess and refine the implementation process to ensure that the goals of the initiative are accomplished.

General Terms:

- **Term.** This agreement will be effective through March 30, 2009 (12 months from ratification).
- **Termination.** Member Agencies and Organizations can withdraw from this agreement at any time by making said request in writing with the effective date and reason for withdrawal.
- **Renewal.** This Agreement is automatically renewed for additional one year terms unless a party withdraws from this Agreement.
- **Liability.** Each party is responsible for its own acts and omissions and those of its officers, employees, and agents. No party is responsible for the acts of third parties.

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