Dismantling Racial Inequity Through Child Welfare Systems Change
Session 1: Using an Institutional Analysis to Identify Core Equity Issues and Spur Change

Presenters:
Sarah Morrison, Center for the Study of Social Policy
Karen Shaban, Marlon Murphy and Nannette Bowler, Fairfax County, VA

Facilitator:
Carole Wilcox, Butler Institute, University of Denver
Takeaways

• Institutional features contribute to unintended consequences: families of color not getting what they need from institutions

• Persistence and collective action are important: lessons from efforts to advance equity
Overview

• Brief history of Fairfax County, Virginia’s efforts to address racial disproportionality and disparities in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare

• Searching for Institutional Contributors: The Institutional Analysis

• Fairfax County Results, Response and Future
MILEPOSTS IN THE FAIRFAX JOURNEY TO ACHIEVE EQUITY

**1990’s**
- Established FCPS Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee
- Formed Chantilly Pyramid Minority Student Achievement (FCPS)
- Established Early Intervention Strategy Team

**Mid-2000’s**
- Hosted “Building on the Strengths of the African American Family” Summit
- Convened Together We’re the Answer Community Collaborative

**2010**
- Adopted FCPS Closing the Minority Achievement Gap Plan
- Initiated Institutional Analysis examining juvenile justice front door
- Established Disproportionality and Disparity Prevention and Elimination Team

**2012 - 2014**
- Released Institutional Analysis report
- Established Successful Children and Youth Policy Team
- Launched Opportunity Neighborhood place-based pilot
- Attended Government Alliance on Race & Equity convenings

**2015**
- Adopted Strategic Plan to Facilitate Economic Success
- Released Equitable Growth Profile of Fairfax
- Became member of Government Alliance on Race & Equity
- Engaged in community conversations with John A. Powell

**Structural Focus**

**Individual/Agency Focus**
What is an Institutional Analysis?

An institutional analysis (IA) is a qualitative methodology that uncovers how a particular outcome is produced. The IA looks at the GAP between what a child, youth or their families experience and what the institution is set up to do ...
THE SYSTEMS ICEBERG

Events and Behaviors

Patterns

Structures

Paradigms

Conditions

What is happening now?

How do patterns play out over time and space?

What are the drivers and deep structures?

How are they related?

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INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Juvenile Justice System & Partners

Knowledge of Client(s)
- Effective Intervention
- Capacity to Intervene/Act

Youth OUTCOMES:
- No recidivism
- Connected to school
- Connected to positive adults
- Engaged in positively with community

AFRICAN AMERICAN/HISPANIC YOUTH & FAMILIES
- Strengths/Resources
- Challenges
- Child Maltreatment

COMMUNITY:
- Formal and Informal
- Supports/Resources
- Constraints

Mission, Purpose, Function
Rules and Regulations
Administrative Practices
Concepts and Theories
Education and Training
Resources
Linkages
Accountability
Other
Institutional Methods that Shape How Families Experience Our Services

• **Mission, purpose and various job descriptions** – these inform a worker of their role and duties and set boundaries around what a work is and is not expected to do. *Questions: Are actions aligned with mission? What do job descriptions emphasize? Are contract providers aligned with agency mission?*

• **Polices** – laws, rules and regulations. *Questions: Are they clear? Are there “policy mythologies”? Are policies undermining or supporting continuity of services to families?*

• **Administrative practices** – forms, computer modules, screening tools, report-writing formats, assessment tools etc. *Questions: What is the case transfer process? What is the court hearing process? What kind of support do relative caregivers receive?*

• **Resources** – time, staff, programming, etc. *Questions: What are the caseload sizes? Are placement options sufficient? Is technology effective and sufficient? Are “good fit” services sufficient?*

• **Education and training** – preservice readiness and inservice competency building. *Questions: Do staff and caregivers have the knowledge and skills they need to act effectively? Do staff receive cultural competence/cultural humility training?*
Institutional Methods that Shape How Families Experience Our Services

- **Linkages** – the organized methods for connecting a worker to other practitioners. *Question: Are there problems sharing information among providers? Is the court informed by the most knowledgeable people? Is communication timely?*

- **Accountability** – to whom and for what are people expected to answer for. *Questions: Are there mechanisms for obtaining and using family/youth feedback? How are contracted services held accountable? Are there protocols and supervisory practices in place to ensure respectful and consistent practice? Are we asking questions about how our decisions affect families and children?*

- **Concepts and theories** – assumptions that are embedded in the way we talk and write about families or an issue. Policies and administrative practice are connected to broader assumptions, theories, values and concepts. *Questions: Is “coded” language used in case narratives? Is the view of what constitutes a family limited or expansive?*

- **Other** – often times in child welfare this is “fear”
The Work of an Institutional Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Data Collected</th>
<th>Analysis/Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Selecting/Supporting a Local Coordinator</td>
<td>• Gathering the Lived Experience</td>
<td>• Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Selecting/Training an Investigative Team</td>
<td>• Collecting data about the system</td>
<td>• Working with jurisdiction on product format, action plan and release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying focus of inquiry</td>
<td>• Daily Debriefing</td>
<td>• Product release</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Determining the Focus of Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Population (age 10 – 17)</td>
<td>119,287</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to Juvenile Court</td>
<td>4,106</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases diverted</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases involving secure Detention</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases petitioned to court</td>
<td>2,512</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases with delinquent findings</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases put on probation</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

What organizational factors contribute to the fact that African American/Hispanic youth are less likely to be diverted and more likely to be detained?
DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

- **Interviews**
  - youth and parents to capture and understand their “Lived Experience” with the Institution
  - practitioners to capture and understand how they are organized to know children/families, how they are organized to intervene, and what capacity they have to intervene
  - agency and judicial leadership to capture and understand how the Institution is organized.

- **Focus groups** with Parents, Youth, Caregivers, Practitioners and Lawyers

- **Observations of**
  - Court Activity and Organization
  - Family Team Meetings/Team Decision Making Meetings
  - Practitioner Routine
  - Parenting Classes
  - Etc

- **Policy Analysis**

- **Text Analysis**
  - Forms
  - Case Narratives
  - Court Reports
Texts Shape and Reflect Our Work With Families
Computer Screens, Forms, Case Narratives, Court Reports, etc

• **Set Priorities**
  Captures/Reports what is deemed “Most Important”

• **Establish Filters**
  Categorizes people and actions

• **Present Snapshots**
  Knowledge at a Given Point in Time

• **May allow unchecked bias and uncorrected inaccuracies, contradictions and inconsistencies**

• **Reflect Decisions**
  Formed from the information that has been gathered and reported in text

  WE ASSUME NOTHING IS NEUTRAL
System interventions undermine the bonds and functioning of African American families and their networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lived Experience</th>
<th>Problematic Institutional Features</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Youth spoke of need to see extended family; on their own (often against worker advice) seeking out family; and secretly visiting parents.</td>
<td>• Administrative practices: Automatic supervised visitation orders between children and parents—insufficient protocols to increase time and reduce supervision; visitation happens in centrally located offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Youth prevented from seeing certain family members because not everyone was “cleared”; youth not able to go to funerals, family reunions, not supposed to text with family, etc...</td>
<td>• Resources: individual therapy and parent-child therapy available/prescribed but little assistance provided to heal extended family connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Youth planned to return to family upon exit from care even though they had had very little interaction with those family members</td>
<td>• Rules and Regulations: ASFA criminal background process blocks many otherwise qualified relative caregivers. ASFA being applied to every adult a child comes into contact with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children and youth not able to live with family members and they are unclear why</td>
<td>• Concepts and theories: Caregivers put in “policing” role—monitoring visits and other parental contact with child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty of youth and parents navigating complex family relationships</td>
<td>• Females are better caregivers than males</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fathers being told by lawyers to find female relatives to care for children.</td>
<td></td>
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FAIRFAX COUNTY
Institutional Analysis
RESULTS, RESPONSE, FUTURE
Themes from the IA in Fairfax County
Shared by African American and Hispanic Youth and Families

• Theme 1: Publicly available preventive services do not consistently meet the broad range of needs of African American and Hispanic youth and families.

• Theme 2: Youth who become involved with the courts frequently have mental health, substance abuse and special education needs, and earlier interventions to address these needs have either not occurred or not been sufficient.

• Theme 3: A common, cross-system vision promoting the well-being of youth and families and emphasizing collaborative work with families has not been fully developed and implemented. As a result, families experience uncoordinated teams, assessments and case plans.
Themes from the IA in Fairfax County
Shared by African American and Hispanic Youth and Families

• Theme 4: Approaches to working with families are often based on operational requirements of the system—that is, the system privileges its need for efficiency over the individual needs of families.

• Theme 5: Most youth involved with juvenile court are also struggling in school. System interventions do not consistently support youth in remaining connected to and completing school.
Themes from the IA in Fairfax County
Specific to Hispanic Youth and Families

- **Theme 6:** The mixed documentation status of many Hispanic households creates unique needs for this population and often compromises a family’s ability to access prevention services.

- **Theme 7:** School truancy is often a warning sign of significant needs of the youth and family. Interventions around school truancy issues of Hispanic youth do not necessarily account for and meet the underlying needs of youth and are therefore unsuccessful; resulting in youth becoming more involved in the juvenile court system.

- **Theme 8:** Interventions do not take into account the language barriers and cultural barriers experienced by some Hispanic families who were newer to the United States.
Desired County-wide results emerging from institutional analysis

- Prevention and intervention efforts reach youth & families most likely to have poor outcomes because of race, language, cultural and economic barriers.

- A common, cross-system vision promoting the well-being of youth and families guides collaborative work among county agencies and community.

- Approaches to working with families are trauma informed, culturally humble, flexible and individualized.

- Youth, especially those most likely to be hindered by socio-economic, race and/or cultural barriers are consistently supported to remain connected to and complete school.
Moving the IA Findings to Action: Dialogue with Directors Series

Topics:
- Juvenile Justice Front Door / Restorative Justice
- Depression / Suicide
- Truancy & Out of School Time
- Housing / Homelessness / Transitional Living
- Health & Wellness / Teen Pregnancy
- Graduation & Achievement
- Family Engagement / Reunified Families
- Domestic Violence / Trauma / Bullying
- Community Outreach

Stakeholders invited based upon topic:
- Police – School Resource Officers
- Neighborhood & Community Services Youth Division
- Park Authority
- Family Services
- Middle School After School Program
- Schools Attendance Office

Dismantling Racial Inequity Through Child Welfare Systems Change
Session 1 | July 2017 | A service of The Children’s Bureau
Governance and Accountability Structure:

- **Successful Children and Youth**
  - Thriving People
  - Thriving Economy
  - Thriving Communities

- **Healthy Starts**
  - Contributors to Community
  - Workforce Readiness
  - Post-Secondary Success
  - Violence & Injury Free

- **Kindergarten Readiness**
  - Academic Success
  - Physical Health
  - Behavioral Health & Resilience

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**Collective Action Networks and Goal Teams** to plan and align strategically around key outcome areas

**Data-driven** planning, decision-making, and accountability

**Cross-System Operations, Management and Support** to align work and resources across systems

**Place-Based Focus** to ensure all neighborhoods become the kinds of places that enable children and families to succeed and thrive
Strategic Plan to Advance Opportunity and Achieve Racial Equity
(working draft: updated September, 2014)

Leadership

Infrastructure
- Use direct language regarding race equity
- Establish common definitions for Fairfax
- Centralize & decentralize equity support

Tools
- Apply Equity & Empowerment Lens
- Host Dialogue with Directors Series across deputy areas to explore County Equitable Growth Profile opportunities for action

Data
- Partner with Policylink to complete a County Equitable Growth Profile
- Develop and adopt shared data policy to mandate data disaggregation

Community Engagement
- Broaden & reconvene “Together We’re the Answer”
- Engage Faith community
- Utilize SCYPT goal setting process

Accountability Mechanisms
- Apply equity policy to Early Childhood education
- Explore Equity Scorecard
- Align with RBA / Profile of a Graduate work

Frame “One Fairfax” broader than human services
Measure how Fairfax County is doing in terms of equity
Adopt new growth model driven by equity through the Strategic Plan for Economic Success
Share best, promising and next practices through the Governing for Racial Alliance cohort
Engage in metro regional dialogue about race equity
Adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on July 12, 2016

Adopted by the Fairfax County School Board on July 28, 2016

The resolution directs the development of a racial and social equity policy to be applied in the planning and delivery of all public services

Through the use of equity tools the county and schools will ensure that decisions are made and resources are allocated within the context of One Fairfax, implementing policies, practices, and programs that will not just eliminate identified gaps, but increase success for all.
Questions?
Join Us!

Learning Exchange
Monday, July 31, 2017, 3:00-4:00 pm EDT

Register here: http://bit.ly/REquityReg1
Dismantling Racial Inequity through Child Welfare Systems Change

Webinar topics:

1. Institutional Analysis
2. Cross-systems & Tribal Partnerships
3. Data Collection & Analysis
4. Reframing & Training
5. Social Work Education
6. Sustainability
Presenters

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Thank You!