

Meeting Minutes

Justice Involved Women and Girls Task Force

Date: January 8, 2025, 10:00am-12:00pm

Purpose: The Advisory Task Force on Justice Involved Women and Girls consults with the Commissioner of Corrections regarding choice of model programs to receive funding, reviews and makes recommendations on matters affecting female offenders, identifies problem areas, and assists the Commissioner in seeking improved programming for female offenders.

Open Meeting Law: The taskforce is governed by [The Minnesota Open Meeting Law](#) requirements.

Location: Hybrid: ZOOM and in the DOC Itasca Room

Attendance:

NAME	ROLE	TERM END DATE	ATTENDANCE
ANGELA THOMPSON	Taskforce Member	1/9/26	Via Zoom
KILOMARIE GRANDA	Taskforce Member	1/9/26	Via Zoom
LATONYA REEVES	Taskforce Member	1/9/26	Via Zoom
NICKI ENGEL	Taskforce Member	7/29/26	Via Zoom
BECKY ANDERSON	Taskforce Member	7/29/26	Absent
VICKI HUNTER	Taskforce Member	8/8/26	In-Person
	Interim Chair		
PAULA SCHAEFER	Taskforce Member	8/8/26	Via Zoom
TANA WELTER	Taskforce Member	8/8/26	Via Zoom
COREY THOMPSON	Taskforce Member	8/8/26	Via Zoom
	Interim Co-Chair		
CECELIA VEIL	Taskforce Member	8/8/26	Via Zoom
AMBER FAULKNER	Taskforce Member	8/8/26	Via Zoom
JEFF SPIES	Taskforce Member	8/8/26	Via Zoom
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
VACANT	Taskforce Member		N/A
CONNIE JONES	Staff		In-Person
AMY LAURICELLA	Staff		In-Person
KENDRA SAUNDERS	Staff		In-Person
SHAHNA FREDRICK	Staff		Via Zoom
KRISTI COBBS	Public		Via Zoom
HEIDI RIVERS	Public		Via Zoom
LUANNE BUCK	Public		Via Zoom

DEIDREANN FRATER-ROWE
SARAH THOMAS

Public
Public

Via Zoom
Via Zoom

Taskforce Membership Appointment

Conversation took place regarding the email (attached) sent to the Taskforce from Commissioner Schnell on December 20, 2024, addressing the open vacancies on the taskforce and next steps.

Summary:

- There are a total of 8 open seats on the taskforce. Goal is to issue appointment letters to new members in time for the February 2025 taskforce meeting.
- The DOC will be seeking names from 7 organizations (listed in the email) to serve as members on the taskforce. The DOC will accept the recommended member from the organization and will not be vetting the names further.
- For the additional open seat, the DOC will continue to consult with the taskforce on who they believe is a good fit and round out the needed voices at the table. While the Commissioner's memo indicated the seat would be for a person who has experience from their youth with the juvenile delinquency system, the taskforce members believe this experience exists on the taskforce already and would like to look for other potential areas to round out the team. DOC staff will confirm that expertise before moving forward with appointing anyone from an additional organization.
- The taskforce has requested to receive the applications of those who have applied to serve on the taskforce for their consideration and referral to Commissioner Schnell. In addition, a taskforce member highlighted the lack of prosecutorial experience on the taskforce and indicated an individual from Ramsey County has applied. Amy Lauricella will bring this forward to Commissioner Schnell for consideration for the additional open seat if juvenile lived expertise is already present.
- Future vacancies will continue to be evaluated for new membership with goal of continuing to round out the taskforce and fill in gaps including, but not limited to, community voices, lived experiences, organizations not represented, and diversity.
- Moving forward, the taskforce has requested that a letter be sent to applicants as they apply acknowledging receipt of their application and letting them know what to expect.

Onboarding and Training of new Taskforce Members

- Plan for onboarding of new taskforce members to take place during the February 2025 taskforce meeting. Please plan to be in-person for the February meeting.
- Welcome letters will be issued to all current and new taskforce members.
- Onboarding topics from DOC management will include, at a minimum, legislative responsibilities and authority, how the taskforce and DOC interact, and training on the open meeting law and data practices.
- Additional onboarding topics brought forward by taskforce members include:
 - Stressing the importance of attendance and participation.
 - Taskforce history policy contributions.
 - Tours of Shakopee offered throughout 2025.

Planning for 2025

The taskforce has recommended engaging in a strategic planning session facilitated by an outside agency (ex: Management Analysis Division) in order to create a roadmap.

Deputy Commissioner Jones will determine if there is funding available from the DOC for the strategic planning exercise.

Chair and Co-Chair Open Seats

Vicki Hunter has agreed to serve as the interim chair and Corey Thompson agreed to serve as the interim co-chair. Discussion to be held at a future meeting regarding who will serve as the chair and co-chair moving forward.

Girls Subcommittee

The taskforce will reassemble a sub-committee.

Body Worn Cameras (BWC)

A pilot for body worn cameras (BWC's) will begin at Shakopee on Thursday, January 9, 2025. BWCs will be issued to security staff at the start of shifts and returned at the end of the shift. A taskforce member raised concerns about exploitation, coercion, and privacy, particularly regarding nudity and searches. Requested mechanisms to prevent misuse (see attached article from Corey)

Taskforce members will review the [Body Worn Camera Policy \(301.037\)](#) and make formal recommendations for edits, if applicable.

Education and Disciplinary Processes

When an IP is removed from education, they are placed on Unassigned Idle – Education (UI-ED) status. As openings in Education occur, they are removed from UI-ED and reassigned to education classes.

Tablets at MCF-SHK

Shakopee will be issuing tablets to IP's the week of January 21st. Tablets will have limited functions initially and expand over time. J-Pay systems will be phased out.

Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRA)

Work in the MRRA space continues. A [message](#) was sent out to all IP's and their friends and family. Open hyperlink for additional information.

Shakopee, along with Moose Lake, is a pilot site that will develop and apply processes for granting Earned Incentive Release for those currently incarcerated.

A taskforce member brought up the importance of connecting with domestic and sexual violence agencies to provide resources upon release.

Employment and Housing Programs

A member of the public highlighted available tax breaks for companies who hire IPs and also mentioned the DOC housing programs that support reintegration. Jeff Spies spoke to the work case managers do as it relates to release planning in this space.

Higher Education

IPs housed at Shakopee will be getting laptops to take their college classes soon instead of tablets.

Inspection and Enforcement

Taskforce members requested a conversation with the Inspector General (IG) and Director of the Inspection and Enforcement Division regarding the new rules and enforcement of those rules at an upcoming meeting. Taskforce members will prepare a list of questions they are looking to for answers by the February meeting so the IG and Director can come prepared.

Past Recommendations

The topic of past recommendations not being addressed was brought forward.

Not discussed at the meeting, but as a follow-up and recorded here, Paula Schaefer, Taskforce Member, sent an email to DOC Deputy Commissioner Connie Jones providing an overview of recommendations and communications the taskforce has previously shared with Commissioner Schnell and other members of the DOC with a summary of key items that the taskforce has submitted. The five items identified were (1) DOC State of Girls Report Draft – February 9, 2021, (2) DRT Final Report – December 13, 2022, (3) Letter to Commissioner Schnell – March 20, 2023, (4) Recommendations Letter to Commissioner Schnell – May 9, 2023, and (5) Licensing Representative Request.

The response can be found as an addendum to the minutes below. If there are other recommendations that are not included in the five items identified above, and they are still open or are still of concern, the taskforce should add the items on a future agenda for conversation.

Importance of Respectful Communication

As discussed, it is essential that our taskforce meetings promote a positive and collaborative environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing ideas, taking responsibility, and working together to find solutions. Unfortunately, the use of divisive or blaming language, as observed during the meeting on January 8, 2025, and in prior instances, undermines this goal creating a counterproductive atmosphere that can hinder creativity, trust and team cohesion.

To ensure the success of our taskforce, it is imperative that all attendees commit to respectful and professional communication. Discussions should be grounded in facts, avoiding generalized or accusatory statements.

By fostering a respectful and inclusive environment, we can work more effectively toward achieving our shared objectives.

February Agenda:

1. Orientation
 - Legislative responsibility and authority (led by DOC)
 - How the taskforce and DOC interact (led by DOC)
 - Open meeting law and data practices (led by Dept of Admin)
 - History of the Taskforce (led by taskforce members)
2. Discussion on what is needed from the taskforce to plan for CY 2025
 - Strategic Planning process and use of a facilitator
 - Data
 - Dashboards
 - Guests to be invited in the future.

March Agenda:

- Mikael Garland, Inspector General and Kristi Strang, Director of Inspection and Enforcement:
To discuss rule changes and enforcement.

Action Items

1. **Shelbi Groath** to send membership applications to taskforce members.
2. **Taskforce members** to review membership applications and make recommendations to the Commissioner recognizing the goal is to appoint members in time for the February meeting.
3. **Shelbi Groath** to send letters to applicants, going forward, as they apply acknowledging receipt of their application and letting them know what to expect.
4. **Amy Lauricella and Connie Jones** to discuss with Commissioner Schnell adding an individual with prosecutorial experience to the taskforce. Deadline end of January.
5. **Connie Jones** to identify if DOC funds are available for the strategic planning exercise.
6. **Taskforce members** will review the [Body Worn Camera Policy \(301.037\)](#) and make a formal recommendation for edits, if applicable.
7. **Taskforce members** will review the [MRRA memo to IP's and Friends and Family](#) and submit formal recommendations, if applicable, regarding work in this space.
8. **Taskforce members** will prepare a list of questions for the IG and Director of Inspection and Enforcement in preparation for their attendance at the March meeting. Due to Shelbi by February 12, 2025.

9. **Taskforce members** to prepare a presentation on the history of the taskforce for the new member orientation in February.
10. **Taskforce members** will reassemble a girl's subcommittee.

Attachments

1. Email from Commissioner Schnell sent to taskforce members on 12/20/24 regarding open vacancies.
2. [Body Worn Camera Policy 301.037](#) (open link)
3. Article from Corey
4. [MRRA memo to IP's and Friends and Family](#) (open link)

Meeting Adjourned at 1200; Minutes prepared by: Shelbi Groath, DOC Executive Aide

Addendum: Past Recommendations

JJWG Taskforce members:

Thank you for sharing some of the task force's past requests and recommendations with me. I've got an update on the substance of your recommendations and then a suggestion on how to structure future recommendations for a more formal review.

While I wasn't in receipt of the correspondences related to use of DRT and the statutory change that occurred in 2023, I do know that the suggestions were thoroughly reviewed, considered, and then incorporated into the rule that is set to go into effect January 13th. THANK YOU for all the valuable feedback you provided, both writing and verbal during engagement sessions. It strengthened the rulemaking process and the law.

As for the concerns around lack of statewide data, particularly on juveniles, you aren't alone in identifying this need, and we share the desire for more holistic data. The working group on youth interventions identified this as an issue in their report in February 2024, which was also recommended almost 25 years earlier by a similar group. The complex web of system connections with kids in Minnesota leaves state and local agencies working with them without the full picture. Improving data collection, sharing, and analysis is important, and DOC will continue to engage with state and local partners on this as the new state agency - Department of Children, Families, and Youth - is built out.

You indicate in your email that you have repeatedly requested that a representative from the licensing team attend a taskforce meeting. Greg Huska, former Inspector General, attended a taskforce meeting on August 14, 2024 (see meeting minutes). I am sorry to hear this did not meet your needs. As we discussed at the meeting on January 8, 2025, Kristi Strang, Director of the Inspection and Enforcement Division, will be attending the meeting in March. For her to come prepared, you have agreed to provide specific items you want her to address. Please send these to Shelbi Groath by February 12, 2025.

In terms of future recommendation, the Commissioner of Corrections receives these types of written requests from a variety of advisory bodies, many of whom prepare formal reports, such as the Ombuds for Corrections, the Community Supervision Advisory Council, or the State Correctional Facilities Security Audit Group, and it

seems to work well. Moving forward, I'd suggest the task force use a template that makes it easy to track and respond to requests and recommendations. If you would like we can circulate a template for the committee to consider and discuss at the next meeting.