



## Timothy Montoya Task Force | Meeting Nine

### October 11, 2023, Meeting Recap

#### Overview

The Timothy Montoya Task Force to Prevent Children from Running Away from Out-of-home Placement is legislatively charged with analyzing the root causes of why children and youth run from out-of-home care to help develop a consistent, prompt and effective response for when children and youth do run. It is also charged with assessing how to address the safety and well-being of children and youth upon their return to care.

#### Outlining Subcommittee Work

Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman with the Office of the Colorado Child Protection (CPO), provided an overview of how the task force will move forward during its second year. Per the legislative directives for the task force, addressing quantitative and qualitative data are complete. The remaining directives are ongoing and will fit into the work the task force will do during the upcoming year. Presently, the task force is setting aside the directive to consider resources and funding for recommendations and systems. This is being done to ensure members can think about systems without financial constraints. The task force will come back to this directive before issuing recommendations.

Jordan then outlined a proposal to have the task force break into two subcommittees – prevention and intervention. Jordan provided an overview of the topics covered under each category, with intervention focusing on standard response protocols, communication and coordination. She proposed that prevention dive into education, current laws, locked/delayed lock facilities, electronic monitoring and restraint. Jordan proposed that each member choose one of these subcommittees to participate in. The subcommittees will meet during regular scheduled meeting times and both subcommittees will remain connected, sharing materials and reporting their progress to the larger group. There will be two types of meetings going forward: detailed subcommittee meetings and larger group discussions.

Jordan outlined the projected timeline for the work. The subcommittees will meet in November and December and the group will reconvene in January to discuss the progress of each subcommittee. This three-meeting cycle will continue until July 2024, at which time the entire task force will reconvene to begin discussing possible recommendations.

Bryan Kelley, the newest member of the CPO team, was introduced. Brian is a public policy analyst with the CPO and will serve as a resource to the task force by preparing research packets for the subcommittees. For the prevention subcommittee, Bryan is creating a research packet that includes information on how different states address secure residential facilities outside of youth corrections, Colorado law, regulations and federal law, as well as programs for educating youth in facilities and the

use of restraints. For the intervention subcommittee, Brian is working on pulling and summarizing protocols from states with standard responses and providing information on coordinated efforts in other states.

Bryan is also working to bring in speakers who can provide insights into how things are implemented on the ground in different states. They have already scheduled meetings with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the National Center for Education on Runaway Prevention.

Trace Faust asked for reactions and feedback from the task force, expressing a desire for co-design while recognizing the need to make progress due to time constraints.

During this part of the conversation, several task force members expressed their support for the plan presented. Becky Miller Updike, Jenna Coleman, Sergeant Brian Cotter all indicated that they think the plan is a good idea, and Sergeant Cotter highlighted that it would help the task force divide and conquer, bringing their expertise together.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

Trace then created breakout rooms for task force members to self-select into one of the two subcommittees, with Bryan and Trace leading one, and Jordan leading the other.

In the quick debrief following the breakouts, Jordan summarized the intervention subcommittee's discussion. The intervention subcommittee decided to continue focusing on the three categories they discussed most recently in August. They will begin with standardized response protocols and ensure they have sufficient research, including input from Bryan about what other states have done with standard protocols. They also plan to bring in speakers to provide insights. Once they complete the discussion on standard protocols, they will move on to developing standardized response units and eventually address the topic of temporary placement. They intend to build on their work incrementally.

Bryan summarized the prevention subcommittee's discussion. The prevention subcommittee plans to study and understand Colorado law more comprehensively, distinguishing between what the law actually says and common misconceptions. They also aim to explore practices in other states, not only related to hardware aspects but also broader prevention approaches like education.