



ADVOCATES

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

“We just want to be heard.”

Recommendations to Improve the Lives of
Maryland’s Dually Involved Girls

August 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Childhood maltreatment is a strong indicator for future juvenile justice involvement for any youth; however, female youth are particularly vulnerable. Though the population of female youth involved in the delinquency system is often smaller than that of males, a disproportionately high number of these young women are dually involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Despite their increased need for more intensive services and coordinated case planning, dually involved female youth frequently slip through the cracks and ultimately do not receive the support they need from either system.

This report is a culmination of over two years of work by Advocates for Children and Youth to better understand the needs of dually involved girls in Maryland and to improve their outcomes. The recommendations within are rooted in research, input from stakeholders from across the state, and – most importantly – the direct experiences of the young women themselves.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- **PRIORITIZE A GENDER RESPONSIVE APPROACH**
Conduct site and staff selection, as well as program and material development, in a manner that is reflective of the realities of girls' lives and that address and respond to their strengths and challenges; continue to expand access to age and gender appropriate services.
- **EXPAND TRAUMA-INFORMED POLICIES, PROGRAMS, & PRACTICES**
Support efforts to establish a statewide, trauma-informed system of care; review existing policies and practices to ensure they maintain fidelity to trauma informed care best practices.
- **SUPPORT PLACEMENT STABILITY AND PERMANENT RELATIONSHIPS**
Increase access to effective, home-based early interventions; better individualize and mater placement locations to the needs of the girls; facilitate positive connections with families and home communities.
- **IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION**
Support the implementation of the LINKS project and advocate for public access to the data; continue to conduct and refine assessments regarding the service needs of girls involved in the child welfare and delinquency systems.
- **INCREASE CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION**
Support the implementation and expansion of the Crossover Youth Practice Model, identifying opportunities to expand statewide; advocate for the expansion of other cross-system collaborations.
- **EXPAND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**
Identify opportunities to create consistent training and professional development opportunities for DJJ and DSS staff; expand trauma-informed, gender-responsive, and youth-development training

INTRODUCTION

DUAL INVOLVEMENT DEFINED

Youth who experience childhood maltreatment are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior and become involved in the juvenile justice system.¹ Often these young people are referred to as crossover or dually involved youth. While these terms are frequently used interchangeably, researchers have established distinct terms that reflect the different degrees of involvement in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems.²

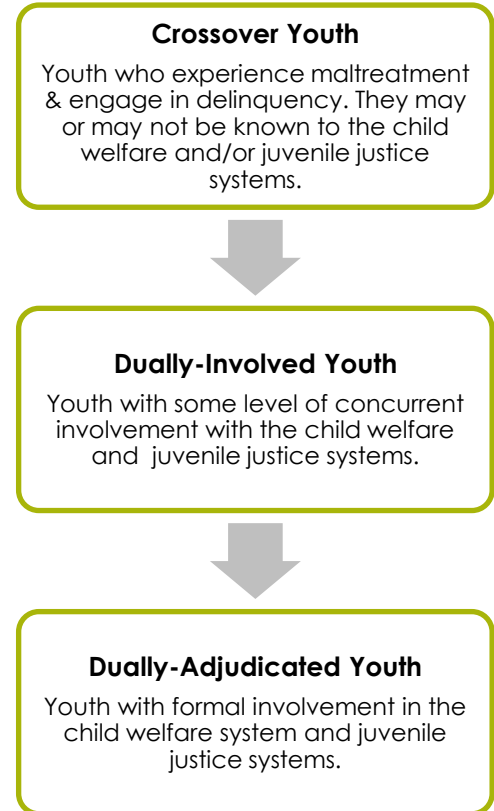
For the purpose of this project and report, Advocates for Children and Youth uses the term “dual involvement” to refer to when a young person has experienced **any** level of involvement in both systems.

By referring to dual involvement in a way that encompasses all degrees of contact with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (crossover, dually-involved, and dually-adjudicated), Advocates for Children and Youth can identify recommendations that will benefit the greatest number of systems-involved girls.

WHY GIRLS?

Dual involvement affects both boys and girls. However, a disproportionately high number of dually involved youth are female, specifically girls and young women of color.³ Unfortunately, little research has been devoted to exploring the unique needs and experiences of dually involved girls specifically.

Research has shown, however, distinct differences in the biological and social development of boys and girls, which result in different risk factors and social pressures and different pathways to juvenile court involvement.⁴ For example, girls in the juvenile justice system are more likely to have experienced trauma; to be a victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; and to have family-related challenges than their male peers.⁵ Additionally, girls often become more deeply involved in the juvenile justice system for more minor offenses than boys.⁶



Herz, et. al. (2012). *Addressing the Needs of Multi-System Youth: Strengthening the Connection Between Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice*. Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform

¹ Hertz, et. al. (2012). *Addressing the Needs of Multi-System Youth: Strengthening the Connection Between Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice*. Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform

² In addition to distinguishing between the depth of involvement in each system, research on dual involved youth also identifies different patterns of involvement to characterize which system (child welfare or delinquency) a young person first came into contact with.

³ Bilchik, S. and Nash, M. (2008). Child welfare and juvenile justice: Two sides of the same coin. *Juvenile and Family Justice Today*, Fall 2008, 16-20.

⁴ Farrell, J. & Bright, C. (2013). *Best Practices for Supervising Girls in the Juvenile Justice System*. PowerPoint presentation at the Department of Juvenile Services Girls Workgroup in Baltimore, MD.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Watson, L. & Edelman, P. (2012). *Improving The Juvenile Justice System For Girls: Lessons From The States*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Center on Poverty, Inequality, and Public Policy.

DUALLY INVOLVED GIRLS IN MARYLAND

In Maryland, a significant number of females become involved in the juvenile justice system each year. In 2013, the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) screened 7,455 cases involving young women with the majority of them being between the ages of 14 and 17.

While it is difficult to identify the number of dually-involved youth at all stages of the juvenile justice system, we see similar trends in Maryland regarding the disproportionality and risk factors of dually involved girls. For instance, female dually-involved youth are over represented among the youth committed to the custody of DJS in Maryland. In 2012, 90 percent of female youth placed in a Department of Juvenile Services out-of-home placement reported having moderate or high family-related needs and 39 percent had a history of physical or sexual abuse—over triple the rate for males.⁷ We do not know how many of these youth had open child welfare cases at the time of their involvement with the juvenile justice system, but their high rates of maltreatment reflect their vulnerability to becoming dually-involved.⁸

⁷ Female youth committed to DJS out-of-home placements were also more likely than their male counterparts to have histories of neglect, running away or being kicked out of the home. Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (2013). *2012 JCR response: Girls services implementation plan and report on placement disparities update*. Baltimore, MD.

⁸ Though not necessarily dually involved, Maryland data also suggests that girls are becoming more deeply involved in the delinquency system and placed in more restrictive settings for minor offenses than their male counterparts. "The most frequently adjudicated offenses [for girls] were misdemeanors and violations of probation" and only 17 out of 46 girls at the J. DeWeese Carter Youth Facility within the past two years had "case histories that warranted placement in a hardware secure facility; the remainder...could have been served with an intervention in a less secure setting." Department of Juvenile Services. (2013). *Maryland Department of Juvenile Services: Residential and community-based services gap analysis*. Baltimore, MD.

IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS OF DUALY INVOLVED GIRLS

Although the relationship between maltreatment and delinquency is well established, little research has addressed the specific risk factors and unique experiences of dually involved female youth.

In order to better understand the needs of these young women, Advocates for Children and Youth conducted extensive research over two years that laid the foundation for the recommendations outlined within this report. We reviewed the existing literature on dually involved youth, interviewed 20 young women with prior involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in Maryland, and convened over 30 stakeholders from across the state in multiple “strategy sessions” to discuss recommendations for improving the lives of Maryland’s dually involved girls.

PART 1: RESEARCHING DUAL INVOLVEMENT

Advocates for Children and Youth first reviewed existing research on dually involved youth and found that, while dual involvement can occur with any youth, there are certain experiences and risk factors that significantly increase the likelihood of whether a young woman will become dually involved.

For example, national research shows that three or more out-of-home child welfare placements doubled offending behavior in boys; however any out-of-home placement doubles offending behavior in girls.⁹ Additionally, experiences of abuse or trauma – particularly during adolescence – were shown to be significant indicators of dual involvement in young women.¹⁰ While any one of these risk factors can increase the chances that a young woman will become dually involved, many girls experience multiple in risk factors in different areas of their lives – increasing their chances even further.¹¹

More details can be found in our issue brief: *Unique Risk Factors Signal Dual Involvement for Female Youth in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems*.

PART 2: LISTENING TO THEIR STORIES

“ We have vulnerabilities...we need services to help with those things before we go to jail. ”

Participant #18, age 24, when asked how to better serve young women that are dually involved

The goal of Part 2 of Advocates for Children and Youth’s work was to better understand not only dual involvement generally, but also the unique needs of dually involved girls in Maryland. To achieve this goal, we interviewed 20 young women between the ages of 18 and 24 to learn – directly from them – about their experiences in both systems and about what they felt would have prevented them from becoming dually involved.

⁹ Widom, CS. (1992). The role of placement experiences in mediating the criminal consequences of early childhood victimization. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 61, 195-209.

¹⁰ Dowdell, E.B., Cavanaugh, D.J., Burgess, A.W. and Prentky, R.A. (2009). Girls in foster care: A vulnerable and high-risk group. *The American Journal of Maternal and Child Nursing*, 34, 172-178.

¹¹ Bilchik, S. and Nash, M. (2008).

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS INCLUDE:



For more information and findings from the interviews, see Advocates for Children and Youth's white paper titled: *Perspectives from Maryland's Dually-Involved Female Youth*.

PART 3: CONVENING STAKEHOLDERS

Advocates for Children and Youth brought together over 30 stakeholders, representing 19 different agencies and organizations from across Maryland, to discuss the needs of dually involved girls during three "strategy sessions" in October and November 2013. The meetings used the interview findings as a framework and were characterized by robust discussions regarding recommendations for improving the lives of Maryland's dually involved girls.

PARTNERS

Baltimore City Public Defenders Office ❖ Baltimore City School Police ❖ Baltimore County Department of Social Services ❖ Baltimore County Local Management Board (LMB) ❖ Community Law in Action (CLIA) ❖ Court Appointed Special Advocates ❖ The Family League ❖ The Jewish Women's Giving Foundation ❖ Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) ❖ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) ❖ Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (MD NASW) ❖ Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) ❖ Maryland Foster Youth Resource Center (MFYRC) ❖ Maryland Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (MD JDAI) ❖ Maryland Legal Aid Bureau ❖ Maryland Police Training Commission ❖ New Lens

RECOMMENDATIONS

Advocates for Children and Youth is committed to elevating the voices and needs of dually involved girls in Maryland. The following recommendations lay the framework and foundation for ongoing advocacy across the state to improve the lives of Maryland's dually involved girls. These recommendations cover a broad array of topics and are rooted in research, substantial input from a variety of stakeholders across the state, and – most importantly – the direct experiences of the young women themselves.

RECOMMENDATION 1: PRIORITIZE A GENDER RESPONSIVE APPROACH

Many of the recommendations proposed within this report would benefit both boys and girls that are dually involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. However, we know from the research that girls have very different experiences that lead them to becoming systems involved and that girls react differently to these experiences than boys.¹² An approach to working with girls that is sensitive to their unique needs and is incorporated into everything from the physical environment to the types of services offered is essential to improving outcome for dually involved girls.

The Department of Human Resources and Department of Juvenile Services should conduct site and staff selection, as well as program and material development, in a manner that is reflective of the realities of girls' lives and that address and respond to their strengths and challenges.¹³

An effective, gender responsive approach includes:¹⁴

- ❖ Acknowledging, and responding appropriately to, the reasons why girls commit offenses (i.e. family conflict, mental health issues, maltreatment, trauma).
- ❖ Orienting dispositions, staff interactions, etc. towards treatment instead of punishment.
- ❖ Providing single gender environments.
- ❖ Paying attention to, and striving to understand, the significant relationships in a girl's life.
- ❖ Respecting girls' differences in class, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, gender expression, and all other differences.
- ❖ Involving girls in the design and implementation of their own programming.
- ❖ Listening to young women's stories.

The state of Connecticut is at the forefront of implementing a gender responsive system. The guidelines on the next page direct the development and redesigned of programs across the state and can be used as a model in Maryland.

¹² Farrell, J. & Bright, C. (2013).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

CONNECTICUT GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING A GENDER RESPONSIVE SYSTEM FOR GIRLS¹⁵

AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL:

- Commit to a strengths-based service delivery system
- Prioritize a relationship approach in service delivery
- Recognize and plan for the difference in effective interventions for boys & girls

AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL:

- Staff hiring and training must be gender responsive
- Ensure a relational culture
- Insist on physical, emotional, and psychological safety

AT THE CLIENT LEVEL

- Utilize a gender specific assessment and treatment planning approach
- Implement a gender specific behavior motivation system
- Trauma sensitive practice

The Department of Human Resources and Department of Juvenile Services should increase access to age and gender appropriate services.

In addition to infusing a gender responsive approach and philosophy throughout the child welfare and delinquency systems, it is important to also expand access to programs and services that address the needs of girls specifically.

Currently, the Department of Juvenile Services offers the Female Intervention Team (FIT) to DJS-involved girls in Baltimore City that are supervised through aftercare, probation, and the violence prevention initiative. The primary focus of this program has been to “keep girls in the community and prevent them from re-offending through the use of case management and access to support services... [such as] teen parenting, parent support, and substance abuse groups.”¹⁶ To better support dually involved girls, Maryland should consider ways of: 1) expanding FIT to other jurisdictions in the state, 2) expanding FIT to include girls that are under pre-court supervision; and 3) establishing a subgroup of FIT specific for dually involved girls. Girls Group and Girls Circle are two other gender-specific services offered, with limited availability, to girls involved in DJS across the state.

¹⁵ Sokoloff, K. (2007). *Ideas for building a gender responsive system for girls*. [Handout] from Georgetown University Law Center presentation on Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice for Disconnected Girls, November 2013.

¹⁶ Department of Juvenile Services. (2013). *Maryland Department of Juvenile Services: Residential and community-based services gap analysis*. Baltimore, MD. pg. 11

RECOMMENDATION 2: EXPAND TRAUMA-INFORMED POLICIES, PROGRAMS, & PRACTICES

The impact of trauma is significant. Any unaddressed experience of childhood trauma, such as childhood maltreatment, can have a lasting impact on a child's cognitive and behavioral development and can lead to negative outcomes such as substance abuse, mental health issues, and delinquent behavior.¹⁷ When a child experiences multiple instances of trauma, as many children in the child welfare system have, they become two to ten times more likely to experience more severe and long-lasting behavioral and emotional impairments.¹⁸ Not only have many dually involved girls experienced trauma in their lives, but that trauma is often what led to their delinquent behavior and dually involved status.

Maryland should establish a statewide, trauma-informed system of care that better identifies, responds to, and addresses trauma before it results in young women going deeper into the system.

At the January of 2014 meeting of the Evidence Based Practice (EBP) Advisory Committee at the University of Maryland, School of Social Work, it was proposed that Maryland's child serving agencies and stakeholders from across the state work together to develop a concrete plan and set of action steps for establishing and implementing a statewide, trauma-informed system of care. As the Maryland Children's Cabinet moves this effort forward, it is important that advocates are involved and that the policies and procedures that are put in place reflect best practices of trauma-informed care.

Existing policies and practices within the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Juvenile Services should be reviewed and revised to align with trauma-informed care.

An effective, trauma-informed system of care:¹⁹

- ❖ Incorporates an understanding of the impact of violence and abuse on girls into all programs and services.
- ❖ Establishes both physical and emotional safety in order to prevent re-traumatization.
- ❖ Creates an atmosphere that is respectful of girls and their need for safety, respect, and acceptance.
- ❖ Eliminates unnecessary triggers and identifies triggers for each individual.
- ❖ Strives to maximize a girl's ability to make safe choices and exercise control over her life.

¹⁷ Klain, E. & White, A. (2013). *Implementing Trauma Informed Practices in Child Welfare*. ABA Center on Children and The Law, Washington DC. Kros, F. (2013, January 13). Giving a fish a bath: The untold story of the adolescent mind. Presented at A Day with the Upside Down Organization - Prince George's County Homeless Youth Workgroup, Hyattsville, MD.

¹⁸ Klain, E. & White, A. (2013).

¹⁹ Georgetown University Law Center (November 2013). *Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice for Disconnected Girls* Presentation. Washington, DC.

- ❖ Strives to be culturally competent – to understand a girl’s culture and how that affects her life experiences, view of the world, and behavior.
- ❖ Uses “universal precautions” and assumes that every girl may be a trauma survivor.

RECOMMENDATION 3: SUPPORT PLACEMENT STABILITY AND PERMANENT RELATIONSHIPS

One of the most recurring themes in our research and interviews with the twenty young women was the impact of placement instability on the likelihood of a girl becoming dually involved. In addition to the 80 percent of young women who had multiple out of home placements, 65 percent emphasized the importance of stability in their lives. Many said that in addition to feeling stable in their placements, a sense of social stability – through lasting relationships with their biological families, peers, role models, or mentors – would have helped reduce the likelihood of them offending.

“ As she became older, she felt like a nomad that was unwanted. She never felt stable in her placements. ”

Participant #8, age 20, when asked about the challenges of adjusting to foster care

Best practices for supervising girls in the juvenile justice system also clearly state the importance of promoting positive, lasting relationships; building strong support networks; and utilizing the least restrictive placement or services that matches the girl’s needs and is closest to home.²⁰

Maryland’s child serving agencies should increase access to effective, home-based early interventions.

An example of an effective, home-based early intervention used in Maryland is Functional Family Therapy (FFT). While it is not a gender-specific model, FFT has been shown to be particularly effective for working with systems-involved girls.²¹ Currently, FFT is available to DJS-involved youth in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Howard, Carroll, Harford, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary’s, Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties; however it is not available in Garrett, Allegany, Washington, or Frederick Counties and it has only limited availability on the Eastern Shore.²² In Baltimore County, FFT has been particularly effective at preventing dual involvement among girls; around 50 percent of the caseload is female. Additionally, it is available to youth who have not yet come into contact with either system, making it an effective preventive measure that reduces the likelihood a girl will become systems-involved. Maryland should ensure that FFT and other home-based interventions – especially those for girls who have not yet come into contact with any system – are available in all jurisdictions across the state.

The Department of Human Resources and the Department of Juvenile Services should better individualize and match placement locations to each girl’s need.

When a dually involved girl does have to be placed outside of her home, it is essential that the placement location and level of restriction is appropriate to that individual girl’s needs. This is

²⁰ Farrell, J. & Bright, C. (2013).

²¹ Department of Juvenile Services. (2013). pg. 11

²² Ibid. pg. 18

especially important for dually involved girls in a DJS out-of-home placement. In Maryland's only hardware secure facilities for girls, only 17 out of 46 girls who had been placed there had case histories that warranted their placement in that restrictive of a setting.²³

When placed out-of-home, the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Juvenile Services should support the maintenance of positive connections with the girl's family and home communities.

DJS residential programs for girls are not uniformly located across the state,²⁴ which can make it challenging for families to visit their children when placed out of home. DJS should identify ways to incorporate more home visits when appropriate, to increase opportunities for phone calls home, and to facilitate other measures for ensuring that girls can maintain lasting relationships with support networks and positive role models.

RECOMMENDATION 4: IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION

To effectively meet the needs of Maryland's dually involved girls, it is critical to have access to detailed and accurate data on a regular basis.

Collect and make public data that captures the number of dually involved youth and the degree of involvement in each system.

Currently, there is no readily available public data that shows the number of dually involved youth in Maryland. However, the LINKS project – a recent partnership between The Innovations Institute at the University of Maryland, the Department of Human Resources, and the Department of Juvenile Services – is in the process of establishing a system that will be able to identify the number of dually involved youth in Maryland. The data that LINKS can currently access is largely demographic and includes data points regarding offense history, DJS placements, commitments, pre-court and aftercare supervision, DSS investigations, in-home services, and out of home placements. However, this information will help provide a more robust picture regarding the patterns of dual involvement in Maryland. Additionally, the goal is that the LINKS database will also expand to incorporate assessment data that captures the needs of the youth. As the LINKS project gets off the ground, it is important to continue to advocate for access to the data in order to be able inform advocacy efforts. Advocates should also continue to support efforts to expand the data included in the LINKS project, providing recommendations for data points that will continue to deepen our understanding of dually involved youth.

Continue to conduct and refine assessments regarding the service needs of girls involved in the child welfare and delinquency systems.

The Department of Juvenile Services recently conducted a gap analysis that “summarizes the Department's current service continuum and data related to the risks and needs presented by boys and girls...and provides an assessment of whether the current array of services is sufficient

²³ Ibid. pg. 28

²⁴ Ibid. pg. 24

to meet the needs of all youth, with a specific focus on girls".²⁵ While this is an incredibly valuable resource, there were still some limitations to the data. For instance, there is no data regarding the capacity of community-based programs for youth under pre-court supervision, probation, or aftercare supervision. There is only information regarding the number of programs available. Additionally, there is limited data regarding whether girls are placed in DJS out-of-home placements that best match their needs. The data that discusses girls' ejections from DJS out-of-home placements does not make clear whether the reason for the ejection was because the girl was inappropriately placed or whether it was because the girl was appropriately placed and did not do well in that particular program.²⁶ Despite these limitations, we hope that the Department of Juvenile Services continues to regularly conduct and refine its gap analysis with the focus on girls' services.

RECOMMENDATION 5: INCREASE CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION

Dually involved youth, especially those with concurrently open cases, frequently have court dates and case planning for both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems that occur with minimal input from the other agency. To both prevent dual involvement and improve outcomes for girls that are already dually involved, we must continue to identify opportunities for child serving agencies to collaborate in the case management and service planning of dually involved youth.

Support the implementation and expansion of the Crossover Youth Practice Model, identifying opportunities to expand statewide

Since the fall of 2012, Prince George's County has been partnering with Georgetown's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) to implement the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) and increase cross-systems collaboration for handling dually involved cases. This process has resulted in new policies and procedures that outline coordination between the Courts, the Department of Juvenile Services, and the Department of Social Services from the moment a case opens through the case closing that will improve outcomes for dually involved youth. The new policies will be fully implemented as of September 1, 2014. A second, currently unidentified Maryland jurisdiction will also begin partnering with CJJR to develop a joint practice model in the coming months.

Advocates should continue to monitor and support the implementation process in Prince George's County to highlight lessons learned for when the second jurisdiction begins its partnership with CJJR. While these CYPM efforts are focused at the county level, advocates and the state Department of Juvenile Services and the Department of Human Resources should consider whether certain components could be applicable at the state level.

Monitor the implementation of the Under-13 Initiative and advocate for the expansion of other effective cross-systems collaborations.

The Under-13 Initiative is a school-based intervention for youth 12 and younger that is "based on the premise that if a youth is being arrested at such a young age that there are usually problems

²⁵ Ibid. pg. 2

²⁶ Ibid. pg. 30

at home".²⁷ The Initiative is a collaboration between the Department of Juvenile Services, the Local Department of Social Services, and the local education agency and is intended to prevent youth from going deeper into the juvenile justice system. Although the initiative just started in Baltimore City in May 2013, 21 of the 46 youth referred to the program have agreed to receive services and only two children have reoffended.²⁸ The Under-13 Initiative is still in its early stages in Baltimore City and Prince George's County. Maryland should continue to monitor its implementation, paying close attention to the program's utilization and effectiveness for the female population.

RECOMMENDATION 6: EXPAND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

To ensure that staff can effectively respond to the unique needs of dually involved girls – and to ensure that policy changes actually translate into practice – consistent, high quality professional development is critical.

Maryland should support the expansion of trauma-informed, gender-responsive, and youth-development training opportunities for all child welfare and juvenile justice staff.

An essential component to ensuring the recommendations within this report translate to real change for Maryland's dually involved female youth is to adequately train and support child welfare and juvenile justice staff in gender responsiveness, trauma-informed care, and youth development. The Department of Juvenile Services and the Department of Human Resources can affirm its commitment to providing for vulnerable youth by establishing and consistently providing training programs that address these topics.

CONCLUSION

Advocates for Children and Youth is committed to advancing the needs of Maryland's dually involved girls. In addition to serving as a tool to educate state agencies, elected officials, and the public regarding the unique experiences of dually involved girls, this report also lays the foundation for future advocacy in the coming months and years.

Advocates for Children and Youth looks forward to continuing to work with our partners to identify next steps for acting on and implementing these recommendations. We are confident that the recommendations within will translate to real and lasting change and, ultimately, improved outcomes for girls across the state.

²⁷ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. *Initiatives: Under-13*. Retrieved from: <http://www.djs.state.md.us/initiatives.asp>

²⁸ StateStat (March 26, 2014). *Meeting Summary: Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) State Stat Meeting*. Retrieved from: <http://www.statestat.maryland.gov/reports.html>