

# JUSTICE & AUTISM (ASD)

Reaching for the Gold Standard: Data, Exploration, & Application for Solutions

## Data to Assist:

- Staying abreast of the current state of the state
- Promoting awareness & intervention
- Distribution of services and funds
- Service coordination & access
- Training options
- Policy & legislation planning
- Support resource sharing
- Early identification
- Disparity considerations
- Research prioritization
- Informing cost differences & funds differences & funds

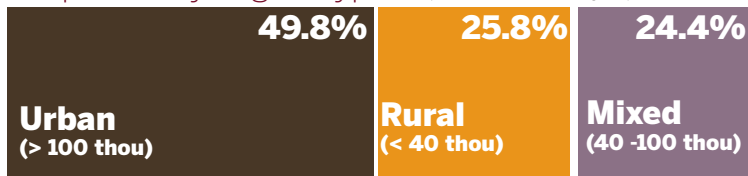
## INDIANA AUTISM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Since 2012, over 4,000 Indiana residents (English and Spanish-speaking) across all 92 counties have responded regarding their needs:

- Individuals with ASD
- Families
- Educators
- Healthcare personnel
- First responders
- Justice and law enforcement
- Other service providers

## SAMPLE RESPONSE CATEGORIES:

Responses by Region Types\* (% of those surveyed)



\* Largely representative of the types of regions compared to census data in Indiana and nationwide

Responses by Race (% ompared to recent IN and US Sensus)

|                        | Survey Respondents | Indiana Census | US Census |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
| African American       | 5.2%               | 9.7%           | 13.3%     |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 0.9%               | 2.3%           | 5.9%      |
| Caucasian              | 89.0%              | 85.6%          | 61.3%     |
| Latino/Hispanic        | 4.5%               | 6.8%           | 17.8%     |
| Native American        | 0.5%               | 0.4%           | 1.3%      |

Other Select Variables Available

- Education level
- Household income
- Family role
- Service access
- Costs & insurance
- Diagnosis

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Individuals with ASD are 7 times more likely to intersect with the criminal justice system, either as victims or offenders (Berryessa, 2014).
- 19.5% of youth with ASD have been stopped and questioned by police by the time they reached their early 20s. Of them, nearly 5% were subsequently arrested (Rava, Shattuck, Rast, & Roux, 2017).
- Yet, the prevalence of actual unlawful behavior of individuals with ASD is relatively low (Woodbury-Smith & Dein, 2014).
- Socio-emotional challenges present in ASD do not allow individuals to have an intent to purposefully harm another person (Berryessa, 2014; Freckelton, 2013; Woodbury-Smith & Dein, 2014).
- Presence of co-morbid psychiatric disorders can be a strong underlying reason for offensive behaviors.
- 20% of children with autism have been physically or sexually abused. However, justice personnel is not sufficiently ready to interact and advocate for these victims (Mandell et al., 2005)

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS (2015):

- 19.5% of state and federal prisoners have cognitive disabilities CD; e.g., autism, Down syndrome
- 30.9% of jail inmates have CD
- 33% of prisoners and 47% of jail inmates with a cognitive disability reported past 30-day serious psychological distress, compared to 11% of prisoners and 24% of jail inmates with a disability other than cognitive

ASD is not easily recognized by police and other officials, therefore their behaviors may seem alike to those of offenders. Challenges with problem solving, acquiescence, lack of understanding of the events, and stress caused by the lights, behaviors of others, and broken routine can cause further suspicion and perception of aggression (Woodbury-Smith & Dein, 2014). In turn, courts often do not accept expert testimony about ASD (King & Murphy, 2014).

## DISPARITIES RESULTING FROM ASD:

- Behaviors may be construed as antisocial
  - # Understanding social cues
  - # Comprehending verbal and non-verbal communication
  - # Dealing with disruptions in routines
- Lack of empathy and repeated behaviors may appear to be intentional
- Poor problem solving ability may reflect as lacking moral values or reasoning
- High IQ may prevent invocation of legal insanity plea

Highlights from Indiana Needs Assessment:

- 12.2 % reported police being called
- 2.5% reported police warning being issued
- 1.1% served time in juvenile detention facility

Additionally, funding, time, and practical information were reported by justice personnel as barriers to implementation of best practices in working with individuals with ASD.

# HELPING TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY-INFORMED STATEWIDE PRIORITIES



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We are proud partners with FSSA and facilitators of IIACC efforts

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