

# **Assessing Alternatives-to- Detention Programs**

**Juvenile Detention Alternatives  
Initiative Inter-site Conference**

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# Purpose of the Session

- To become familiar with JDAI framework for assessing detention alternative programs
- To help prepare you for assessing your own alternative programs

# Why is Assessment of Alternative Programs Important?

- To avoid widening the net
- To ensure appropriate services
- To ensure effective services

# Net-Widening

“Use of a[n]...alternative to control new populations of youth that were not previously under control.”

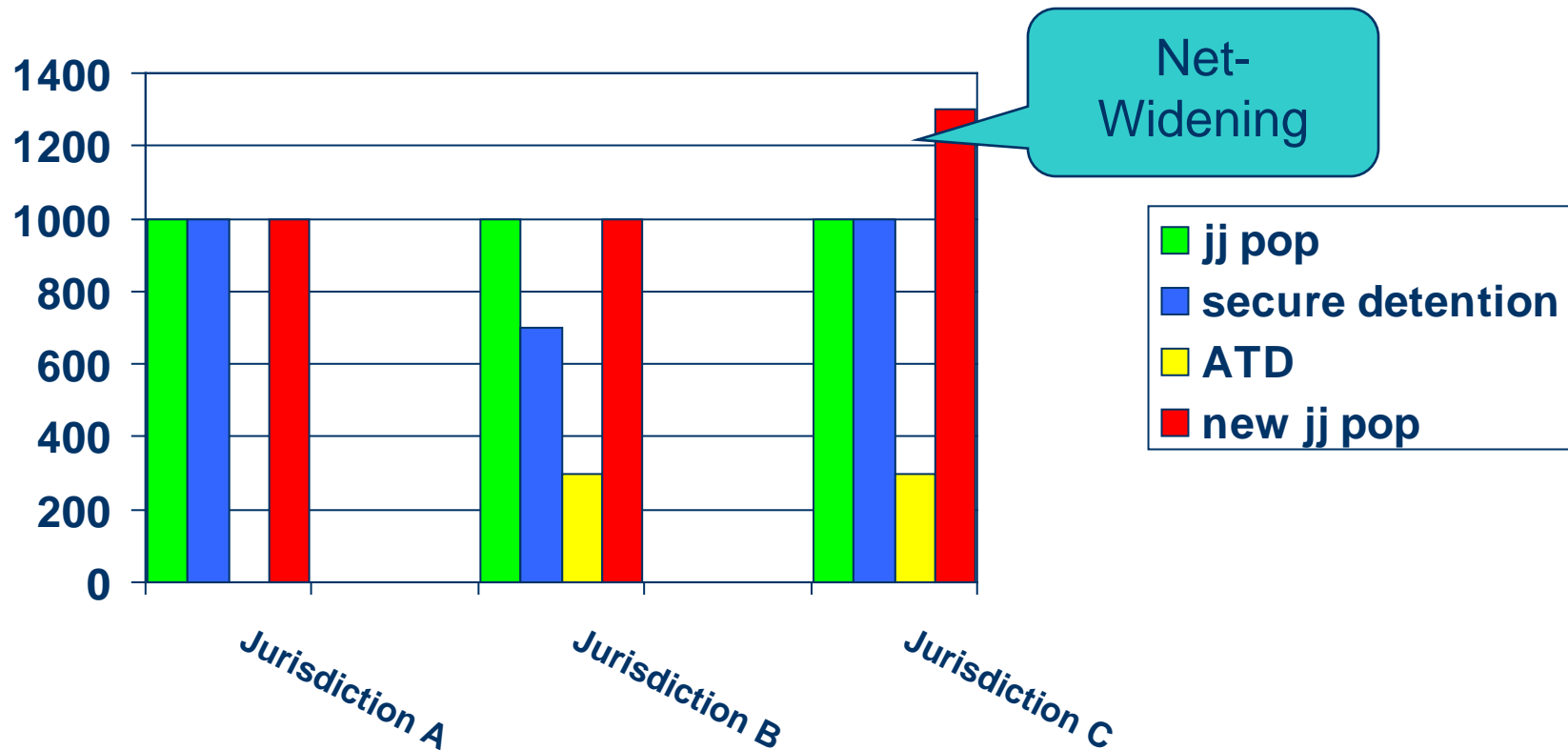
Pathways to Juvenile Detention Reform: Planning



# Net Widening Scenarios

- Jurisdiction A has 1000 youth at risk of detention. There are no juvenile detention alternative (JDA) programs. All 1000 youth are held in secure detention.
- Jurisdiction B has 1000 youth at risk of detention. It introduces a JDA program. 300 detention-eligible youth are placed in the program. The detention population falls to 700.
- Jurisdiction C has 1000 youth at risk of detention. It introduces a JDA program. 300 youth who would not otherwise be detained are sent to the program. The detention population remains at 1000.

# What Net Widening Looks Like



# JDAI Program Assessment Framework

Issue	What/Why	What/Who	Findings	Recommendations
1. Purpose				
2. Population				
3. Activities				
4. Intake/Discharge				
5. Utilization				
6. Cultural Competence				
7. Outcomes/Results				
8. Administration				
9. System Relations				

# 1. Program Purpose, Philosophy and Culture

- Why this is important?
  - Reflects the purpose of the program – what they are intending to do and why
- How do you learn about a program's purpose?
  - Interviews with management
  - Interviews with line staff
  - Interviews with youth and families
  - Review of written materials
  - Observation

# Example of Mission Statement

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“The Center for Community Alternatives is an organization whose purpose is to **reduce reliance on detention and incarceration** in ways that are consistent with **public safety.**”

## 2. Target Population

- Who is the program designed for?
  - Are there objective criteria governing eligibility?
- Is this a population who would otherwise be detained?
- How do we know this?
  - Use of data
  - Compare program population with detention population

# Targeting Example: The Youth Advocacy Program

## NYC Detention Population

- Gender:
  - Male: 95%
  - Female: 5%
- Race
  - Black: 67%
  - Hispanic: 31%
  - White: 2%
- Charge: 66% charged with Robbery 1°

## YAP Program Population

- Gender:
  - Male: 87%
  - Female: 13%
- Race
  - Black: 73%
  - Hispanic: 26%
  - White: 1%
- Charge: 80% charged with Robbery °



## 3. Enrollment and Discharge

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- Eligibility: Who establishes criteria?
- How enrollment is accomplished?
- Program response to non compliance
- Who does the program report to? How and when?
- Criteria for discharge
  - Based on case stage or individual outcomes
- Outcomes/Reasons for Discharge
- Post program services

# Enrollment and Discharge: Program Examples

- Eligibility Criteria: Guided by assessment instrument to exclude youth who would not otherwise be detained: youth in detention for 15 days.
- Enrollment: CCA's appearance in court requesting that the judge release the youth to the program
- Non compliance Response: tightening conditions of release e.g., more face-to-face contacts, increased urinalysis; immediate notification to court if serious non compliance, e.g., rearrest
- Reporting: to judge at each court hearing, or more if so ordered, reporting done through written report and in court appearance
- Discharge criteria: resolution of the case by trial or plea
- Reasons for discharge: resolution of the case, persistent non compliance
- Post program services: sentence planning and advocacy to achieve a non custodial sentence; linkage with [voluntary] community-based services; coordinate transfer of supervision to Probation.



## 4. Program Activities

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- What are the services/activities delivered by the program?
- What methods are used to deliver program services?
- Do these fit the target population's needs within the context of detention alternatives?
  - Mission/activity creep
  - Expansion of net of social control issues

# Program Activities: Program Example

- Key Services Delivered:
  - Community supervision & support: home and community based
  - Daily contact in the initial phase of the program
  - Curfew checks
  - Community & school advocacy
  - Court reporting
  - Youth Development Activities
- Program Methods: Intensive case management
- Meeting the needs of the population: YAP designed for highest risk population, judges expect intensive supervision to ensure return to court and avoidance of rearrest.



## 5. Utilization

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- What is the program service capacity?
- Is the program utilized to its maximum potential?
  - Is it underutilized ? If so, why?
  - Is there a waiting list and how is it managed?
- Length of stay – is it related to case processing or youth needs?
- What happens to a youth who is turned away?

# Utilization: Program Example

- Program service capacity: 100 youth per year
- Utilization: in the last full program year, YAP served 118 youth
- Waiting list: we try not to turn youth down
- Length of stay: related to case processing – cases are closed once a youth is sentenced typically 18—270 days.
- Youth who are turned away are likely to remain in detention.



## 6. Cultural Competency and Racial Disparity Impact

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- Racial disparity – who is being enrolled in the programs?
  - Is the effort to reduce detention also reducing disproportionate minority confinement?
- Programming staffing, approach & environment
- Cultural competency affects all aspects of a program enrollment; engagement with youth and families; outcome.

# Cultural Competency and Racial Disparity Impact: Program Example

- Who is being enrolled: 98% of YAP participants are African American or Latino
- Program staff: 85% of program staff are people of color including the Program Director
- There are bilingual staff (including the Program Director)
- The program space is youth friendly and culturally welcoming

# 7. Results and Outcomes

- Return to court
- No rearrest
- Impact on the detention population

# Results: Program Example

- Recidivism rates: [last program year]: 13% of youth were rearrested
- 6% of program were issued a bench warrant for failure to appear- compared to 9% citywide
- Detention Displacement
  - Average detention day savings: 80 days per each JO released to the project
  - Total detention savings: 7,680 days
  - Total detention savings: \$3,148,800

## 8. Administration

- Staff training and qualifications
- Staff salary, benefits and turnover rates
- MIS – infrastructure support
- Program evaluation
- Board composition and commitment to JDAI
- Organizational leadership- leadership to ensure mission internally and as part of JDAI efforts
- Continuous improvement capacity
- Overall budget



# 9. Systems Relations

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- Perceptions of key stakeholders:
  - Courts
  - Prosecutors
  - Defense Attorneys
  - Probation Officers
  - Community-Based Organizations
  - Parents
  - Youth
- Credibility

# Perceptions of Key Stakeholders: Program Example

## Indicators of Support

- Support from Youth Part Judges in NYC
- Support from several District Attorneys
- Support from New York City Legal Aid and other special defender offices
- Working relationship with Probation
- YAP funded since 1989 by the New York City Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator

# Conclusion: Resources

- Center for Community Alternatives:  
[www.communityalternatives.org](http://www.communityalternatives.org)
- W. Haywood Burns Institute  
<http://www.burnsinstitute.org/>
- Pathways to Detention Reform: Consider the Alternatives. Annie E. Casey Foundation  
[http://www.aecf.org/publications/data/4\\_consider.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/publications/data/4_consider.pdf)