

Annie E. Casey Foundation
Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services
Action Plan

September 2004

Effective July 1, 2004, the Clark County Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative Advisory Planning Committee (JDAIPC) accepted responsibility for the implementation of the Clark County Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, from the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS). JDAIPC, composed of the major stakeholders of public and private agencies with criminal justice responsibilities, serves as an impartial and fair committee that is committed to effective and efficient juvenile justice reform to accomplish the purposes of juvenile detention reform. The following plan reflects a collaborative effort between JDAIPC and DJJS for a countywide detention reform initiative. (See Attachment 1.)

Clark County administers through its general fund budget, approximately 35 million annually to assist DJJS in the intervention of juvenile crime. Clark County also funds improvements in the juvenile court system, including programs designed to reduce the number of detained youth and divert juvenile offenders from short-term detention to community-based alternatives in lieu of secure detention.

In 2003, DJJS added risk based evaluation and programming in order to ensure proper supervision and treatment of juveniles. The shift occurred as a result of on-going policy and procedural changes within DJJS in an effort to analyze and improve the juvenile justice system at all entry points and steps in the process. DJJS has been successful in developing close collaborations between Clark County, community partners and juvenile justice service providers (see Attachment 2) to facilitate successful detention reform.

Considerable progress has been made by DJJS to eliminate the unnecessary use of secure detention of youth who are less than high risk offenders and do not present a public threat to safety. Also, DJJS has taken steps to improve conditions of confinement for youth who do require detention, including reducing the number of beds utilized in detention, increasing the number of "outreach programs," which provide alternatives to secure detention and providing more efficient processing of Court procedures.

A Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) was developed and is currently used as a guide during the intake function and during the court decision-making process. There is also a judicial consensus in support of the use of the assessment instrument to determine the risk of juvenile offenders to the community.

OBJECTIVES

The Clark County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (CCJDAI) will focus on the following three objectives:

Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment Instrument Work Group

- Evaluate the current risk assessment instruments impact on unnecessary detention.
- Assess the jurisdictions capacity to collect data and current data collection practices.
- Enhance management reports designed to track detention utilization, monitor the Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI), as well as the overrides and track alternatives to detention (ATD) utilization.
- Disaggregate all data by race, ethnicity and gender.
- In partnership with law enforcement, enhance detention criteria.
- Develop and implement a JDAI model RAI, testing for unintended racial biases.
- Train staff and relevant personnel in the application of the RAI.
- Develop systems and standards of quality control relative to the RAI.
- Review and analyze the necessity for, and policy and practices of, “mandatory holds.”
- Conduct a detention utilization study that identifies the demographics and risk level of current detainees.
- Review demographics of work force relative to detained youth and their families.
- Assessment of current Alternatives to Secure Detention (ASD): identification of target population, utilization, efficiency, outcomes (e.g., FTA & re-arrest rates), staffing and services, access, language and cultural competency.
- Expand community-oriented alternatives to secure detention.

Court Processing Work Group

- Identify and reduce unnecessary delay of court processing.
- Apply “speedy trial” rights to youth on ASD.
- Review detention hearing scheduling and practices.
- Analyze, for equity and efficiency, approximate times between decision-making points and overall case processing. Develop action plan accordingly.
- Analyze for equity and efficiency, the District Attorney’s filing practices and policies. Develop action plan accordingly.
- Track court continuances and outcomes.
- Track the average length of stay (ALOS).
- Examine “race effects” throughout case processing.
- Implement weekly detention population reviews.
- Develop or enhance an “early resolution” docket.
- Monitor pre-adjudication re-arrest and FTA rates.
- Institute a “court reminder” policy.
- Develop an expedited court process to respond to failures in home detention.

Special Detention Cases (serve as alternatives to detention)

- Identify any service gaps that impact the effectiveness of the programs.
- Analyze current use of detention for all youth placed in special detention (e.g., VOP’s Writs & Warrants, Pending Placement).
- Determine the percentage of detention beds used by each youth.
- Determine the average length of stay.
- Track racial and gender demographics for each youth.
- Complete a qualitative analysis of each youth and develop responsive policies and practices including a continuum of administrative sanctions and alternatives to detention.
- Disaggregate warrants by reason (e.g., arrest or bench).

A separate work group will not address the issue of Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC). Each of the above mentioned groups will strategically gather data to analyze key decision making points that impact youth of color and propose recommendations to reduce the over-representation of youth of color.

IMPLEMENTATION

DJJS will implement the following activities required to move forward with the objectives identified above.

To facilitate a favorable climate for long-term countywide detention reform, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Clark County and DJJS will:

- Provide appropriate on-site technical assistance and training in detention reform or related specialized fields as requested by staff, Courts, and others relative to detention reform.
- Select and appoint a Coordinator to:
 1. Provide overall coordination of the JDAI Action Plan.
 2. Serve as a primary liaison with the courts, Probation staff, other law and justice departments, and community regarding detention reform efforts.
 3. Coordinate all communication with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, including management of the grant, implementation of the action plan; Foundation site visits, and dissemination of information between the County and the Foundation.
 4. Coordinate the JDAI Planning Committee, work with the Committee Chair and Clerk of the Board to develop agendas, notify public, distribute Minutes and report to other relevant Committees and the Board of Commissioners.
 5. Assist the JDAI Planning Committee to oversee all phases of policy development and implementation.
 6. Coordinate and facilitate work groups to accomplish goals and objectives and report back to the JDAI Planning Committee.
- Maintain contact and information sharing with other relevant committees, task forces, coalitions and councils
- Introduce and promote detention reform efforts to County and other elected officials in a positive and effective manner. This will include invitations to potential support groups or individuals to visit our successful detention alternative projects. These groups and individuals will be encouraged to participate in meetings and trainings on detention reform strategies.

- Continue to develop and build positive relationships with the Juvenile Court Judge, Hearing Masters and other court personnel. This will be accomplished by meeting with the Juvenile Court Judge and providing training to specifically address judicial communication issues regarding detention reform.
- Continue to solicit input from the Juvenile Court Judge and Hearing Masters on a number of detention reform issues, particularly the use of the Detention Assessment Instrument.
- Encourage various organizations to “buy-in” to detention reform to ensure support of the process of detention as well as the outcomes.

To facilitate development of local community detention reform projects, Clark County and DJJS will:

- Utilize existing DJJS collaborative planning groups and community partners to assess, plan, develop and implement programs as alternatives to detention.
- Provide increased leadership, guidance and technical assistance to the juvenile court, planning groups and community partners to ensure that all are focusing on detention alternatives with the goal of reducing inappropriate and unnecessary detainment.
- Actively solicit potential funding sources, public and private, to continue to develop and implement detention alternatives programs for low, medium and high-risk youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

To facilitate comprehensive local working agreements between Clark County, DJJS, juvenile courts and other stakeholders, JDAIPC will:

- Organize meetings to provide technical assistance relative to the importance and formulation of a working agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- Present a “best practice” MOU and ensure completion and implementation of the agreements.

BUDGET

Funding provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation will be used for the following:

JDAI Coordinator – \$81,500 (salary and benefits)
 Travel-\$15,000
 Training- \$2,250
 Professional Consultants – \$1,250
 Supplies - \$ 250.00

CONCLUSION

This Action Plan will be revised periodically based on assessments, work progress and input from stakeholders regarding specific challenges and needs. It is anticipated that within three months, the Plan will be reviewed and expanded to reflect a more detailed and comprehensive approach to the countywide Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

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