

New Jersey Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
 Innovation, Improvement, or Institutionalization of Policy/Practice:
 Model Activities

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Site:	ESSEX
Primary Core Strategy Area:	Detention Alternatives
Secondary Core Strategy Area:	Reducing Delay/Case Processing
Title/Name of Activity:	EM Wireless and Expediting Release to Alternatives
Activity Start Date:	9/2006 and 5/2007
Description of Activity:	In order to expedite processing and placement of youth onto detention alternatives, in 9/2006 Essex introduced wireless EM units to its detention alternatives continuum, and in 5/2007 Alternatives Staff were relocated from the detention center to the courthouse.
Problem or Need this Activity Addressed:	Essex historically relied on EM units that required that the youth's home have a landline telephone with specific types of services/features. Youth ordered to EM would have to wait in detention while staff assessed the home telephone situation, and in many cases, while necessary changes to the home telephone service were made. Additionally, in the past Alternatives Staff were based out of the detention center. As such, youth ordered to an alternative program at their court hearing were first transported back to detention where program processing occurred, prior to being ultimately released to alternative supervision. Both of these situations led to delays in release from detention to the court-ordered detention alternative.
Data/Info that Identified this Problem or Need:	Essex's original detention alternatives snapshot data from 6/2004 revealed that for youth on EM, an average of 10.4 days elapsed between the date the youth was referred for placement and the date the youth was released to EM, compared to just 1.6 days for youth released to Home Detention. Additional discussion suggested that problems with household landlines, as well as the location of the alternatives staff who processed placement onto alternatives, were likely among the factors contributing to the delay.
Impact/Results of this Activity:	Reviewing the ongoing data that has been maintained in Essex regarding youth departing detention to alternatives reveals a notable impact. The two solutions described above were implemented between 9/2006 and 5/2007. Prior to that, between 6/2005 and 8/2006, time between admission to detention and release to EM averaged 9.6 days. After the implementation of both solutions, between 6/2007 and 12/2007, this figure dropped to 6.7 days, a decrease of 30.2%. ¹
Next Steps or Additional Comments:	Going forward, Essex plans to continue to work with juveniles to place them on EM wireless units. Essex has also been working to increase the availability of EM units by switching youth whose landline issues are ultimately resolved over to the traditional (non-wireless) units, thereby freeing-up additional wireless EM slots.
List Attachments (if any):	N/A

¹ These figures reflect youth released to any type of EM slot, and only youth released to EM as a single-use alternative (i.e., youth released to EM+some other alternative are not included in the analysis for more straightforward comparison).

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