



**NEW JERSEY COUNCIL ON  
JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT**

C/O Juvenile Justice Commission

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Chair

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Co-Chair

TO: Chairs, JDAI Local Steering Committees

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FROM: Hon. F. Lee Forrester, J.S.C. *FLF*  
Chair, New Jersey Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement

Lisa Macaluso, Deputy Director of Crime Prevention, Office of the Attorney General  
Co-Chair, New Jersey Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement *LM*

RE: Re-designation of Local Steering Committees

DATE: May 5, 2009

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) partnership established five years ago between the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) and the Judiciary, with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has led to an extraordinary reduction in the number of juveniles held in detention throughout the State. Indeed, the JDAI collaborative and data-driven process has proven to be an effective vehicle for bringing about meaningful change in the area of juvenile detention. Building on this success, the JJC and the Judiciary have committed to expanding the scope of the partnerships created through JDAI to include a focus on broader juvenile justice system reform.

To reflect this broader goal, the JDAI State Steering Committee has been re-designated the New Jersey Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement. While detention reform remains a primary focus, the expanded scope of the Council's work includes using the JDAI core strategies to promote policies and practices that improve outcomes throughout the juvenile justice system – from arrest through adjudication and disposition. This broader scope will support the cultivation of a

comprehensive juvenile justice system that protects public safety while ensuring that youth charged with offenses have their cases resolved expeditiously, and in a manner that provides the greatest promise for each youth's rehabilitation. In so doing, it reflects New Jersey's ongoing commitment to a separate system of justice for children.

To parallel the statewide change, each county's JDAI Local Steering Committees will be re-designated County Councils on Juvenile Justice System Improvement. Similar to the State Council, detention will remain at the forefront of the local work. However, as each JDAI county makes progress and achieves success with regard to implementing the JDAI core strategies in the area of detention, each County Council should work to apply those core strategies to additional areas of the juvenile justice system. The mutually supportive relationships between the present JDAI Local Steering Committees and the County Youth Services Commissions will continue under the new designation of the committees as County Councils.

Please share this information with the membership of your County Council. In addition, in order to promote effective, statewide communication regarding JDAI and broader system improvement efforts, each JDAI site continues to have a representative on the State Council.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the challenging work of juvenile justice system improvement. We look forward to continuing to work with you to create the best system of justice for children in New Jersey.

Cc: Hon. Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D., Acting Administrative Director of the Courts  
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