

# STATE-LEVEL DETENTION REFORM

## **State-Level Detention Reform: A Practice Guide for State Advisory Groups**

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JDAI Core Strategies: Through a Racial Lens

Strategy	What We're Looking For; Why This is Important	What to Review, Observe, and Who to Interview	Major Findings	Best Practice Recommendations
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Authority-</b> Is there an official imprimatur that reducing racial disparities is an explicit responsibility of the JDAI collaborative? Has the 'authority' made it clear that the collaborative will work on reducing racial disparities by addressing the JDAI core strategies through a racial lens?</li> <li>✓ <b>Group Composition-</b> The collaborative should reflect the diversity of the kids and families involved in your juvenile justice system. Do we have the decision makers sitting at the table with the appropriate community representatives? Does the collaborative effort include representatives of the impacted neighborhoods of color? Are civil rights advocates at the table? Are community based service providers at the table?</li> <li>✓ <b>Organizing the Work-</b> The intentionality and infusion of the racial lens needs to be driven in unison with decision makers and communities of color. Is the current working configuration, e.g., work group, ad hoc committee, working? Is each sub-committee held accountable for contributions to reducing racial disparities? Common challenges are 'work groups' working in a silo, which are expected to 'fix' the problem.</li> <li>✓ <b>Creating a Safe Place-</b> Are discussions regarding disproportionality undertaken with respect and tolerance? Are the discussions mainly finger-pointing sessions? Are deliberations based upon facts, supported by data, or impressions? Have efforts been made to ensure equal and full participation in the discussions and deliberations?</li> <li>✓ <b>Forging a Common Agenda-</b> Members of the collaborative, including work group members if relevant, have a common understanding of, and embrace the same agenda: detention as the entry point to the reduction of racial disparities. Members of the collaborative understand that the work entails changing policies and practices under the control of their juvenile justice system. Members of the collaborative reach a consensus on the use of detention in their jurisdiction. A shared value that pre-trial detention should not be used as either punishment or treatment.</li> </ul>			
Reliance on Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Disaggregating Data by Race &amp; Ethnicity-</b> Base line data of youth ages 10-17, disaggregated by race/ethnicity/gender/geography, should be collected as the foundation to identify the disproportionality and to commence the discussion. This is done by comparing the percentage of youth of color in the juvenile justice system with the percentage of minorities in the general youth population. All ensuing data collection, e.g., admissions by reason, RAI screening, RAI overrides, LOS, ADP, ATD utilization, etc., should be disaggregated by race/ethnicity/gender/geography. Routine management reports present basic utilization statistics by race/ethnicity/gender to enable stakeholders to identify disparities and to assess trends and change policies and practices.</li> <li>✓ <b>Detention Utilization Studies-</b> One of the first steps in planning for reform is to document how detention is currently used through careful data collection and analysis. A thorough description of recent trends and current practices in detention utilization provides the foundation for the problem identification and analysis, as well as the subsequent development of change strategies. The detention utilization study should provide the collaborative with a quantitative picture of how detention use varies for different categories of youth.</li> <li>✓ <b>Geo-coding &amp; Community Mapping-</b> Identify the target area(s), that is, the geographic area(s) contributing the highest number of kids in detention. Map the community assets, including community based organizations currently providing services to youth and their families in the target neighborhoods. Identifying the target neighborhoods and mapping community based services will assist in informing strategies for effective and efficient alternatives to detention.</li> </ul>			

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Strategy	What We're Looking For; Why This is Important	What to Review, Observe, and Who to Interview	Major Findings	Best Practice Recommendations
Reliance on Data (cont)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Routine Management Reports-</b> Utilizing data to monitor progress toward reducing racial disparities and disproportionate minority confinement. The JDAI quarterly reports are an example of fundamental management reports. As the data from the reports raise questions, further data queries should be developed to dig deeper and acquire clarity.</li> <li>✓ <b>Qualitative Analysis-</b> Digging deeper generally leads to going “behind the data” to look at individuals on a case-by-case basis to further inform policies and practices. For example: Who are these groups of kids, kids of color from the target areas? What are their characteristics, needs?</li> <li>✓ <b>Comprehensive Annual Analysis of Racial Disparities-</b> Is the community informed of the state of racial disparities/DMC on an annual basis in your jurisdiction? Annual reports developed by the system partners helps keep eyes on the prize and promote accountability and transparency.</li> </ul>			
Eliminating Bias in Detention Admission Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Objective Criteria &amp; Instruments-</b> Collaborative development of a race and gender neutral objective detention admission screening instrument based on risk. The admission screening instrument should be scrutinized to eliminate opportunities for disparate decisions by creating an objective instrument free of racial bias. We're looking to control the front gates in an objective and equitable manner; including minimizing the “dumping” of kids of color by other institutions such as schools and mental health.</li> <li>✓ <b>Bias in Statutory Criteria-</b> Examine your jurisdictions statutory detention criteria for any bias and whether the criteria are mandatory or discretionary. This examination should include which factors must be taken into consideration to detain and deducing that which is not prohibited. Having determined what is not prohibited, consider collaborative efforts to develop local detention criteria to reduce the number of kids of color brought to the front gate.</li> <li>✓ <b>Testing for Unintended Bias from Screening Tools-</b> Assess the admission screening instrument and its impact on kids of color. The screening scores and overrides should be consistently monitored for disparate application and nuances that can reveal unintended biases. The risk-based detention screening instrument should not add unfair risk point for kids of color. For example: points for being a “gang associate” tend to penalize our kids for living in the disinvested neighborhoods where youth of color and their families have long been segregated; limiting release to parent(s) only and not considering extended family members or a responsible adult.</li> <li>✓ <b>Multilingual, Multicultural Intake Staff-</b> Eliminating barriers to returning a youth home. Intake staff that speak and understand the language spoken by our youth and families to facilitate the release of youth in a more timely fashion. Along this same vein, implementing intake procedures 24/7. Intake staff who value, recognize and appreciate one's race and culture and its significance and role in the lives of youth and families.</li> <li>✓ <b>Quality Controls-</b> The development of protocols for the implementation of the admission screening instrument. Leadership providing swift and consistent oversight for compliance of the protocols and with the application and scoring of the admissions screening instrument as well as monitoring overrides. Monitoring for consistency and equity in the application of the admission screening instrument by intake staff.</li> </ul>			

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Eliminating Bias in Detention Admission Screening (cont)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Use of Overrides-</b> Collecting data to determine if kids of color are being overridden in a disparate manner. What are the override criteria? What are the reasons for the overrides? Do patterns emerge in the criteria invoked for the override relative to youth of color? For instance, criteria that allows for an override if “parent, guardian or responsible relative refuses to take custody.” Collecting this information will assist in informing strategies for changes in policies and practices relative to the particular override criteria. Monitoring for consistency and equity in the application of the admission screening instrument by intake staff. If one worker, for example, is overriding the RAI at a significantly higher rate than other workers or at a significantly higher rate for kids of color, the pattern should be identified and addressed immediately.</li> <li>✓ <b>Automatic Detention Cases-</b> Collecting and analyzing the data to determine who the youth of color are who fall into this category. Conducting a qualitative analysis to determine their needs to inform changes in policies if necessary, e.g., warrants, and policies that will promote detention alternatives. Monitoring the data to ensure that the automatic detention category is not disparately being applied to youth of color.</li> </ul>			
Culturally Competent Alternatives to Detention Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Identifying Target Populations-</b> The ATD should serve kids who otherwise would be detained. Is the target population based on risk level, e.g., RAI score, or status, e.g., VOP's? Collect and monitor data informing which kids are being referred to ATD. Are youth of color treated disparately in referrals to ATD? Conduct a qualitative analysis of the target population to determine the needed intervention necessary to inform responsive ATD.</li> <li>✓ <b>Program Design-</b> Programs that respond to the needs and circumstances of our youth of color. Good ATD programs are relationship based, not technology based. Successful ATD programs include partnerships with community based organizations to provide the appropriate and cultural &amp; racial relevant and responsive interventions. Pre-adjudication ATD are intended to ensure court appearance and minimize re-arrest risk. Post-adjudication programs will typically feature more treatment interventions (e.g., counseling) and sanctions. The ATD is limited in duration of purpose---don't create a purgatory that will set kids up for failure. Does supervision include face-to-face contact? Is the level of supervision based on risk? ATD that offer more than one level of alternative. Collect data on entry to and exits from the programs. Collect data on the rate of referrals by RAI scores to Electronic Monitoring Programs (EMP). Is there an over reliance on the use of EMP with kids of color? Collect data to monitor terminations/failures. Is there a high failure rate of kids of color by a particular program? Conduct a qualitative analysis to determine reasons for failure to inform needed program changes or enhancement and development of ATD. Does the program have a “no reject” policy?</li> <li>✓ <b>Service Providers-</b> Community based organizations that provide cultural/race relevant and appropriate services. Do current service providers have the capacity and are they appropriate, to work with our kids?</li> <li>✓ <b>Location &amp; Access-</b> Programs that are located in the neighborhoods where our youth and families reside. Programs that are accessible to the youth, e.g., getting to the program isn't going to pose a hazard to the youth's safety. Accessing and partnering with community based organizations that are in the neighborhoods already working with, and touching upon the lives of our youth and their families.</li> </ul>			

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Alternatives to Detention Programming (cont)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Language &amp; Culture-</b> Program staff that have the skills set and values to meet the youth's language and cultural needs. Eliminate barriers, posed by staff's language limitations that hamper the youth's success on the ATD. Principles that acknowledge that "culturally responsive" also include understanding and tolerance of "youth culture."</li> <li>✓ <b>Staffing &amp; Services-</b> Staff who relate, and are responsive to, the needs and circumstances of youth of color and their families. Staff who appreciate the culture of youth and who want to work with our youth and help them succeed. Staff who have an awareness and understanding of the dynamics of the neighborhoods where our youth and their families reside. Staff who look like our children and live in or around the same neighborhoods as our youth and families. Activities and services that value and honor the race/ethnicity/culture of the youth and their families. Are activities and services designed as a "one shoe fits all," or designed to respond to individual needs? Are services designed to build upon the strengths of our youth and their families? Are there cultural and relevant racial competency trainings for staff? Is the programs physical environment reflective of the clientele's race/ethnicity/culture?</li> <li>✓ <b>Results Based Accountability-</b> Assess current ATD for effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness. Does the ATD affect bed displacement of kids of color? Whether the ATD is provided for solely by system folks or in partnership with community based organizations, results/outcomes must be established and monitored. Measurable results for pre-adjudication ATD include minimizing re-arrest and failure to appear (FTA). Contractual agreements between system agencies and community based organizations that specify expected results and define success. Agreed upon data collection and methodology, e.g., FTA, re-arrest, successful completion, LOS.</li> </ul>			
Equalizing Case Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Analysis of Decision Points-</b> Each of the juvenile justice system partners map the decision making points relevant to their discipline, that touch upon our children's lives as they "process" through the system. Collect data relative to each of the decision points and analyze for biased and/or disparate treatment. Some examples of specific decision points: the District Attorney measuring all of their filing decisions and processes by race/ethnicity/gender; the Public Defender measuring requests for continuances, e.g., reasons, frequency, by race/ethnicity/gender; the probation department's recommending or opposing ATD. Monitor decision point data for trends. Monitor for disparities in arresting charge vs. actual charge filed vs. resulting adjudication.</li> <li>✓ <b>Examining "Race Effects" Throughout Case Processing-</b> Develop an initial mapping of your jurisdictions case processing, including time frames for each of the case processing "steps." Collect the data to determine any disparate treatment based on race/ethnicity/gender. Utilize the data to inform changes in policies and practices.</li> <li>✓ <b>Minimizing Unnecessary Delay-</b> Critical examination of case processing with an eye to reveal unnecessary delay for kids of color which contribute to longer lengths of stay in detention. Efficient court and placement system with short lengths of stay in detention. Measure length of stay by race/ethnicity/gender to inform changes in policies and practices. Dedicated staff/expeditor assigned to monitor the status of detained youth and identify any disparities. Examine for and reduce delays that can result in pushing kids into detention, e.g., delays leading to FTA, resulting in the issuance of a warrant in turn resulting in detention.</li> </ul>			

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Strategy	What We're Looking For; Why This is Important	What to Review, Observe, and Who to Interview	Major Findings	Best Practice Recommendations
Equalizing Case Processing (cont)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Ensuring Equal Access &amp; Due Process-</b> The administration of justice that is responsive to the circumstances of youth of color and their families. Court facilities in close proximity and accessible to families. Multi-lingual court personnel, including courtroom interpreters, to minimize barriers for youth of color and their families. Defense counsel knowledgeable of, and experienced in, juvenile law. Defense counsel who want to represent our youth of color and who understand the circumstances of our youth of color. Sufficient number of public defenders to support the case load. A fair and honest rate of pay for appointed counsel. Ensure that youth are represented by counsel at every stage of the proceedings. Monitor for waivers of counsel by youth and eliminate such policies and practices. Monitor for disparities in adjudicatory outcomes for kids of color.</li> <li>✓ <b>Consistency &amp; Equity-</b> Ensuring that kids who are similarly situated are treated in an equitable manner from courtroom to courtroom in your jurisdiction. A determined and intentional commitment to equitable and consistent treatment of kids of color that reflect the principals of JDAI.</li> </ul>			
Race & "Special" Detention Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Data Analysis-</b> Are there disparities in case status by race/ethnicity? Often, kids of color are more likely to have warrants, be charged with VOPs, etc. If disparities are found statistically, are there policy or practice reasons for these? Do youth of color have longer lengths of stay? This is especially likely in the pending placement group; what causes these differences? What are the reasons for warrants, VOPs and delayed placements? For example, are most warrants for FTA? Most VOPs for positive drug tests?</li> <li>✓ <b>Warrant Reduction Strategies-</b> Are FTA rates high; at first appearance? High FTA rates often include many unintentional absences. Is there a court notification system? FTA can be reduced simply by reinforcing notification of court dates. (Similar gains can be made viz. VOPs by decreasing likelihood that youth miss visits with probation.) Are warrant cases screened with RAI? Many warrant cases pose low public safety risks (after all, the kid was not detained in the first instance), but "automatic" detention policies often mean that risk is never assessed. Is there a differential warrant policy? Do judges indicate whether individual warrants must be detained, or is there simply a blanket policy.</li> <li>✓ <b>Violations of Probation-</b> How are conditions of probation established; are they too numerous? If there are lots of unnecessary conditions, it is easy to violate youth. Are detained VOP cases equally distributed across staff? Differences between probation officers in use of detention for VOPs indicates that the underlying policies do not structure decisions or control for individual idiosyncrasies. Are graduated sanctions available as alternatives? Systems ought to have options short of detention that are based upon seriousness of the violation, etc. Is there court policy requiring court intervention for technical violations? Can the department handle routine violations administratively? What do we know about the quality of probation supervision generally? In some systems, for example, high caseloads typically mean ineffective case management which, in turn, leads to youth "failures", negative results that might be avoided through improved supervision.</li> </ul>			

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Race & "Special" Detention Cases (cont)	<p>✓ <b>Pending Placement Cases-</b> Do placement options reflect diversity of client population? Are they culturally competent? If placements are not available for non-English speaking youth, for example, they will languish as staff look for a program that can communicate with the clients. Similarly, culturally incompetent programs will surely have higher failure rates as youth abscond or get frustrated and alienated. What are program policies regarding rejection of referrals or termination of clients? Contract conditions can reduce pending placement cases simply by ensuring that referred clients are accepted or by limiting the numbers of youth getting recycled because of unnecessary ejection from programs. Is there effective dispositional planning? Many places have long pending placement lists because they are uncreative or rigid in their approach to crafting individualized dispositions. Does the placement process delay release? If placement paperwork is not prepared in a timely way, or only sent to one program at a time, days will be wasted. Are there intensive home-based services available? Over-reliance on out-of-home placements is often the result of limited non-residential program options.</p> <p>✓ <b>Effectiveness of Counsel-</b> Does counsel take steps to reduce likelihood of warrants, or to clear old warrants? Defense lawyers can reduce clients' jeopardy of detention for FTA simply by taking steps to ensure their clients appear in court as scheduled. Do staff reflect the racial/ethnic composition of detained youth? Detainees are more likely to be able to communicate, feel safe, etc. if the staff reflect them. Similarly, staff biases are less likely to manifest themselves when staff are more diverse. Of particular importance, do non-English speaking youth have staff with whom they can communicate? Do staff routinely receive diversity training? If we want staff to do their jobs in culturally competent ways, they may need training and consistent reinforcement. Are staff efforts to perform work in culturally sensitive and competent ways routinely reinforced? If we want staff to act in certain ways, or reflect certain values, management should create incentives for such behavior (or disincentives for its opposite). Does counsel have capacity to do effective dispositional advocacy? In many places, the defense fails to offer the court non-residential alternatives that could minimize pending placement backlogs. Similarly, failure to advocate for appropriate conditions of probation increases odds that violations will occur. Does counsel challenge VOPs? Detention use in VOP cases can be avoided if counsel presents a case against the allegations or the detention. Does counsel review "special" detention cases internally or participate in system case reviews? Placement cases languish absent prodding to expedite arrangements. Warrants may be cleared and set the stage for renewed applications for release. These developments are more likely if there is a structured review process, either in counsel's office or by the system generally.</p>			

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Conditions of Confinement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Staff Competencies-</b> Do staff reflect the racial/ethnic composition of detained youth? Detainees are more likely to be able to communicate, feel safe, etc. if the staff reflect them. Similarly, staff biases are less likely to manifest themselves when staff are more diverse. Of particular importance, do non-English speaking youth have staff with whom they can communicate? Do staff routinely receive diversity training? If we want staff to do their jobs in culturally competent ways, they may need training and consistent reinforcement. Are staff efforts to perform work in culturally sensitive and competent ways routinely reinforced? If we want staff to act in certain ways, or reflect certain values, management should create incentives for such behavior (or disincentives for its opposite).</li> <li>✓ <b>Facility Programming-</b> Does facility offer culturally appropriate programs? Failure to celebrate relevant holidays, or to give equal attention to various racial or ethnic groups will create an us/them environment. Are there faith-related resources that reflect diversity of religion? Whether for formal services or individual counseling, the diversity of faiths ought to be accommodated by the detention programs.</li> <li>✓ <b>Health &amp; Hygiene Supplies-</b> Are products familiar to different racial/ethnic groups available? Differences across groups need to be accommodated lest minority groups be forced to use "foreign" supplies.</li> <li>✓ <b>Access &amp; Visitation-</b> Are youth able to see their lawyers? Detained youth should be able to contact their lawyers by phone and there must be private space for consultations. Can youth call home? Facilities need to provide opportunities for youth to call home (collect) in order to maintain contact. Are visitation policies sufficient to maximize likelihood of contact between youth and family members? If visitation days and times are restrictive, kids are less likely to maintain effective contact with family and will be more likely to be depressed, etc.</li> <li>✓ <b>Food-</b> Does food service reflect diversity of detainees?</li> <li>✓ <b>Discipline, Restrictions &amp; Restraints-</b> Is the use of various disciplinary actions, including loss of privileges, room restrictions and placement in restraints equal across racial and ethnic groups? Is there a sufficiently detailed and observed set of due process protections in place? Is there an accessible, genuine grievance process available to detained youth? Do youth of color experience more incident write-ups or infractions?</li> <li>✓ <b>Overall Climate-</b> Do youth of color feel safe in facility? Do youth of color feel respected in facility? Does housing tend to segregate youth by race/ethnicity? Are there tensions and hostilities across racial and ethnic groups?</li> </ul>			

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Specific Strategies to Reduce Racial Disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Formulate a Vision &amp; Goals-</b> Determined leadership! No specific strategy seems more important than the tangible commitment of system leaders to racial justice. System leaders make reduction of racial disparities in detention their priority and use both their formal and informal authority to focus agency strategies to reduce DMC. System leaders engaging staff in the development of a vision establishing the reduction of racial disparities fundamental work. Establishing measurable objectives that are within the control of each partner's respective system/discipline.</li> <li>✓ <b>Establish Formal Structures to Keep Eyes on the Prize-</b> Intentionality! Intentionality! Intentionality! Ensure that technical changes are transformed to "adaptive changes." Establish the organizational infrastructure to sustain system changes. For example: developing and implementing an RAI is a technical change. However, if the infrastructure, e.g., training, protocols, monitoring the data, quality control, etc., are not developed, addressed and adhered to, then the change has not been "adapted," the change will slip into the status quo. Keeping all eyes on the prize requires intentionality.</li> <li>✓ <b>Build Ties to Communities of Color-</b> Successful efforts to reduce racial disparities and DMC includes communities of color at the table. This isn't an issue that white people are going to solve on their own without the unique perspectives of people of color impacted by policies and practices. Relinquishing power to meaningfully engage and promote the unique perspectives and lens' brought by people of color. Promoting system accountability and transparency. Building allies with communities of color to effectively reduce racial disparities and DMC.</li> <li>✓ <b>Diversify System Workforce-</b> Establish measurable goal to establish a workforce reflecting the demographics of our children and families. A multi-cultural and gender relative workforce whose values reflect the principles of detention reform and the reduction of racial disparities and DMC. Key positions have bi-multilingual staff.</li> <li>✓ <b>Create New or Utilize Current Capacities in Key Neighborhoods-</b> Engaging non-traditional partners/CBO's who are already working with our children and families in their neighborhoods. Commitment to, and assisting in, developing the capacities of CBO's to partner in efforts to reduce unnecessary and inappropriate detention, including disproportionality. Informed by the quantitative and qualitative data developed relative to assessing ATD, create ATD in key neighborhoods where our kids of color and their families reside.</li> <li>✓ <b>Conduct Cultural &amp; Relevant Racial Competencies-</b> Ongoing system training to develop staff cultural and relevant racial competencies. Implementation of cultural and racial competence standards by all of the juvenile justice departments.</li> <li>✓ <b>Develop Objective Tools for Key Decision Points-</b> Key decisions, not just the decision to detain, are supported by objective tools. These decision points should be identified from the mapping of the decision points of all system partners; "peeling the onion" at each point to determine how the decision impacts kids of color. Tools are the solutions to the disparities uncovered at any decision point. Examples of objective tools include: detention criteria developed in partnership with law enforcement; customer surveys that identify service barriers; clear criteria without racial bias for assignment to intensive caseloads; clear criteria for removal from intensive caseloads; partnering with cultural and racial relevant CBO's to improve success rates of kids in pre-and post-adjudication services; multi-/lingual/cultural/racial intake officers to facilitate the youth's release from detention.</li> </ul>			

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Specific Strategies to Reduce Racial Disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Improve Defender Services-</b> Defense counsel knowledgeable of, and experienced in, juvenile law. Defense counsel who want to represent our youth of color and who understand the circumstances of our youth of color. Sufficient number of public defenders to support the case load. A fair and honest rate of pay for appointed counsel. Ensure that youth are represented by counsel at every stage of the proceedings. Monitor for waivers of counsel by youth and eliminate such policies and practices. Recognition by defenders of their role in policy reform, exposing abusive practices in detention, the overuse of detention, overcrowding, DMC, and disparities in case processing and outcomes for kids of color. On going training in defense advocacy of juveniles.</li> <li>✓ <b>Stop “Dumping” of Youth from Other Systems-</b> School administrators/decision makers and key mental health personnel must be at the table and actively participate in reaching a consensus as to the use of detention and the implementation of JSAI strategies. Reach a common understanding that it is harmful to our children, and illegal, to provide for their health and mental health needs by detaining them. Develop a ‘system of care’ to leverage resources and provide comprehensive services to our children outside of detention. Minimize school as the entry point into detention by stopping the criminalization of school based behaviors. Eliminate responsibilities that have been transferred from schools to the juvenile justice system. STOP opening the front door to detention so readily.</li> <li>✓ <b>Include Communities of Color in Decision Making-</b> It’s not enough to build ties with communities of color, they must be included in, and have an equal voice in the decisions necessary make change. Communities of color are at the table providing their unique perspectives in the decision making process.</li> </ul>			

## **New Jersey JDAI Detention Specialist Description of Responsibilities and Requirements**

### Overview

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has selected New Jersey as a replication site for the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The JDAI was developed in response to national trends reflecting a drastic increase in the use of secure detention for juveniles, despite decreasing juvenile arrests, and the resulting overcrowding of youth detention centers nationwide. The goal of this systems-change initiative is to create more effective and efficient processes surrounding the use of detention, and by so doing, to reduce detention populations while ensuring public safety and court appearance rates.

To help jurisdictions accomplish this goal, the eight “core strategies” of the JDAI provide a framework for conducting a thorough, data-driven examination of the use of secure detention, and for using that information to develop and implement plans for system improvement. Briefly, these eight core strategies include:

- recognizing the importance of collaboration and leadership in effective detention systems;
- reliance on data to inform policy and program development;
- implementing effective, objective admissions policies and practices;
- enhancing available alternatives to secure detention;
- reducing delays in case processing and corresponding length of stay in detention;
- focusing on challenges presented by “special populations,” including youth admitted for violations or probation and warrants, and youth awaiting dispositional placement;
- establishing a process for detention facility self-inspection to address conditions of confinement;
- identifying strategies to reduce racial disparities in the use of secure detention.

In partnership with other state and local entities, and with support from the Casey Foundation, the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) is the lead agency in implementing JDAI in New Jersey.

### Requirements

A Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice or related field.

One year of experience working in juvenile justice, social justice, youth-serving, or similar field, and/or conducting research in the above.

### Knowledge and Abilities

Knowledge of and experience working with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences); experience with other analytical software helpful (SAS, Microsoft Access).

Knowledge of various research methods and statistical techniques, both quantitative and qualitative.

Experience with data collection, data analysis, and preparing analytical reports.

Ability to interpret and explain research results and data findings.

Strong writing skills.

Ability to think critically, analytically, and independently, as well as communicate effectively, in order to contribute to and lead discussions regarding strategies for justice-system reform, and to help plan for and implement those strategies.

Ability to work productively and proactively without constant, direct supervision, and to manage time effectively.

Ability to work cooperatively, collaboratively, and diplomatically with a variety of key actors, and to facilitate challenging discussions and problem-solving.

### Responsibilities

Become an expert in the purpose and use of secure detention and detention alternatives, as well as in the principles and language of juvenile detention reform. Learn to understand and anticipate the barriers to reform.

Work actively and collaboratively with Local JDAI Steering Committees and the JJC's Office of Local Programs & Services to help facilitate the implementation of the JDAI.

Participate on the Local JDAI Steering Committee and its Subcommittees, attending and facilitating meetings, providing information and guidance regarding JDAI strategies and detention best-practices, and working to develop local policy and practice that achieve the goals of the JDAI.

Collect and analyze extensive data regarding juvenile justice processes and the population of youth in the juvenile detention system over time, including those referred to detention, those in secure detention, and those placed in detention alternatives. Tasks include, but are not limited to, contributing to the development of appropriate methodologies (both quantitative and qualitative), developing research instruments, reviewing court, detention, and program files, interviewing juvenile justice personnel, and developing, maintaining, and manipulating databases.

Prepare and present analytical reports and related information regarding the use, efficiency, and effectiveness of the local detention system; draw conclusions and explain results; help Local Steering Committee identify where improvement is needed and the appropriate strategies for making those improvements.

Help monitor the progress of the JDAI. Document and track policies and practices implemented; evaluate whether strategies implemented achieve intended outcomes; prepare related reports; make appropriate recommendations.

Serve as liaison between the Local Steering Committee, the JJC's Office of Local Programs & Services, and the State Steering Committee, sharing information, addressing questions, and reporting progress.

Train/educate staff and juvenile justice personnel in the principles of JDAI via one-on-one discussions, group presentations, and participation at JDAI conferences.

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF LOCAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**THE ROLE OF THE DETENTION SPECIALIST IN THE  
THE JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE (JDAI)**

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation has selected New Jersey as a replication site for the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The JDAI was developed in response to national trends reflecting a drastic increase in the use of secure detention for juveniles, and the resulting overcrowding of youth detention centers nationwide. The goal of this systems-change initiative is to create more effective and efficient processes surrounding the use of detention, and by so doing, to reduce detention populations while ensuring public safety and court appearance rates.

To help jurisdictions accomplish this goal, the JDAI provides a framework for conducting a thorough, data-driven examination of the use of secure detention, and for using that information to develop and implement strategies for system improvement. While the work of the JDAI is carried out by the Local Steering Committee established within each county, there are several supports provided by both the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC). One such support is the Detention Specialist assigned to each county. The Detention Specialists, part of the JJC's Office of Local Programs & Services, will work actively and collaboratively with Local Steering Committees to help facilitate the implementation of the JDAI.

To help clarify the role of the Detention Specialist in the implementation of the JDAI, the following provides an overview of the Detention Specialist's primary responsibilities.

- Collecting and analyzing data regarding detention processes and the population of youth in detention, and reporting this information to the Local Steering Committee in order to inform the development of local strategies for JDAI implementation. The JDAI requires the collection of case-level and aggregate data within each county. Extensive data collection will be conducted through the review of detention center files, family court files, management information systems, etc., consistent with JDAI requirements. The Detention Specialist will work with the Local Steering Committee to identify the most appropriate, reliable, and valid sources of the data, within the guidelines established by the JDAI. Examples of the types of data collected for youth in detention include demographics, delinquency/court history, dates admitted to/released from detention, and prior admissions to detention.
- Contributing to the work of the Local Steering Committee. Together with a management representative from the JJC's Office of Local Programs and Services, Detention Specialists will actively participate in Local Steering Committee meetings, providing support and guidance as appropriate.
- Serving as liaison to the JJC and the State Steering Committee. In this capacity the Detention Specialist, together with a management representative from the JJC Office of Local Programs and Services, will directly address questions and concerns raised by the Local Steering Committee when possible, and will otherwise communicate these questions and concerns to/obtain responses from the JJC and State Steering Committee.

# **EXPEDITOR**

## **Responsibilities and Performance Standards**

- 1. Constructs release option plans as appropriate for pre-adjudicated detained youth**
  - Obtains relevant data (petition, JVR, affidavit, court contact history, history of prior services) of all youth scheduled for daily detention hearings
  - Contacts assigned CSU worker for coordination including confirmation that guardian has been notified of hearing and review of DAI
  - Contacts guardian and facilitates appearance at detention hearing as necessary
  - In coordination with placement specialist
    - i. Works with detained youth, guardians and families, CSU workers, RDJJ staff, attorneys, caseworkers and others to formulate a safe release option plan for appropriate youth
    - ii. Contacts alternative facility, as necessary, to secure placement
  - Completes youth data sheet and written release option plan
  - Presents plan at pre-detention hearing meeting with Commonwealth's Attorney, defense attorney and other concerned personnel
  - Present plan at detention hearing and records outcome of hearing
  
- 2. Reduces length of stay by completing a review of all detained youth every ten days**
  - In coordination with the CSU, Commonwealth's Attorney, Public Defender, Department of Justice Services and attorneys, conducts a weekly detention review meeting in order to identify youth appropriate for community release and devises release plans, as appropriate
  - Facilitates the placement of post-dispositional youth in court ordered placements

- 3. Reduces FTA rates by notifying released youth and their guardians of upcoming court dates.**
  - Sends court date reminder letters one week before court date
  - Makes court date reminder phone call 48 hours before court
- 4. Prepares and distributes caseload results to supervisor on a weekly basis**
- 5. Assists in the identification, evaluation and improvement of detention alternatives**
- 6. Performs other related duties as assigned**

## **PLACEMENT SPECIALIST**

### Responsibilities and Performance Standards

#### **1. Identifies, evaluates and improves detention alternatives**

- Surveys community to identify existing resources which, alone or in combination, can be utilized as detention alternatives
- Contacts resources and conducts site visits for assessment
- Documents in writing the procedure for referral of detained youth and resource description
- Updates information on a monthly basis

#### **2. Assists in the construction of alternative detention plans for pre-dispositional detained youth**

In coordination with Expeditor

\* Works with detained youth, guardians and families, CSU workers, RDJJ staff, attorneys, caseworkers and others to formulate a safe release option plan for appropriate youth

\*Contacts alternative facilities, as necessary, to secure placement

#### **3. Verifies timely placement/onset of services set out in implemented release plan**

#### **4. Monitors and tracks detained youth and produces corresponding tracking and status reports**

- Enters demographic, case and detention information on all detained youth into a database and tracks their immediate status
- Updates database with new case status information

- Prepares monthly statistical reports on the number and types of releases from detention
- Provides statistical information to DJJ as directed

**5. Provides court date reminders to reduce failures to appear of released youth**

- Sends court date reminder letter to youth and guardian approximately one week before court
- Calls youth and guardian approximately 48 hours before court

**6. Performs other related duties as assigned**

## 1

## DETENTION REFORM: A COST-SAVING APPROACH

*“A single detention bed costs the public as much as \$1.5 million over a 20-year period.”*

—EARL DUNLAP, CEO, NATIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION ASSOCIATION

**JUVENILE DETENTION  
ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

While some youth need to be confined for public safety reasons, many communities spend millions of dollars detaining youth who could be safely supervised elsewhere. By helping ensure that the right youth—but only the right youth—are detained, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) helps communities reduce wasteful spending detaining non-violent youth, and frees up these funds for more effective public safety solutions.

### **JUVENILE DETENTION IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE, BUT LEAST EFFECTIVE WAY TO ACHIEVE PUBLIC SAFETY GOALS.**

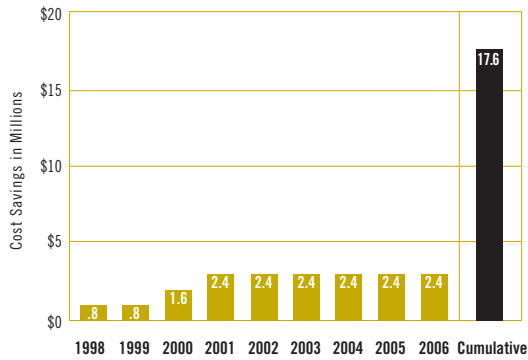
While costs vary from region to region, the price of detaining a young person can range from \$32,000 to \$65,000 annually, or even more in some places. Over time, these costs really add up: including construction, finance, and operating costs, a single detention bed can cost \$1.5 million over a 20-year period.

JDAI cuts costs by helping communities safely reduce detention populations, which enables them to close detention units or avoid the expense of new construction. Many JDAI sites have shifted money once spent on detention to other kinds of youth supervision programs and services, saving counties and states millions in confinement-related costs.

### **WITH FEWER YOUTH DETAINED, JDAI SITES HAVE CLOSED DETENTION UNITS AND SAVED MONEY.**

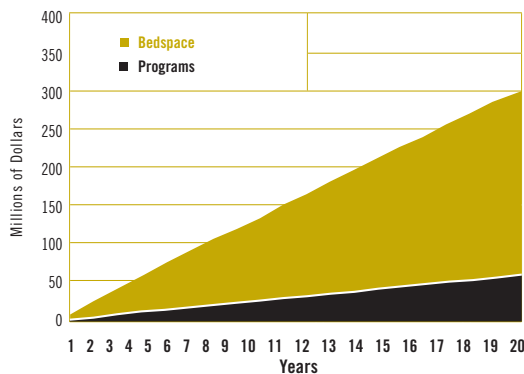
Because JDAI safely reduces the number of young people detained, many communities realize big savings by closing wings (or units) of detention centers. For example, because of decreased detention use, Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon, closed three 16-bed detention units between 1998 and 2001. Since then, it has saved \$2.4 million each year in detention

FIGURE 1  
**JDAI MODEL SITE MULTNOMAH COUNTY REDEPLOYS  
 \$17.6 MILLION DOLLARS**



Source: Multnomah County, Oregon, *JDAI Results Report*, 2006.

FIGURE 2  
**OVER 20 YEARS, JDAI'S DETENTION ALTERNATIVES  
 WILL SAVE COOK COUNTY ALMOST A QUARTER OF  
 A BILLION DOLLARS IN DETENTION COSTS**



Source: Cook County, Illinois, *JDAI Results Report*, 2006.

operating costs, for a total of more than \$17 million in cumulative savings.

**JDAI HELPS COMMUNITIES AVOID BUILDING BIGGER, MORE EXPENSIVE DETENTION CENTERS.** By enabling communities with crowded facilities to reduce the inappropriate use of detention, JDAI helps avoid the costs of building bigger or additional detention centers. For example, before JDAI was introduced in Cook County (Chicago), Illinois, the county had authorized the construction of 200 new detention beds in response to chronic overcrowding. This new facility would have cost approximately \$300 million over 20 years. Instead, the county has spent approximately \$3 million annually on alternative-to-detention programs and related staffing. By safely reducing the number young people detained on any given day, JDAI reforms enabled the county to forego construction of the planned detention center. Over two decades, JDAI will save the county almost \$250 million.

**JDAI SHIFTS PUBLIC SAFETY SPENDING FROM DETENTION TO COMMUNITY-BASED SUPERVISION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.** The tax dollars that communities save by reducing detention spending has been re-invested in other forms of youth supervision, services and interventions. In Pierce County (Tacoma), Washington, for example, JDAI reforms helped close a 50-bed detention unit and shifted approximately \$800,000 to support new community-based detention alternative programs for youth. In Bernalillo County (Albuquerque), New Mexico, JDAI helped the community close a wing of beds in a local juvenile detention center, and reinvested \$200,000 on detention alternatives so that youth are supervised safely in the community.

**JDAI HELPS REDUCE THE NUMBER OF YOUTH SENT TO EXPENSIVE STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.** Sending a young person to a state correctional facility is expensive, and can cost taxpayers upwards of \$60,000 a year. While JDAI strategies are primarily

geared toward helping communities reduce the number of youth detained locally, many of the detention reform strategies help sites reduce the number of youth sent to state correctional facilities or other out-of-home placements. Cook, Santa Cruz, and Multnomah counties have seen the number of youth they send to state facilities decline by 50 percent or more, relying instead on community-based alternatives or interventions that have far better public safety track records than state lock-ups. Whether counties are saving funds they would have spent sending young people to expensive state placements, or whether states are saving money because counties are making better decisions, JDAI is helping save taxpayer dollars.

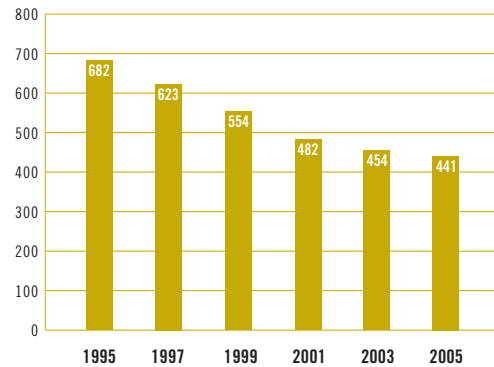
#### HOW DOES JDAI HELP COMMUNITIES SAVE MONEY?

**1) JDAI INCREASES SYSTEM EFFICIENCY.** By identifying where there are backlogs or delays in the system, detention reforms can be implemented to speed up case processing so that youth move through the system faster. These efficiencies reduce lengths of stay in detention and expand program resources.

**2) JDAI DEVELOPS NON-SECURE ALTERNATIVES THAT ARE LESS EXPENSIVE THAN DETENTION BEDS.** While detaining a young person can cost tens of thousands of dollars each year, JDAI sites develop a range of detention alternatives to supervise young people in the community and ensure their appearance in court. For example, while a day in detention in Cook County costs, on average, \$114 a day, many young people are now supervised in the community by a youth advocate for \$17 a day, or report nightly to a community center for intensive supervision and programming at a cost of \$35 a day. Over 90 percent of the young people in Cook County's detention alternatives remained arrest-free while in the programs.

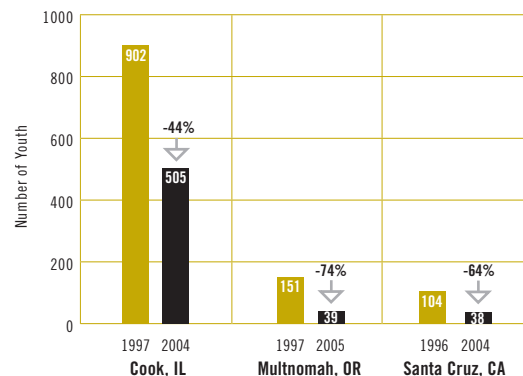
**3) JDAI KEEPS YOUNG PEOPLE OUT OF STATE JUVENILE FACILITIES.** JDAI's core strategies, including data-driven decision-making, improved stakeholder

FIGURE 3  
**COOK COUNTY REDUCED THE AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION IN DETENTION**



Source: Cook County, Illinois, *JDAI Results Report*, 2006.

FIGURE 4  
**JDAI SITES SAVE TAXPAYERS MONEY BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF YOUTH SENT TO STATE FACILITIES**



Source: *JDAI Model Site Reports*, 2006.

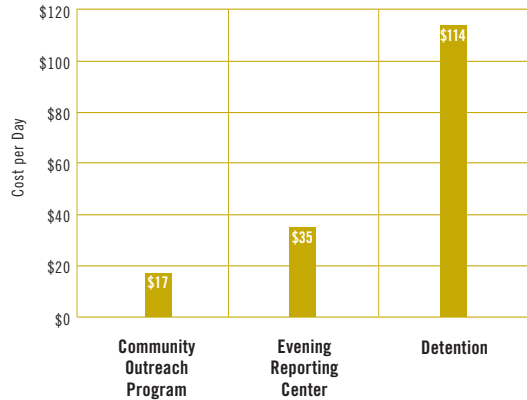
collaboration, and objective tools to identify the youth most at-risk of reoffending, have helped communities develop the skill set needed to reduce spending on state incarceration and other out-of-home placements. Thanks to JDAI, sites are making smarter placement decisions and relying more on proven community-based placements, all of which help save taxpayer dollars and keep more youth closer to home.

**4) JDAI HELPS PUT YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS.** New research that contrasts the costs and benefits of various crime reduction strategies shows that juvenile detention does not provide a big return on the money invested. For example, researchers in Washington State have shown that for every dollar government invests in detaining a young person, about \$1.98 in “benefits” are generated through reduced crime and savings to taxpayers. In contrast, evidenced-based practices (interventions that are scientifically proven to cut juvenile recidivism) yield much bigger returns, saving upwards of \$6 to \$13 for every dollar the government invests in these kinds of services to youth and families. The more public safety resources that can be devoted to these kinds of interventions, the more taxpayers will save by avoiding crime.

*For more information, see Holman, B., and J. Ziedenberg. 2006. The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities. Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute.*

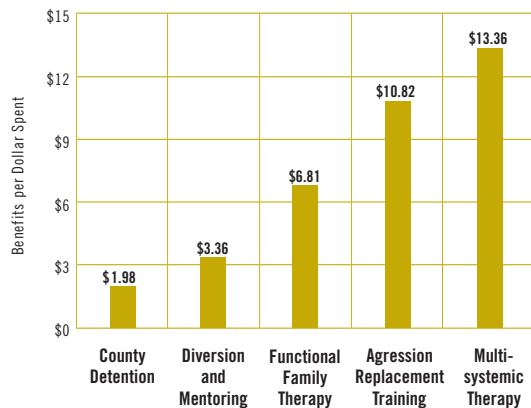
JDAI is an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. To learn more about the Foundation’s investments in this work, visit the Major Initiatives JDAI section at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). For access to JDAI’s technical assistance help desk, visit [jdaihelpdesk.org](http://jdaihelpdesk.org).

FIGURE 5  
**COOK COUNTY (CHICAGO): JDAI’s DETENTION ALTERNATIVES HELP COMMUNITIES SAVE MONEY EVERY DAY**



Source: Cook County, Illinois, *JDAI Results Report*, 2006.

FIGURE 6  
**COST EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTIONS PER DOLLAR SPENT**



Source: S. Aos. 2002. *The Juvenile Justice System in Washington State: Recommendations to Improve Cost-Effectiveness*. Olympia, Washington: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

## 2

## DETENTION REFORM: AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY

*“The daily detention population in our facility has been greatly reduced but without a resultant compromise in community safety. In fact, just the opposite: we have the lowest rates of reoffense that we’ve ever had.”*

—AMY HOLMES HEHN, MULTNOMAH COUNTY (PORTLAND, OREGON)  
DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

JUVENILE DETENTION  
ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) is, first and foremost, dedicated to keeping communities safe. That’s why JDAI is focused on ensuring that the right youth—but only the right youth—are detained, and only for as long as needed. JDAI’s core strategies provide tools to help juvenile justice officials reduce crime while reserving scarce public safety resources for more effective ways to supervise young people.

### JDAI’S PUBLIC SAFETY TRACK RECORD: FALLING CRIME RATES AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCESSFULLY RETURNING TO COURT

**1) FALLING CRIME RATES AND FALLING DETENTION POPULATIONS.** While some youth may need to be detained to protect the public, two-thirds of those detained are held for non-violent crimes. Though experience and research have shown that most juveniles can be supervised in the community while awaiting their court date, some people worry that releasing them may drive up crime rates. In JDAI’s four model sites, however, where the average daily population in detention declined dramatically, juvenile arrests fell between 37 percent and 54 percent, drops similar or larger than the decreases experienced in the rest of the country. JDAI is showing every day that fewer young people can be detained without sacrificing public safety.

**2) MORE YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCESSFULLY RETURN TO COURT.** Juvenile detention is intended to ensure that young people return to court for their hearings and do not commit crimes while awaiting their court dates. Many systems, however, simply lack intermediate options between detaining a young person

*“It’s easy enough to go along doing what you’re doing because of convenience, or because that’s how it’s always been done. But JDAI made us reevaluate what we were doing. We have started looking at detention as the last thing we consider.”*

—ATLANTIC COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE JAMES JACKSON

or releasing them to the community until their court date. JDAI helps set up detention alternatives (including home confinement, evening reporting, and shelter care) that provide supervision in the community to reduce risks of reoffending and to ensure court appearance.

Prior to JDAI, a full 40 percent of youth in Cook County did not successfully return to court. But after successfully implementing JDAI strategies, 87 percent of youth in the county showed up for their court dates. In Multnomah and Santa Cruz counties, more than 90 percent of youth now make their court dates. By redirecting funds (previously spent on incarceration) to detention alternatives, these communities are able to release young people to effective forms of community supervision that keep them out of trouble pending their court dates.

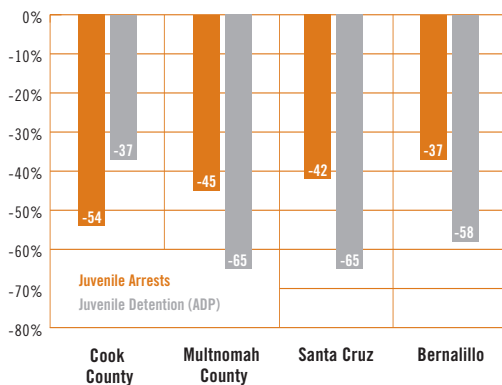
### 3) MORE YOUNG PEOPLE SENT TO INTERVENTIONS PROVEN TO CUT RECIDIVISM INSTEAD OF STATE YOUTH PRISONS.

As JDAI reforms kick into gear, and as sites become more successful in using the core strategies to detain fewer youth, they also improve the systems’ ability to send young people to interventions proven to reduce juvenile recidivism after the court disposes with their case. Instead of sending youth to costly state correctional facilities with high recidivism rates, JDAI’s data-driven and outcome-focused strategies have helped Multnomah, Cook, and Santa Cruz counties rely more on **evidenced-based practices** (interventions that are scientifically proven to cut juvenile recidivism) as post-disposition options.

### WHY IS DETENTION REFORM AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY?

JDAI’s core strategies, including a reliance on data, use of objective tools and instruments to identify the youth most likely to reoffend, alternatives to detention programs, and government and community collaboration, all help sites develop effective public safety policies.

FIGURE 1  
JUVENILE CRIME AND DETENTION REDUCED IN JDAI MODEL SITES



\*\*Note: crime declines are juvenile felony arrests in Santa Cruz (1996–2005) and Multnomah for (1994–2000); juvenile violent arrests in Cook (1993–2000); and juvenile arrests in Bernalillo (1999–2006). Detention declines occurred during the following timeframes in: Multnomah (1995–2002), Cook (1996–2002), Santa Cruz (1997–2005), and Bernalillo (1999–2004).

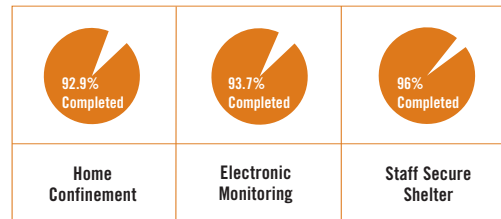
**1) JDAI HELPS IDENTIFY THE YOUTH MOST LIKELY TO REOFFEND.** JDAI relies on objective tools that measure the public safety risks posed by youth entering the system. Sites that successfully use these tools more accurately identify youth who need to be detained, and free up resources to spend on other ways to protect the public.

**2) JDAI HELPS LAW ENFORCEMENT AND YOUTH SERVING SYSTEMS WORK TOGETHER.** Juvenile justice systems are smarter and do better when prosecutors, police officers, child welfare workers, probation officers, and community organizations are all on the same page. JDAI brings these stakeholders to the same table to coordinate sound juvenile justice policies.

**3) JDAI'S FOCUS ON DATA HELPS HOLD THE SYSTEM ACCOUNTABLE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY RESULTS.** In many jurisdictions, juvenile justice officials do not know if youth are reoffending frequently or not returning to court. By relying on accurate data, JDAI sites can monitor these basic public safety indicators and change policy to improve outcomes. Most important, JDAI's reliance on data allows policymakers to hold the system accountable for public safety outcomes.

**4) JDAI HELPS COMMUNITIES DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES THAT ENHANCE SUPERVISION AND HELP YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCEED.** In many places, judges and probation staff have only two options when faced with an arrested juvenile: outright release or lock-up. JDAI sites expand the range of options available, increasing opportunities to release young people under appropriate levels of supervision. These detention alternatives include home confinement, day or evening reporting centers, and shelter care. In Cook County, more than 90 percent of young people successfully remained arrest-free during their time in home confinement, electronic monitoring, and shelter care, and similar results have been seen in other JDAI sites.

FIGURE 2  
IN COOK COUNTY (CHICAGO), ILLINOIS, MORE THAN 9 OUT OF 10 YOUNG PEOPLE REMAINED ARREST-FREE WHILE THEY WERE IN A JDAI DETENTION ALTERNATIVE

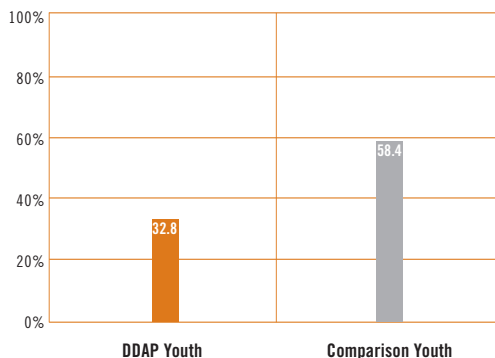


\*Successful completion indicates that the minor remained arrest-free during the time of the program.

*“We all know that crime is a symptom of something bigger—education, the economy, the kids’ situation at home. The question is, ‘How are you helping that child to break that cycle by putting him in jail?’ ”*

—SGT. MELVIN GILBERT, A SUPERVISOR IN THE NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT’S JUVENILE DIVISION

FIGURE 3  
SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER RECIDIVISM RATES FOR YOUTH  
IN THE DETENTION DIVERSION ADVOCACY PROGRAM  
(DDAP) IN SAN FRANCISCO



Source: *OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, September 1999.  
The bulletin is entitled "Detention Diversion Advocacy:  
An Evaluation" by Randall D. Shelden.

## DETAINING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE DOES NOT NECESSARILY MAKE COMMUNITIES SAFER

*"If we unnecessarily detain younger and less-experienced offenders, we're exposing them to other juvenile offenders who are fully engaged in criminal life."*

—Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Chief Judge David Bell

In the past decade, research by numerous groups has shown that overreliance on incarceration, including the inappropriate use of detention, can drive up youth recidivism and aggravate a community's public safety problems. Some researchers have recently shown that communities that rely more heavily on imprisonment have higher crime rates than places that incarcerate far fewer people. How can this be?

**1) BRINGING DELINQUENT YOUTH TOGETHER INCREASES THEIR CHANCES OF REOFFENDING.** A growing body of research indicates that congregating delinquent youth creates a peer culture that prolongs and deepens youthful misbehavior. Nowhere are delinquent

youth brought together in greater numbers and density than in detention centers. So, when some communities make greater use of detention in an effort to curb juvenile crime, their practices may *increase* the likelihood that youth will reoffend.

## 2) DETENTION MAY PROLONG DELINQUENCY BY PRECLUDING NORMAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT.

Most law enforcement and juvenile justice personnel know that youth who engage in crime typically put their delinquency behind when they grow up. Research published by the U.S. Justice Department, for example, has shown that three-fourths of all youth who commit serious violent crimes during adolescence terminate their offending by age 21. In contrast, research shows that detaining large numbers of youth, particularly younger delinquents, may actually *prolong* delinquency that might otherwise end and can diminish the likelihood that young people will find a place in law-abiding society.

## 3) DETENTION ALTERNATIVES CAN STEER MORE YOUTH AWAY FROM REOFFENDING.

Several studies have shown that youth who are incarcerated are more likely to recidivate than youth who are supervised in a community-based setting, or not detained at all. One study of a detention alternative in San Francisco, for example, found that young people diverted from detention had about half the recidivism rate of young people who remained in confinement.

*Also see, Holman, B., and J. Ziedenberg. 2006. The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities. Washington, D.C.: The Justice Policy Institute.*

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