

**Washoe County Department of Juvenile Services**  
Clarifying Questions and Answers  
2006 Scope of Work

- 1. How does “the inventorying of existing alternatives to detention...” differ from “completing an assessment of existing alternatives to detention?” Wouldn’t an assessment include the inventory of existing ATD? What are the results you desire?**

Yes, completing an assessment of alternatives to detention will include doing an inventory of our existing programs since the two are interrelated. However, as a process, the first thing we will do is to identify those programs which are currently being used as an alternative for youth who otherwise would be detained versus identifying alternative programs that are currently being used as sanctions for misdemeanor and probation violation offenses.

After having completed this inventory thoroughly, we will assess and evaluate those programs by using the framework for detention system assessment matrix as a guide. Appropriate referrals will be made to alternatives to detention based on the individual’s needs regardless of ethnicity. In addition to having the programs be culturally relevant, the Admissions/Pre-dispositional Alternatives Work Group will be looking at program FTA rates as well as re-arrest rates; client satisfaction levels; program capacity to track results; and to see if program displaces youth from a secure bed.

- 2. What do you mean by “identifying needed program models and expansions?” Program models and expansion for what? What will inform this identification? What are the results you’re looking for?**

In both of the workgroups (court processes and post-dispositional alternatives and intervention, risk assessment and pre-dispositional alternatives) discussions have taken place regarding the need to identify and map existing community based programs and models that are currently serving juveniles. Before considering the expansion of programs or the development of new alternatives, it is imperative that the work groups identify the total capacity of existing programs and then compare the actual demand/need to the capacity while considering the linkage to risk and individual needs. Again, referrals need to be matched to appropriate programs that meet address the specific risk and needs of the youths. Data on RAI scores, referrals, MAYSI- II screens, assessments and evaluations will be used to make these determinations.

The identification of program models will allow our department to enhance our current community partnerships as well as to create new ones with other CBO’s who are already working with youth and families in their neighborhoods.

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**3. What do you mean by “ensuring racial and ethnic diversity and decision making level?” What measures will you take to make this happen?**

Our department will take the following measures to ensure racial and ethnic diversity at every decision making level:

We will diversify our workforce to reflect the demographics of our caseloads and referrals, the youth and the families we serve, and we will provide our staff with on-going cultural and racial sensitivity trainings. Department management will compare the number of Non-English speaking clients to the number of bilingual staff and increase it when necessary. The department is currently developing a diversity action committee to network with community organizations for the purposes of employee recruitment. The majority of department forms have been translated into Spanish to serve our Latino clients.

Focusing all agency strategies to reduce DMC by collecting data and looking at race, gender, and age of offenders at every decision level point including referrals to alternative programs/ interventions.

Continue reviewing probation violation and arrest data and compare it to officer caseloads and to the number of referrals to the department.

We will also collect and analyze data related to court decisions and commitments to determine whether youth of color fall disproportionately into this category.

**4. What measures will you take, what will you do, to “ensure that all strategies focus on DMC issues?”**

Continue to ensure that collaborate members have a clear understanding that reducing racial disparities and achieving gender equality is the overarching philosophy that should be considered at every stage of the detention reform process.

Create new partnerships and improve current collaboration with people of color and community-based organizations. Keep on adding key community members to the stakeholder group and workgroups. Making sure that we have minority and female representation at the table and engage in the decision making process to reduce racial disparities.

Every technical change implemented gets transformed into an “adaptive change” by developing and adhering to infrastructures (e.g., quality control, trainings, protocols, data monitoring, etc.) to ensure that these changes get transferred to all employees.

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**5. Other than the general template language in the third bullet, what specifically will you do to “adapt” the RAI? Training, written protocols, quality control, monitoring its impact, etc?**

After we find out the results from the RAI field-test study, we will make the necessary revisions to the screening instrument to ensure that our front gates continue to be controlled in an objective and equitable manner. The necessary trainings will be held to familiarize the detention and probation staff with the RAI changes and to ensure that the detention admission criteria are followed correctly. A new protocol on the implementation of the screening instrument will also be developed and distributed to staff for quality control. To monitor the RAI's, leadership staff will continue to track and monitor detention scores and the use of overrides to examine and eliminate opportunities of unequal decisions; they will also provide consistent oversight for compliance with the new protocol. We will continue to track data related to the percentage of juveniles who are being released and comparing that data to previous years.

The data collected will also be utilized to monitor progress towards reducing racial disparities and disproportionate minority confinement. Routine management reports will be created and presented to the stakeholders group with statistics on race, ethnicity, gender, and geographic area so that we can identify any disparities, assess any trends in detention, and make necessary changes in our policies and/ or practices.

We will continue to provide training to law enforcement officials to understand the RAI and monitor if more citations are coming in to the department especially for school related offenses rather than bookings. Meet with law enforcement to develop specific criteria for admissions.

**6. Again, relative to the third bullet, specifically data, now that you will be implementing the revised RAI, I suggest you consider collecting public safety data, that is pre-adjudication and FTA rates.**

We will monitor and analyze FTA rates for comparison and re-arrest data as well as data on those juveniles who re-offend with a new criminal offense prior to appearing in court. We have already begun to gather the necessary information needed to obtain this suggested public safety data by utilizing JCATS, our data system. After gathering this information, we will make sure to look behind the data to clarify reasons behind our statistics and findings to ensure that juveniles are treated in an equitable manner. Our quantitative analysis will include looking to see if there are any disparities in case status by race and ethnicity, if youth of color have more warrants or have longer lengths of stays, and if so, what causes these differences.