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Responsible Public Policy

The Department of Youth Services (DYS) touches the lives of thousands of youth in Ohio. Beyond youth in DHS facilities and those on parole, DHS funds and supports over 610 direct service programs throughout the state offering nearly 110,000 youth (based on annual program admissions) opportunities and services to effect positive change.



Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

Consistent with our reform efforts and commitment to a community-based service delivery system, Ohio began implementing the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in 2010. JDAI is a product of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and is designed to examine juvenile detention practices and reform the delivery of juvenile justice. The Initiative now functions in more than 125 jurisdictions across the country. Specifically, the objectives of JDAI are to:

- Eliminate inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention
- Minimize the number of youth who fail to appear in court or reoffend pending adjudication
- Redirect public finances to successful reform strategies
- Improve conditions of confinement in secure detention facilities
- Reduce racial and ethnic disparities

Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lucas, Montgomery and Summit Counties have piloted the rollout of JDAI in Ohio. Each of the counties has established a local executive committee, identified a local site coordinator, and participated in intensive training and technical assistance to further enhance their understanding of implementing JDAI in their local jurisdictions. Combining the results of all five counties, detention admissions have been reduced by 18% for all admissions and by 15% for youth of color admissions (from 2009-2011).

DYS has received a three-year grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, totaling \$450,000, to implement JDAI in Ohio. One of the expectations of the grant is for JDAI sites to attend model site visits. The visits provide learning opportunities for peer-to-peer exchanges, discussion of implementing the JDAI core strategies, and the opportunity to experience and observe practical examples and strategies for broader reform efforts. Each of the Ohio sites has attended at least one model site visit to either Santa Cruz County, California; Bernalillo County, New Mexico; Multnomah County, Oregon; or Cook County, Illinois.

DYS was also given an additional grant by the Casey Foundation to send an Ohio delegation to New Jersey to learn how to expand JDAI to additional counties. After ensuring successful implementation in the first five Ohio counties, a second cohort of counties is planned to expand the juvenile detention reform efforts.

JDAI is accomplished through adherence to eight interconnected core strategies:

- 1. Collaboration***
- 2. Use of Accurate Data***
- 3. Objective Admissions Criteria***
- 4. Alternatives to Detention***
- 5. Case Processing Reforms***
- 6. Reducing the Use of Confinements for "Special Cases"***
- 7. Deliberate Commitment to Reducing Racial Disparities***
- 8. Improving Conditions of Confinement***

