Competitive RECLAIM is a performance-driven grant program available to juvenile courts and local communities. It has been made possible by the continued success of juvenile courts in reducing the DYS facility population as well as the successes of the department’s investments in community-based programming to serve the right youth in the right environment with the right treatment.

Counties use the program to support diversion, evidence-based programs, and alternatives to detention. Efforts in Ashtabula and Fairfield Counties are highlighted below. To read more about the programs funded throughout the state, as well as additional stories about the success youth are experiencing, please click here.

Ashtabula County uses Competitive RECLAIM to support its new resource center and diversion from both formal court processing and secure detention. At the center, youth are assessed and screened for trauma and mental health issues. Early intervention includes offering support to the entire family. The success of the resource center enabled the court to permanently close its secure detention facility in April 2018.

17-year-old Youth D was leaving home often without permission, using drugs, and failing school. A Diversion Specialist at the resource center helped youth D receive mental health and substance abuse assessments. Youth D got into treatment and actively participated, quickly turning her life around. Within 4 months, she brought her grades up, graduated from high school, picked up more hours at her place of employment, and stayed off drugs. In addition, her relationship with her mother improved significantly, and both expressed gratitude for the support they received from the resource center.

In Fairfield County, Competitive RECLAIM supports the Positive Youth Development (PYD) Program. One of its first participants, a 13-year-old boy, initially presented as shy and uncertain of his interests or strengths. After several meetings, however, he became more open and shared that he had always...
been interested in forensic science as highlighted in television shows such as *CSI*. He also said he enjoyed taking photographs with his phone when he went on walks in the local park.

These expressed interests became specific goals; the boy would direct his energy in a positive way by learning about photography and taking more pictures. In addition, he would interview a Fairfield Police Department detective and write a report.

The boy accomplished his goals and has stayed on a more positive course. A tour and interactions with a detective have resulted in his desire to pursue a degree in forensic science once he graduates from high school. He surprises others with the beautiful photographs he takes. He told Fairfield County staff that he positions his camera so that a photo of a puddle surrounded by rocks could be made to look like the Grand Tetons rising above a beautiful lake. He has learned to transform puddles and rocks into beauty and art!