



Multnomah County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Overview

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) was designed to support the vision that all youth involved in the juvenile justice system have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults. The primary objectives of JDAI are to:

- Eliminate the reliance on secure detention when not truly necessary for public safety
- Minimize failures to appear and delinquent behavior and maximize positive youth and community outcomes
- Redirect public finances from building or expanding facilities to creating responsible, innovative alternative strategies and programs that maximize community and family involvement
- Improve conditions in secure detention facilities
- Advance race equity, a state in which all youth have the opportunity to reach the potential we know they have

Since its inception in 1994 in Multnomah County, JDAI has repeatedly demonstrated that it can use taxpayer dollars effectively, and maintain and improve public safety and enhance outcomes for youth, families and victims through changes and improvements in policies, practices, and programs.

Juvenile Justice System Innovations, Reforms and Improvements

- Reduced reliance on detention and probation unless necessary for public safety by diverting status and low-level offenders, using objective risk assessments, developing a Reception Center and other alternatives and using effective case management practices. Youth delinquency as measured by the number of referrals to the system has not increased; in fact it has decreased.
- Designed and tested an objective risk assessment instrument to guide admissions decisions
- Established an array of community-based pre-trial alternatives to detention (Community & Electronic Monitoring Program and Shelter Care) where nearly 100% of youth make it to court and do not re-offend
- Commenced the 11 o'clock meeting where attorneys, juvenile justice, child welfare, and alternatives to detention partners meet to discuss cases set for preliminary hearing
- Adopted expedited case processing and preliminary hearing (next business day) to reduce length of stay
- Collaborated with DA's office on formal protocol to help divert youth with low-level offenses
- Developed and implemented a graduated sanctions grid to reduce formal probation violation petitions
- Formed the Juvenile Justice Council, a collaborative body designed to oversee and push for continued detention and juvenile justice system reforms

System Strengths from which to Build

- Track record of investing in detention alternatives, prevention and intervention services, treatment programs, etc.
- Strong history of collaboration among system partners and stakeholders to continuously improve, carry forward accomplishments and redouble efforts to achieve outcomes
- Collective agreement on the importance of addressing and reducing racial and ethnic disparities
- Availability of data to inform decisions and reform efforts
- High standards in detention facility, including quality assurance system and opportunities for youth to experience culturally responsive supports

JDAI 8 CORE STRATEGIES



Collaboration/Leadership

Establish and maintain a collaborative and governance structure that includes system and community representatives who have the credibility, authority and information to make decisions on behalf of their agencies or groups related to system reform and improvement in policies, practices and programs

Data-driven Decision-making

Use objective data analysis to inform the development and oversight of policy, practice and programs. Data must be collected to provide a portrait of who is being detained and why, and to monitor the impacts of policies and practices. All data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, geography and offense to recognize and address disparities in the system.

Objective Admissions

Employ detention admissions policies and practices that distinguish between youth who are likely to flee or commit new offenses and those who are not. JDAI sites use detention risk assessment Instruments to objectively screen youth to determine which youth can be safely supervised in the community.

Alternatives to Detention (ATDs)

Develop and maintain a continuum of non-secure alternatives to detention and diversion programs that increase the options available for arrested youth by providing supervision, structure and accountability. Programs should be able to respond to compliance failures by increasing contact and case management activities when possible consistent with public safety instead of automatically terminating participation for noncompliance. ATDs should be grounded in an understanding of adolescent development and behavior. Program activities should reflect and be responsive to youths' needs, cultures and traditions.

Expedited Case Processing

Employ case processing reforms to expedite the flow of cases through the system. These changes reduce length of stay in custody, expand the availability of non-secure program slots and ensure that interventions with youth are timely, appropriate and effective.

Special Detention Populations

Carefully examine cases involving youth held on warrants, pending disposition, on probation violations and for policy reasons to guard against and reduce inappropriate or unnecessary stays in detention.

Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Develop and implement specific strategies aimed at eliminating bias and ensuring a level playing field for youth of color. Racial/ethnic disparities are the most critical aspect of our juvenile justice reform. Real lasting change in this arena requires committed leadership, ongoing policy analysis, community engagement and targeted policies and programming.

Conditions of Confinement

Conditions of confinement in the secure detention facility shall be assessed and monitored to promptly identify problems. Corrective action will be taken to ensure that conditions of confinement are as safe, humane and therapeutically appropriate as possible through regular facility assessments. These facility assessments are typically guided by trained teams of local stakeholders and partners in a rigorous methodology and pursuant to established standards that carefully examine all aspects of facility policies, practices and programs.