

# Ramsey County JDAI/DMC Mission, Purpose & Principles

Adopted 4/4/07

## **Mission**

To improve public safety and long-term outcomes for juveniles in Ramsey County by:

- Reducing the number of juveniles in secure detention;
- Eliminating the disproportionate representation of juveniles of color in secure detention;
- Achieving systematic reform of juvenile detention practices; and
- Developing appropriate and effective detention alternatives for juveniles who should not be held in secure detention.

## **Purpose of Secure Detention**

In accordance with the Ramsey County Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI), Ramsey County will use secure detention for juveniles who have committed a law violation and are at risk of:

- Reoffending before their next court date, or
- Failing to appear in court.

## **Guiding Principles**

- The core purposes of the juvenile justice system are to promote public safety and reduce juvenile delinquency by developing individual responsibility and accountability. These purposes must be pursued through means that are fair, just and recognize the unique characteristics and needs of juveniles.
- Juveniles who violate the law need to be held accountable. However, non-essential incarceration has been shown to do further damage to juveniles at great expense to taxpayers and public safety. Effective, community-based alternatives are necessary to enhance and promote public safety as well as achieve better long-term outcomes for juveniles.
- To ensure secure detention is used only when appropriate, there is an immediate and critical need to develop viable alternatives for juveniles who are in immediate danger but at low risk of re-offense. It is a priority of this initiative to develop alternatives for these juveniles, including secure alternatives (such as staff-secure shelters) when necessary.
- Ramsey County JDAI is an initiative that strives to eliminate bias and ensure that all juveniles in the juvenile justice system – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, economic status or physical ability – are treated fairly and equitably.
- Comprehensively gathering and rigorously analyzing data throughout the juvenile justice system is central to our mission. It is critical to ensuring long-term reform, detecting disparate treatment and eliminating inequity in the system.
- The initiative cannot succeed without the active engagement and full participation of families and communities as stakeholders. Ownership and consensus of all stakeholders is key to: making system reform work; fostering positive change in juvenile behavior; and enhancing opportunities for juveniles to thrive in community.