

**TWO DECADES OF
JDAI**

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

A Progress Report

**From
Demonstration
Project to
National
Standard**

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of UPS, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at www.aecf.org.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Launched in the 1990s by the Annie E. Casey Foundation as a five-site demonstration project, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) has steadily swept the country in recent years and is on track to become the standard of practice for how local justice systems nationwide handle the critical front end of the juvenile court process.

This report documents JDAI's recent progress both in reforming juvenile detention practices nationwide and also in contributing to the larger movement for more comprehensive reforms in juvenile justice. Specifically, the report finds:

THE JDAI MODEL HAS PROLIFERATED RAPIDLY IN RECENT YEARS, AND NOW REACHES A SUBSTANTIAL SWATH OF THE U.S. YOUTH POPULATION. JDAI is now operating in 110 local jurisdictions in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Combined, these jurisdictions are home to 17 percent of the nation's young people. In addition, another 18 percent of U.S. youth reside in states that have signed on as JDAI partners and have committed themselves to supporting local JDAI replication efforts. All told, 61 percent of U.S. youth reside in states where at least one locality is a JDAI site. The number of localities and states participating in JDAI continues to grow at a rapid rate.

THROUGH JDAI, PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS ARE SHARPLY REDUCING RELIANCE ON SECURE DETENTION FOR YOUTH AWAITING TRIAL OR PENDING PLACEMENT TO CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS. Recently, the Casey Foundation conducted a one-day census of all active JDAI sites nationwide. Among the 78 sites reporting both current and pre-JDAI data, the total detention population on June 17, 2009, was 1,955 (or 35 percent) less than the average detention population in these jurisdictions prior to joining JDAI. In 24 sites, the detention population on June 17 was less than half of the average in the year prior to entering the JDAI project.

JDAI IS REDUCING DETENTION POPULATIONS IN WAYS THAT PROTECT OR ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY. JDAI model sites in Bernalillo County (Albuquerque), New Mexico, Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon, and Santa Cruz County, California, have seen juvenile arrests for serious violent offenses decline by 27 percent, 43 percent, and 46 percent, respectively—far better than the reduction in juvenile violent arrests nationwide in the same period. Most JDAI sites tracking juvenile crime rates also report improvements since their detention reform efforts began.

JDAI IS ALSO GENERATING SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS FOR TAXPAYERS BY ENABLING PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS TO AVOID COSTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF SECURE DETENTION FACILITIES. Twenty-seven JDAI sites have closed detention units or whole facilities as a result of smaller detention populations, reducing their detention capacity by a combined total of 978 beds. Also, JDAI has generated substantial taxpayer savings in a handful of other jurisdictions by eliminating the need for construction of new or expanded detention facilities.

COMBATING RACIAL DISPARITIES IS A CORE ELEMENT OF THE JDAI MODEL. While JDAI sites do not report an overall average reduction in the proportion of detained youth of color, a handful of sites have substantially reduced racial/ethnic disparities in detention rates. Overall, JDAI jurisdictions detained 873 fewer youth of color in 2007 than they did prior to beginning JDAI—in sharp contrast to the continuing increases nationwide in the population of youth of color confined in detention. JDAI has played a crucial role in mobilizing local leadership to take on the DMC challenge, and sites across the nation are undertaking ambitious efforts to analyze and address racial disparities.

IN ADDITION TO ITS DIRECT IMPACT ON DETENTION, JDAI IS PROVING AN EFFECTIVE CATALYST FOR BROADER REFORMS IN JUVENILE JUSTICE. FOR EXAMPLE, JDAI JURISDICTIONS ARE SHARPLY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF YOUTH COMMITTED TO STATE JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND OTHER RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS. Across all sites reporting, total commitments to state custody were down by more than 2,000 in 2007 from the sites' pre-JDAI levels—a decline of 23 percent. Indeed, the ability of JDAI sites to steer youth away from the deep end of the juvenile justice system is likely a prime reason for reduced juvenile offending rates in participating jurisdictions. In virtually every state nationwide, re-arrest and re-incarceration rates of youth released from juvenile corrections facilities are alarmingly high.

MANY JDAI JURISDICTIONS ARE ALSO PURSUING OTHER IMPORTANT AND LONG OVERDUE JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORMS. Some have developed new methods to engage and support the parents and families of court-involved youth. Many are applying effective techniques and strategies they learned in detention reform—ideas like objective decision-making tools, family conferencing, and community-based partnerships—in other phases of the juvenile court process.

As the following pages document, JDAI faces many challenges in the years to come. Nonetheless, JDAI stands out as an unusually influential systems-change initiative. In 2003, the longtime director of the National Juvenile Detention Association, Earl Dunlap, described JDAI as “the single greatest reform ever undertaken in juvenile justice programming.” Since then, the JDAI reform movement has continued to grow.

SECTION I.
JUVENILE DETENTION REFORM:
WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Detention is a crucial early phase in the juvenile justice process. Though the typical stay in juvenile detention is brief—the average length of stay nationally is around 20 days and many youth spend only a few nights in these locked facilities—detention is pivotal to the juvenile justice process for several reasons.

First, an estimated 400,000 young people every year are admitted to detention nationwide,¹ and approximately 26,000 young people are held on any given night.² The sheer volume of youth affected demands our attention.

Second, detention itself has a significant negative impact on delinquency cases. Research has shown that detained youth are more likely to be formally charged, found delinquent, and committed to youth corrections facilities

than similarly situated youngsters.³ According to one Florida study, youth detained pending court were three times as likely to be committed to a corrections facility as youth with identical offending histories who were not detained.⁴ Detention, therefore, might be thought of as the slippery slope into juvenile justice’s deep end.

Third, detention is associated with negative long-term life outcomes. (See Figure 2.) Research shows that youth who spend time in custody are less likely to complete high school, less likely to avoid re-arrest, less likely to find employment, and less likely to form stable families. They are also more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.⁵ Placement in locked detention—particularly if it leads to a lengthy period of correctional custody—interrupts the natural maturational process through which most young people age out of delinquent behavior.

FIGURE 1
WHAT IS JUVENILE DETENTION?
A CRUCIAL EARLY STEP IN THE JUVENILE COURT PROCESS

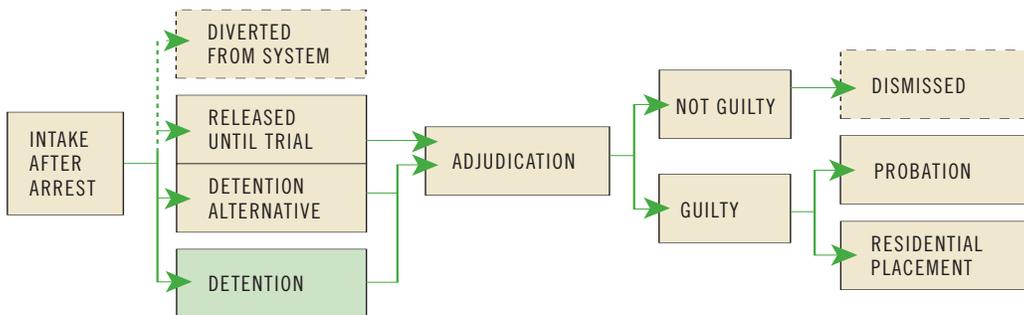
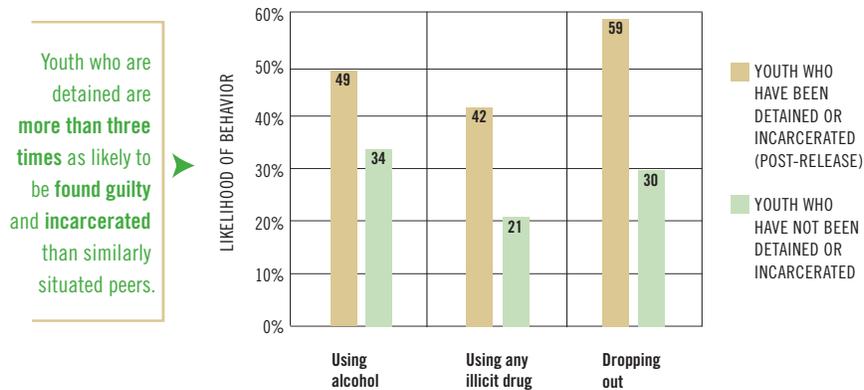


FIGURE 2

DETENTION LEADS TO WORSE OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH

After release, incarcerated youth are much more likely to **drop out** of school and use **drugs and alcohol**



Sources: Office of State Courts Administrator, Florida Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment (2003); LeBlanc, (1991), "Unlocking Learning" in Correctional Facilities, Washington, D.C.; Substance use, abuse, and dependence among youths who have been in jail or a detention center: The NSDUH report, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, (2004); America's Promise report on national rates of high school dropouts: www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23889321/.

Detention also represents a significant cost to taxpayers—more than \$1 billion per year nationwide. Though costs vary widely from region to region (depending on salary levels, programming, and services), average costs per bed have been estimated at \$48,000 per year. The average cost to build, finance, and operate a single detention bed over its first 20 years is approximately \$1.5 million per bed.

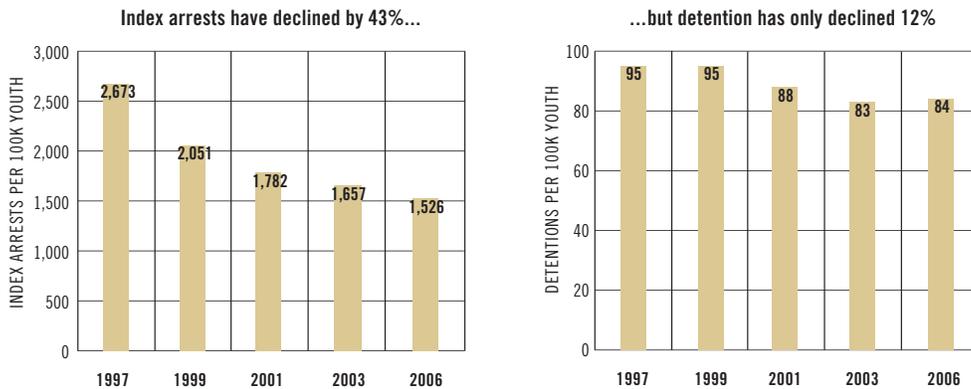
In the early 1990s, as the Annie E. Casey Foundation began planning JDAI, detention policies were arbitrary, ineffective, and discriminatory in most jurisdictions, and careening toward crisis. Nationwide, the average daily population in detention was rising at an unsustainable pace, more than doubling from 13,000

in 1985 to 28,000 by 1997.⁶ Though the rapid run-up in youth offending in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a factor in this rise, it was not the primary cause. As Figure 3 on p. 6 shows, when juvenile crime rates began a steep decline in the 1990s, detention rates did not follow suit.

As a result of the rapid increase in detained youth, detention centers nationwide experienced serious and rampant overcrowding, jeopardizing the health and safety of detained youth (and custodial staff), and compromising educational and other services. In 1985, just 20 percent of detained youth were confined in overcrowded facilities;⁷ a decade later, 62 percent were in overcrowded facilities.

FIGURE 3

SERIOUS CRIME ARRESTS HAVE DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY, BUT DETENTION HAS NOT



Note: Index arrests are classified as more serious crimes including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assaults, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson; skip in 2005 for detention data is due to “unforeseen delay in mail-out” for Census of Juveniles of Residential Facilities for detained population.

Source: OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book: Juvenile Offenders and Victims 2006; Easy Access to FBI Statistics Database 2007.

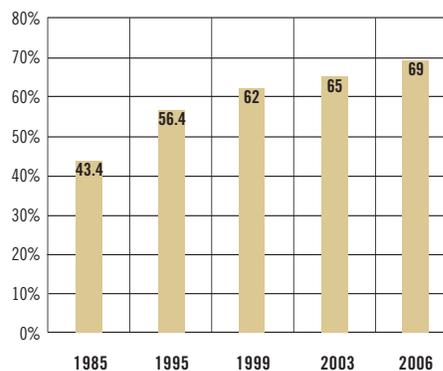
To address the overcrowding problem, many jurisdictions planned new or expanded facilities, and many appropriated funds to build them. In California alone, local jurisdictions have added 2,250 new detention beds since the late 1990s.⁸

This period also saw a dramatic worsening in the disproportionate representation of youth of color in detention. In 1985, 43 percent of juvenile detainees nationwide were youth of color. That percentage grew to 56 percent in 1995 and 62 percent in 1999, rising to 69 percent in the most recent national count taken in 2006.⁹ (See Figure 4.)

These alarming trends progressed in most jurisdictions without any serious consideration

FIGURE 4

INCREASING OVERREPRESENTATION IN DETENTION CENTERS: Youth of Color as a Percentage of Total U.S. Detention Population



Source: Census of Public and Private Juvenile Detention, Correctional and Shelter Facilities, 1985–1995, and OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook, 1999, 2003, and 2006.

from public officials. Rather, policymakers and administrators in most communities remained unaware of policy alternatives or management practices that might safely reduce detention populations. In so doing, they ignored abundant evidence that many detained youth posed minimal danger to public safety, or that many languished in detention for long periods with no benefit for youth or public safety. For instance:

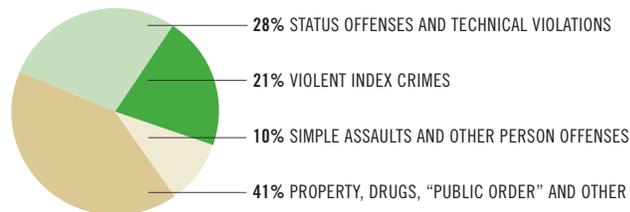
- More than 70 percent of all detention cases in 1995 involved property or drug crimes, public order offenses, technical probation violations, or status offenses. Just 29 percent of all cases involved any violence—and many of these were misdemeanor assault charges. Yet few jurisdictions systematically screened youth to ensure that detention was only used for those who posed genuine public safety risks, and few invested in detention alternative programs to supervise in the community moderate-risk youth who might otherwise be confined.

Today, low-risk cases continue to predominate in detention, as seen in Figure 5 below.

- Roughly one-fourth of all detained youth were confined for breaking probation rules, rather than new law violations. Yet few jurisdictions had thoughtful policies or practices to hold youth accountable for rule violations without removing them from home.
- Many youth languished in detention for weeks and months due to bottlenecks in case processing and placement delays. Yet few jurisdictions had procedures to expedite cases and minimize lengths of stay in detention.

Few kids in detention (21 percent) are charged with serious violent crimes. As one chief probation officer recently said about his detention population, “These are kids we are angry at, not kids we are scared of.”

FIGURE 5
**OFFENSE PROFILES:
Detained Youth in the United States, 2006**



Source: Sickmund, Melissa, Sladky, T.J., and Kang, Wei. (2008) "Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook." Online. Available: www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/cjrp/.

JDAI was developed to reverse these troubling trends and to demonstrate that detention populations could be substantially and safely reduced. However, while JDAI's efforts focused on the detention phase of the juvenile process, Casey Foundation leaders also believed that detention reform would be a catalyst for needed changes in other areas of

JDAI has been expanding rapidly in recent years and is now operating in 110 local jurisdictions in 27 states and the District of Columbia.

juvenile justice. By demonstrating—through detention reform—that juvenile justice can be smarter, fairer, and more efficient, the Foundation hoped to show that thoughtful, comprehensive reforms can reduce unnecessary or inappropriate confinement, improve public safety, redirect public funds to more positive youth development endeavors, and, in the long term, improve the odds that delinquent youth become productive adults.

SECTION II. WHAT IS THE JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

JDAI was inspired by a successful detention reform effort in Broward County, Florida, which combined interagency collaboration, research, objective screening procedures,

non-secure detention alternatives, and faster case processing to reduce its detention population by 65 percent from 1987 to 1992, without any sacrifice of public safety and saving taxpayers more than \$5 million.

JDAI's demonstration phase—commenced in 1992—involved five pilot sites, each of which received extensive financial and technical support from the Casey Foundation to implement a multi-faceted reform strategy. Then, as now, the core elements of the JDAI model included:

- 1) *Collaboration* among the local juvenile court, probation agency, prosecutors, defenders, and other governmental entities, as well as community organizations—including a formal partnership to cooperatively plan, implement, and assess detention reforms.
- 2) *Collection and utilization of data* to diagnose the system's problems and proclivities, assess the impact of various reforms, and assure that decisions are grounded in hard facts—rather than myths and anecdotes.
- 3) *Objective admissions screening* to identify which youth actually pose substantial public safety risks, which should be placed in alternative programs, and which should simply be sent home.
- 4) *New or enhanced non-secure alternatives to detention* targeted to youth who would otherwise be locked up and—whenever possible—based in neighborhoods where detention cases are concentrated.

5) *Case processing reforms* that expedite the flow of cases through the system, reduce lengths of stay in custody, expand the availability of non-secure program slots, and ensure that interventions with youth are timely and appropriate.

6) *Flexible policies and practices to deal with “special” detention cases*, such as violations of probation and failures to appear in court, that in many jurisdictions lead automatically to detention even for youth who pose minimal risks to public safety.

7) *Persistent and determined attention to combating racial disparities*, including careful study to identify specific strategies to eliminate bias and ensure a level playing field for kids of color.

8) *Intensive monitoring of conditions of confinement* for youth in secure custody to ensure that detention facilities are safe and appropriate care is provided.

Begun at the height of the nation’s alarm over youth crime, JDAI pilot sites faced significant political resistance and, perhaps predictably, achieved mixed success. However, two of the original sites—Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon, and Cook County (Chicago), Illinois—recorded significant successes, as did two of the initiative’s first replication sites, Santa Cruz County, California, and Bernalillo County, New Mexico.

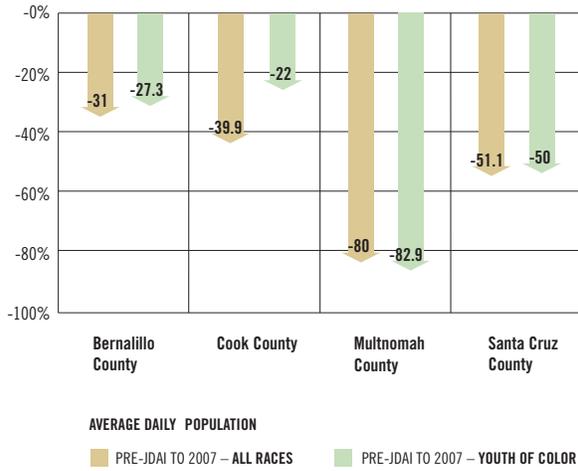
■ In Chicago, whose 498-bed detention facility averaged 710 youth per night in 1996, detention populations steadily decreased as

leaders implemented the JDAI model. By instituting new-risk assessment procedures, creating a network of detention alternatives, implementing court notification procedures (which reduced detention for failure to appear in court), and expediting case processing to reduce time in detention, Cook County lowered its average population to 543 by 1999—a drop of 24 percent. More than 90 percent of youth in alternative programs remained arrest-free and appeared in court as scheduled. The smaller detention population allowed Cook County to avoid construction of 200 new detention beds, saving millions of dollars for local taxpayers.

■ In Portland, JDAI led to an even greater reduction in daily detention population, from 96 per day in 1993 to 35 per day in 1999, thanks to new risk screening procedures and a series of reforms that sharply reduced case processing times and shortened average lengths of stay. In addition, Portland made dramatic progress in reducing racial disparities in detention: whereas youth of color arrested for delinquency had been significantly more likely to be detained than white youth before JDAI, by 1999 the differences in detention rates disappeared entirely.

Juvenile arrests for serious violent offenses have declined by 27 percent, 43 percent, and 46 percent, respectively, in Bernalillo, Multnomah, and Santa Cruz counties.

FIGURE 6
REDUCING RELIANCE ON DETENTION: JDAI Model Sites



■ Santa Cruz embraced JDAI in 1997 and reduced its average detention population from 61 in January 2001 to just 35 throughout all of 2001. Santa Cruz also lowered the percentage of minority youth in detention from 64 percent in 1997 to 54 percent in 2001. Bernalillo County reduced its average detention population from 118 in 1998 to 85 in 2002, allowing the county to close two wings of its detention facility and re-deploy staff members to new detention alternative programs.

As these successes and related detention reform strategies were documented and disseminated, JDAI’s replication phase gained momentum. A training and technical support infrastructure was built to help interested jurisdictions faithfully adopt the eight core strategies, including five model sites that

agreed to serve as learning laboratories for other jurisdictions. Beginning around 2003, JDAI began increasingly focusing on state-level replication efforts, typically beginning with a cohort of counties that would expand based upon demonstrated progress. In 2009, New Jersey became the first statewide model jurisdiction, based on its success in supporting effective replication of the JDAI model throughout the Garden State.

SECTION III. HOW WIDELY IS THE JDAI MODEL BEING REPLICATED NATIONWIDE?

As can be seen in Figure 7, the number of jurisdictions participating in JDAI has risen rapidly since 2003. As of August 2009, 110 local jurisdictions in 27 states and the District

FIGURE 7
JDAI REPLICATION: A Steady and Rapid Rise
Number of JDAI Replication Sites and State Partners Over Time

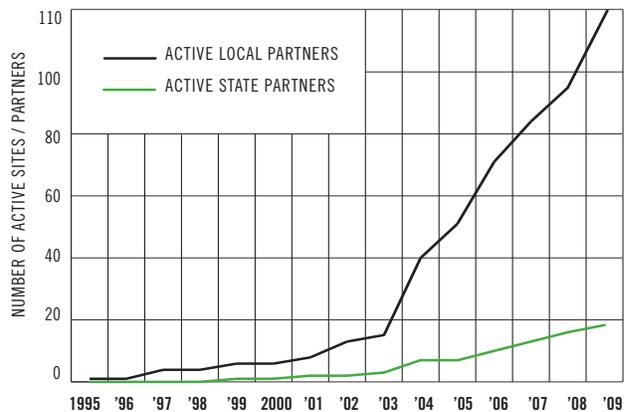
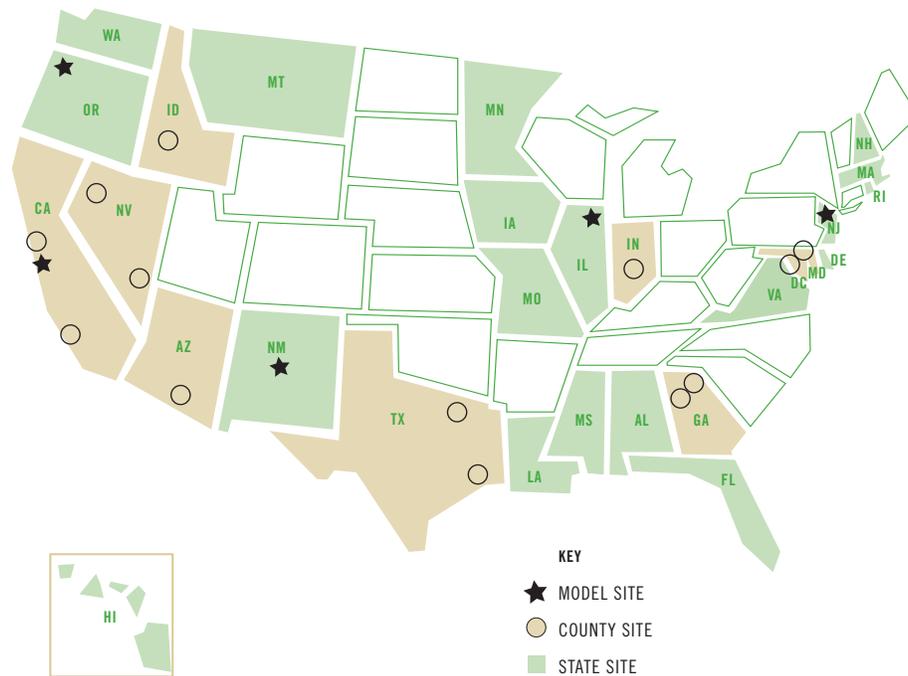


FIGURE 8
NATIONAL MAP OF CURRENT JDAI REPLICATION SITES
AUGUST 2009



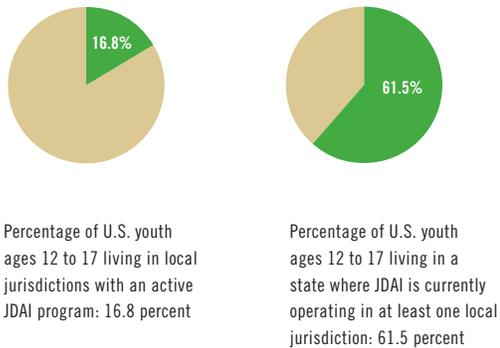
of Columbia had active JDAI programs. These jurisdictions were home to 17 percent of the nation's children. Active JDAI sites are scattered throughout all regions of the country, and they are broadly dispersed to include many rural, suburban, and urban locations.

The requirements for sites to enter the JDAI project are by no means trivial. To ensure integrity of the initiative and promote success, the Casey Foundation requires interested jurisdictions to apply for participation, and it

accepts into JDAI only sites which demonstrate a strong commitment to the project's goals, agree to implement all elements of the model, and mobilize a broad-based collaborative leadership team with the skills and resources required for success.

Of the 105 active local JDAI sites as of July 2009, 81 were located within the 17 states that had signed on as state-level JDAI partners with the goal of replicating JDAI statewide. Together, 29 percent of the nation's

FIGURE 9
JDAI'S PENETRATION IN THE UNITED STATES



youth lived either in one of these JDAI states or in a county that is implementing JDAI in other states. In August 2009, two more states—Florida and Rhode Island—entered the initiative, bringing the share of U.S. youth served in JDAI jurisdictions and/or residing in a JDAI partner state to 35 percent. More than 15 million youth—61.5 percent of the nation's youth population—reside in a state where at least one locality is implementing JDAI. (See Figure 9.)

Financial support for this rapid growth has come largely from county and state governments. Casey Foundation site support grants are very modest and mainly cover travel, training, and meeting costs. Participating jurisdictions do receive extensive Foundation support in the form of technical assistance, training, conferences, and publications, as well as access to the five JDAI model sites.

Most sites—particularly those with strong leadership—have been successful in identifying or raising the necessary operating funds to support their JDAI efforts. Funding has come from state government grants and appropriations, foundation grants, county government appropriations and reallocations, or reprogramming of funds saved through reduced reliance on locked detention.

Overall, sites providing fiscal information in 2008 (about one-half of all sites in the initiative) reported leveraging roughly \$1 million in grants from other foundations and \$14.5 million in state and federal grants to support new JDAI-related programming and personnel. Many local JDAI sites have received support from State Advisory Groups (SAGs), independent bodies established under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) and authorized to distribute JJDP funds for juvenile justice projects. Others have received funding through state government appropriations.

JDAI sites providing fiscal information also reported \$34.7 million in local contributions—though much of this amount represented continued funding for ongoing detention-related programming. Many sites have funded JDAI-specific staff or programs through new appropriations or redeployed use of ongoing budget lines, however. (For more detail on how JDAI sites are securing needed funding, see text box on p. 13.)

WHERE ARE JDAI SITES FINDING THE FUNDS THEY NEED TO SUCCEED?

Following are some recent examples:

- **Grants from State Advisory Groups.** A recent report from the Coalition for Juvenile Justice found that 10 states and the District of Columbia received \$6.8 million in SAG-sponsored funding to support their JDAI efforts from 2001 to 2007.¹⁰ In Virginia, the SAG provided a five-year grant to fund evening reporting centers as an alternative to locked detention, and SAG grants have also been used to hire “Detention Expeditors,” enhance school-based probation services, and initiate restorative justice programs.
- **State government appropriations.** Several states have been especially noteworthy for their financial support of detention reform. New Jersey, for example, appropriated \$4 million in 2008 to support and sustain detention reform efforts. Alabama matched the Casey Foundation’s JDAI grant, doubling the resources available for its first cohort of sites. Washington State has appropriated \$200,000 in each of the past few years to support JDAI expansion to new counties.
- **Local government support.** County governments have provided the bulk of funding for JDAI programs and personnel, either through new appropriations or through re-allocation of funds to new functions. In Ramsey County (Saint Paul), Minnesota, the county board recently approved \$1.1 million over two years in new funding for community-based alternatives to detention. In Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana, local officials have provided more than \$1 million annually for new programming, personnel, and training.
- **Re-allocating funds previously spent on detention.** Pierce County, Washington has reallocated the \$800,000 per year it saved by closing a 50-bed detention unit to support a range of new detention alternative programs. Likewise, after substantially reducing its daily population and closing two units of its locked detention facility, Bernalillo County, New Mexico, has staffed its two main detention alternative programs with officers previously assigned to supervise youth in detention.

SECTION IV.
**WHAT HAVE PARTICIPATING SITES
ACHIEVED THROUGH DETENTION
REFORM?**

Smaller Detention Populations. The most consistent result of JDAI has been a substantial reduction in the detention populations of participating sites. In the most recent complete tabulation of average daily populations in participating JDAI sites, compiled in 2008 and reflecting data from 2007, 73 sites reported a combined reduction of 1,484 youth per day in their average detention populations. Specifically, these sites had a total average detention population of 5,451 in the year prior to each site joining JDAI and 3,967 in 2007—representing a 27 percent cumulative

reduction in average daily population as of 2007. Thirty-six of the reporting sites (49 percent) had total population reductions of 25 percent or more, and these high-performing sites had a median population reduction of 39 percent.

To gauge additional progress made since 2007, the Casey Foundation recently conducted a one-day count of detention populations in JDAI sites. Though one-day counts offer a less precise method of measuring population changes than long-term averages (because detention

populations are subject to random swings), the updated figures suggest sizable continued population reductions since 2007. In the 78 sites for which both baseline and one-day count figures were available, the total detention population on June 17, 2009, was 1,955 (or 35 percent) less than the average daily population in these jurisdictions prior to JDAI.

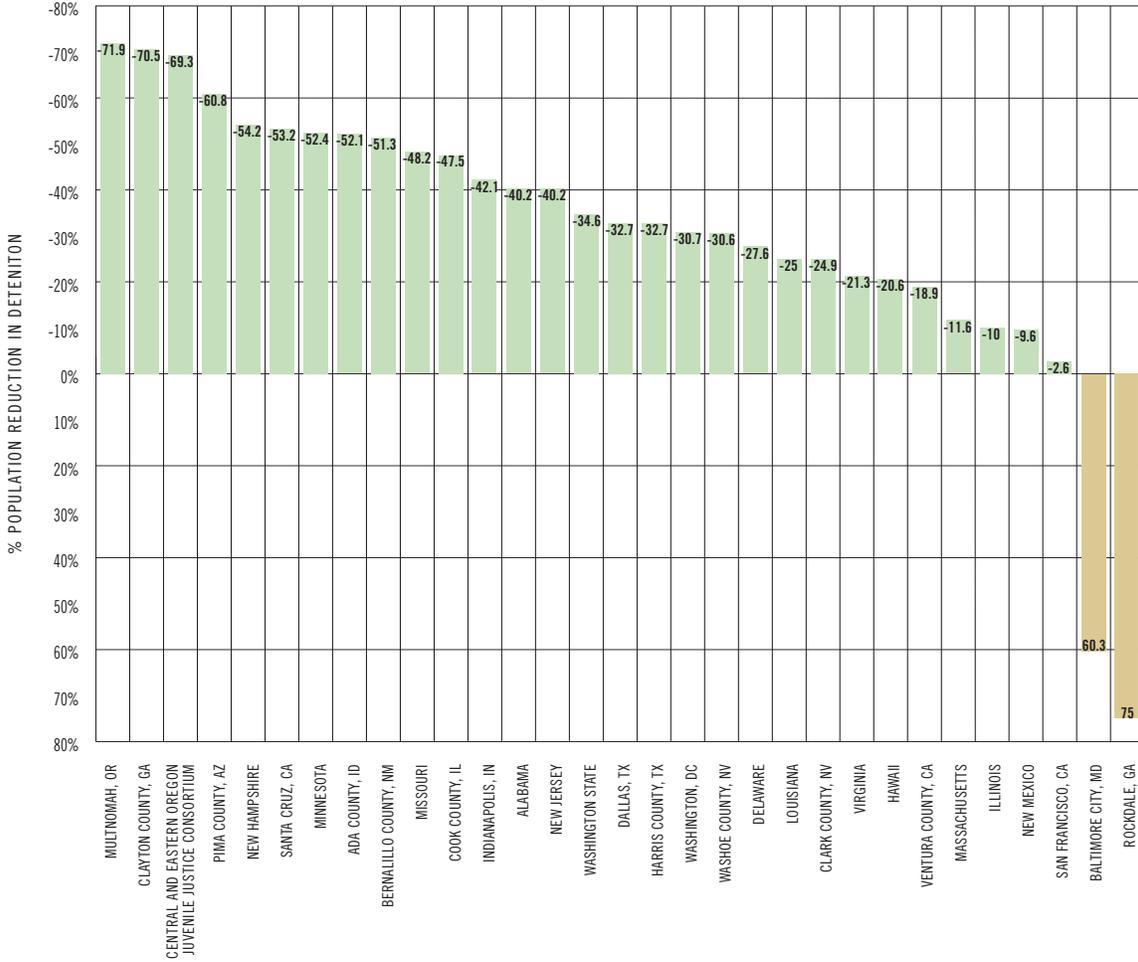
The significance of these declines in detention population becomes clearer when JDAI sites are compared with the much larger number of jurisdictions nationwide that have not taken part in JDAI. Even after its rapid expansion in recent years, JDAI now operates in jurisdictions serving one-sixth of the nation's youth population. In prior years JDAI served an even smaller share of America's youth. Yet, JDAI sites are responsible for virtually all of the detention population reductions nationwide in recent years. From 2003 (when replication of JDAI began its rapid acceleration) to 2006 (the most recent year for which national data are available), the total number of youth detained in the U.S. increased slightly from 26,269 to 26,344.¹¹ Yet many JDAI sites substantially reduced their populations during this period. Counting only newer sites that began work on JDAI in 2003 or after, total detention populations fell by more than 650 youth per night during these three years.

Reductions in the detention populations in JDAI sites are a function of two factors: lower admissions (in virtually all sites) and shorter lengths of stay (in many sites). Of 75 sites reporting admissions data for both 2007 and

In the 78 JDAI sites for which figures are available, the total detention population on June 17, 2009, was 35 percent less than the average daily population in these jurisdictions prior to JDAI.

FIGURE 10

REDUCING DETENTION POPULATIONS: The Majority of JDAI Sites Have Substantially Reduced Use of Detention



Results of a One-Day Count in JDAI Jurisdictions. Average Daily Population in Year Prior to JDAI Entry vs. Population on June 17, 2009. Includes all state JDAI sites, plus local JDAI sites located in other states.

the year prior to entering JDAI, 62 had lowered the number of new admissions to detention, with a median reduction of 28 percent. In some jurisdictions, declines in admissions have primarily been the result of new risk-assessment procedures which prevent low-risk youth from being placed in confinement. Other sites have also reduced admissions substantially through new procedures aimed at lowering the

REMARKABLE RESULTS BECOMING ROUTINE

As of June 17, 2009, 24 JDAI sites had reduced their detention populations by 50 percent or more from their pre-JDAI averages.

While much of the attention in the JDAI initiative has gone to the national model sites—Cook, Multnomah, Bernalillo, and Santa Cruz counties—dramatic reductions in juvenile detention populations are by no means limited to them. Rather, the one-day census of juvenile detention facilities conducted in participating JDAI sites on June 17 showed that 24 now have reduced the number of youth confined in detention by at least half from their average in the year prior to joining JDAI. As Figure 11 below makes clear, remarkable results are becoming more and more commonplace.

FIGURE 11

WIDESPREAD IMPACT: List of Local JDAI Jurisdictions Where Secure Detention Population on June 17, 2009, Was 50 Percent or More Below the Average Daily Population prior to JDAI

JURISDICTION	ADP PRIOR	6-17-09 ONE-DAY COUNT	PERCENT CHANGE
1. Green County, MO	18	3	-83%
2. Bergen County, NJ	20	4	-80%
3. Hopewell, VA	14	3	-78%
4. Bedford County, VA	4	1	-76%
5. Petersburg, VA	12	3	-74%
6. Multnomah County, OR	96	27	-72%
7. Jefferson County, AL	81	23	-72%
8. Clayton County, GA	61	18	-70%
9. Central/Eastern OR JJ Consortium	13	4	-69%
10. Ramsey County, MN	62	20	-68%
11. Jackson County, MO	61	20	-67%
12. Pima County, AZ	186	73	-61%
13. St. Louis City, MO	98	43	-56%
14. Atlantic County, NJ	34	15	-56%
15. Hennepin County, MN	94	42	-55%
16. New Hampshire	24	11	-54%
17. Camden County, NJ	95	44	-53%
18. Santa Cruz County, CA	47	22	-53%
19. Pierce County, WA	126	60	-52%
20. Ada County, ID	71	34	-52%
21. Essex County, NJ	244	117	-52%
22. Bernalillo County, NM	113	55	-51%
23. LaSalle County, IL	14	7	-50%
24. 15th Circuit, IL	6	3	-50%

HOW RIGOROUSLY ARE PARTICIPATING SITES REPLICATING THE JDAI MODEL?

Due to the demands of the model and the lack of a single dedicated funding source, enabling replication sites to rigorously implement all elements of the JDAI approach has been (and remains) a substantial challenge. The “qualitative indicator” survey compiled by JDAI site consultants in 2008 found that:

- A large majority of sites had formed a strong leadership collaborative and undertaken the key organizational steps recommended for JDAI. For instance, 49 of the 54 sites had diverse leadership teams that included, at a minimum, the chief probation officer, presiding judge of the juvenile court, state attorney, law enforcement, detention manager, and community organizations. Forty-seven of the 54 had a JDAI site coordinator and/or designated staff with assigned roles and responsibilities for carrying out detention reform. And 46 of the 54 had an annual JDAI work plan with explicit tasks and measurable outcomes.
- Most sites had developed the capacity to collect needed data and generate statistical reports on detention reforms (46 of 54); developed and implemented an objective risk-assessment instrument to guide detention placement decisions (34 of 54); and developed or expanded detention alternative programs targeted for youth who would previously have been held in secure custody (40 of 54).
- Sites had a more mixed record in implementing case processing reforms, taking steps to reduce confinement in “special” detention cases, and conducting analyses to identify factors that contribute to racial disparities in the treatment of youth. Only a minority of sites have taken concerted, ongoing action to monitor and improve conditions of confinement, though few sites report serious overcrowding or significant health or safety issues within their detention facilities.

number of youth who fail to appear in court as scheduled, or through new “sanctions grids” that require probation officers to impose alternative sanctions rather than detaining youth who violate the terms of their probation agreements.

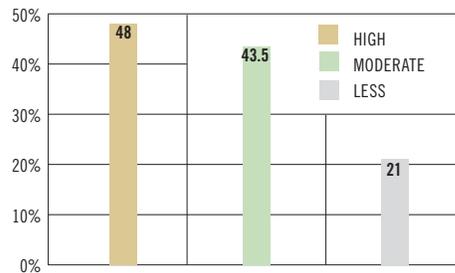
Of the 70 sites reporting detailed data on average lengths of stay in detention, 39 have lowered the typical period of confinement for detained youth. Many sites have reduced lengths of stay by speeding up their court processes to ensure that cases are heard and detention decisions are made quickly. Some jurisdictions have assigned one or more staff members to act as “expeditors” to identify and explore alternatives for youth who are languishing for long periods in detention.

Not surprisingly, sites that are more fully adhering to the JDAI model are achieving stronger outcomes than those which are less advanced in implementing the model’s key elements. In 2008, JDAI’s technical assistance team leaders completed a “qualitative indicator” survey for 54 of the JDAI replication sites. The survey assessed the sites’ progress on 49 elements and sub-elements of the JDAI model and found that 13 sites had achieved an advanced level of replication—defined as meeting 40 or more of the 49 surveyed measures; 20 sites had achieved a moderate level of replication (meeting 30 to 39 of the 49 measures); and 21 sites, many of them relatively new to JDAI, were less advanced in their replication efforts (meeting less than 30 of the 49 measures). (For more on the

progress of participating sites toward fully replicating the JDAI model, see text box on p. 17.)

Though the qualitative indicator survey offers only a rough gauge of sites’ implementation progress, a high score on the survey is highly correlated with success in JDAI. In terms of population reductions, the 13 sites with an advanced level of replication had a median reduction of 48 percent in average daily population from the year before entering JDAI through 2007, compared with a 44 percent median drop among sites with a moderate level of adherence and a 21 percent decline among sites that have made less progress in implementation. (See Figure 12.) The differences between advanced and intermediate sites were modest, while sites with the least adherence had substantially weaker outcomes.

FIGURE 12
ADHERENCE = SUCCESS:
Population Reductions in Sites with High, Moderate, and Less Adherence



Pre-JDAI ADP vs. 6/17/09 One-Day Census

Improved Public Safety. The substantial reductions in detention population by JDAI jurisdictions would be of less significance if they were achieved at the expense of public safety. Fortunately, there is no evidence that JDAI has led to any increases in offending in the short-term while youth who might otherwise be detained are supervised in the community. And there is substantial reason to believe that by steering substantial numbers of youth away from the deep end of the juvenile corrections system—i.e., commitment to juvenile correctional facilities or other extended out-of-home placements—JDAI is making communities safer in the long-term.

Unfortunately, because states and localities have different reporting requirements and employ many different statistical measures, JDAI sites have not reported consistent measures of public safety outcomes. However, 59 sites did report at least one measure of JDAI's short-term or long-term safety impact for 2007. And the vast majority of these show safety outcomes improving through the period of JDAI participation. In the short-term, despite releasing many more youth in the pre-trial period or placing them in community-based supervision programs, 13 of the 19 jurisdictions reporting re-arrest data in the pre-trial period show improvement since launching JDAI (and one showed no change). Many sites have also reduced the number of youth who fail to appear in court as scheduled.

In terms of long-term public safety, 59 JDAI sites report trends in one or more indicators

of overall juvenile crime. Of the 18 sites reporting trends in total juvenile arrests, 12 have seen reductions since launching their JDAI programs. Likewise, 17 of 25 sites reporting total petitions or referrals to juvenile court and four of 11 sites reporting felony petitions or referrals have seen reductions since JDAI began.

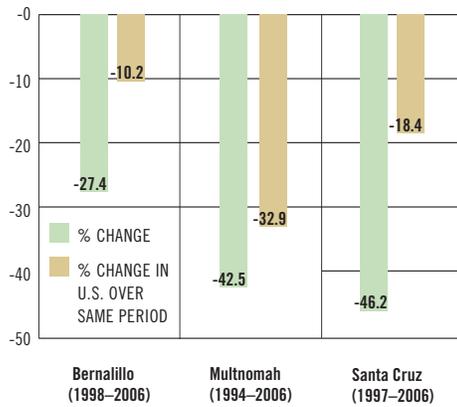
The most powerful evidence of JDAI's positive impact on public safety can be seen in the outcomes of JDAI model sites in Bernalillo, Cook, Multnomah, and Santa Cruz counties: All have seen youth crime rates plummet since launching their JDAI programs.

- In Bernalillo County, juvenile arrests for violent index offenses (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) declined by 27 percent from 1999 to 2006.
- In Multnomah, juvenile violent index arrests went down 43 percent from 1994 to 2006.
- In Santa Cruz, juvenile violent index arrests were 46 percent lower in 2006 than in the JDAI program's outset in 1997.

In all three counties, the decline in youth violence substantially exceeded the nation as a whole. (See Figure 13 on p. 20.)

Sites that are more fully adhering to the JDAI model are achieving stronger outcomes than those which are less advanced in implementing the model's key elements.

FIGURE 13
REIGNING IN JUVENILE VIOLENCE:
Juvenile Arrests for Violent Index Offenses
in Model JDAI Sites



Source: Easy Access to FBI Arrest Statistics: 1994–2006, U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/ezaucr>.

Cook County does not report the ages of those arrested, so no figures are available regarding the reduction in juvenile violent index arrests. However, the total number of youth formally charged (or “petitioned”) in Cook County’s juvenile courts declined from 18,828 in 1996 to 6,967 in 2008—a drop of 63 percent.

These crime reductions have come despite the fact that—as detailed in the following section—all of these jurisdictions have sharply reduced the number of youth committed to juvenile facilities, belying the widespread (and often unquestioned) assumption that high rates of incarceration inevitably enhance public safety.

Savings to Taxpayers. In addition to reducing confinement of young people and enhancing public safety, JDAI is generating substantial savings for taxpayers by enabling participating jurisdictions to avoid costs for the construction and operation of secure detention facilities. Across the country, 27 JDAI sites have closed detention units or whole facilities as a result of smaller detention populations, reducing their detention capacity by a combined total of 978 beds.

In addition to closing existing detention units, JDAI has generated substantial taxpayer savings in a handful of other jurisdictions by eliminating the need for construction of new or expanded detention facilities. Cook County was able to scrap planned construction of a 200-bed facility in the late 1990s—estimated to cost \$300 million to build, finance, and operate over a 20-year period. Instead, the county has invested \$3 million annually in alternatives to detention, saving taxpayers an estimated \$240 million over two decades.

Recently, Camden County, New Jersey, has shown that taxpayers can reap savings from JDAI even when new detention construction is undertaken. After years of terrible crowding, in which its 37-bed detention facility often housed more than 90 youth per night, Camden erected a new 72-bed facility just as its JDAI program was beginning to yield results. Between 2003 and 2008, Camden’s average population fell from 95 to 50—leaving many beds vacant in the new facility.

FIGURE 14
JDAI DETENTION BED CLOSINGS

JURISDICTION	NUMBER OF BEDS REDUCED
Ada County, ID	16
Bernalillo County, NM	27
Central and Eastern Oregon	10
Clark County, NV	43
Dallas, TX	30
Harris County, TX	89
St. Clair County, IL	15
Peoria County, IL	21
Indianapolis County, IN	32
Jefferson Parish, LA	8
Worcester County, MA	23
Suffolk County, MA	22
Ramsey County, MN	36
Jackson County, MO	12
Multnomah County, OR	64
Camden County, NJ	16
Essex County, NJ	32
Lea County, NM	30
Pima County, AZ	119
San Francisco County, CA*	30
Norfolk County, VA*	12
Richmond County, VA	20
King County, WA	98
Pierce County, WA	93
Spokane County, WA	25
Whatcom County, WA	7
Washoe County, NV	48
TOTAL	978

* San Francisco and Norfolk have not officially closed the units where these beds are located, but units have been continually vacant for at least more than year in each site.

Recently, Camden has reached an agreement to take in youth from neighboring Gloucester County—for a fee of \$200 per night per young person. Camden expects to earn \$1 million or more per year from Gloucester (and possibly other nearby counties as well)—and it will use the funds to defray some costs for the detention center as well as detention alternative programs. New Jersey’s Essex County has also forged an agreement to take in youth from nearby Passaic County, which recently closed its detention facility. The 10-year deal will provide Essex County with \$4 million annually to support the detention center, detention alternatives, and other juvenile programs, and it will save Passaic—which recently signed on as a JDAI site—\$10 million per year.

Combating Racial Disparities. For many decades now, perhaps the most defining—and damning—feature of the juvenile justice system has been the unequal treatment of youth from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In detention, youth of color have comprised an ever-increasing percentage of the confined population since the 1980s—rising from 43 percent in 1985 to 69 percent in 2006, far above minority youths’ 39 percent share of the total U.S. youth population. The wide disparities in the detention rates for youth of color vs. white youth cannot be explained by racial differences in offending rates. Rather, as a recent U.S. Department of Justice report explained, “There is substantial evidence that minority youth are often treated

In a period when JDAI sites were substantially reducing the population of minority youth in detention, nationwide the number of youth of color in detention increased.

differently from majority youth within the juvenile justice system...Existing research suggests that race/ethnicity does make a difference in juvenile justice decisions in some jurisdictions at least some of the time.”¹²

In 1988, Congress amended the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act requiring states to address disproportionate minority confinement (DMC). Yet, as the W. Haywood Burns Institute for Juvenile Justice Fairness and Equity

lamented in a recent report, “little substantive action has been taken to transform this nationwide crisis...in the two decades since the United States Congress first mandated that States ‘address’ the overrepresentation of youth of color in juvenile justice systems... [and] the action Congress has called for since 1988 has yielded few tangible results.”¹³

From the outset, the Casey Foundation has made combating racial disparities a core element of the JDAI model, requiring a rigorous and explicit focus from participating sites and providing them with extensive training and support on DMC issues. While JDAI sites have not collectively reduced the overall disproportionality of their detention populations, many sites have substantially

reduced the number of minority youth in detention. In 61 sites reporting, JDAI jurisdictions detained 873 fewer youth of color in 2007 than they did prior to beginning the detention reform process. As with the trends in overall detention populations nationwide, a look at the national map reveals that virtually all of the progress in reducing the number of minority youth in secure detention nationwide is tied to JDAI. Indeed, in a period when JDAI sites were substantially reducing the population of minority youth in detention, nationwide the number of youth of color in detention increased by more than 1,000 from 2001 to 2006.

In a handful of sites, JDAI leaders have substantially reduced disparities in the detention rates of white youth and youth of color. When JDAI began in Multnomah County in 1994, white youth picked up on delinquency charges were about one-third less likely to be detained than youth of color. Multnomah organized a high-level committee and implemented a variety of reforms to reduce the racial disparities—including changes to its risk-assessment instrument to eliminate

FIGURE 15
YOUTH OF COLOR IN DETENTION: National vs. JDAI Trends

NATIONAL TRENDS	JDAI TRENDS
2001–2006	Pre-JDAI–2007
+1,067 youth detained	-873 youth detained
6% increase	22% decrease

criteria that inequitably increased the odds that minority youth would be detained. By 1999, both white youth and youth of color had the same likelihood of being detained, and the rates remained virtually identical for several years. Recently, some disparities have reappeared in the detention rates, but youth of color's share of the Multnomah detention population remains well below the 1994 level, even though minorities have grown substantially as a percentage of the county's total youth population.

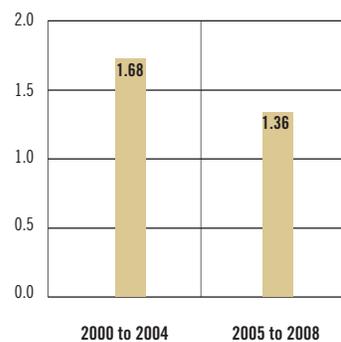
In Santa Cruz, during the early years of JDAI, Latino youth had a far higher likelihood of being admitted to detention than white youth. Indeed, from 2000 through 2004 Latino youth were two-thirds more likely than whites to enter detention. However, thanks to focused attention and targeted action by the Santa Cruz Probation Department and other agencies involved in the local juvenile justice system, this disparity has been cut nearly in half over the past four years. (See Figure 16.) Much of the progress in Santa Cruz has been due to a new community-based detention alternatives program—an evening reporting center—which is located in a formerly underserved neighborhood and supervises many Latino youth who would have previously been assigned to secure detention.

Perhaps as significant as the statistical results achieved to date in reducing disproportionate minority confinement has been JDAI's impact in mobilizing local leadership to take

on the DMC challenge with seriousness of purpose. Most sites have created active interagency working groups specifically to examine and reduce racial and ethnic disparities. JDAI leaders routinely analyze (and re-analyze) specific policies and specific decision points in the court process to identify any that have disparate impact on youth of color, and sites frequently devise and test new strategies to combat the difficult DMC problem.

Most JDAI sites have created active interagency working groups specifically to examine and reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

FIGURE 16
REDUCING DISPROPORTIONATE DETENTION IN SANTA CRUZ:
Detention Rate for Latino Youth
Relative to White Youth



*Detention Rate is the total admissions to detention as a percentage of youth population for each ethnic group. Figures above represent the differential between detention rates of Latino youth vs. non-Hispanic white youth.

“JDAI has brought a critical mass of jurisdictions— from a wide variety of urban, medium-sized, and rural communities— that are now being engaged on DMC issues.”

—James Bell, Executive Director, W. Haywood Burns Institute for Juvenile Justice Fairness and Equity

■ Since 2004, Pima County (Tucson), Arizona, has been working closely with the W. Haywood Burns Institute to analyze and address racial disparities throughout its juvenile system. Among the many steps they have taken are: (1) surveying hundreds of police officers to learn what they believe are the causes of overrepresentation of youth of color and to learn how they interact with children and families in the field; and (2) opening a new Domestic Violence Assessment Center after determining that a disproportionate number of Latino youth were referred and placed in detention following domestic disturbances.

■ In Pierce County, Washington, local juvenile justice officials have for years been calling and reminding youth and parents of any upcoming court date. Last year, leaders noticed that youth of color were failing to appear in court at a far higher rate than white youth, frequently resulting in a detention. So in September 2008 they began sending a case monitor to the home of any youth who couldn't be reached and reminded of the court date by telephone. The results were dramatic: the attendance

rate among youth of color shot up from 52 percent in the first eight months of 2008 to 91 percent for the remainder of the year.

■ Caddo Parish, Louisiana, recently opened a new Misdemeanor Reporting Center for youth accused of lesser crimes—including many youth involved in school fights—who would previously have been referred to detention. Between September 2008 and April 2009, 129 of the 137 youth (95 percent) referred to the center were African American. By diverting many of these youth away from detention, the new center enabled Caddo to reduce its average detention population from 31 in the last quarter of 2008 to 19 in the first quarter of 2009.

Through these efforts and many more like them, JDAI has served as a crucial catalyst to spark serious attention to the DMC problem—and it has become a laboratory for innovation and experimentation in the search for effective responses to this vexing challenge.

“JDAI has brought a critical mass of jurisdictions—from a wide variety of urban, medium-sized, and rural communities—that are now being engaged on DMC issues,” says James Bell, executive director of the Burns Institute. “[Initiative leaders] make it clear that DMC is something they really care about,” Bell says. “Without JDAI, these folks would not come to us.”

Improving Conditions of Confinement. The JDAI model calls for sites to conduct rigorous

self-assessments of their detention facilities, typically beginning in year two of the initiative and annually thereafter. This approach is based upon the idea that conditions of confinement are unlikely to deteriorate and can improve if there is greater transparency and if more stakeholders are involved in monitoring them. In each site, teams of stakeholders are trained in the inspection protocols and participate in the self-assessment process. Experts from the Youth Law Center and the Center on Children's Law and Policy provide coaching and quality assurance. While this approach continues to be refined, it has resulted in concrete improvements in several JDAI site facilities. For example:

- Hennepin County, Minnesota, revised staff training on use of restraints, increased mental health services, and expanded due process safeguards for youth charged with disciplinary violations.
- Pima County, Arizona, increased its visiting hours, translated its resident handbook into Spanish, and revised policies regarding strip searches.
- Ramsey County, Minnesota, increased nursing and mental health services, added a weekly STD clinic, expanded programming for girls and reduced its staff-to-youth ratio to 1:8.
- Saint Louis, Missouri, took steps to eliminate mold and pests, heightened supervision of frontline staff, and began notifying parents any time force or restraints were used on a child.

- Montgomery County, Alabama, extended visitation opportunities, increased access to education for youth on restriction, and expanded access to counsel.

Though these examples are encouraging, strengthening JDAI sites' efforts to assess and improve conditions of confinement continues to be a priority for the initiative.

SECTION V.

HOW HAS DETENTION REFORM STIMULATED OR SUPPORTED BROADER CHANGES IN JUVENILE JUSTICE?

In its 2007 report, *Beyond Detention: System Transformation Through Juvenile Detention Reform*,¹⁴ the Foundation examined the impact JDAI has had on other phases of the juvenile justice system in the model sites of Cook, Multnomah, and Santa Cruz counties. The study found that in each jurisdiction, success in detention reform has led to deeper, wider-ranging reforms. These spillover benefits are now manifesting themselves widely, as summarized below.

Reducing Incarceration. The most immediate and widespread "beyond detention" impact of JDAI has been sharp reductions in the number of youth committed to juvenile corrections

JDAI was developed not only to address the very real and worrisome problems in juvenile detention, but also to stimulate broader changes in juvenile justice.

facilities and other residential facilities. In the model sites, commitments to deep-end correctional and treatment programs have plummeted. Cook County, for instance, cut commitments to state correctional facilities by half from 1997 to 2004 and reduced the number of youth in residential treatment centers from an average of 426 per month to 75. From 1996 through 2005, Santa Cruz slashed the number of youth committed to state corrections (from 11 to 0), to a local correctional ranch (from 35 to 5), and to residential treatment facilities (from 104 to 38).

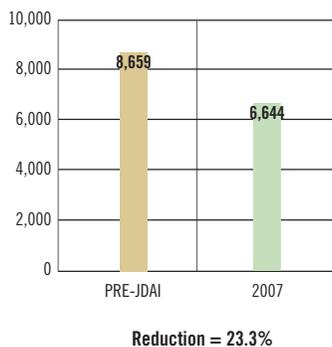
Recently, newer JDAI jurisdictions have also begun to make dramatic reductions in the use of incarceration. Illinois replication sites outside of Cook County sent just half as many youth to state correctional facilities in 2007 as they had pre-JDAI. Participating Virginia jurisdictions lowered commitments

by 45 percent, while Alabama’s JDAI counties lowered commitments by 27 percent. Indeed, all JDAI sites combined committed 2,015 fewer young people to correctional facilities in 2007 than they did prior to joining JDAI—a drop of 23.3 percent.

Better Decision-Making. As an outgrowth of their work in JDAI, many sites are making much more effective use of data and adopting better decision-making techniques, including objective screening and classification tools and structured decision-making grids, in multiple phases of the juvenile court process. For instance, in addition to its risk-assessment instrument to determine which youth require secure detention, Multnomah County has developed objective decision tools to guide each of the stages of the juvenile justice process. New tools now measure the severity of the youth’s offending behavior, risk of re-offending, and needs in nine life domains. “JDAI was the seed that got the system thinking about itself and got the whole thing started,” says David Koch, who oversees juvenile probation and detention for Multnomah County.

Youth, Family, and Community Involvement. Several sites have taken steps to increase the involvement of families—and youth themselves—in operating and refining their services. Juvenile justice systems have traditionally done little to engage youth or their families when designing and implementing treatment interventions or sanctions, and they often fail to forge partnerships with community-based organizations that operate

FIGURE 17
REDUCING RELIANCE ON INCARCERATION:
Annual Placements to State Juvenile Corrections Facilities in JDAI Jurisdictions



in the neighborhoods where court-involved youth reside and could provide them with valuable and ongoing support.

As part of its efforts to involve and empower families, Santa Cruz County now conducts family-team meetings for any young person at risk of out-of-home placement, and it has begun hiring “family partners”—typically parents of youth previously involved in the system—to coach and support the parents of children currently in the system. Cook County has created a “juvenile advisory council”—a group of former probationers—to conduct orientation for youth newly assigned to probation and to provide youth feedback on probation policies and programs. Officials report that youth who receive probation orientation from the juvenile advisory council experience substantially reduced rates of probation violations.

Addressing Racial Disparities. In addition to their efforts to reduce the overrepresentation of minority youth in detention, JDAI sites are taking important strides to address the DMC challenge throughout their juvenile systems. To address a lack of culturally competent probation programming for African-American and Latino youth, Multnomah County initiated a “Communities of Color” program to engage neighborhood residents, religious congregations, and other community organizations in working with court-involved youth. The Cook County juvenile probation department, which was previously staffed primarily by white officers, reformulated its recruiting and hiring practices and significantly

increased hiring of minorities—increasing the percentage of staff of color from 45 percent to 65 percent between 1995 and 2006. Newer sites are also taking ambitious action to address the racial equity challenge. Eleven JDAI jurisdictions are working closely with the W. Haywood Burns Institute to analyze and address racial disparities in their juvenile systems, and many more receive training from Burns Institute specialists each year.

Improving Services for Youth with Special Needs.

Like all juvenile justice systems, JDAI sites face difficult challenges in effectively serving youth with serious mental health issues or other special needs. Bernalillo County has reallocated funds saved by closing unused detention beds to open a free-standing adolescent mental health clinic adjacent to its detention center. The clinic provides multiple services that reduce the likelihood that youth will be dumped in detention due to a misdiagnosis or unmet mental health need. Cook County began assigning a mental health professional to each juvenile courtroom to expedite the assessment process and avoid unnecessary delays. In addition, Cook County designated one courtroom to hear all cases involving youth with mental illness who were being considered for residential treatment. Together, these reforms were pivotal

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Some JDAI sites have worked with schools to roll back “zero tolerance” policies that result in referrals to juvenile court for misbehavior better (and traditionally) handled informally through the schools.

to Cook County’s dramatic reductions in residential treatment—saving taxpayers millions of dollars every year.

Reconsidering Zero Tolerance. Some JDAI sites have worked with schools to roll back “zero tolerance” policies that result in referrals to juvenile court for misbehavior better (and traditionally) handled informally through the schools. For instance, in Clayton County, Georgia, delinquency referrals from schools mushroomed from 200 to 1,100 between 1993 and 2003. To reverse the trend, juvenile court and

school system officials negotiated new guidelines limiting referrals to court for misdemeanor public order offenses—like fighting or disorderly conduct—at least until the third such offense. As a result, delinquency referrals from the schools fell by more than 50 percent. In Indianapolis, a new “initial hearing court” was established in which judges could dismiss cases they believed were not in the best interest of the child or the public. From April to October 2006, judges rejected 289 of 1,803 petitions filed—with school referrals making up 40 percent of the rejected cases.

SECTION VI. **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

In the 17 years since it was launched, JDAI has achieved substantial impact, both directly on detention practices in participating sites and indirectly as a catalyst for broader juvenile justice reforms. A large and growing number of jurisdictions have embraced the JDAI model and the reform premises underlying it, and they have introduced significant reforms to implement the model in practice. As a result, we are seeing substantial and safe declines in detention populations in a great many communities nationwide.

We also see in participating jurisdictions a consistent trend toward reducing commitments to juvenile training schools and other out-of-home placements, a sharpening focus on the challenge of racial disproportionality, and—more generally—a growing openness to reforms rooted in a less punitive, more outcome focused vision of juvenile justice.

Looking to the future, however, JDAI faces a number of crucial challenges.

Promoting and Sustaining Fidelity to the JDAI Model. As noted earlier in this report, the majority of participating jurisdictions are implementing most of the organizational steps and many of the operational tasks called for in the JDAI model. However, adherence to the model remains uneven across the country and incomplete in many sites. A number of sites, for example, do not yet employ a

risk-assessment instrument, lack a full menu of detention alternatives, or have yet to devise and implement a sanctions grid for responding to probation rule violations.

Perhaps the most important and consistent shortcomings in current JDAI replication efforts are: (1) continuing weaknesses in the collection and analysis of data regarding detention utilization and related reform efforts; (2) a failure to continuously monitor conditions of confinement for youth in secure custody; and (3) inconsistent and still-inadequate efforts to address racial disparities issues.

In terms of data, though many sites have made important advances, some routine information is often unavailable, including data regarding public safety outcomes. Juvenile justice systems often lack a solid information technology infrastructure and rarely have the analytical horsepower essential for a deeper understanding of trends and results, so the ambition of being “data-driven” remains unfulfilled in many places. JDAI stakeholders’ growing appetite for data is helping to rectify this shortcoming in some sites, but important data gaps remain widespread.

The JDAI model calls for sites to conduct rigorous self-inspections of secure facilities. Most sites have undergone training in the methodology and many have made (and are still making) important improvements in their facilities and services as a result. Yet few JDAI sites have made annual monitoring of

conditions of confinement a routine and ongoing practice: less than half of the 54 sites reviewed in JDAI’s 2008 qualitative indicator survey had completed a facility self-inspection in the prior 12 months, and only one-third were routinely monitoring progress on a corrective action plan to improve conditions.

And, while JDAI sites have probably been as aggressive and determined as any places regarding efforts to reduce racial disparities, the differential treatment of youth of color in juvenile justice remains the system’s most intractable characteristic. Most simply stated, sites continue to wrestle with the challenge of translating general ambitions for greater equity into practical modifications of policy, practice, and programming. Hopefully, the growing list of practical reforms implemented by JDAI sites will help to bridge this gap between aspiration and implementation.

Achieving State-Scale Replication of the Model. Over the past six years, JDAI’s replication strategies have undergone a pivotal shift. Rather than continuing to enroll individual counties, the Foundation has increasingly partnered with states and enlisted cohorts of counties in those states to implement detention reform strategies, with the expectation that the success of initial sites would lead other counties to enroll over time. This replication strategy had the advantages of (1) more efficient training and technical assistance delivery and (2) easier identification of state-specific issues and opportunities that need to be addressed.

The exemplar of this approach has been New Jersey, where the five counties which began implementing JDAI in 2003 lowered both their detention populations and their commitments to state correctional facilities by more than 40 percent in the first four years. Five more New Jersey counties entered the initiative in 2005, and they too have reduced both detention populations and commitments, though not yet as much as their more “mature” counterparts. Two more counties joined JDAI earlier this year. Through JDAI, New Jersey counties have been able to close three small detention facilities, saving an estimated \$16.5 million per year.

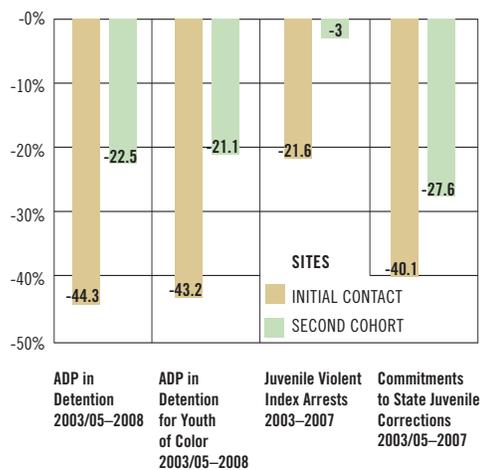
Progress in terms of “going to scale” in other JDAI states, however, has been slower and

inconsistent. A handful of states have expanded to additional counties, though largely in an ad hoc manner, and none besides New Jersey has developed a strong state infrastructure to promote, support, and sustain replication on a state scale. For this reason, New Jersey was recently designated a model site and will soon serve as a learning laboratory for other JDAI states that want to plan and implement wider replication. A new “incentive grant” program is also being introduced in 2009 to support visits and subsequent planning by state delegations to New Jersey.

Expanding JDAI to Additional States and Localities.

In recent strategic planning for the initiative, the Casey Foundation has articulated the goal of replicating JDAI in jurisdictions serving at least three-fourths of the nation’s youth by 2015. With America’s youth population slated to grow by 10 million between 2010 and 2030, achieving such broad replication might be the only way to avoid massive public expenditures for the construction and staffing of additional detention facilities over the next two decades. With Florida and Rhode Island joining the initiative as state partners in 2009, 35 percent of the nation’s youth now live in jurisdictions that are either actively implementing JDAI or in states committed to replicating the model. Achieving the 75 percent goal nationwide will require both greater progress in terms of state-scale replication (noted above) and, ultimately, buy-in from some of the nation’s larger states, including those like California, Texas, and

FIGURE 18
PROGRESS OF NEW JERSEY JDAI SITES:
 Initial Five Counties and Phase Two Counties



Arizona where individual counties are participating, but a state-focus on juvenile detention reform has yet to emerge.

Sustaining Detention Reform in an Era of Economic Crisis and Budget Deficits. Whether it's strengthening implementation within current JDAI sites, supporting statewide replication within partner states, or expanding the JDAI model to a wider share of U.S. communities, all of the challenges facing JDAI are exaggerated by the current economic crisis. Across the nation, state and local budgets are deep in deficit, placing enormous pressure on officials to reduce spending. The threats to detention reform personnel and programs are very real.

The ace in the hole for JDAI proponents, however, is the compelling evidence that detention reform makes juvenile systems more efficient and saves taxpayers money. In some sites, JDAI has allowed local officials to cancel plans for costly construction of new detention facilities, and many sites have been able to shut down units in existing detention centers, saving the dollars associated with operating those beds. Detention alternatives cost far less per day than secure confinement, while efforts to expedite court processing or minimize detention for youth who violate probation rules or miss court dates offer low-cost means to reduce daily detention populations. For all these reasons, elected leaders and system managers in successful JDAI sites have fought hard, often successfully, to avoid budget cuts that would undermine these proven reforms.

Nonetheless, daunting budget shortfalls will inevitably make JDAI replication efforts more difficult. For that reason, the federal government can and should consider increasing funding to promote and sustain best practices in juvenile justice. One approach would be for Congress and the Obama administration to increase federal aid to juvenile justice systems, either by increasing appropriations to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, or through direct support for state and local detention reform efforts. Another approach would be to eliminate Medicaid's "inmate exception" for juveniles in custody which currently leaves juvenile detention centers to pay the full cost of medical and mental health care for youth in confinement.

Detention reform makes juvenile systems more efficient and saves taxpayers money.

CONCLUSION:

MOVING TOWARD COMPREHENSIVE JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

As noted at the outset of this report, JDAI was developed not only to address the very real and worrisome problems in juvenile detention, but also to stimulate broader changes in juvenile justice. Initiative managers believed that detention reform would inspire and establish the values, policies, practices, and skills necessary to transform the larger juvenile justice system—to strategically reduce confinement, improve the success of

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—Shay Bilchik, Former Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

court-involved youth, boost cost-effectiveness, and enhance public safety.

Thankfully, the political discourse over juvenile justice has vastly improved in the years since JDAI’s founding. No longer are states rushing forward in a headlong dash to transfer ever more youthful offenders to the criminal justice system. No longer are they embracing ever more punitive measures in their juvenile systems, eroding the rehabilitative ideal on which juvenile courts were founded a century ago. Today, states are more likely to debate raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction than lowering it. And many states are rethinking their juvenile corrections

systems, closing prison-like training schools and embracing newer approaches grounded in evidence-based treatment and positive youth development.

This decisive and welcome shift has been the result of many forces.

- The spike in youth violence of the early 1990s ended abruptly in 1994 and youth crime declined dramatically thereafter, belying the alarming predictions of a new generation of “juvenile super-predators” and a “ticking time bomb” of youth crime.

- New research has revealed that treating juvenile offenders as adults exacerbates crime. Other studies proved youth are less able than adults to control impulses, resist peer pressure, or think through the consequences of their actions, thereby providing empirical evidence of youth’s reduced culpability.

- Experience and research have also continued to reveal that traditional youth corrections is expensive and ineffective, leading in most states to dangerously high rates of re-offending and re-incarceration. Moreover, juvenile corrections facilities have frequently been the subject of alarming revelations involving scandalous treatment of children.

- Meanwhile, a number of evidence-based, non-residential treatment programs have proven far more effective than incarceration, at a fraction of the cost.

Amid all of these developments, it is difficult to determine JDAI’s impact on the debate over juvenile justice and its influence in encouraging a new openness to reform. However, several expert observers believe that JDAI’s role has been significant.

Shay Bilchik, who directed the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the 1990s, says, “JDAI provided a counterbalance to the simplistic thinking and anecdotal advocacy for get-tough approaches in the 1990s based on fear that kids were more dangerous than they used to be. It has

absolutely helped communities understand who these kids are, what they need, and what it takes to keep them out of the system.”

“JDAI has made a critically important contribution to changing the way many local justice officials and community members view the role and proper operation of the juvenile justice system,” adds Bilchik, who now oversees the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University. “If you’re breaking through that barrier of not detaining as many kids, and you’re seeing that you can manage them safely in the community without confining them, then you’re going to be much more open to other, non-institutional possibilities for the disposition of their cases.”

“JDAI is one of the most important and successful reform movements in the history of juvenile justice,” says Barry Krisberg, long-time president of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. “Beyond just another demonstration project, JDAI created tools and a cadre of experts who could assist jurisdictions with interest in reform. JDAI captured the attention of virtually all the professional groups in juvenile justice and was effectively presented to elected officials.”

Whatever JDAI’s role has been in the larger debate over juvenile justice, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has recommitted itself recently to building on the success of detention reform and working directly on broader juvenile justice reform challenges. In 2008, its essay, “A Road Map for Juvenile

Justice Reform,” laid out an ambitious national reform agenda.¹⁵ In addition to detention reform, the Foundation will soon expand its focus to the deep end of the system, the training schools and other correctional institutions that have long consumed the lion’s share of system funds while producing woeful results for youth and taxpayers alike.

While the Foundation has much work to do devising strategies to pursue these goals, one critical factor in its success will be the momentum of the JDAI initiative itself. Wherever it operates effectively, JDAI is convening teams of juvenile justice leaders around well-documented reform strategies and providing them with training, support, and recognition. In doing so, JDAI is building a movement of committed and capable juvenile reform practitioners all across the nation. This is a movement that did not exist previously, a network of reformers with deep roots and credibility within their own states and communities. By continuing to grow and nurture this network, JDAI will be giving a crucial boost to the prospects for fundamental juvenile justice reform in the years ahead.

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