

# Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

## What is JDAI?

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) is a detention reform and juvenile justice system improvement initiative that was launched in 1992 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The purpose of JDAI is to demonstrate that jurisdictions can effectively and efficiently reduce the reliance on secure detention without jeopardizing community safety.

## Objectives:

- Reduce the number of children unnecessarily or inappropriately detained
- Minimize the number of youth who fail to appear in Court or re-offend pending adjudication
- To redirect public funds toward successful reform strategies
- Improve the conditions of detention

**The objectives of JDAI are accomplished through the integration of the following eight core and interconnected strategies:**

1. **Collaboration** between juvenile justice agencies, government entities, and community organizations that undertake joint planning and policymaking to address reforms;
2. **Use of data** to accurately diagnose system issues and assess the impact of implemented reforms;
3. **Objective Admissions Criteria and instruments** to guide detention decisions through objective evaluation and relevant risk factors;
4. **Alternatives to Detention** that offer new or enhanced community-based alternatives to secure detention;
5. **Case Processing Reforms** to expedite the flow of cases through the system, reduce lengths of stay in custody, and ensure timely and appropriate interventions;
6. **Reduce Special Cases** admitted to secure detention for youth behavior that is not delinquent, but rather for matters that are technical in nature, such as probation violations, warrants, and youth awaiting placement;
7. **Reducing Racial Disparities** with strategies that eliminate the intentional and unintentional bias and the disparate treatment of youth of color involved in the juvenile justice system; and,
8. **Improving Conditions of Confinement** through application of rigorous protocols and standards pursued through multi-disciplinary teams of professionals and community members to ensure health and well-being of facility youth and staff.

## Resources:

JDAI Helpdesk [www.jdaihelpdesk.org](http://www.jdaihelpdesk.org)  
[www.jdaiconnect.org](http://www.jdaiconnect.org)

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