

Initiatives and Reform: JDAI, The Deep End Initiative, & Probation Transformation

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Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative

The Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) was started by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 1992 as a pilot project in a handful of sites across the county to reduce over-dependence on secure detention. These early sites found success in JDAI and were able to safely reduce the number of youth detained without compromising public safety. The Casey Foundation then used these encouraging results as proof to more jurisdictions across the nation, that sites could safely reduce their reliance on secure detention.

Today the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative is in more than 300 jurisdictions, 23 states, and the District of Columbia.

Objectives that JDAI sites adhere to include:

- Eliminate the inappropriate use of secure detention;
- Minimize failure to appear and incidence of delinquent behavior;
- Redirect public monies to successful reform and;
- Improve conditions of confinement in secure detention facilities.

These objectives are achieved through implementing 8 core strategies: Collaboration, Data Driven Decisions, Objective Admissions, Alternatives to Detention, Case Processing Reforms, Special Detention Cases, Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities, and Improving Conditions of Confinement.

Since the inception of JDAI, there has been tremendous growth in the research around the impact of detention on public safety. This research has demonstrated that the inappropriate use of detention can actually increase the likelihood of recidivism and negatively impact public safety in the community (for further reading please visit <http://www.aecf.org/resources/the-dangers-of-detention/>).

Lucas County Juvenile Court's goal is to provide the families and children who appear before the Court with the care, guidance, treatment, and protection to serve the best interest of the child and the community. With this goal in mind and the research demonstrating that public safety can be improved by offering a continuum of services Lucas Coun-

ty began implementing alternatives to secure detention in 2000. These included an Evening Reporting Center, Electronic Monitoring, Surveillance, and Home Detention. Then, in 2010, the State of Ohio became a JDAI site and Lucas County was one of the five first official JDAI sites in Ohio.

Since 2000, Lucas County has diligently worked to implement and expand detention reform in order to improve community safety. These efforts have been done in collaboration with our partners from across the Lucas County community. Lucas County Juvenile Court could not serve the children and families who come before the Court without the collaboration of invested organizations, service providers, and individuals in children's lives. We thank you for your collaboration!

The Deep End Initiative

In 2012, after nearly 20 years of JDAI work, The Annie E. Casey Foundation expanded their reform efforts to the dispositional or "deep end" of the system. AECF outlined the purpose for this expanded focus of juvenile justice reform in the publication No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Reliance on Juvenile Incarceration drawing on research regarding adolescent brain development, effective interventions in juvenile justice, and legal cases around conditions of youth confinement. In their findings AECF proposes that America's Juvenile Correctional Facilities are:

1. Dangerous
2. Ineffective
3. Unnecessary
4. Obsolete
5. Wasteful
6. Inadequate

Further, the publication highlights an array of research informing America's juvenile justice systems that incarcerating young people is an ineffective means to achieve public safety (for more on this please visit <http://www.aecf.org/resources/no-place-for-kids-full-report/>). In 2013, Lucas County Juvenile Court was selected to be a pilot site in the Deep End Initiative and work with The Anne E. Casey Foundation to "safely and significantly reduce out of home placements, especially for youth of color." As part of this initiative LCJC has been collaborating with community organi-



zations to provide an array of programming that will safely and significantly reduce over-reliance on youth incarceration without compromising the safety of the community. This includes but is not limited to: Day Treatment Reporting, advocacy and mentoring services, Family Functional Therapy, Multi-Systemic Therapy, and Probation Services.

Probation Transformation

Following the expansion of JDAI to the “Deep End” of the system The Annie E. Casey Foundation released an RFI (Requests for Innovations) in 2015 inviting juvenile courts from around the country to partner with AECF in examining the role of Probation Services in the youth justice system. Lucas County Juvenile Court responded to this RFI with the proposal that Probation Services, when delivered to the appropriate population and when utilizing best practices in ‘what works’ with youth, leads to improved outcomes for youth, families, and communities. Subsequently Lucas County Juvenile Court was selected to work with AECF in examining the practices, policies, and protocols that make up juvenile probation at the end of 2015. LCJC is one of only 2 sites in the nation awarded this opportunity. The purpose of these efforts is to ensure that young people under the supervision of Probation receive services that are strengths based, individualized, and take into account adolescent brain development when addressing a youth’s behaviors in the community while preserving public safety (for more on LCJC’s Probation Department please see the Probation section of this report).



LCJC staff meet with Annie E. Casey representatives who provide technical assistance as part of the AECF Probation Transformation Grant. (See pg. 73, “Description of Grant & Subsidy Funds Received” in Juvenile Court Fiscal-Business Office report section.)

Highlights & Accomplishments 2018

Lucas County Juvenile Court continued contracting with Center of Hope Family Services for the Family Navigator Program. This program provides parents and guardians with peer support as they navigate their child’s delinquency matters. In addition to other services, a Family Ambassador is available during the week at all family visitations at the Juvenile Detention Center to offer support parents visiting their child in the detention facility. The Family Navigator Program served 265 families during 2018.

The Family Navigator Program objectives are:

- Understanding juvenile justice system policies and procedures;
- Assisting families in collaborating with juvenile justice agencies, staff, and community partners;
- Providing families with opportunities to bond with, and receive support from other parents in the same situation and;
- Helping families build capacity to advocate for their children.

The goal of placing a young person in Juvenile Detention under the JDAI umbrella is to protect public safety and minimize the incidence of failure to appear for delinquency matters. JDAI does not seek to eliminate the use of secure detention for young people but instead promotes that detention should be used appropriately for those youth who pose a risk to the community during the pendency of their delinquency matters. In 2018 there were 806 admissions in the Juvenile Detention Facility. This is a 71% decrease in admissions from 2009 (the base line data year for JDAI). This decrease in detention admissions however would not be worth applause if the safety of the community were jeopardized. This is not the case. Since officially beginning JDAI the number of felony filings from 2009 to 2018 has been reduced 53%. Further, commitments to The Ohio Department of Youth Services has declined 61% as well.

Next, Lucas County Juvenile Court successfully provided training to all departments on engaging and supporting victims of juvenile delinquency. This training included information on Marsy’s Law, Victim Rights, and best practices in Victim Services.

This year Lucas County Juvenile Court was honored to be featured on an HBO-Vice documentary Raised in the System. This documentary features youth and young adults sharing their stories of the impact the juvenile justice system had on their lives. Lucas County Juvenile Court, along with other organizations share juvenile justice reform efforts

that improve the lives of young people who become involved in the system. The full episode can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/yq3uVJQN8Gw>.

Lucas County Juvenile Court is also featured in in The Annie E. Casey Foundation's publication Transforming Juvenile Probation: A Vision for Getting it Right which outlines a vision for transforming juvenile probation into a focused intervention that promotes personal growth, positive behavior change and long-term success for youth who pose significant risks for serious offending¹. Lucas County Juvenile Court is highlighted in this publication as a leader in the field of juvenile justice for bringing best practices and evidenced-based services to children and families.

Further, Lucas County Juvenile Court successfully completed a Facility Self-Assessment of the Juvenile Detention Center. The Facility Self-Assessment is a process by which a team of volunteers assesses the strengths and opportunities for improvement in the Juvenile Detention Center according to a set of best practice standards provided by The Annie E. Casey Foundation. The findings from this assessment will be utilized to inform facility improvements at the Juvenile Detention Center ensuring that the children housed at JDC continue to be provided with conditions that offer the care, guidance, treatment, and protection needed. A special thanks to the Facility Self-Assessment Team for their time, expertise, and assistance.

Finally, Lucas County Juvenile Court continues to engage and support The Ohio Department of Youth Services in the sustainability and expansion of JDAI across Ohio. In 2018 there were 4 additional counties that signed on to become JDAI sites.

Moving Forward:

In 2019 Lucas County Juvenile Court is looking forward to continuing to provide effective interventions for children and families at the attention of the Court. In addition we look forward to collaborating with The Ohio Department of Youth Services as they enhance their efforts to ensure that children across Ohio are served by Probation Services that are evidenced based. Lucas County Juvenile Court will be participating in a series of trainings hosted by ODYS on Probation Transformation in Ohio, Family Engagement, and Community Engagement.

Next, LCJC will be working with a research partner to evaluate the utilization of our Structured Decision Making Matrix. This matrix assists Probation Officers in making objective dispositional recommendations for youth adjudicated of a delinquency offense. LCJC will be collaborating with The Annie E. Casey Foundation and Big Picture Research and Consulting to conduct a multi-dimensional review of the adherence, use, and improvement of this tool.

Through any reform effort the input of family members and community is essential to growing sustainable changes in juvenile justice practices. In order for reform efforts to be meaningful, transformative in the lives of youth, and successful to achieving public safety outcomes LCJC recognizes the critical input of community members. We thank all of our community partners, family members, youth, and stakeholders who offer their talent to shape the juvenile justice system.



Representatives of the Annie E. Casey Foundation engage Lucas County Juvenile Court staff in providing technical assistance in juvenile justice reform.

1 The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018). <https://www.aecf.org/resources/transforming-juvenile-probation/>

