

Nebraska Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

Progress Report





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WELCOME

Nebraska Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

As Co-Chairs of the Nebraska Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), we are pleased to present the first statewide JDAI Progress Report. This report highlights the role JDAI in Nebraska has played in ongoing juvenile justice system reform. In this report, you will see how the local sites in Douglas, Sarpy, Otoe, and Lancaster Counties have achieved significant outcomes, and how at the state level, we utilized the JDAI philosophy and framework to impact long term policy change.

The heart of this initiative is the collaborative work that happens each day in local sites, court houses, probation offices, alternative to detention services and with many other system partners. We would like to thank the committed leaders in each of these sites for the tireless hours creating policies, services, and problem solving to achieve the reductions highlighted in this report.

We are grateful for the vision and support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, founders of this initiative. They continue to provide national leadership and innovation to assist us in creating a juvenile justice system that is Just, Developmentally Appropriate, Accountable and Inclusive.

While we have made tremendous progress in reducing detention populations, expanding alternatives, and expediting cases, there is much work left to be done. The state collaborative group has spent 2019 developing a strategic plan for the future of JDAI in Nebraska. We are excited and dedicated to implement the next phase of this initiative. JDAI is not a project that is ever completed, but a philosophy by which we continually aim for the best outcomes for youth in Nebraska.

We are proud of the work that has been accomplished by JDAI in Nebraska and invite you to join us as we continue the work into the future!

Sincerely,
State Senator Tony Vargas

State Court Administrator Corey Steel



Corey Steel, State Court Administrator



Tony Vargas, State Senator 7th Legislative District

Pictured below are members of the State JDAI Collaborative following a meeting in November 2019.

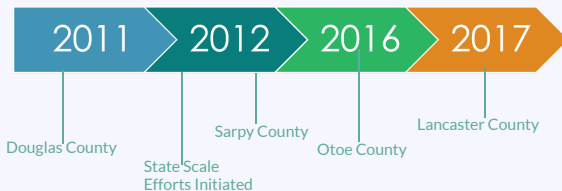


State JDAI

When working with youth in the juvenile justice system, we want a system that is:

Just
Developmentally Appropriate
Accountable
Inclusive

In Nebraska, JDAI has been active since 2011 in Douglas County and 2012 in Sarpy County. In 2012, the Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation took a lead role in supporting the JDAI efforts. Through the leadership of Judge Robert O'Neal and Otoe County Attorney Dave Partsch, the JDAI efforts expanded into Otoe County, Nebraska's first rural county to implement JDAI in 2016. Lancaster County Board of Commissioners voted to join as Nebraska's fourth JDAI site in 2017. The Nebraska State JDAI Collaborative membership includes members from local JDAI sites, Judges, attorneys, state senators, child advocacy agencies, Nebraska Court Improvement staff, and other community stakeholders. This group convenes on a quarterly basis to review progress of the local JDAI sites, recommend policy and legislative changes, address cross-cutting issues as well as supporting the on-boarding of new JDAI sites.



What is the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)?

The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) in the late 90's with the understanding the juvenile justice system in the United States was broken and that youth achieve better outcomes when they are not incarcerated. Eight core strategies grew from the experiences of jurisdictions around the country creating a fundamental framework for juvenile justice system improvement. Those strategies are:

1. Collaboration
2. Objective Admissions
3. Data
4. Alternatives to Detention
5. Case Processing
6. Special Populations
7. Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities
8. Conditions of Confinement

JDAI was designed with the vision that all youth involved in the juvenile justice system have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults. After more than two decades of innovation and replication, JDAI is one of the nation's most effective, influential, and widespread juvenile justice system reform initiatives.

JDAI promotes changes to policies, practices, and programs to reduce reliance on secure confinement, improve public safety, reduce racial disparities and bias, save taxpayers' dollars, and stimulate overall juvenile justice reforms. Throughout this effort, JDAI has demonstrated that community safety has been maintained while implementing the strategies of JDAI.

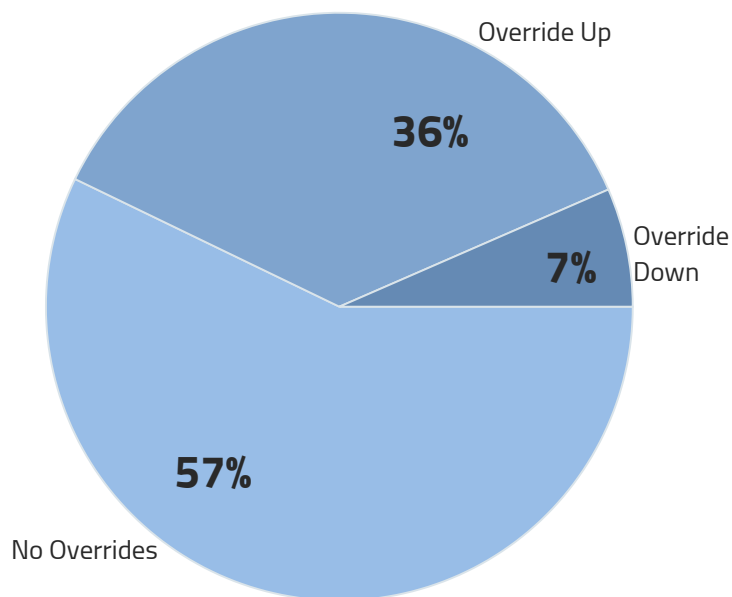
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is possible due to the support of the JDAI Coordinators from each of the local jurisdictions. The information and data for each jurisdictions section, came from the work happening at the local level.

Detention Screening Instrument

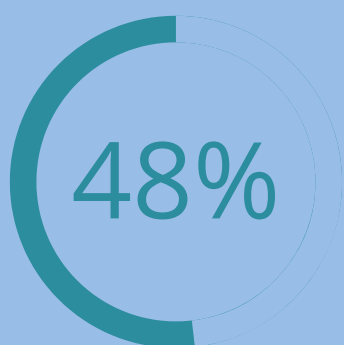
JDAI sites use detention screening instruments to ensure that youth are treated consistently. Detention screening instruments are triage tools and use a point scale to assign points for each factor to produce a total score that would fall into a high, medium or low risk level. The total score is then compared to a decision scale indicating a detention result: youth scoring "high" are held in detention; youth scoring "low" are released without restrictions; and youth who score in the medium range are eligible for release to detention alternatives.

The Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation is required by statute §43-260 to utilize a detention screening instrument when making a detention decision.

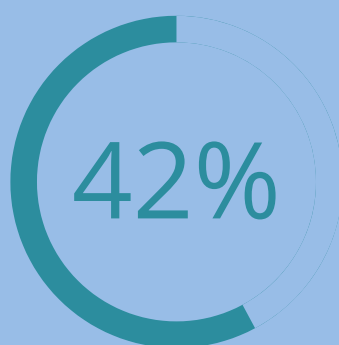


Nebraska's Detention Screening Instrument Override Data

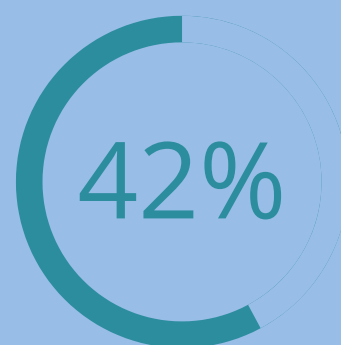
Overrides occur when there are special circumstances that a probation officer considers when approving a higher or lower intervention than recommended by the detention screening instrument. Overrides are to ensure community safety while utilizing the least restrictive options available and must be approved by a supervisor.



2015-2016 Statewide
Override Percentage
(includes overrides to
both a higher and lower
level of care)



2016-2017 Statewide
Override Percentage
(includes overrides to
both a higher and lower
level of care)



2017-2018 Statewide
Override Percentage
(includes overrides to
both a higher and lower
level of care)

Moving Forward in 2020

Nebraska's JDAI Collaborative worked on developing a strategic plan for the next five years. Based off of the work done, eight priority areas were developed. Each priority area as actions steps that will be prioritized. The Nebraska Strategic plan will service as a roadmap through 2025.

1

Strengthen state and local infrastructure for long term sustainability of JDAI efforts.

5

Establish a coordinated local/state Racial and Ethnic Disparities JDAI effort.

2

Develop state level data infrastructure to support local and state data collection, analysis, and promotion of impact.

6

Identify special population(s) to impact through data, policy, practice and programming.

3

Coordinate a collaborative approach to achieving ongoing reduction of Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) override rates.

7

Continue to identify and support efforts to address case processing issues to improve outcomes for youth/families and efficiencies for system stakeholders.

4

Continue collaborative efforts to develop innovative effective alternatives to detention.

8

Enhance collaboration with detention facilities and Jail Standards.

Pictured below; Nebraska JDAI delegation, who attended the 2019 National Conference in Seattle, Washington.



Douglas County

"When you know better, you should do better, and we now, without a doubt, have researched and verified proof that just detaining children is not best for their long term development and rehabilitation."

Involvement in JDAI is not only true to the foundational intent of the juvenile justice system (which is rehabilitation), but it is a more efficient way to use public funds and proven way to serve children and families.

Douglas County Commissioner Chris Rodgers

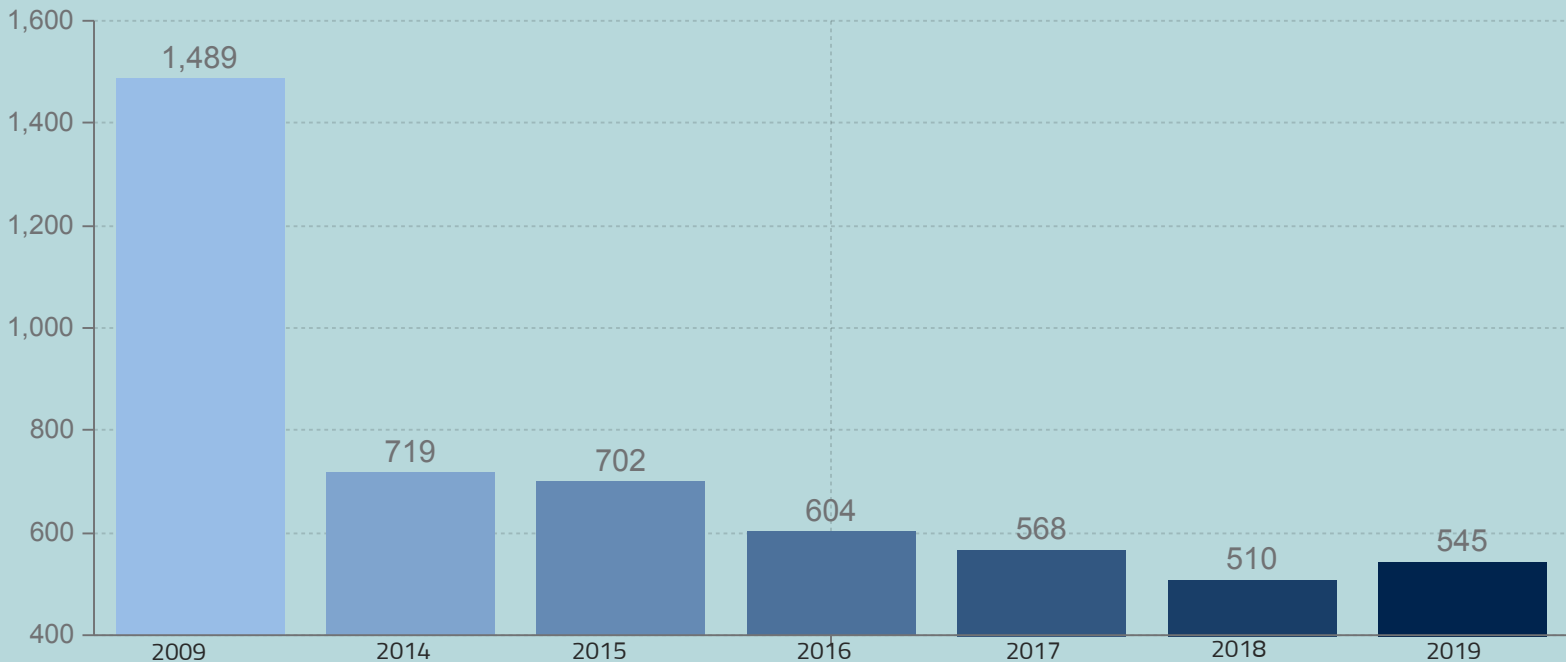
Douglas County became the first official JDAI site in 2011. Due to overcrowding at the Douglas County Youth Center, initial efforts focused on developing alternatives to detention. Leadership from Douglas County sought out the expertise and support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation to build these efforts using the eight core strategies making up the JDAI framework.

In 2007, the Douglas County Youth Center (DCYC) had an average daily population (ADP) of 167 youth in a 144 bed facility. The journey towards reform began and in the next three years the ADP declined to 129 youth. In February 2011, Douglas County began their journey with JDAI. It started with a system assessment and detention utilization study by the Annie E Casey Foundation. The County was looking to increase the use of alternatives to detention and ultimately reduce the number of youth housed at DCYC. The Douglas County Board voted to make Douglas County the first official JDAI site in Nebraska.

Admissions to the Youth Center have declined, dramatically over time.

The chart below depicts the number of admissions to DCYC from 2009 to 2019. Admissions dropped from 1489 youth to 545 in this ten year period. A decrease of approximately 63%.

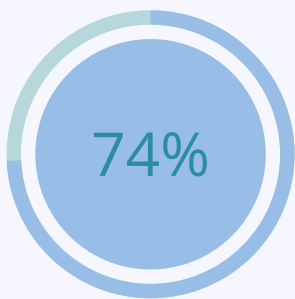
Admissions



Douglas County Priority Areas

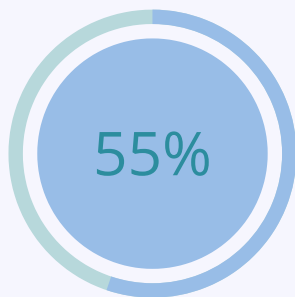
JDAI sites use their system assessment, detention utilization study and data collected through the Quarterly Reporting System (QRS) to identify priority areas for their JDAI Collaborative and sub-committees to focus on.

Great strides have been made in reducing admissions, detained youth for technical violations (see below) and the average daily population, however, the same level of success has not been seen for youth of color (YOC). Although the overall numbers of YOC have reduced at each year, the overall percentage of YOC has not seen a decline. The disproportionate rate at which YOC enter the Juvenile Justice system and the disparate treatment received once involved, will continue to be the lens through which Douglas County JDAI sees this work.



In 2014; youth detained for technical violations

It was clear, from looking at data surrounding youth detained that youth of color and youth with warrants/technical violations were the largest group of youth detained, therefore this population was identified as a priority area.

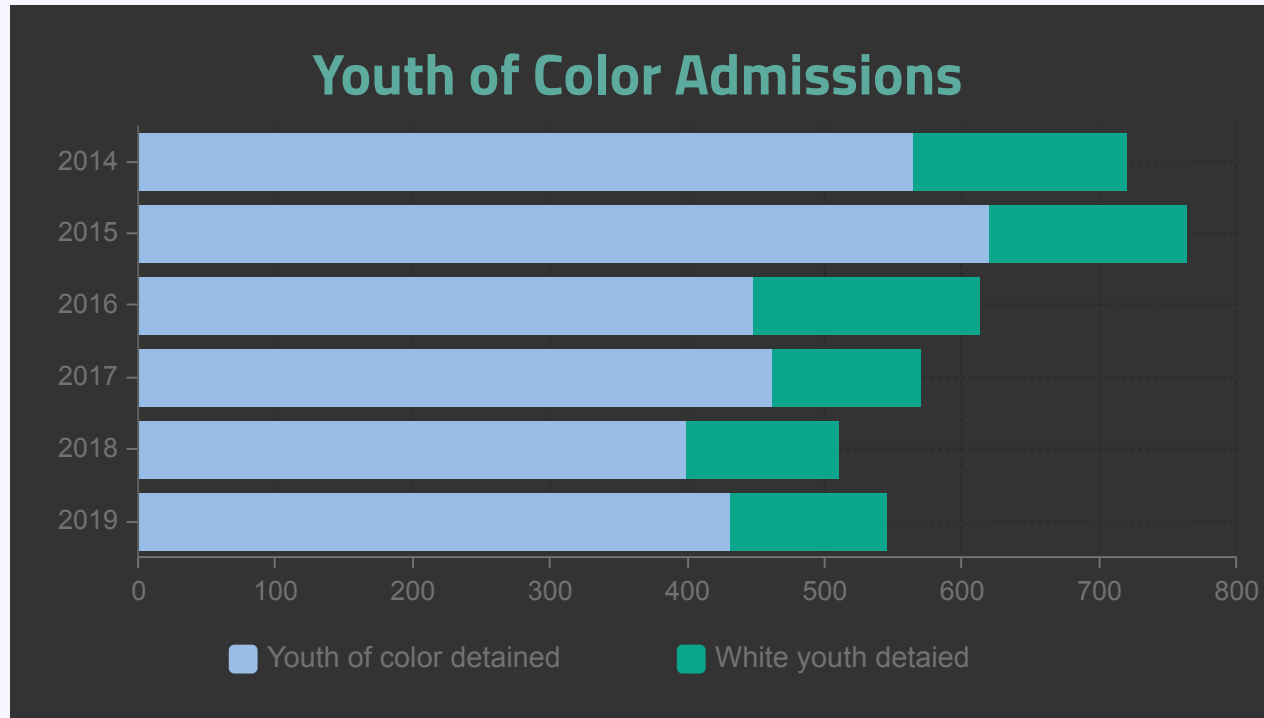


In 2019; youth detained for technical violations

Solid reductions have been seen in this area. When these data points are examined, they act as additional indicators of system improvement.

Douglas County: Youth of Color Detained

A second priority area in Douglas County has been reducing the number of youth of color who are detained. Youth of color are more likely to be detained than white youth.



Pictured below; Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Georgetown team attended the Georgetown Certificate Program on November 6, 2019.



Moving Forward in 2020

The Douglas County JDAI Collaborative is working to increase communication between parties about the youth and families we serve. The ecology of the child is important to their rehabilitation and continue to work to ensure that all professionals understand that trauma does matter. The sub-committees will be working on the following goals this year.

1

ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION (ATD): This committee will continue to work to increase the use of ATDs for youth who, based on their RAI, are to be released with an appropriate alternative. Evaluate successful and unsuccessful discharges from ATDs.

2

OBJECTIVE ADMISSIONS: This committee will collaborate with the Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation regarding the validation and potential changes to the Nebraska Detention Screening.

3

DATA: This committee is working with the Omaha Police Department, Juvenile Assessment Center and the Douglas County Attorney's office to create data memos from the first five system points of the Juvenile Justice system.

4

RACIAL & ETHNIC DISPARITIES (RED): This committee plans to increase their collaboration in all JDAI work and reform efforts. Work is being done with the Data committee to determine system points to ensure data from each system point is collected by REGGO (Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Geography and Offense). This committee will assist the Douglas County RED Coordinator in the planning and execution of the first RED Conference.

5

CASE PROCESSING: This committee is finalizing the Case Processing Agreement (CPA) to assist parties in understanding the juvenile court and its processes. Developing protocol to expedite youth detained as well those released to ATDs.

Restorative Justice Programs/Practices is another area of interest Douglas County will work to develop an understanding of what services are available for youth. This information along with data from the JDAI data committee will be used to work with the County Attorney to develop a pathway for youth prior to official filing.

Sarpy County

"Sarpy County has been part of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative since 2012.

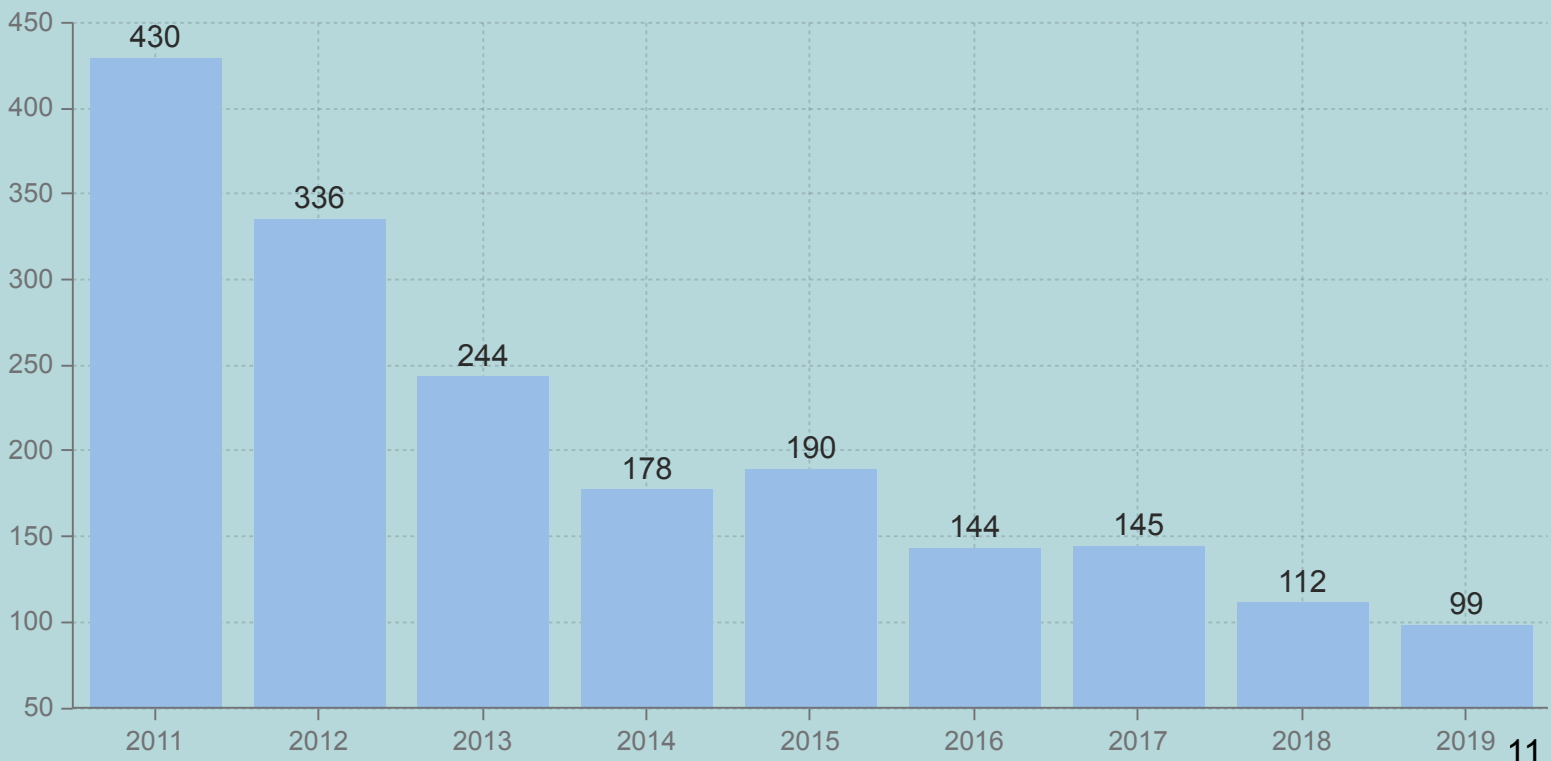
That process has given our stakeholder team the opportunity to examine under what circumstances we place young people in detention, analyze whether those detentions are the most appropriate means to ensure public safety and court attendance, and establish alternatives that meet those goals. As a result, our detentions have declined by two-thirds since 2014. We continue to look at ways to improve public safety and outcomes for young people. We hope that others around the state will join in that initiative."

Honorable Robert O'Neal, Separate Juvenile Court Judge

Sarpy County became Nebraska's second JDAI site in 2012. The JDAI work was spearheaded by long time juvenile justice advocate and former Juvenile Justice Center Director, Dick Shea. Dick and stakeholders saw JDAI as an opportunity to apply an evidence based model to enhance the work already in progress in Sarpy County. As with any new site, Sarpy County stakeholders completed an initial system assessment and detention utilization study to identify areas to focus their efforts. Most recently, Sarpy County participated in a system re-assessment to guide the development of updated priorities.

The total number of admissions has dramatically decreased in Sarpy County. From 2011 to 2019; Sarpy County saw a 77% decline.

Admissions



Crisis Mediation Team

In July 2015, Sarpy County implemented the Crisis Mediation Team (CMT) with the help of Community Based Aid grant funding. The CMT program is facilitated through Heartland Family Service. CMT is designed to provide youth who may otherwise be placed under the juvenile court system with services to divert them from the juvenile justice and social service systems. CMT members are called to the location of a crisis, they assess the nature of the crisis, and then provide immediate de-escalation and conflict resolution. A safety plan is developed, and the family is provided additional community resources and support. The main goal of the program is to keep the family intact and the youth either at home or in the community with specific safety measures in place.

489

Total number of intakes completed by CMT

2

Total number of youth detained at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC)

1

Total number of youth placed outside of the family home

3

Total number of youth who received in home services

In most situations, law enforcement makes the initial call to CMT, but they can also be contacted by schools or other agencies in the county when there is a crisis involving a youth. After the call to CMT, there is an immediate response by a therapist. Law enforcement officers remain on the scene to support the therapist and the family but step away from the mediation that takes place. On site, the therapist completes an assessment. The therapist will review all community options for the youth to remain in the home or look for alternative community placement. There is a 24-hour follow-up and another 30-day follow-up completed by the therapist. For those youth and families eligible, a referral to wrap-around case management is made.

Moving Forward in 2020

Sarpy County will continue to work collaboratively for the young people they serve. Below are the goals for 2020.

1

Evaluate data on youth who have a length of stay over 10 days in detention. Determine if these are for waiting placements or evaluations.

2

Work with Alternatives to Detention committee to identify services and programs for youth who run from home or placement.

3

Partner with community stakeholders to develop services for youth experiencing mental and/or behavioral health crisis.

4

Participate in System Re-Assessment to aid with the development of alternatives to detention for youth in Sarpy County.

Pictured below; Congressman Bacon tours the clothing closet housed at Sarpy County JJC. Congressman Bacon attended the annual Back to School bash.



Otoe County

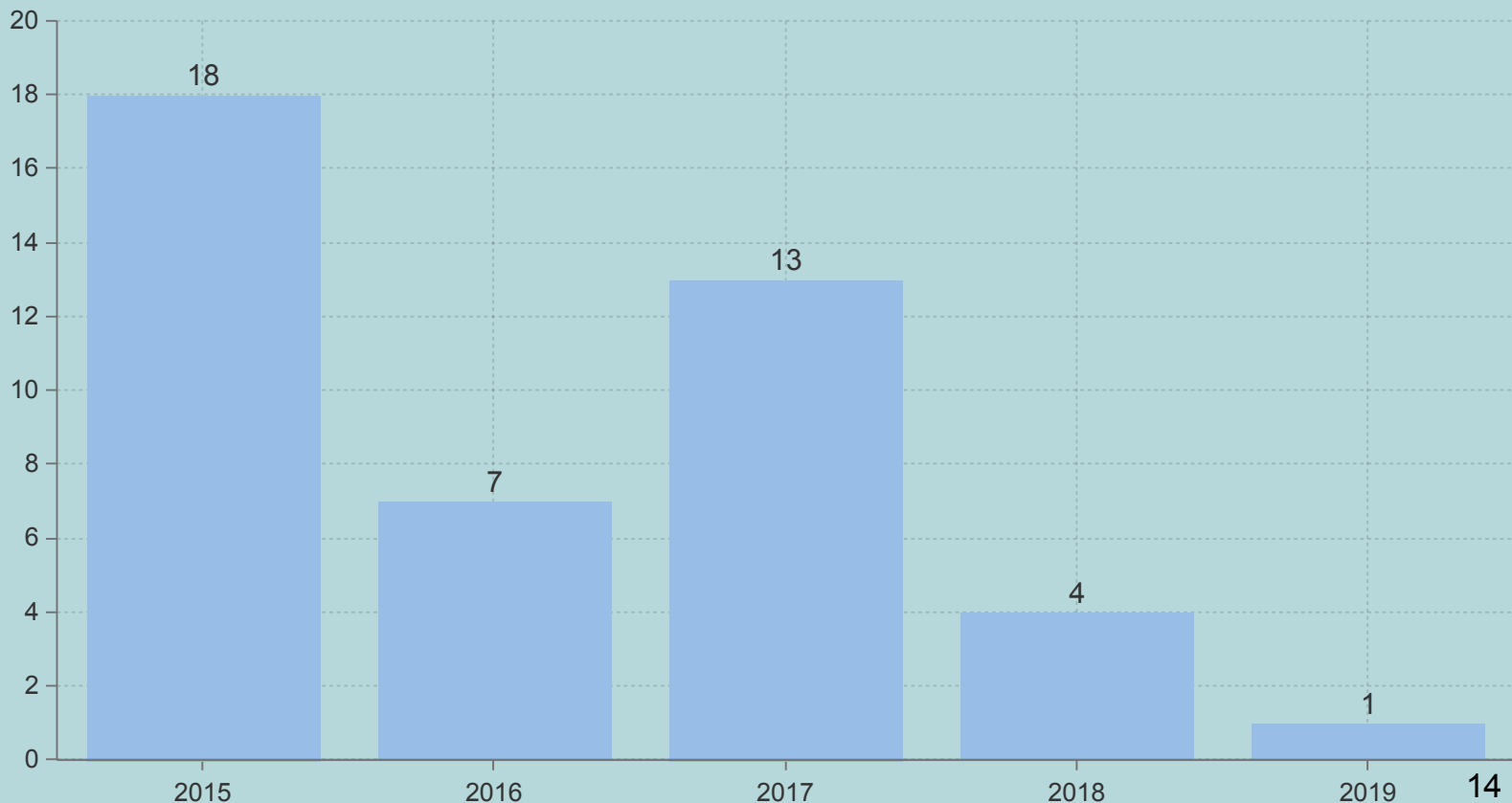
"The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative brings system stakeholders together to examine the youth justice system for possible improvements that may be implemented through local community policies and practices. It recognizes the need to hold youth accountable for their actions while providing resources to improve their long-term success rates. If we can address youth early and effectively, our communities will be safer. Rural county attorneys have particular issues that may differ from large urban areas, but JDAI's core strategies are customizable to each community. If rural counties fail to participate in JDAI, they enhance the risk of state-wide policies and practices being determined by others who may not have the same experiences with their juvenile systems. It is important for rural communities to have a voice at the table."

*Hon. David J. Partsch, County Judge
Otoe County Attorney from 2009-2019*

Otoe County officially became the first rural Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) site in 2016. It was the third JDAI jurisdiction to be implemented in Nebraska, following Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The work of JDAI was incorporated into the Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare Team that has been established in Otoe County since 2001. With the implementation of JDAI, new stakeholders became engaged and the purpose of the team advanced toward a common vision of creating effective alternatives for youth and reducing the need for detention. With admissions to detention, and costs to detain, at their highest in Otoe County the initiative was timely to begin making an impact. As a new site, stakeholders completed a comprehensive System Assessment and Detention Utilization Study to guide the work of the team. Several processes and trainings led to the development of three committees to guide the work: Case Processing; Data; and Community & Pre-Adjudication Alternatives.

Otoe County has seen changes related to detention admissions. The chart below shows the total number admission for youth starting one year prior to JDAI implementation. Since implementing the JDAI core strategies, total admissions have declined to one detention admission in 2019.

Admissions

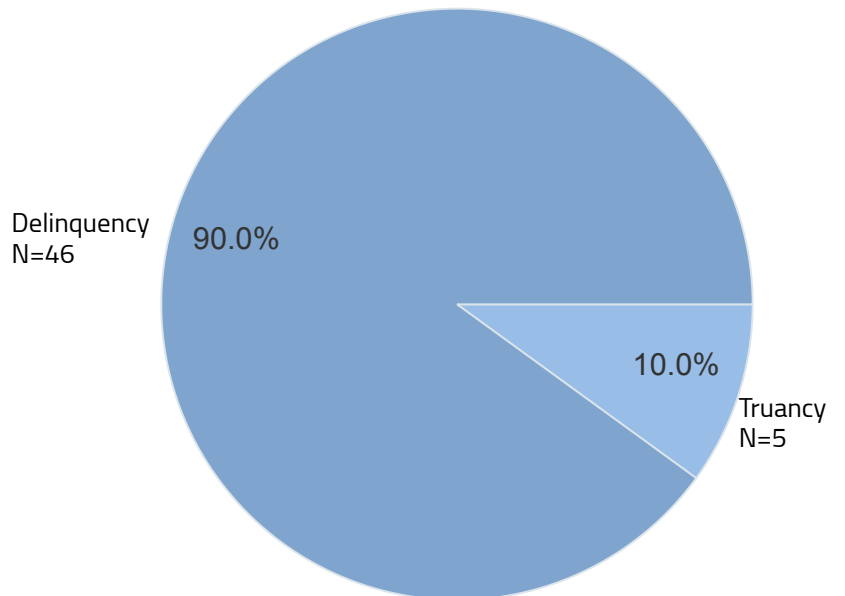


Core Strategy Work

Case Processing and Alternatives to Detention committee members determined expansion of services within the Diversion Program, especially for truant youth, would be most needed. Data confirmed 81% of juvenile citations and truancy referrals were sent to the diversion program and each year truancy referrals have risen. In 2018, a partnership with CEDARS allowed for implementation of Truancy Trackers/Attendance Advocates to be utilized by the program. In 2019, family support services were utilized for middle school age referrals and their families.

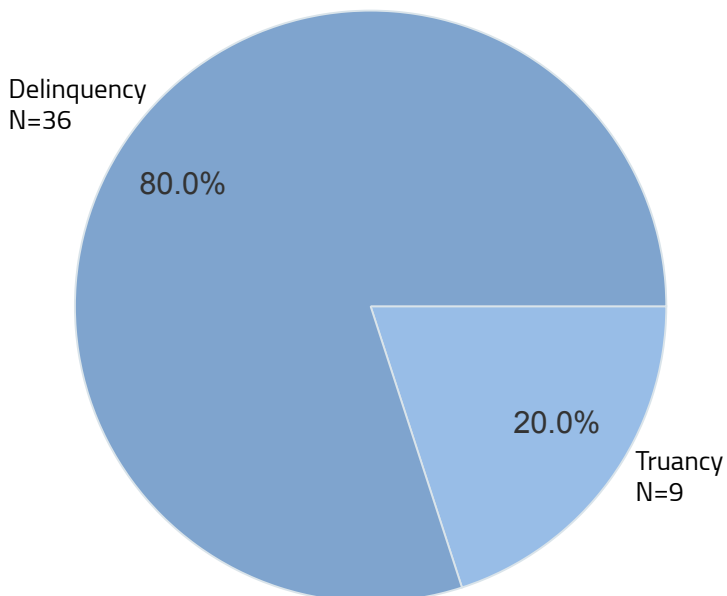
2017

Diversion Referrals N=51



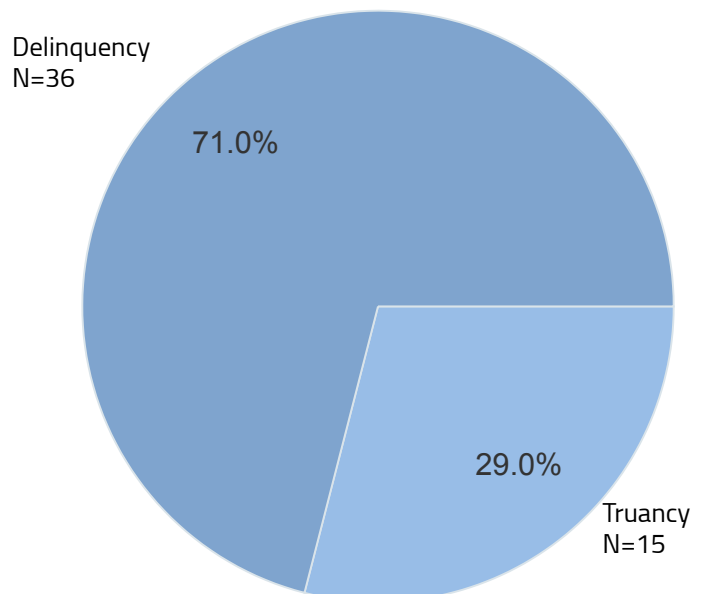
2018

Diversion Referrals N=45



2019

Diversion Referrals N=52



Moving Forward in 2020

In 2020, the expectation is Otoe County will support recidivism reduction and thriving families by:

1

Focusing on evaluating and enhancing the use of current community alternatives & pre-adjudicated alternatives.

2

Partnering with the Better Together Collaborative to expand resources to families, supporting basic needs such as transportation, utility assistance, etc.

3

Continuing education on the purpose and vision of JDAI to community members, providers and key stakeholders.

4

Expanding knowledge and use of services, to expand the list of community alternatives such as crisis response, victim youth conferencing, family navigators, etc.

5

Implementing policy and practice changes at front end system points to shorten time from offense to intervention.

Pictured below; Otoe Counties delegation that traveled to Santa Cruz, CA for a model site visit in 2017.



Lancaster County

"Lancaster County's involvement with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives (JDAI) over the last three years has been very positive. Three successes have resulted, one being that we have fewer youth in our detention. Another is the greater understanding and involvement of the community's nonprofits who are crucial in providing alternative services for youth. Lastly, the organizational input and support of people involved in juvenile justice on local, state, and national levels has been crucial in the development and application of the JDAI principles of helping youth be successful".

Roma Amundson

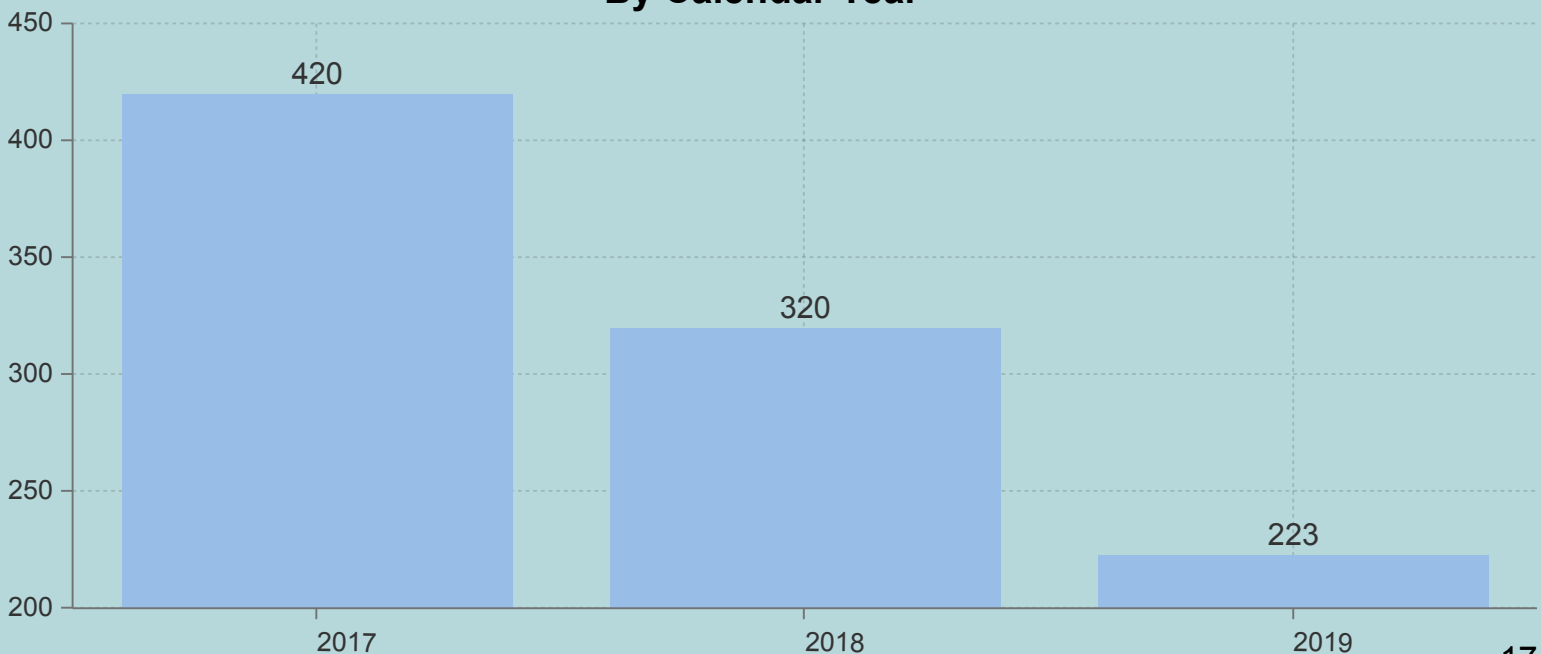
Lancaster County Commissioner

Lancaster County became the fourth official Nebraska JDAI site in 2017. Lancaster County stakeholders completed a comprehensive System Assessment and Detention Utilization study. These initial activities assisted sites in identifying a target population on which to focus. The focus area in Lancaster County is youth that remain detained at the Lancaster County Youth Services Center for an extended length of time. Lancaster County leadership sought JDAI technical assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to build on these efforts through the JDAI framework and core strategies.

The foundation of the JDAI framework is built on eight core strategies, the first being Collaboration. The JDAI collaborative is currently chaired by Lancaster County Human Services. Members of the collaborative represent County Attorney's Office, County Board of Commissioners, Community Service Providers, Youth Services Center, Department of Health and Human Services, Lincoln Public Schools, Public Defenders office, Lincoln Police Department, Lancaster County Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Probation and a Juvenile Court Judge. Work groups include: Case Processing, Family Engagement, Data and Prevention.

Lancaster County collaborative and sub committee members use data to track trends, document success and identify target areas for system improvement. Data from the Lancaster County Youth Services Center depicts a 47% decrease in the number of youth detained from 2017 to 2019. Less than 10% of youth in detention in Lancaster County are for pre-adjudicated detention holds.

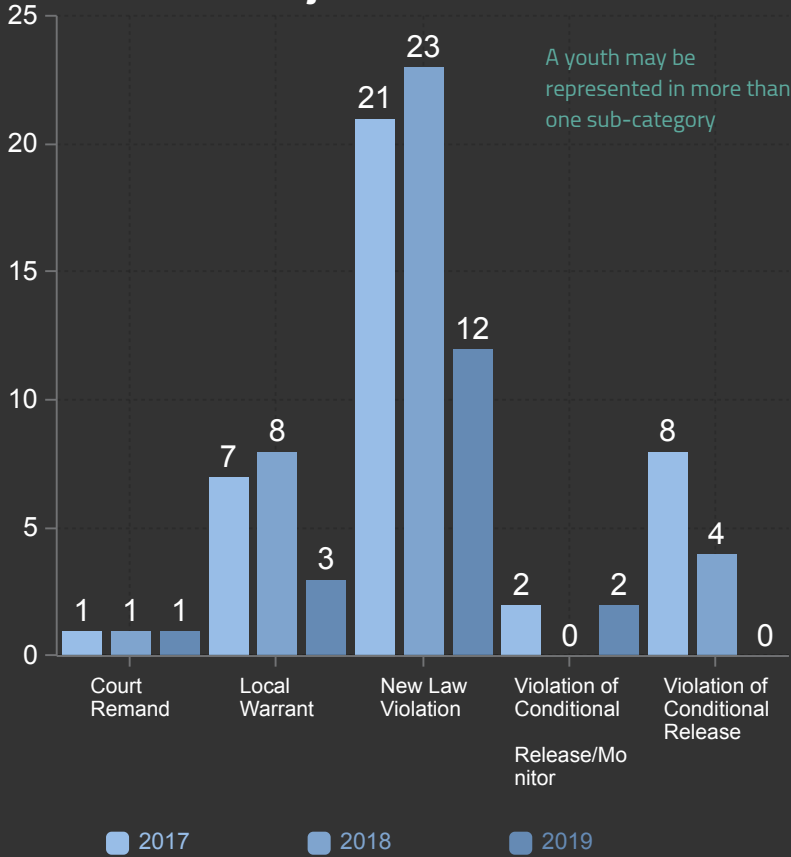
Total Admissions By Calendar Year



Data from the Lancaster County Youth Services center broken down in the below chart by pre-adjudicated youth illustrates most pre-adjudicated youth are detained for new law violations.

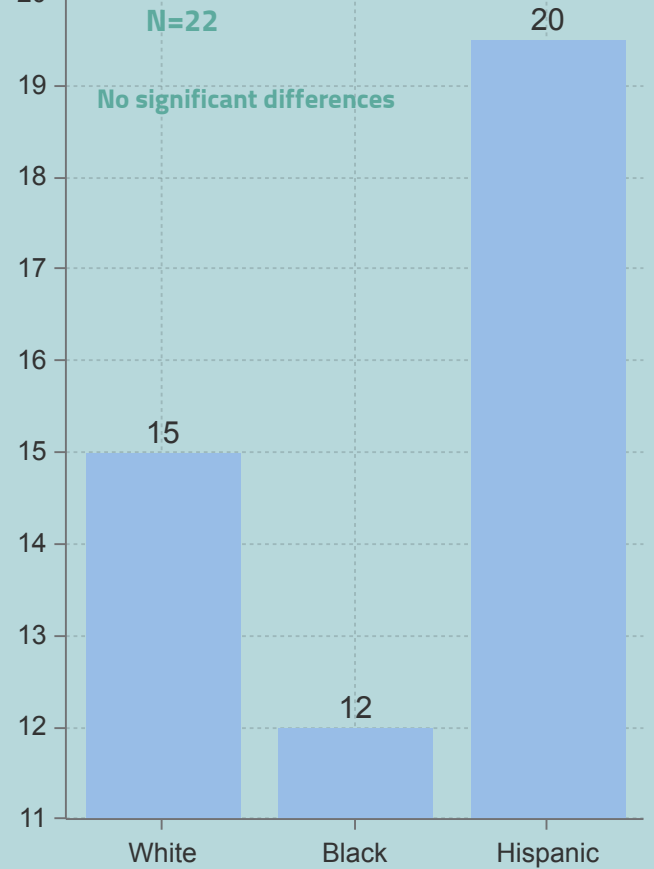
Lancaster County has a partnership with Dr. [Name] and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to gather system point data to help support system reform efforts. The below chart represents the median length of stay for Lancaster County youth in detention, broken down by race.

Intake Reasons by Year Pre-Adjudicated Youth



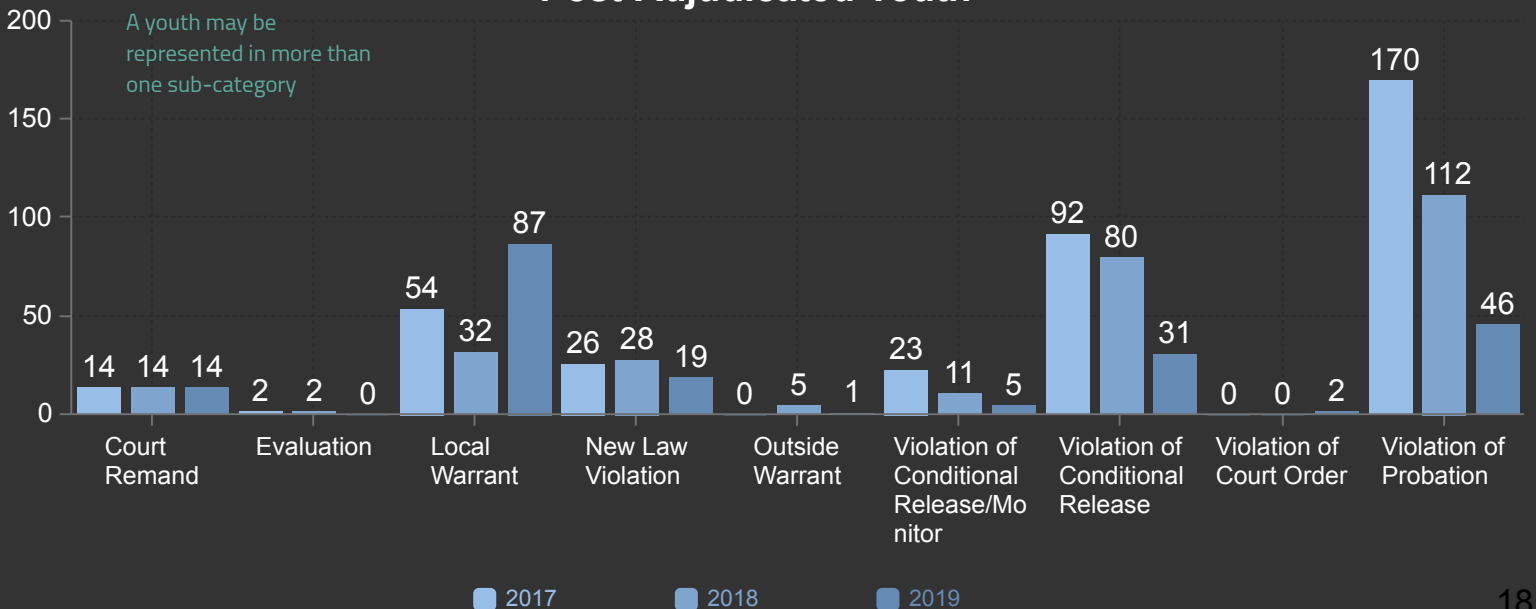
Median Length of Stay by Race (Days)

November 2018-September 2019



Data from the Lancaster County Youth Services center broken down in the below chart by post-adjudicated youth illustrates most post-adjudicated youth are detained for probation violations.

Intake Reasons by Year Post-Adjudicated Youth



Moving Forward

JDAI is an ongoing system improvement process and currently the Lancaster County Collaborative is focused on:

1

Obtaining additional case processing technical assistance to further work around target populations.

2

Continuing to gather data in the Quarterly Reporting System (QRS) and enhance data quality.

3

Using data to identify strategies to shorten the time youth wait in detention or shelter.

4

Assessing the effectiveness of current alternatives to detention and identifying gaps in the continuum.

5

Aligning and integrating the JDAI system improvement framework with local juvenile probation's Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Initiative.

Pictured below; Lancaster County Juvenile Court Judges meet with Annie E. Casey staff for system assessment interviews.



Want to know more?

For more information on JDAI efforts in Nebraska reach out to State JDAI Coordinators;

Monica Miles-Steffens at:
monica.miles-steffens@nebraska.gov

Michele Lueders at:
michele.lueders@nebraska.gov

For additional information and resources on the JDAI work across the country visit JDAI Connect.



Monica Miles-Steffens
Director of Court Services



Michele Lueders
Juvenile Intake & Detention
Alternatives Specialist

JDAI connect

JDAI Connect is a platform for juvenile justice reformers to connect, find resources and learn. This resources is available to everyone-practitioners, policy makers, community based organizations, advocates, youth families, researcher and others. It is free to join whether or not you participate in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

To sign-up and join the JDAI Connect community, please visit www.jadaiconnect.org and following the following steps:

- You will be redirected to the login screen on the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Community Cafe
- Click on the "Non-Casey Staff Login" link
- Enter your name and email address and click confirm
- You will receive an email with instructions on creating your account and logging into the Community Cafe
- From here click on the "Need access to JDAIconnect?" button

