

Fact-Finding Report on Community Assessment Centers (CACs): Final Report

For:
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Background

In 1995, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) identified the concept of community assessment centers (CACs) for juveniles as worthy of further investigation. Many people in the juvenile justice field believe that CACs offer particular promise of improving prevention and intervention services for delinquent and at-risk youth. CACs typically involve partnerships between juvenile justice agencies and youth service providers who are located together and provide a central intake point for youth who have been taken into custody by police. While specific approaches vary, centers generally aim to

- provide more comprehensive assessment of the needs of youth
- improve case management and treatment
- make more efficient use of law enforcement, juvenile justice, and treatment resources
- avoid unnecessary detention
- enhance information-sharing across agencies
- enable better monitoring of system performance.

The first known program opened in Florida in 1993. Because the CAC concept is relatively new, there has been limited documentation available about the approach. To further its program development process, OJJDP developed a concept paper on CACs in 1995, with input from a focus group of experts. The group consensus was that the CAC approach was a viable one, provided that CACs avoided breaches of confidentiality and due process and unnecessary “net-widening.” This concept paper identified several features that CACs should provide:

- a **single point of entry** to services for youth who are juvenile justice involved or at risk.
- **immediate and comprehensive assessments** in a community-based setting. The process should conform to the core requirements of the JJDP Act for deinstitutionalization of status offenders, separate of juveniles and adults while securely confined, removal of juveniles from jails and lockups, and reducing disproportionate minority confinement.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Community Assessment Centers: A Discussion of the Concept's Efficiency, November 1995.

- a **management information system (MIS)** that can be used monitor a youth's progress in treatment and document previous intervention attempts.
- **integrated case management** that provides a treatment plan, referral and monitoring of service delivery, and reassessment.
- **provision of input to the policymaking process.**

The focus group concluded, however, that too little was known about CACs to determine what kind of support communities would need for developing them or whether a specific program model should be recommended.

To provide further information, OJJDP sponsored a fact-finding effort on CACs, which began in January 1996. Phase I of this effort involved a mail survey to nearly 300 juvenile justice and youth service contacts nationwide, as well as extensive telephone networking. Approximately 20 possible CAC programs were initially identified through the survey and networking process. Upon further examination, however, many exhibited few elements of the CAC concept, as defined by OJJDP. Nine operational programs that appeared to exhibit several key elements of the CAC concept were identified in four states--Colorado (one program), Florida (six programs), Kansas (one program), and Utah (one program). Three additional programs were in the planning stages, two in Kansas and one in Nebraska.

Purpose of this project

This project was designed to help OJJDP further its program development process for CACs, by collection information about the CAC concept by visiting selected programs (Phase II) and reporting the information to OJJDP (Phase III).

Activities

Data collection (Phase II). In late March, visits were scheduled to four CAC sites in Florida and to three other programs that had been identified in Kansas, Colorado, and Utah respectively. The sites were chosen in consultation with OJJDP staff, based on Phase I recommendations. Although the program did not match the working definition of a CAC, a Lawrence, Kansas site was added to the itinerary to provide a look at the state's management information system for juvenile intake. The eight sites were all visited during the month of April, as shown below.

The time at each site averaged one and a half days. It was spent touring the facility, collecting written materials and forms, interviewing key staff, and meeting with agency heads or other representatives of the partner agencies. On average, ten people were interviewed at each site. At all locations, an attempt was made to speak face-to-face or by telephone with a public defender, a prosecutor, and a juvenile judge who were knowledgeable about the program. Judges were reached in all locations and prosecutors and public defenders were reached in six of

the seven CAC sites. (The prosecutor and public defender who could not be reached came from different sites.)

Site	Dates of Visit
Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Golden, Colorado	April 24-25, 1996
Pinellas Juvenile Assessment Center Clearwater, Florida	April 4, 1996
Orange County Juvenile Assessment Center Orlando, Florida	April 4-5, 1996
Juvenile Assessment and Receiving Center Tallahassee, Florida	April 1, 1996
Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center Tampa, Florida	April 2-3, 1996
Juvenile Intake and Assessment System Lawrence, Kansas	April 15, 1996
Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center Olathe, Kansas	April 16-17, 1996
Salt Lake County Juvenile Receiving Center Salt Lake City, Utah	April 22-23, 1996

Reporting (Phase III). In addition to telephone updates provided to the Program Manager, an oral briefing was provided to OJJDP staff on May 6. Profiles also were developed for each of the sites visited and sent to the program directors for review. The program profiles and a chart summarizing many features of the program operations appear in the Appendices.

Summary of Findings

This site did not match OJJDP's working definition of a CAC.

Generalizations in this section apply only to the seven sites selected for their resemblance to the CAC concept. The Lawrence, Kansas site is excluded.

Length time in operation. Many of the programs visited were relatively new. The oldest program, in Hillsborough County/Tampa, had been in operation for three years. Only two others had been operational for a year or more. The newest programs are still in an implementation mode.

Planning process. All programs were developed through a multi-agency planning process, usually lasting a year or more. Local planning teams included high level representatives of a broad range of law enforcement, juvenile justice, and youth service agencies, who set the program goals, identified new and existing resources to support the program, and oversaw the operational planning. Participants often characterized this as a fairly arduous process, because the program could involve significant reorganization of service delivery and would require a large budget. Some agencies dropped out of the planning process along the way. Local participants viewed the multi-agency planning effort as an essential ingredient of successful implementation, however. In general, the more comprehensive the program, the longer it took to plan. Once the program was implemented, the planning team often became the center's policymaking board.

Common operational features. Certain features are common to all or nearly all of the sites visited. These features include: round the clock availability for police (or close to it); provision of intake, preliminary assessment, service referrals, and follow-up; and release of youth to detention, home, or an alternate setting within about two to six hours. Staff generally have an in-house management information system and some on-site access to other databases to aid them in the assessment process and help track cases. A lead agency with expertise in juvenile assessment has been designated to staff the core assessment team and manage the facility. Almost always, other juvenile justice and youth service providers are co-located at the center.

Key differences in approach. Despite their commonalities, each program has unique features, which are the result of tailoring the approach to fit the local jurisdiction's needs and resources, as well as state statutes and regulations. There are some broad differences in emphasis between the programs visited in Florida and those at other sites. Most significantly, only the Florida sites target detainable youth and these are the only centers that provide secure custody and booking under the supervision of law enforcement or correctional officers.

In Florida, police with arrestees in custody enter the locked area through a secure sallyport. Once youth are admitted, the center's officers take custody, assuming responsibility for searching, photographing, and fingerprinting. Youth remain in a locked waiting room until their assessment and subsequent release to detention, home, or another setting. A restraint chair and seclusion rooms are available to help control misconduct, but few youth require these measures. Most Florida centers also contain a non-secure area where nondelinquents, such as truants, are assessed and where staff meet with parents. In contrast, the non-Florida programs do not target detainable delinquents and their facilities are non-secure. Only one site has law enforcement staff on the premises part-time. These centers contain waiting areas and offices

where staff complete assessments and meet with parents. Youth are not physically restrained from leaving if they insist on it, but only a small number actually do so.

The Florida programs tend to have a broader range of agencies and services co-located at the center than the non-Florida sites. Besides the staff of the lead agency and juvenile justice intake or screening staff, these centers often house personnel from law enforcement or corrections agencies, the public schools, programs for runaways and other status offenders, and diversion providers. Three of the Florida programs also are co-located with juvenile addiction receiving facilities (ARFs), which are short-term residential programs for youth in need of detoxification, stabilization, or assessment for substance abuse. Centers divert youth who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol to these facilities until they are in shape to be assessed. The ARFs also help out the centers with medical screening and non-emergency medical care.

The Florida sites also are more apt to provide some form of case management for delinquent youth who are awaiting court disposition or are participating in a diversion program. As a general rule, the non-Florida centers are more oriented to short-term concerns--i.e., determining the most appropriate place to release a youth who has been taken into police custody and handling the immediate needs of youth or families through on-the-spot crisis counseling plus referrals. Only one of the three programs provides case management services, to a narrowly defined subset of youth.

Management information systems. All but one of the programs visited has a computerized management information system (MIS), or is in the process of implementing one. These systems typically contain information about a youth's charges and demographic characteristics, case processing at the center (such as times in and out), and release. Some systems incorporate much more detailed information, such as prior delinquency and abuse/neglect histories, a summary of recommendations made, and information useful for case management and/or tracking. In three locations, the assessment forms are built into the MIS so that staff can enter data as they conduct an assessment interview. Most centers also have on-site terminals that link them to other databases, containing criminal histories, prior court contacts, or school information, although these systems are not integrated with each other or with the center's MIS. Formal or informal agreements govern who is permitted access to which databases and how information is shared.

Comparison to the OJJDP concept. None of the programs visited displays all of the CAC features outlined in OJJDP's concept paper. Most significantly, none provides a single entry point for all categories of youth. Delinquents are always a target group, as are truants in most locations, but programs vary in the extent to which they target runaways or other types of status offenders. Abused and neglected youth are generally not targeted as a separate group, although abuse and neglect issues are addressed for youth who have been brought to the center for other reasons. Several programs do provide comprehensive assessments and have (or are building) an MIS system containing a wealth of information. Thus far, however, it appears that the databases have not been exploited to their full potential for planning or evaluation purposes. Several

programs also provide case management, but in general, it is case management in a more limited sense than the concept paper envisions. There are at least three contributing factors: (1) case management by center staff extends only through court disposition or the completion of diversion; (2) case management by the center is voluntary, i.e., youth and families cannot be forced to participate in it; and (3) current center caseloads are high.

Due process and confidentiality of information. Most programs have involved both public defenders and prosecutors in the development of the center's procedures, and consider it essential to incorporate their perspectives. Centers have developed forms and procedures for informing juveniles of their rights, explaining the purpose of the assessment process, and explaining the extent to which information will be shared with others. It is standard policy not to discuss the facts of the current case with arrestees and, typically, all parties understand that the information obtained during the assessment can be used only in the disposition process, not the adjudication. In most locations, public defenders have been involved in the program planning process. Where they have been involved, they are generally satisfied with the programs and do not believe that juveniles' rights are being abused. Some fine-tuning of the process may be needed over time, however. For instance, two public defenders noted that they thought some parents and youth failed to understand that the assessment was voluntary. In another site, a defender felt that the forms signed by youth did not cover all contingencies.

Costs. Program budgets are large, ranging from about \$400,000 to over \$3,000,000. Costs are usually shared among multiple agencies. Typically, the budget represents a mix of old dollars, covering existing staff who have been transferred to the center, and new dollars, for additional staff and for start-up costs such as facility renovation, the management information system, and equipment. Start-up costs varied considerably depending on the type of facility involved and the need for construction or renovation.

Program results. To some extent, all programs are still in an implementation mode. Even so, most of the agencies involved in assessment centers are extremely enthusiastic about the approach and believe it is beneficial for communities, agencies, and youth. None of the programs has been formally evaluated, however, and more information would be needed to determine their effects on communities and individual youth.

Based on the limited information available, it appears highly likely that the programs do save law enforcement time, increase coordination among the agencies involved in working with youth, increase the amount and quality of information upon which juvenile justice decisions are based, and speed up the decisionmaking process in some types of cases. The visits also suggested that effects on arrest, detention, diversion, and filing rates, and as well as access to services for youth and families, may vary from site to site depending on state statutes, law enforcement policies, and other circumstances. Most interviewees believe that police take more youth into custody if a center is available, although the effect may be small in some communities. Those involved in the programs generally view this a plus, because it may provide an opportunity to intervene early and avert further misconduct. But they acknowledged that communities must be prepared to

offer appropriate programs and treatments. None of the judges interviewed believed that the assessment center had increased the court's workload, nor is there any evidence that the programs have increased detention rates.

Is there a preferred model? Given the dearth of evaluative information and the qualifiers noted above, it is too soon to say that any particular approach is more effective than another in meeting the needs of delinquent and at-risk youth or improving juvenile justice processes and outcomes. In fact, given the way that planning teams tailored their programs to the unique concerns and resources of their jurisdictions, it seems doubtful that any one approach will meet the needs of all communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings summarized above and discussed in more detail in the oral briefing, it appears premature for OJJDP to endorse a particular CAC "model." However, the CAC approach clearly appears worthy of further exploration. OJJDP might considering investing its resources in the following ways:

- Providing planning grants to communities that are interested in the CAC concept. (Because of the long time required to plan a CAC, a conventional demonstration program seems less appropriate.)
- Encouraging existing assessment centers to improve their MIS capabilities, especially their capability to generate evaluative and policy-relevant data.
- Encouraging existing assessment centers to enhance their capabilities for case management.
- Promoting evaluation of new or existing CAC initiatives to better determine their effects on community and juvenile justice resources and their outcomes for youth.
- Promoting opportunities for CAC communities and others interested in CAC approaches to share information about their experiences.

Appendix A.

Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites

Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Florida			
	Tampa/ Hillsborough County	Orlando/ Orange & Osceola Counties	Tallahassee/ Leon County	Clearwater/ Pinellas County
History and structure				
Started	1/93: truants 5/93: felons 4/94: misdemeanants	11/94	8/95: truants 11/1995: delinquents	12/95
Planning time	1 year	1+ years	2+ years	2+ years
Multi-agency planning process	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special oversight committee for Assessment Center?	No (done by ACTS Board plus ad hoc JJ group)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lead agency	ACTS	Human Services Associates, Inc. (HSA)	DISC Village, Inc.	Operation PAR
Lead agency also provides treatment or diversion programs for youth?	Yes	Addiction Receiving Facility only	Yes	Yes
Co-located services	-FL Dept. of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) -Hillsborough Co. Sheriff -Tampa Police Dept.	-FL Dept. of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) -Orange Co. Public Schools -Orange Co. Corrections	-Leon County School Board -Capital City Youth Services	-Pinellas Co. Sheriff/Corrections & Diversion -Pinellas Co. School Board

Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Florida			
	Tampa/ Hillsborough County	Orlando/ Orange & Osceola Counties	Tallahassee/ Leon County	Clearwater/ Pinellas County
	-Hillsborough Co. Public Schools -Hillsborough Co. Dept. of Children's Services -U. of South Florida -Addiction Receiving Facility/ACTS	-Children's Home Society -JASP Diversion -U. of Central Florida -Addiction Receiving Facility/HSA	-FL Dept. of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) -Addiction Receiving Facility/DISC Village	-FL Dept. of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) -Family Resources, Inc. -Youth and Family Connection -Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services (PEMHS)
Target population				
-Delinquents-detainable	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Delinquents-nondetainable	✓	✓ (Orange Co. only)	✓	✓
-Truants	✓		✓	
-Runaway/ungovernable/ other status offenders				✓
-Abused/neglected				
Services and operations				
Hours available	Open round the clock	Open round the clock (Assessors on duty 7 am-1 am)	Open round the clock	Open round the clock

Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Florida			
	Tampa/ Hillsborough County	Orlando/ Orange & Osceola Counties	Tallahassee/ Leon County	Clearwater/ Pinellas County
Standard services				
-Booking	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Urinalysis	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Screening/preliminary assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓
-In-depth assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Diversion recommendations	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Referrals	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Follow-up	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Case management	✓ (misdemeanors only)	✓	✓	
Case volume	1995: 9550 intakes (92% delinquents)	1995: 11,801 intakes (100% delinquents)	11/95-2/96: 829 arrestees 8/95-2/96: 338 truants	12/95-3/96: 1762 intakes (95% delinquents)
Release time	4-6 hrs.	70 % out in 6 hrs. in 1st yr.	6 hrs. or less	93% out in 6 hrs.
Length of involvement	90 days or until completion of diversion for youth on case	Until disposition or transfer of case to diversion	Until disposition or completion of diversion	Follow from 45 days after release until 1st face-to-face referral contact

Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Florida			
	Tampa/ Hillsborough County	Orlando/ Orange & Osceola Counties	Tallahassee/ Leon County	Clearwater/ Pinellas County
	management			is made
Screening/assessment process				
Primary instruments used	-State suicide risk assessment form -State detention screening form -Problem-Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) -Psychosocial assessment guide	-State suicide risk assessment form -State detention screening form -HIV risk assessment -Biopsychosocial worksheet -Parent survey	-State suicide risk assessment form -State detention screening form -Biopsychosocial interview guide	-State suicide risk assessment form -State detention screening form -Biopsychosocial assessment form
Reporting format	6-page psychosocial dossier	Completed forms & notes	Biopsychosocial-predisposition report (delinquents only)	Narrative report, similar to a pre-disposition report
Shared with	-DJJ -State attorney -Public defender (if case is petitioned) -Diversion agency	-DJJ (if case is petitioned) -Diversion agency	-State attorney -Public defender (if case is petitioned)	-DJJ case manager -On-site agencies -Referral agencies
Assessor qualifications	Bachelor's in related field plus 1 yr. experience	Bachelor's plus 2 yrs. related experience	Bachelor's in related field plus experience	Bachelor's plus experience

Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Florida			
	Tampa/ Hillsborough County	Orlando/ Orange & Osceola Counties	Tallahassee/ Leon County	Clearwater/ Pinellas County
Other operational features				
Separation of delinquents & others	Yes	Yes	Yes	Seated on different sides of the waiting area
On-site law enforcement/ security staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
On-site transportation	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
On-site medical support	From addiction receiving facility	From addiction receiving facility	From addiction receiving facility	No
Information-sharing and MIS capabilities				
Computerized program MIS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other MIS linkages	-Delinquency, child abuse & neglect history (HRS) -School Board -NCIC/FCIC -State attorney -Sheriff's Office	-Delinquency, child abuse & neglect history (HRS) -Orange County Court -NCIC/FCIC	-Delinquency, child abuse & neglect history (HRS) -School Board	-Delinquency, child abuse & neglect history (HRS) -School Board -Clerk of the Court
Pending linkages	-DJJ system under development	-DJJ system under development	-Clerk of the Court -NCIC/FCIC -DJJ system under	-DJJ system under development

Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Florida			
	Tampa/ Hillsborough County	Orlando/ Orange & Osceola Counties	Tallahassee/ Leon County	Clearwater/ Pinellas County
			development	
Budget	\$3.4 million	\$3 million	\$1 million+	\$1.8 million

Key Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Kansas		Utah	Colorado
	Lawrence/ Douglas County*	Olathe/ Johnson County	Salt Lake City/ Salt Lake County	Golden/ Jefferson County
History and structure				
Started	1987	1/96	9/94	10/95
Planning time	<1 year	1+ years	6+ months	2+ years
Multi-agency planning process	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special oversight committee for Assessment Center?	No (done by The Shelter's Board of Directors)	Yes	No (done by Salt Lake County Division of Youth Services Advisory Board)	Yes
Lead agency	The Shelter	Temporary Lodging for Children (TLC)	Salt Lake County Division of Youth Services	Jefferson Center for Mental Health
Lead agency also provides treatment or diversion programs for youth?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Short-term crisis intervention only
Co-located services	-- (Staff use space in County Law Enforcement Center, but do not have permanent	-- (No space now. Other bldg. occupants plan to move, freeing up space for other	-Third District Juvenile Court -Salt Lake County Sheriff	-Jefferson County School District -District Attorney -Jefferson County

Key Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Kansas		Utah	Colorado
	Lawrence/ Douglas County*	Olathe/ Johnson County	Salt Lake City/ Salt Lake County	Golden/ Jefferson County
	offices there)	partners.)		Human Services/Family Adolescent Crisis Team
Target population				
-Delinquents-detainable		(Services offered to parents by appointment)		
-Delinquents- nondetainable	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Truants	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Runaway/ungovernable/ other status offenders	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Abused/neglected	✓	✓		
Services and operations				
Hours available	On call to go to Law Enforcement Center, round the clock	Round the clock	Round the clock	7:30 am -12:00 am, Su -Th 7:30 am -2 am, F -Sa
Standard services				
-Booking		(Fingerprinting equipment & camera are available, if		

Key Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Kansas		Utah	Colorado
	Lawrence/ Douglas County*	Olathe/ Johnson County	Salt Lake City/ Salt Lake County	Golden/ Jefferson County
		arresting officer wants them)		
-Urinalysis				
-Screening/preliminary assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓
-In-depth assessment				✓
-Diversion recommendations	Prohibited by statute	Prohibited by statute		✓
-Referrals	✓	✓	✓	✓
-Follow-up	✓	✓		✓
-Case management				✓ (Delinquents not being prosecuted and w/o other case manager)
Case volume	1995: 726 intakes (43% delinquent)	1st 3 mos.: 434 intakes	1995: 5193 intakes (51% delinquent)	1st 5 mos.: 285 intakes (80 % delinquent)
Release time	Not applicable (Process averages 2 hrs.)	2-4 hours	Ave. 2¼ hours	Ave. 5 hours
Length of involvement	Follow-up to family next day & at 90 days	Follow-up to family at 30 days	Until release from Center	6 months for youth on case management

Key Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Kansas		Utah	Colorado
	Lawrence/ Douglas County*	Olathe/ Johnson County	Salt Lake City/ Salt Lake County	Golden/ Jefferson County
Screening/assessment process				
Primary instruments used	-Problem-Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) -State Juvenile Intake & Assessment System (JIAS) Form	-Detention Assessment -Problem-Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) -State Juvenile Intake & Assessment System (JIAS) Form -Parent Survey	-Intake Summary -Case notes	-Colorado Youth Offender Level of Supervision Inventory -Risk & Resiliency Assessment -Substance Abuse Survey -Medical history form
Reporting format	1-page summary	2-page summary	No formal report	No formal report (case plan & client contract for youth on case management)
Shared with	-District Attorney, Court Services, Community Corrections (delinquents only) -Dept. of Social & Rehabilitative Services (discretionary for non-delinquents)	-District Attorney(delinquents only) -Court Services, Community Corrections (if on caseload) -Dept. of Social & Rehabilitative Services (if on caseload) -Mental Health, Public Defender (upon request)	Not applicable (Some information is shared informally with in-house court worker or youth's school)	Not applicable (Some information is shared informally with in-house agencies. For client on case management, staff may provide status letter to District Attorney)
Assessor qualifications	Bachelor's plus SRS or	Bachelor's in related field plus	Bachelor's or 2 yrs.	Bachelor's in related field

Key Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Kansas		Utah	Colorado
	Lawrence/ Douglas County*	Olathe/ Johnson County	Salt Lake City/ Salt Lake County	Golden/ Jefferson County
	court system experience	2 yrs. experience	experience working with youth	plus 1 yr. experience, or 6 yrs. experience
Other operational features				
Separation of delinquents & others	Not applicable	No	No	No
On-site law enforcement/ security staff	Not applicable (but interviews are conducted in Law Enforcement Center)	No	2 pm-10 pm, M-F 4 pm-12 am, Sa-Su	No
On-site transportation	Not applicable (Intake workers transport in some situations)	No	No (Bailiff transports in some situations)	No (Assessors transport in some situations)
On-site medical support	Not applicable	No	No	No
Information-sharing and MIS capabilities				
Computerized program MIS	Yes	Now implementing	No	Now implementing
Other MIS linkages	None currently	(Manual access to probation and Dept. of Social & Rehabilitative Services records)	-Court & commitment history, including abuse & neglect cases (UT Div. of Youth Corrections)	-State court information system -School District

Key Characteristics of Community Assessment Center Sites				
Characteristic	Kansas		Utah	Colorado
	Lawrence/ Douglas County*	Olathe/ Johnson County	Salt Lake City/ Salt Lake County	Golden/ Jefferson County
Pending linkages	None currently	Integrated MIS for Sheriff, Court Services, & District Attorney is under development--program will have access to it	None currently	-NCIC/CCIC -Statewide detention screening database -(Data Committee is trying to develop system that would link all county data systems)
Budget	\$128,000	\$500,000	\$392,000 (excluding Sheriff's deputies)	\$650,000

*This location does not meet the working definition of a CAC that was established for the fact-finding effort. This program involves an assessment process, but not an assessment center. Information on the program is included for comparative purposes only.

Appendix B.

Profiles of Sites Visited for the Community Assessment Center Fact-Finding Project

The Florida Sites

Background

The first juvenile assessment center (JAC) in Florida opened its doors in Tampa in 1993, the product of a local collaboration among law enforcement, juvenile justice, and youth service agencies. The program proved immediately popular with law enforcement and other agencies and soon earned the endorsement of the Florida Legislature. In 1993, the legislature appropriated funds to assist in establishing two additional JACs. In 1994, legislators followed up with \$2,000,000 more to encourage their expansion throughout the state. In appropriating the funds, the legislature also authorized the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to work cooperatively with law enforcement, schools, and service providers in each DJJ District to establish assessment centers.

As of April 1996, nine JACs were in operation, six of them providing round the clock access, central booking for police, and comprehensive assessment operations for delinquents. Most sites also provide intake and assessment for some types of nonoffenders. The usual approach is for several agencies to be located under one roof, with one agency designated to manage the program. Local agreements determine who is the lead agency at each location. Plans are underway to open JACs in the remaining DJJ Districts, although not all will offer the "full-service" model pioneered by Tampa.

DJJ provides staff and funding at all JAC locations. Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Services (ADM), within the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), is also a significant contributor to the JAC movement through its contracts for substance abuse screening and assessment. In addition, ADM funds several juvenile addiction receiving facilities, which are short-term residential programs for youth in need of detoxification, stabilization, or assessment for substance abuse problems. Four addiction receiving facilities share a building with JACs and are managed by the same agency.

As the JAC approach has gained recognition, there have been several relevant developments. Florida's public education statute was amended last year to permit greater sharing of school information for purposes of assessment, case management, and court disposition, provided that there is an interagency agreement in place. Meanwhile, DJJ is writing policies and procedures for JACs and developing quality assurance standards, with help from a committee of state and local people who have been involved in the JAC movement. A Florida Juvenile Justice Providers Association was formed in January 1996, representing 22 provider organizations in the state, many of which are ADM or DJJ contractors with an interest in juvenile justice programming. This organization has been sponsoring statewide meetings of JAC participants.

Other statewide initiatives will eventually affect the MIS capabilities of the JACs. Most important, DJJ is spearheading development of a new juvenile justice MIS for statewide use. (Until recently, juvenile justice functions fell under the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, which incorporated delinquent history information in its Children's Information System.) The new DJJ

system is expected to incorporate collection of common data elements from all JACs. Also, the State Department of Law Enforcement is looking at ways to enhance sharing of arrest information statewide.

Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)

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Darrell W. Manning, Program Supervisor

History

The Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) opened in January 1993. It began by serving truants, then opened up to felons in May 1993. Misdemeanants were added to the target population in April 1994.

The program was the result of nearly a year of planning spearheaded by the Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc. (ACTS), a nonprofit provider of substance abuse intervention and treatment. The immediate impetus for the program was the availability of grants for centralizing substance abuse assessment under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. However, other key agencies, including the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and the District Office of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, saw this an opportunity to tackle other shortcomings of the current juvenile justice process, which they saw as wasteful of police time, and inefficient and ineffective in meeting the needs of the area's many multi-problem youth. The planning process involved a broad coalition of agencies involved in law enforcement, juvenile justice, and treatment.

Program structure: The lead agency for JAC is ACTS, which provides the assessment staff for the program, manages the facility, and coordinates the efforts of all the agencies involved. The on-site agencies include the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, the Tampa Police Department, Hillsborough County Public Schools, the Hillsborough County Department of Children's Services, and the University of South Florida. The ACTS Board of Directors is the primary policy-making body for the program. The JAC has no formal board of its own, but the participating agencies meet frequently to discuss policy and programmatic issues.

Target population: Youth aged 12-17 who are taken into custody by police, including

- Juvenile delinquents
- Truants.

Police must use the JAC for youth who are bound for detention. It is optional for other youth. However, staff estimate that only 3 percent of arrested youth in Hillsborough County are not brought to the JAC.

Location/facilities: The program is located on the second floor of an old building that was renovated specifically to house the JAC. It contains a secure area with a sally-port for controlled entry by police

officers, where juveniles are booked, assessed, and held until they are transported to detention or released to a responsible adult or community program. The area provides for "open booking," with a central desk for Sheriff's deputies and an open waiting area for youth. The area has seclusion rooms and restraint chairs for use in controlling unruly youth. The building also includes a non-secure side where truants are handled, parents are received, and meetings are held with youth released from the secure area and their parents. The lower level of the building houses a 24-bed addiction receiving facility for juveniles. Buildings across the street house other ACTS programs, including a variety of diversion and treatment programs that serve some JAC clients.

Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services provided

For arrestees

Central booking: Arrested youth enter the facility through the secure sallyport. Upon arrival, DJJ screeners check youth for suicide risk or other health conditions requiring emergency intervention. The nurse on duty at the addiction receiving facility (ARF) will assist if needed. Officers are required to transport youth elsewhere for emergency medical attention or escort them to the ARF if they are intoxicated. For mental health crises, screeners can consult with Northside Mental Health or summon their Mobile Crisis Unit. If youth are medically acceptable for entry, screeners check for outstanding warrants, advise youth of their rights, and turn them over to the Sheriff's deputies in charge of the secure booking area. Deputies search, fingerprint, and photograph the youth, orient them to the waiting room rules, and supervise a urinalysis. A male and female deputy are on duty at all times.

Assessment: While booking is underway, DJJ screeners check the youth's delinquent history and pick-up orders to determine his eligibility for detention, using a standard state form. An ACTS counselor completes the rest of the assessment. He or she first administers the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT), a series of 139 yes/no items that flags potential problems in several domains of psychosocial functioning. Then staff complete a psychosocial assessment form that pulls together demographic information, delinquent and dependency history, treatment history, substance usage, educational, and family information elicited from the youth or from in-house data bases. The assessment process typically takes about 1½ hours. Counselors enter information directly into the computer as they talk with youth. For felons and youth who are detention-bound, this is the end of the initial assessment process. For misdemeanants, most of whom are released directly to their parents after the assessment, the counselor will meet with the parents when they arrive to discuss the results of the assessment and collect additional information. At this time, the counselor will advise the parents if they have identified problem areas that suggest more assessment is needed. They will also make referral recommendations and explain any diversion options for which the youth may be eligible. If parents refuse to pick up the child or there is some other reason to believe that immediate return home is unsuitable (such as an allegation of abuse or neglect), staff will arrange an alternative placement, in collaboration with Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services child protective

investigators if necessary. The program aims to release felons from the facility within 6 hours and misdemeanants within 4 hours.

Whether a youth is detention-bound or not, within 3 days JAC staff prepare recommendations to the State Attorney's Office advising whether the child should be diverted from prosecution or is more appropriate for judicial handling. Staff are thoroughly familiar with the requirements of the various diversion programs in the area, and in most cases the State Attorney concurs with their recommendation. The results of the psychosocial assessment, along with POSIT scores, are condensed into a 6-page "dossier", which follows the youth wherever he goes--to diversion, to the State Attorney's Office, and/or to DJJ field case managers who will be handling the case. The Public Defender's access to information is restricted to those cases where a court file has been opened (although the agency would like broader access). Parents of misdemeanants get written referral recommendations.

Youth who are determined to need further assessment, because of their POSIT scores or other factors, are handled in various ways depending on their location and needs. Youth in detention are referred to Northside Mental Health counselors who operate a unit at the detention center. Youth who have returned home and appear to have substance abuse problems will be contacted for further assessment by Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime, a program which is operated by ACTS and is located across the street from the JAC.

Case management: Currently, case management is limited to misdemeanants, because of the JAC's large caseload. Other cases are turned over to Department of Juvenile Justice field staff for case management. The JAC's case management for misdemeanants consists mainly of monitoring a youth's compliance with his or her diversion program and call-backs to families to determine whether they have followed up on the referral recommendations. Case management lasts 90 days or until completion of the diversion program. If a youth fails on diversion, the JAC case manager will recommend to the State Attorney whether the youth should be reinstated in the program, transferred to another program, or prosecuted.

For truants

Youth who are picked up for truancy are brought to the Truancy Center on the non-secure side of the JAC, where staff are available on school days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A law enforcement officer checks youth in, takes their property, gets parent contact information, and determines that they have no outstanding charges or warrants that would necessitate their transfer to the secure side of the building. While an officer attempts to reach parents, youth are brought to a classroom setting, where an ACTS counselor supervises them and conducts assessments. The assessment process is similar to that of arrestees except that, because of the case volume, youth usually self-administer the POSIT. A school system terminal is available at the Truancy Center, on which the ACTS counselor can access a restricted range of information about the youth's schooling. When the school social worker is present, she will obtain a more complete history from the MIS. The counselor also obtains a printout of the youth's delinquency and dependency record from terminals on the secure side. When the assessment

is completed, she passes along all cases to the school social worker, who follows up on cases where there appear to be school-related problem areas. The ACTS counselor also routinely notes significant problems related to runaway, ungovernability, or family conflict on the intake form. These forms are reviewed weekly by a Department of Children's Services worker who is stationed across the street. She contacts families to offer counseling services in cases where there appears to be a need for some intervention.

When the parent arrives to pick up a child, the law enforcement officer explains the infraction and provides a form to be given to the school when the parent returns the child there. Then the parent is directed to the school social worker, who may provide further information and make recommendations based on the assessment results. A school psychologist who is stationed at the Truancy Center provides backup for the social worker, acts as a resource person, and compiles data on the program, in addition to other school system duties not directly related to JAC.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities:

The JAC has its own MIS, which is now being revamped and rewritten into a more user-friendly format. The current system permits direct entry of client demographics, assessment data, client dispositions, and JAC process data. The system produces routine reports on client characteristics, caseloads and case flow, and arrests by each law enforcement agency. The JAC is unique in having an in-house research capability, which is supported by DJJ and is responsible for quality control of data, monitoring trends, developing routine reports on clients served, and producing special analyses. The on-site research team extracts data files needed for research studies and analyzes them using other software.

In addition to its own MIS, the JAC has terminals that provide access to

- Criminal histories, through NCIC and FCIC, the Sheriff's Office MIS, and the State Attorney's MIS
- Delinquency, child abuse, and neglect histories, through the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services MIS
- School information, through the School Board's MIS.

Information-sharing among the partners is governed by an interagency agreement. In some cases, access to certain MIS databases is restricted to certain staff.

Staffing and budget

The staffing pattern includes the following components:

- **Administrative staff**, who work for ACTS. These staff include the Program Supervisor, who supervises ACTS staff and oversees operations of the entire facility, and a secretary.
- Four **control room receptionists**, employed by ACTS, who manage the doors that control access to the secure area, handle initial intake paperwork, and help with delinquent history checks, data entry, and other tasks.
- **The Sheriff's Department Central Booking unit**, which consists of a sergeant and 11 deputies.
- The **Department of Juvenile Justice screening team**, which consist of a supervisor and nine staff.
- The **ACTS assessment team**, which consists of 3 shift supervisors, 5 felony assessors, and 12 misdemeanor case managers.
- The **Truancy Center** staff, consisting of a full-time officer from the Sheriff's Department , a half-time officer from the Tampa Police Department, and a psychologist and a social worker from the school district. One of the ACTS misdemeanor case managers regularly works at the Center.
- Five **van drivers**, employed by ACTS, who operate the program's two secure and one non-secure vans.
- A **drug-testing nurse**, employed by ACTS.
- A **research and data management team**, consisting of a professor from the University of South Florida, two research assistants, and several interns.

ACTS case managers are required to have a bachelor's degree in a related field and one year of experience working with youth. Degrees are not required for assessors and control room personnel. All DJJ and ACTS staff who work at the JAC are cross-trained so that they may fill in for one another at peak times and during absences, holidays, and vacations.

The program's operating budget is estimated to be \$3.4 million. When the program began, many of the staff, including 10 Sheriff's deputies, the school system personnel, the DJJ detention screening staff, the Tampa P.D. officer, and the Department of Social Services staff, were reassigned to JAC from other locations and supported from regular agency budgets. The Anti-drug Abuse Act funding and a contract from DJJ supported the assessment and case management staff. Building renovations

were supported primarily by Hillsborough County, ACTS, and the local Children's Board, but many other agencies pitched in to provide start-up support and equipment.

Outcomes

In 1995, the program handled 9550 intakes, 92 percent of whom were delinquents. An estimated 60 to 70 percent were released to detention, with while most of the others went home either on home release or home detention. In July 1995, the most recent month for which complete data are available, 85 percent of the delinquent youth agreed to a urinalysis; 39 percent tested positive, usually for marijuana.

About three-fourths of the delinquents assessed by ACTS were recommended for in-depth assessment, based on the POSIT and the standard assessment interview.

The program has not been formally evaluated. However, the partners and staff believe it has resulted in:

- Savings of law enforcement time (the Sheriff estimates that he was able to put 15 officers back on the street as a result)
- Increased information-sharing, coordination, and mutual support among agencies, which have facilitated other program development for juveniles
- Increased juvenile arrests and pick-ups for truancy
- Earlier intervention in problem behavior
- Much faster processing of diverted youth
- Increased ability to monitor and track individual outcomes (although the current process is cumbersome)
- Increased ability to document the problems in the juvenile justice and youth service systems and use the information to affect funding priorities (most recently through informing legislators of substance abuse testing results).

Media attention to the program has been positive and many state legislators have toured the site. The partners are not aware of any opposition to the program in the community at large.

This organization has authority to distribute funds garnered under a Florida statute that permits localities to set aside a percentage of taxes for services to children and youth.

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** Because the JAC was a new concept, it was not recognized in Florida statutes, nor were there any policies and procedures to serve as a model when it began. Participating agencies were particularly wary about information-sharing. Since then, JACs have been specifically recognized in various statutes, and new legislation has facilitated greater information-sharing. In general, planning and assembling funding for the program was time-consuming and complicated. The Sheriff's commitment to place 10 deputies at the JAC was an important key to success.
- **Net-widening.** The partners state that there has been a significant increase in referrals to the program over time. They are unsure as to what proportion of the increase is attributable to the JAC, but police admit that the program has made them more willing to take youth into custody. The partners suspect that the program may have produced a small increase in detentions, primarily because the JAC has better information available about arrested youth. Florida detention criteria are fairly inflexible, however, and recent statutory changes have increased the burden on detention, independent of JAC. For the non-detainable youth, staff try to triage and not to overserve.
- **Relationships with service providers.** The JAC policy is to make three referral recommendations, if possible, so as to diffuse concerns that counselors may be favoring certain programs, including those run by ACTS. However, ACTS offers some programs for which there are no other equivalents.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** Both the State Attorney and the Public Defender's Office participated in developing JAC policies. They worked together on the consent form that youth sign upon entry, which describes the process and the fact that it is voluntary. Youth also are informed of their right to an attorney, who can be accessed by paging the Public Defender's Office. According to the Public Defender, there have only been a handful of calls from the JAC since the program's inception, and if resources were available, she would prefer to station an attorney on site. However, the Public Defender does not believe there have been instances of assessment information being abused. A youth's refusal to participate in the assessment may be noted by staff in their reports but staff are not aware of any case where this has been detrimental to the youth. Information that youth disclose during the assessment cannot be used in the adjudicatory process.

Future prospects

The partners believe that there is sufficient support at the state level and in the community to assure the program's survival. However, the main grant that supports assessment services will expire in Fall 1996, so those funds will need to be replaced. In addition, the current JAC space has become

inadequate. Some expansion is anticipated, since the state legislature recently approved funds for capital improvements at JACs and earmarked a portion for Hillsborough County.

Orange County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)

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History

The Orange County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) opened in November 1994. It was the product of a multi-agency planning process, begun in Fall 1993 and carried out by key decisionmakers who eventually became the JAC's Governing Board. The planning group aimed to address several systemic problems in the juvenile justice process. The central concerns were the lack of coordination around juvenile booking and intake, inadequate assessment resources for juveniles and their families, and the fragmentation of assessment and case management services in the county.

Program structure: The program's Governing Board consists of the County Chairman, the Presiding Juvenile Judge, the Superintendent of Orange County Schools, the State Attorney, the Public Defender, the Clerk of Courts, the Orlando Police Chief, the Orange County Sheriff, and the district managers for the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), the HRS Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Services Division (ADM), and the State Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The group began by meeting monthly, but now meets bi-monthly. Human Services Associates, Inc. (HSA), a private nonprofit organization with expertise in assessment and service coordination, has been given responsibility for facilitating and managing the overall program. Besides HSA, on-site agencies include DJJ, Orange County Corrections, the Children's Home Society, Orange County Public Schools, and the Juvenile Alternative Services Program. Agency heads from HSA, ADM, DJJ, the Orange County Corrections Division, and the County Division of Health & Community Services make up the Management Team. There is also a Site-based Management Team composed of key staff from the JAC. Operational issues that cannot be resolved at the site level are referred to the Management Team.

Target population: Delinquents from age 9 through 18, including

- Juvenile arrestees taken into custody in Orange County
- "At-large" arrestees who have not been taken into custody but have been directed by police to report to the Court Clerk's Office
- All juvenile detainees from neighboring Osceola County.

Osceola law enforcement officers determine the detainability of the youth they have in custody by telephoning and consulting JAC staff.

The program currently lacks the staff and space to handle other types of youth. The program does not handle curfew violators and provides only booking and fingerprinting for misdemeanor traffic matters. Use of the JAC is mandatory for detainees, but voluntary in other types of cases.

Location/facilities: The program is housed in a one-story building in downtown Orlando that was renovated for JAC use. The building includes a secure area with a sallyport for controlled entry by police officers and arrestees. There juveniles are booked, assessed, and held until they can be released to detention, their parents, or another community program. The area provides for “open booking,” with a central desk for the officers in charge and an open waiting area for youth. There are seclusion rooms and a restraint chair for control of youth who misbehave while awaiting assessment. There also are offices around the perimeter where staff can meet privately with youth. The non-secure side of the building contains a public waiting room and additional offices for the staff of JAC and other programs. The building also houses a 20-bed addiction receiving facility (ARF) for adolescents, which is operated by HSA. There is a Public Health Unit with an HIV clinic across the street that accepts program referrals.

Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, assessment staff are off-duty from one a.m. to seven a.m., so youth brought in during those hours are assessed by follow-up appointment.

Services provided

For arrestees who are brought directly to JAC

Central booking and screening: Police are encouraged to call ahead when they have a youth in custody so that screeners can begin checking the youth’s warrants, history, and eligibility for detention. Upon arrival, screeners make sure that there is no need for emergency medical treatment for intoxication or other physical or psychological problems. Officers are required to transport the youth elsewhere if treatment is needed, or in cases of intoxication, they escort youth to the ARF. If the youth is acceptable for immediate admission, the officer can submit the arrest paperwork and leave. Corrections officers log the juvenile in, and take care of fingerprinting and photographing. Detention screening, using a standard state form, is then completed to determine whether the youth can be released following his or her assessment.

Assessment: Upon entry to the JAC, each youth is assigned to an HSA case manager who will complete the assessment. This worker obtains the youth’s consent to participate in assessment and urinalysis, and supervises the urinalysis. The assessment includes completion of a one-page HIV risk assessment and a 10-page biopsychosocial worksheet covering multiple dimensions of behavior and functioning. Repeat offenders who are on community control supervision with DJJ receive a condensed version of the biopsychosocial assessment. When parents arrive to pick up their child, they are asked to complete a brief survey concerning the youth’s behavior and prior treatment. At this point, the assessors provide referral recommendations to the family and if possible, directly set up an

appointment with the referral agency. Staff estimate that they see about 95 percent of the parents of the nondetainees, immediately or by follow-up appointment. They do not see the parents of youth who are bound for detention, but try to speak with them by telephone. The aim is to release all youth from the JAC within 6 hours.

Assessors follow up and attempt to complete assessments on youth who are released during the hours that assessors are off-duty. Youth released home are called and asked to come in for an assessment within three to five days. Approximately 60 to 70 percent comply, although the process is voluntary. Staff visit the youth who have been sent to detention and complete the assessment there.

Assessment information and recommendations are entered directly on the worksheet and other forms. There is no separate assessment report. However, for a youth on community control, the assessor shares his or her findings and recommendations with the community control counselor. In all other cases, the assessor prepares a State Attorney Recommendation, indicating whether the youth should be diverted to a community program or be handled judicially. While awaiting the filing decision (which takes a few days to a month, ordinarily), staff assist families in linking up with referral resources.

Case management: Responsibility for further case management depends on the State Attorney's decision. If the youth is diverted, the HSA case manager retains the file until notified that diversion has been successfully completed. If a case is petitioned, the youth's file is passed on to a DJJ case manager at the JAC. The HSA and the DJJ case managers will jointly present the case at a multi-disciplinary case staffing where a service plan and recommendations are discussed. The DJJ case manager then takes over the file and prepares a comprehensive pre-disposition report. The agencies represented at staffings can vary, depending on the child's needs profile, his or her legal status, and the family's financial situation. For instance, special staffings are held for youth who will be committed to the custody of DJJ, for sex offenders, and for those in need of long term substance abuse treatment. The DJJ case manager remains responsible for helping the youth and family work on the service plan until the case is disposed of in court. Cases are reviewed in peer review meetings every 30 days until they are closed.

Other services: HSA case managers attempt to contact victims by mail or phone to ascertain their feelings about diversion of the youth involved in their case.

For "at-large" arrestees

At-large offenders are processed initially through the Court Clerk's Office as a result of an arrest affidavit from police. The Court Clerk in turn directs them via affidavit to the JAC, where they enter the non-secure area of the building for future appointments. They are assigned to a case manager who specializes in at-large cases. This unit is jointly staffed by HSA and DJJ case managers who carry out

ADM requires its contracted providers to give priority to JAC clients. With the implementation of JAC, ADM also required providers to reallocate staff who were previously involved in assessment to treatment functions, so as to avoid duplication with JAC.

the same assessment and recommendation process that is completed for other arrestees. However, a higher proportion of these arrestees are diverted from prosecution. If a case is to be prosecuted, it will be passed along to a DJJ case manager outside this unit. Diverted cases are retained until diversion is successfully completed.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities:

The JAC has two MIS databases of its own, one for juvenile arrestees who are brought to the secure side of the building, and another for at-large offenders who come in the non-secure side. The system contains only basic demographic information and charge data for each occasion that the juvenile is admitted. The remainder of data collected during the assessment process is contained in the paper files. Ultimately, the JAC expects to participate in the statewide database that is being developed by DJJ. In the interim, staff are hoping to integrate the two in-house databases and make the system more user-friendly.

Other information sources that can be accessed in-house include:

- Criminal histories, through NCIC/FCIC and the Orange County Court MIS
- Delinquency, child abuse, and neglect histories, through the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services MIS.

The program has no direct link to the school district's MIS, but the on-site school social worker can access the information it contains.

Staffing and budget

The JAC staffing pattern includes the following components:

- The **HSA Program Director**, who is responsible for supervision of the facility and the HSA staff.
- The **detention screening unit**, which consists of one supervisor and ten case managers employed by DJJ, and four case managers and two clerical personnel employed by HSA. These staff are primarily involved in detention screening, although the HSA case managers also help out with assessments.
- The **booking and security unit**, which is staffed by one sergeant, two corporals, and 12 officers from Orange County Corrections.
- The **arrestee assessment unit**, which consists of two supervisors and 11 case managers who are employed by HSA.

- The **at-large assessment unit**, which consists of two HSA and two DJJ case managers who handle assessments of youth who are ordered to report to the JAC by the Court Clerk
- The **Department of Juvenile Justice unit**, which consists of a program administrator, two supervisors, and 11 case managers who handle JAC cases through the court process up to disposition. DJJ also employs a commitment manager, who holds case staffings for all youth who are sentenced to DJJ custody, and a civil citation manager, who supervises first-time offenders who have been given a ticket to appear at the JAC and are typically required to do some type of community service.
- A part-time **school social worker**, employed by the School District, who assists case managers by obtaining the information they need from the school MIS.
- The **University of Central Florida internship program**, which consists of 8 graduate-level and 3 bachelor's level social work students, who are supervised by an M.S.W. employed by HSA. These students help out in the assessment and juvenile justice units, as well as in the ARF at the site.
- A **caseworker from the Children's Home Society**, who is on site to take referrals of JAC youth with problems related to family conflict or ungovernability and who participates in case staffings.
- The **Juvenile Alternative Services Program (JASP)**, which consists of 7 staff employed by the nonprofit Human Services Council. These staff provide a diversion program for first and second offenders with service needs.

The facility also houses HSA's Family Service Planning Team and Case Review Committee, who are sometimes involved in staffing JAC cases and funding treatment for indigent youth.

The program has two non-secure vans at its disposal and relies on the detention center to pick up youth who require secure transport to detention.

HSA assessors are required to have a bachelor's degree and 2 years of experience, preferably in work with adolescents and substance abuse/mental health. DJJ and HSA staff are cross-trained.

The operating budget for the program is estimated at \$3,000,000. Most of the staff involved, including the corrections officers, the assessment staff, and the DJJ staff were transferred from other locations. The assessment staff had been and continue to be funded by ADM under the Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) program, along with additional funding from DJJ.

Costs of obtaining, renovating, and equipping the JAC site are estimated at about \$2,000,000. Building and renovation costs were shared by the County, ADM, and HSA. Many agencies assisted in equipping the facility.

Outcomes

The program handled 11,801 delinquency intakes in 1995, including 9103 intakes through booking and 3506 at-large intakes. During the first year of operation, 47 percent of the intakes resulted in detention, 46 percent were released home, and 2 percent went to shelters or other settings. Seventy percent remained at the JAC for less than six hours. Eighty-nine (89%) percent of clients were referred to treatment.

Surveys of law enforcement officers and parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with the services provided. Otherwise, the JAC has not been formally evaluated. However, the partners believe that the program has resulted in

- Savings in law enforcement time (estimated to equal the time of 14 officers)
- Some increase in arrests
- Increased use of diversion
- Expedited referrals of youth to drug treatment and other services
- Quicker resolution of juvenile cases referred to court
- Increased collaboration among key decisionmakers in other areas
- Reduced duplication of assessment.

The program has had to re-assess its operations, however, to ensure that it is meeting the needs of its juvenile clients. After the first few months of operation, the JAC partners found that case managers were completing assessments on less than 30 percent of the youth brought in and were diverting only 20-25 percent. A work group composed of DJJ, HSA, and ADM staff was appointed to come up with a plan to remedy these problems. Although the JAC had originally attempted to use DJJ and HSA case managers interchangeably, the work group concluded that the program would work better with more specialization of functions along agency lines. As a result, many tasks were redistributed and goals of 100 percent assessment and 60 percent diversion were set. Implementation of some of these changes is still underway. However, staff are now completing assessments on close to 90 percent of youth and diversion rates are increasing. Four hundred and three (403) youth were diverted in January 1996, compared with 233 the previous January, and 122 in January 1994, before the program opened.

Community reaction to the program has been favorable.

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** The biggest challenge was putting together the funding for the program. There also are some unresolved conflicts of philosophy and practice among the participating agencies. Greater specialization of functions along agency lines is expected to alleviate some of these conflicts.
- **Net-widening.** Comparisons of statistics from the first year of operation with the preceding year show a slight increase in juvenile complaints. Petitions also went up by 28 percent, but program managers believe this stemmed from prosecution policies unrelated to the JAC. With the increased use of civil citations by law enforcement, there is some expectation that the number of juveniles taken into custody will decrease. The partners do not believe the program has had a significant effect on the detention population.
- **Relationships with service providers.** There was some initial concern among treatment providers about how referrals would be made. Providers now attend staffings at which referral recommendations are developed. Private pay providers who participate are expected to accept referrals of indigent youth from time to time. HSA itself provides no treatment services other than the ARF.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** Before participating in the assessment and urinalysis, youth must sign a consent form for each. Youth also sign a client contract for case management by JAC and parents sign releases to permit information-sharing with juvenile justice and treatment agencies. JAC staff do not discuss the facts of the current charges with youth.

Future prospects

The partners expect that the program will continue, because it has strong backing among key decisionmakers and a favorable image in the community. However, some of the current funding is temporary, and additional resources will be needed to maintain current levels of operation. A truancy component for Orange County will be added within the next year.

Juvenile Assessment and Receiving Center (JARC)

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History: The Juvenile Assessment and Receiving Center (JARC) began full operations in November 1995. It represents the culmination of a movement to streamline assessment processes and co-locate services for youth that has been going on for several years. A major milestone occurred in 1993 when the District Office of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and DISC Village, Inc., a private provider of assessment and treatment services for youth, began jointly staffing a centralized intake system for juvenile offenders. A next step involved the transfer of DJJ community control staff to the same location. The final step was the construction of a new facility adjacent to the old programs, which has enabled the partners to put centralized intake, centralized booking for law enforcement, a Truancy Center, and an Addiction Receiving Facility all under one roof.

Program structure: The JARC involves a broad-based partnership of public and private agencies, including the Leon County Sheriff's Office, the Tallahassee Police Department, the Leon County School Board, DJJ, the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services Division (ADM) of the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), DISC Village, Inc., Capital City Youth Services, the SDOS Consortium, and others. DISC Village, a provider of substance abuse treatment and other interventions for adolescents and families, is the lead agency and is responsible for managing the facility. A Steering Committee of the key funders, as well as the State Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the Clerk of Circuit Court, meets bi-monthly to establish policy and review progress.

Target population: Youth aged 5-18, including

- Juvenile offenders taken into custody by the police in Waculla and Leon Counties
- Truants taken into custody by police in Leon County or brought in by school resource officers.

Police must bring in all youth who will require detention, while use of the JARC is optional in other cases.

Location/facilities: The program is located in a new building, built to house the JARC. The building includes a secure area, with a sallyport for controlled entry by police officers, where juveniles are booked, assessed, and held until they are released to detention, a responsible adult, or another

School resources officers are school-based officers jointly funded by the Sheriff's Office and the School Board.

community program. The area provides for “open booking;” there is a central desk for the officers in charge and an open waiting area for youth. Two seclusion rooms at the perimeter of the waiting area and a restraint chair can be used to control serious misconduct while a youth is awaiting assessment. The other side of the building contains a non-secure area where truants are brought, and where staff meet with families and with youth released from the secure area. The building also houses a 10-bed addiction receiving facility. Other buildings in the same complex house DJJ case managers, diversion programs for juveniles, and DISC Village outpatient services.

Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services provided

For arrestees

Central booking: Arrested youth enter the facility through the secure sallyport. Officers are encouraged to call ahead so that JARC staff can check the youth’s MIS records and assemble background information before he or she arrives. Upon arrival, the youth is first screened for suicide risk and other mental or physical conditions that require emergency medical attention. Minor medical problems can be attended to by the nurse on duty at the ARF. Officers are directed to transport youth with more serious problems to a hospital. Intoxicated youth can be escorted to the ARF next door until they are stable enough to return. If the youth is cleared for entry to JARC, police turn over custody to the correctional officers on duty. Police usually leave within minutes. Correctional officers then search, fingerprint, and photograph the youth, and orient him or her to waiting area rules. Youth also are asked to provide a urine sample.

Assessment: The assessment procedure consists of detention screening (using a standard state form) and a one to three-hour clinical interview, conducted by an intake counselor. The assessment covers ten main areas, including family history, substance abuse and legal history, educational, medical, and peer issues. Based on the results of the screening and assessment, counselors determine whether youth must be transferred to detention, can be released directly to a parent or guardian, or require transfer to some other location such as an emergency shelter. They also prepare a recommendation for the State Attorney, advising whether the youth should be diverted or handled through the judicial process. If youth are to be detained, they are transported to the detention facility by JARC drivers. Most of the remaining youth go home with parents, who meet with JARC staff upon arrival and are asked to provide additional information for assessment purposes. At this point, JARC staff discuss the legal process and what they will recommend to the State Attorney. They then explain that the family will be contacted after the State Attorney has made a decision and a case staffing has been held. Unless there are unusual difficulties arranging placement or a parent refuses to take custody, a youth leaves the facility within 6 hours.

Following a case staffing (see below), the results of the assessment are prepared in the form of a biopsychosocial/pre-disposition report, which is printed on DJJ stationary, and sent to the State

Attorney. The public defender also receives a copy if the case is to be petitioned. Results of the urinalysis are not included in the report.

Case management: Within one to three days after a youth's release from JARC, the case is scheduled for a multidisciplinary staffing. At staffings, attended by the intake counselors and provider agencies, the team develops juvenile justice disposition and treatment recommendations for each youth. Those in attendance have all signed an agreement not to divulge confidential information revealed in this meeting. Following the staffing, intake counselors retain responsibility for case management of these youth until the case is disposed of in court, or the youth has completed his or her assigned diversion program. For offenders who will be prosecuted, case managers take responsibility for making referrals and linking families to treatment resources while the case is pending. Acceptance of referrals prior to disposition is voluntary, however. For offenders who have been offered a non-judicial option, case managers ensure that the youth enter the diversion program. They hold the case until the diversion requirements have been completed or re-open it for further consideration if the youth fails on diversion.

Other services: Staff send out a letter to the victim in every case, offering victim assistance services.

For truants

Truants do not require booking or secure handling, so they are taken directly to the Truancy Center. The Center operates on a normal work week, and is inactive in periods when the schools are closed. Like arrested youth, truants receive an assessment, although the interview tends to focus more intensively on school-related problems. Assessments are conducted by a JARC counselor employed by DISC Village or a counselor from Capital City Youth Services, a provider of runaway shelter and other services for the area's children and families in need of services (CINS/FINS). A truancy specialist from the school system also has office space at the Center. She helps obtain school information about specific youth and identifies relevant resources available through the school system.

After the assessment, the youth's school is notified and parents are asked to pick up the child. Counselors then talk to the parent about any issues or concerns and make referrals to other agencies, if appropriate or desired by the parent.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities: The Center has its own MIS, which is designed to track client demographics, type and source of referrals, case dispositions, recommendations and referrals made, the State Attorney's response to recommendations, and repeat admissions to JARC. It also logs information about case processing within the center, such as times in and out of booking. A plan to track client progress via reports from referral agencies has been tabled until a feedback requirement can be built into providers' contracts. The system is still very new. Efforts continue to adapt it to information and reporting needs as they are identified, and to make it more user-friendly. Monthly statistical reports are prepared, showing frequencies for the main data elements in the system. Additional reports are possible through special programming.

Besides the information in its own MIS, the JARC has terminals that can access:

- Delinquency, child abuse, and neglect histories, through the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services' statewide MIS
- School attendance, grades, and the name of the custodial parent, through the School District MIS. Automated disciplinary information will be added to that system soon.

The JARC is also working on linkages to the Court Clerk's Office and NCIC/FCIC.

Information-sharing among agencies is governed by an interagency agreement among the main partners.

Staffing and budget

The JARC staff include:

- The **JARC Administrator**, who is responsible for overseeing all program operations, including the addiction receiving center at the site. She is employed by the lead agency, DISC Village.
- The **intake and assessment team**, consisting of 14 full-time and 2 part-time counselors, 2 supervisors, and 5 support staff. Four of the counselors, one supervisor, and one support staffer are DJJ employees. The rest work for DISC Village.
- The **booking and security unit**, which has 6 certified correctional officers and 6 control room technicians, all employed by DISC Village. The nurse on duty at the addiction receiving facility provides medical assistance to the booking staff when needed.
- The **Truancy Center**, which has a supervisor, a counselor, and a secretary from DISC Village, a counselor from the School Board, and a counselor from Capital City Youth Services.
- The **transportation unit**, which has 6.5 FTE drivers and a supervisor employed by DISC Village.
- **Victim assistance**, which has a supervisor and a court liaison employed by DISC Village.

DISC Village intake workers typically have a bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, or a related field, and some pertinent experience. DJJ staff were selected from existing personnel or applicants who appeared to have the skills and aptitude for working in the JARC environment. Intake counselors from both agencies have been cross-trained so that all share a knowledge of pertinent state laws, juvenile justice procedures, crisis intervention, and interviewing techniques.

The total operating budget for the program is estimated at \$1.8 million. Most of the JARC staff were transferred from other locations by DISC Village, DJJ, Capital City Youth Services, and the School Board. DJJ and HRS/ADM are the major funders of the assessment components, and had been funding these functions before. The most significant new staff expense was for the booking unit. This cost has been underwritten by Leon County. The School Board and DISC Village split the cost of the court liaison position.

Construction of the facility was supported by DJJ, HRS/ADM, the City of Tallahassee, and Leon County. The land was donated by the school board. Other agencies contributed to start-up costs, including the Sheriff's Office, which provided equipment and trained personnel in the use of the restraint chair.

Outcomes

From November 1995 through February 1996, the JARC booked and assessed 829 youth, 91 percent of them arrested by either the Sheriff's Office or the Tallahassee Police Department. The Truancy Center also handled 338 students through February. Over half (57%) of the arrestees were released to family members, 40 percent were transported to detention, and most of the others went to the ARF. The average turnaround time for law enforcement in February was 2 to 3 minutes. Of the arrestees agreeing to a urinalysis in February, 35 percent tested positive for marijuana, alcohol, or cocaine.

The program is still in its infancy and has not been formally evaluated. However, the partners mentioned a variety of results so far:

- Significant savings in law enforcement time
- A large increase in truancy pickups and some increase in arrests.
- Greater collaboration among partner agencies and improved access to decisionmakers in those agencies
- Increased compliance with state requirements for notification of school personnel when a youth has been arrested
- Greater efficiency in the assessment process and fewer youth "falling through the cracks"
- Faster resolution of cases in juvenile court, because assessment information is available more rapidly
- Prompt identification of youth who need substance abuse interventions

- More information about the prevalence of drug use among juvenile offenders, which has helped demonstrate the magnitude of the problem to decisionmakers and funders.

The partners are not aware of any opposition to the program in the community at large or among other agencies.

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** The partners agree that putting the plan together and assembling the funding for it was enormously challenging. Several partners said it would have been easier if they had had a model to follow and present to funding sources initially.
- **Net-widening.** Detention criteria are so specific that the program is expected to have minimal impact on detentions. However, bookings have increased since the inception of the program (by 75 a month, according to DJJ staff) and the Public Defender reports that their case volume has gone up. Truancy pickups have also increased. The JARC will be working with the Sheriff on a new civil citation procedure for truants.
- **Relationships with service providers.** Originally, some providers were anxious about being left out. The case staffing process, which is open to providers who agree to abide by confidentiality restrictions, has alleviated this concern. Some providers have dropped out of staffings as they have filled up their caseloads or have lost interest for other reasons (possibly because many youth are unable to pay for services).
- **Minority overrepresentation.** There had been some fear that minority youth would be disproportionately targeted by law enforcement, especially for truancy pickups, but this does not seem to be occurring.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** Youth receive an explanation of the program and are required to sign a number of consent forms--for urinalysis, for participation in the assessment, for release of their records to treatment providers--and a statement that they have been informed of their legal rights. All partners agree that the information provided during the assessment is to be used for purposes of dispositional and treatment planning, and cannot be introduced in the adjudicatory process. Urinalysis results are described as being used primarily for research purposes at the moment. The Public Defender has been involved as a member of the Steering Committee. While generally pleased with the program, she reports that some parents have complained about having to go through the assessment process if their child is innocent. They seem to feel that it is mandatory.

Future prospects

The partners realize that the program will have to justify its existence if it is to maintain or expand support over the longer term. The partners are optimistic, but the program is still very new.

Pinellas Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)

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History

The Pinellas Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) opened its doors in December 1995. The planning process began over two years earlier, in response to the Florida Legislature's appropriation of funds for Juvenile Assessment Centers. The planning team included the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners, the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, the District Office of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services Division (ADM) of the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (SRS), the Pinellas County School Board, the Public Defender's Office, the State Attorney's Office, Operation PAR, and several other social service agencies.

Program structure: The program is designed to provide a "one-stop shop" for intake, assessment, and follow-up of youth taken into custody by law enforcement officers. It is managed by Operation PAR, a nonprofit provider of substance abuse treatment and prevention, which employs the assessment staff on site. Other agencies located at the JAC include the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Pinellas County School Board, Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services (PEMHS), and Family Resources-Youth and Family Connection. The program has an Advisory Council made up of representatives from the partner agencies that participated in planning and the on-site staff.

Target population: Youth of any age who have been taken into custody by the police, including

- Delinquents
- Children in need of supervision, including runaways, ungovernable, and unsupervised youth.

The program does not have the capacity to serve truants. However, no youth has been turned away.

Law enforcement officers are required to bring detainable youth to the JAC, but use of the service is voluntary in other cases.

Location/facilities: The program is located in a one story renovated building adjacent to the county jail and about a block from the county's juvenile detention facility. Law enforcement officers with youth in custody enter the secure area of the building through a sallyport. Here youth are booked, assessed, and held until they can be transferred to detention, released to a responsible adult, or placed in an

alternative shelter. The area provides for “open booking,” with a central desk for Sheriff’s deputies, a waiting area, seclusion rooms and a restraint chair for control of misconduct, and a private room and cubicles where youth can meet with JAC staff. The waiting area is divided into two sections, with delinquent youth seated on one side and nondelinquents on the other. Youth are not permitted to talk with one another while waiting. The non-secure section of the building contains offices and a conference room for administrators and staff. Parents use the non-secure entrance during the day, and are admitted into the vestibule of the secure section after hours.

Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services provided

Central booking: Upon entry to the facility, a youth is searched for weapons by deputies and then screened for physical or psychological conditions that would rule out immediate admission. Youth who require emergency medical treatment or detoxification are referred to a hospital. If there are significant psychiatric concerns, staff will call on the on-duty worker from Personal Enrichment through Mental Health (PEMH) to talk with the youth. If the youth appears to be at immediate risk of suicide or breakdown, the worker will arrange for assessment at PEMH’s emergency department. If not, the worker may recommend follow-up with a community treatment provider. In the worker’s off-duty hours, screeners consult with PEMH staff at other locations about the best handling of the case. Once the youth is determined to be appropriate for admission to JAC, the admission screener obtains demographic and arrest information and then the officer is free to leave. About 90 percent of the time, officers are in and out of the JAC within 10 minutes. At this point, the Sheriff’s deputies take over. They book and fingerprint the delinquents, provide all youth an orientation to the rules of the waiting area, and seat them to wait for assessment. Educational videos are shown on the television in the waiting room.

Assessment: Upon their admission to the JAC, DJJ screeners inform youth of their right to counsel and determine their eligibility for detention, using a computer version of Florida’s standard screening form. Assessment staff then take over, performing a urinalysis and conducting an assessment interview. Assessors belong to the Juvenile TASC (Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime) Unit, which transferred to the JAC when it opened. The assessment tool, which was developed by combining Operation PAR’s previous assessment tool and the ASAM Placement Criteria for Adolescents developed by the American Society for Addiction Medicine, covers functioning and problems in multiple areas. The typical assessment takes about 45 minutes. If youth return to the center within 60 days, staff do not readminister the full assessment, but merely update it using a paper form. Assessors may call on in-house agencies, including personnel from PEMH, the School District, and Family Resources-Youth and Family Connection to assist in conducting the assessment or provide pertinent information.

In May 1996, Operation PAR opened a 20-bed juvenile receiving facility about ½ mile away, which will take intoxicated youth.

Following the assessment, youth who are detention-eligible are transported to the juvenile detention center by detention center staff. For most other youth, parents are called to come in and pick up their child. Assessors do not usually meet with parents when they arrive. The JAC aims to release youth within 6 hours. So far, they have succeeded 93 percent of the time.

When the assessment is complete, the computer generates a narrative report, based on the data entered.

The typical report is several pages long and looks similar to a pre-disposition report. It contains a section with treatment recommendations. Assessors can transfer this narrative to a word processing program for touch-up editing. Assessment results are shared with the DJJ staff on site, who are responsible for ensuring that the DJJ case managers in the field receive the information. They also identify youth who are eligible for certain diversion programs run by the Sheriff's Office and two of the county's municipalities. These youth are directly referred to the appropriate diversion program, rather than to DJJ field staff.

Written recommendations and the results of the urinalysis are sent to parents within about 2 days, and include a general recommendation about treatment, a referral to a specific agency based on the youth's geographic location and needs, and a list of other agencies that provide a similar level of service. The program's clinical coordinator reviews all recommendations made by assessors for their first six months at the JAC. He also reviews all treatment recommendations made for residential placements and all cases in which clients received no recommended treatment services.

The program has just begun holding multidisciplinary staffings for cases where assessors are unable to identify a suitable placement or where a provider agency has rejected a youth as inappropriate for their services.

Follow-up: The program begins tracking all youth 45 days after the assessment and until the youth and family have made the first face-to-face contact with a referral agency. Most of the tracking is done through contacts with the family. However, referral agencies are required to send monthly reports on a case until the family has begun receiving services.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities:

The JAC has a user-friendly management information system, newly developed for use by Operation PAR. It tracks the movement of youth through the JAC process from booking to release, permits staff to fill out all forms directly on the computer, and generates narrative assessment reports. Operation PAR administrators say that the staff could never have handled the volume of cases so far without such a system. To protect the confidentiality of clients, the MIS is designed so that some on-site agencies cannot access all parts of the database, nor can all agencies input data.

In addition to its own MIS, the JAC has terminals providing access to:

Initially, staff provided three specific referrals, but found that parents tended to be confused by this and call back for further advice on which agency they should contact.

- Court history, through the Clerk of the Court's information system
- Delinquency, child abuse, and neglect histories, through the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services MIS
- School Board information.

Staffing and budget

The staffing pattern for the JRC includes

- The **administrative staff**, including the Program Director, who is responsible for program oversight, facility management, and supervision of the assessment team, an administrative assistant, and an MIS administrator. They are employed by Operation PAR.
- The **Sheriff's booking and security team**, consisting of 12 to 13 staff. Extra deputies are called in from the jail next door if needed.
- The **DJJ screening unit**, consisting of a supervisor, 9 intake screeners, and a secretary.
- The **assessment and follow-up team**, consisting of a clinical coordinator, a supervisor, 4.5 FTE admission screeners, 8 clinical assessors, and 3 follow-up counselors, all employed by Operation PAR. Staff are cross-trained so that they can fill in for one another if needed.
- A **mental health crisis worker** from Personal Enrichment through Mental Health (PEMH), who is on duty from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. to assist in screening youth for mental health issues and making referrals.
- Two **intake counselors** from Family Resources, Inc.-Youth and Family Connection, who help screen and make referrals for runaways, ungovernable youth, and truants who are not under the supervision of DJJ or HRS.
- A **Pinellas County School District team** composed of a school social worker and two part-time school psychologists, who provide liaison to all school system functions and can research previous services that a youth has received through the school system. They also will provide DJJ field staff with information on a youth's school attendance and behavior while he or she is awaiting disposition.
- The **Pinellas County Sheriff's diversion program**, staffed by 2 detectives, a social worker, and a clerk. Staff provide a diversion program for truants and first-time

offenders who have been arrested for misdemeanors and minor felonies by Sheriff's deputies or referred by parents or schools .

Assessment staff are required to have a bachelor's degree and some related experience, as well as the ability to work in a stressful environment.

The total operational budget for the JAC is estimated at \$1.8 million, exclusive of rent, which is taken care of by the county. Operation PAR's operational budget for administration, facility management, and assessment staff is approximately \$700,000 a year. About \$400,00 of that budget comes from a pre-existing ADM grant, which funded assessors under the Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime program. ADM allowed Operation PAR to transfer staff from this program to the JAC's assessment team. The County and a Community Partnership grant support additional assessment and follow-up staff, while a DJJ grant covers the administrative staff and facility operations. New positions for the Sheriff's booking and security unit were funded by the county. Most of the other agencies involved at the JAC, including the School District, PEMH, Family Resources, Inc.-Youth and Family Connection, and DJJ, transferred their staff from other locations and supported them out of current agency budgets. DJJ augmented its screening team, however, and added transportation.

Major start-up expenses included the renovation of the facility (formerly a juvenile detention center), which was supported by state and county funds, and the development of the computer system. The county paid the \$200,000 cost of the computer system, which included software development, purchase of the hardware, and training for the users.

Outcomes

Three and a half months into the program, the JAC had handled 1762 intakes, about 95 percent of them delinquents. Of these intakes, 58 percent were transferred to the detention center, 33 percent went home with a parent, guardian, or other relative, and the remainder were released to a shelter or other setting. Over half the intakes come from the two largest police departments in the area, the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office and the St. Petersburg Police.

Quarterly, the JAC asks law enforcement officers who are bringing youth in to the center to complete a two-page survey about the services. So far, the response has been enthusiastic. Otherwise, the program has not been formally evaluated. However, the participating agencies attribute the following results to the program:

- Savings of law enforcement time
- Improved information about delinquent histories and improved offender identification
- More complete, higher quality information for DJJ field staff
- More rapid resolution of court cases

- Increased collaboration among the agencies in the partnership, which has benefited programming in other areas
- Better planning information concerning the needs of youth and local service gaps.

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** About 35 to 40 agencies attended the first planning meeting for the program. Many agencies dropped out when it was made clear that participants would need to contribute resources to the JAC. Those who remained became the core planning and implementation team. Securing funding for the program was difficult, especially the county funding for the Sheriff's deputies. Siting was also a problem. The team had originally planned to co-locate with Operation PAR's juvenile addiction receiving facility, but the city vetoed the original siting plan. As it turns out, the current location is working out well because of its proximity to the jail and juvenile detention. However, the facility is already full, so it will be difficult to accommodate any expansion of the current staff, let alone the addition of other providers.
- **Net-widening.** The program is very new, but is already handling about twice the number of youth it had expected. The partners believe that this means police are taking more youth into custody than before. However, they hope that early intervention will avert future arrests.
- **Relationships with other service providers.** Provider resistance to the program has not been a problem. To receive referrals from the JAC, service providers must make a presentation to a credentialing committee composed of JAC and HRS staff, and provide information on their licensing and liability insurance. The providers must also agree to provide feedback reports to the JAC until the youth or family has begun receiving services.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** Before beginning the assessment, assessors explain its purpose and obtain written permission to release the results to DJJ, parents, on-site agencies, and other treatment providers. Youth must agree to share information with both DJJ and their parents or they will not be assessed. The Public Defender and the State Attorney's Office worked out the wording of the participation agreement, and the State Attorney also provided the JAC with a letter stating that youth would not be prosecuted for information disclosed during the assessment. As an added precaution, assessment staff do not discuss the facts of the current offense with clients.

The problem is that youth are often more willing to share information with DJJ than with their parents. However, staff feel that it is unrealistic to promise youth that information shared with DJJ will not be disclosed to their parents at some point in the juvenile justice process.

A separate release form is required for the urinalysis, and individual results are not available to the State Attorney's Office.

Future prospects

The JAC is extremely new and is struggling under a caseload that is much heavier than anticipated . However, the local partners are enthusiastic about it so far and expect the program to be continued.

The Kansas Sites

Kansas Background

In 1994, the Kansas legislature appropriated \$1.5 million for establishment of a statewide juvenile intake and assessment system. Legislative interest in intake and assessment had been stimulated by OJJDP-sponsored training and technical assistance that included a presentation about the juvenile assessment center in Tampa, Florida. Legislators and several service providers later visited Florida to see operations first-hand. The Kansas legislation placed responsibility for implementing the new intake and assessment system with the Kansas Supreme Court and the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA). The statute required that each judicial district assemble a multi-agency community team to guide planning and implementation. According to an administrative order in February 1995, each district was to select an agency to take responsibility for intake and submit a funding proposal to OJA. Proposals were reviewed in the spring and awards were made by July 1995. By April 1996, juvenile intake and assessment programs were in place in 30 of 31 judicial districts, covering 104 of 105 counties. The legislature has since appropriated \$2.5 million dollars to continue the program.

Districts are required to provide intake and assessment services for all youth taken into custody by police, including delinquents, children in need of supervision, and abused and neglected children. According to OJA staff, the basic Juvenile Intake and Assessment System (JIAS) provides:

- Round-the-clock intake screening using a statewide Juvenile Intake and Assessment Questionnaire (JIAQ) and the Problem-Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (the POSIT, which is also used in Tampa). The districts are equipped with laptop computers, so that JIAQ and POSIT information can be fed directly into a state database.
- Arrangements for placement or return home.
- On-the-spot crisis counseling with the family if appropriate, and referrals to other services. Intake workers are not required to follow up. Nor are they permitted to make any recommendations to prosecutors concerning the case. This restriction is intended to maintain the separation between prosecutorial and judicial powers.

Police are not required to use JIAS.

Usually a law enforcement center serves as the intake location. Programs are very diverse, depending on how rural the area is, the working relationships among the providers, and other factors. The designated intake agencies (one in each location) include courts, sheriff's departments, community corrections agencies, mental health centers, and private youth service providers. A few urban districts are attempting to develop more comprehensive center-based assessment programs, but only one such

program was underway as of Spring 1996. This is the Olathe/Johnson County program described below. A basic JIAS, in Lawrence/Douglas County, is also described.

OJA staff note that the Juvenile Intake and Assessment System should provide a platform for future improvements in the juvenile services system. Further changes in the administration and organization of juvenile services are in the offing, under the auspices of a recently created Kansas Youth Authority. The Youth Authority will take over the JIAS in July 1997, along with other responsibilities that are still being debated.

Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC)

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History

The Johnson County Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC) began operations in January 1996.

It grew out of a multi-agency planning process that started in 1994, in response to the recent statewide juvenile intake and assessment legislation. The planning team drew many of its members from an earlier task force that focused on overcrowding in juvenile detention. Once state proposal guidelines came out, Temporary Lodging for Children, a nonprofit provider of shelter and other services for children and their families, was asked to become the lead agency and develop the proposal for the judicial district. TLC was viewed as the logical choice because of its unique expertise in round-the-clock crisis intervention and its long-time advocacy of better services for children in custody.

Program structure: TLC serves as the lead agency and manager of the program. The planning team has become the oversight committee for implementation. Its members include TLC, the District Attorney's Office, Juvenile Court Services, the Court Administrator, the Sheriff's Department, the Overland Park and Olathe Police Departments, Juvenile Detention, Intensive Probation, three school districts, United Community Services, and the Mental Health Center. Currently, TLC is the only agency to provide on-site services at the center. However, the implementation team's vision is for other agencies to join TLC when space becomes available in the building. Several agencies are considering locating personnel at the JIAC, including the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS), Juvenile Court Services, one of the area school districts, and local substance abuse and mental health providers.

Target population: Youth of all ages who are taken into police custody, including

- nondetainable delinquents
- status offenders, including truants, runaways, and ungovernables
- abused and neglected children.

Police take detainable delinquents directly to the detention center rather than to JIAC. Use of the JIAC is optional for all other youth.

The JIAC also offers assessment and referral services to parents of youth in detention and to families for whom police have filed a written referral with SRS, because they believe a child to be truant, a runaway, or ungovernable. This summer, the program also will begin handling youth who have been cited but not detained by police and are ordered to report to the JIAC.

Location/facilities: The JIAC has space in a Court Services building right next to the juvenile detention center. It includes a small waiting area, two meeting rooms, and private office space. The building is non-secure, but is equipped with TV monitors so that staff can watch the waiting area when they are in the private office area. More space will become available to the JIAC when the other tenants move into a new county building that is scheduled for construction.

Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services provided

Assessment: Law enforcement officers bring youth to the JIAC and remain while an intake counselor ascertains that the youth is medically acceptable for admission, presents no potential for violence, and is weapon-free. The counselor tries to complete the jurisdiction's detention screening form right away, so that the officer can walk the youth to the detention facility next door if necessary. (However, detention staff will come over to escort a youth if he or she is discovered to be detainable after the officer has left.) Law enforcement officers also are asked to transport youth to a hospital if immediate medical attention is needed. If a youth can be accepted by JIAC but appears agitated, police are asked to remain until the staff feel that the youth is stable. Police usually can leave in a matter of minutes. Staff do no booking, but fingerprint equipment and a camera are available to officers if they care to use them.

After the officer leaves, the intake counselor administers the POSIT and completes the Juvenile Intake and Assessment Questionnaire. If the case involves suspected child abuse or neglect, staff then contact the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) for authorization to place the youth in a shelter or foster home. SRS staff will then follow up on the case. If there do not appear to be any child abuse and neglect issues involved, staff call the parents to come in and pick up their child. When parents arrive, staff talk to them privately, ask them to complete a behavioral checklist for their child, and try to confirm other information provided by the child. At this point, staff may need to do some crisis counseling with the family. Staff also answer questions about the legal process and provide a brochure. Staff provide the family with three referrals for each problem area identified in the assessment. On average, youth spend two to four hours at JIAC.

The program has handled a couple of dozen young children for whom the standard assessment procedure is not appropriate. In these cases, staff merely provide supervision until other arrangements can be made. TLC is applying for Attendant Care funding that would provide personnel to take over babysitting responsibilities. The JIAC is not equipped to accept infants at the moment because of space limitations, but expects to purchase a crib and some toys when other room in the building opens up.

For youth who are taken directly to detention, it is the responsibility of detention staff to administer the POSIT. However, JIAC counselors also call parents to inquire if they would like to set up an appointment with JIAC. For youth who have been referred to SRS by a police officer, SRS passes along the referrals to JIAC staff, who call the families to offer an assessment. The majority of SRS cases refuse services, although in some cases the counselors are able to provide referrals by telephone. Prior to JIAC, however, these cases had not received any follow-up because of staff shortages at SRS.

The assessment results in a one to two-page narrative report covering the reason for referral, school history, legal history, peer and family issues, medical and sexual history, substance abuse history, treatment history, and recommendations. For delinquents, the report is sent to the District Attorney and to the probation officer, if the youth has one. It can also be shared with the defense attorney. The report is shared with SRS if the youth has a caseworker there or the program has referred the youth to SRS for abuse and neglect issues.

Follow-up: Intake counselors call families after 30 days to find out whether they have followed through on any JIAC referrals and to ask how satisfied they are with JIAC services.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities:

The JIAC began without a management information system, but is now linking up to the statewide Juvenile Intake and Assessment System MIS. This system permits direct entry of information contained on the state's Juvenile Intake and Assessment Questionnaire and the POSIT. In addition to the reports that will be generated at the state level, the JIAC will be able to prepare some standard reports on its own cases.

Now, the JIAC is not linked to any other computerized databases, but has immediate access to manual probation files. Otherwise staff rely mostly on self-report by youth and families for the assessment information. Staff do inform SRS daily of the previous day's intakes and SRS notifies JIAC if any of the youth are known to their child protective services workers.

Ultimately, the hope is to make the JIAC an information center for the entire county. However, most county agencies have limited or no MIS capabilities at present. In addition, many concerns about information-sharing have yet to be resolved. Nonetheless, some improvements are expected soon. Locally, an MIS is under development to link juvenile data from the Sheriff's Office, Court Services, and the District Attorney's Office. Also, state legislation is pending to create a statewide law enforcement information system.

Staffing and budget

All current JIAC staff are employed by TLC. They include the coordinator, a secretary, and 9.4 FTE intake counselors. Intake counselors must have a bachelor's degree in a related field and two years of

experience, preferably working with delinquents and/or status offenders. The initial staff were screened and hired by a multidisciplinary team drawn from the planning group.

The operating costs of the program are funded by a \$500,000 grant from the State Office of Judicial Administration. Space is provided free by Court Services.

Outcomes

In its first three months of operation, the JIAC had 434 referrals, including 218 youth dropped off by law enforcement officers and 116 youth contacted as result of SRS reports. In that period, they completed 288 assessments and provided 64 phone consultations. Other statistics are not available because case records are still being computerized, but staff note that a significant proportion of the cases involve nondelinquents.

Because the program is so new, the agencies involved are reluctant to comment on the results. However, they believe that it is:

- Saving law enforcement time
- Serving a population--the SRS referrals--who had previously received no intervention
- Improving the quality of information available to SRS for decisionmaking
- Intervening earlier with youth and their families. For youth referred to court, this can mean setting some treatment into motion before Court Services becomes active in the case. (Ordinarily, youth who are being prosecuted have no contact with Court Services for 3 to 4 weeks after their arrest.)

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** This suburban county, located just outside Kansas City, contains 16 municipalities, 18 law enforcement agencies, and 6 different school districts. This has complicated the planning process and made it difficult to identify local resources to support the program. For instance, the fact that no single law enforcement agency has a large volume of juvenile cases has temporarily stymied plans to have on-site security.
- **Net-widening.** So far, there is no evidence that police are making more arrests because of the existence of JIAC. Local team members suspect that when fully implemented, the program will find alternatives to detention for some youth and increase diversion from prosecution. Although the filing decision is solely the District Attorney's, youth who avail themselves of referral resources suggested by JIAC may be more likely to be offered diversion.

- **Relationships with service providers.** No problems have surfaced so far.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** Youth and parents are informed of the purpose of JIAC and the extent of information-sharing it entails when they meet with intake counselors. Staff do not discuss the facts of the current case during the intake process. A court order from the administrative judge permits information-sharing among the intake staff, law enforcement, SRS, Mental Health, and the schools. However, staff obtain release forms for information exchanges with schools, mental health, and other service providers. A private attorney who represents indigent juveniles expressed the concern that some parents view compliance with the JIAC recommendations as mandatory.
- **Location.** Although the current location next to the juvenile detention center is convenient for program staff, the partners believe that it is somewhat out of the way for many law enforcement agencies. This may discourage full usage of the services.

Future prospects

The program is still quite new. It has been bringing new law enforcement agencies into the system gradually. Only two law enforcement agencies were involved during the first three months of operation, so staff are still unsure about what case volume to expect when all 18 agencies have been oriented to the program. Also, many aspects of the community planning team's vision for the program have not yet been realized. Co-location of some other services for youth is likely when space becomes available. The team also plans to develop a process for referral agencies to provide feedback to counselors. However, JIAC will need more resources in order to provide the other desired features, such as a law enforcement presence on site and case management.

Juvenile Intake and Assessment System

The Shelter, Inc.

105 West 11th Street

Lawrence, KS 66044

Judy Culley, Executive Director

Karen Smith, Program Supervisor

913-843-2085

913-843-2086 (fax)

History

The Juvenile Intake and Assessment System (JIAS) began in 1987 as a juvenile jail removal program, operated by The Shelter, Inc., a private nonprofit provider of crisis intervention and shelter services for young people. Shelter staff focused on assessing youth taken into police custody and finding placements that would avoid holding youth in jail or transferring them to out-of-county detention facilities. After three years of gradually diminishing federal and state grants, the city of Lawrence and Douglas County picked up the program entirely in 1990. The program remained substantially unchanged until July 1995, when The Shelter began receiving state funding under the new Kansas JIAS initiative. Since the state forbid supplanting existing program activities with the JIAS dollars, the program used state funds to provide more extensive follow-up services and to purchase the computer equipment needed to implement the new JIAS questionnaire.

Program structure: The program is managed and staffed entirely by The Shelter, Inc., which has a multidisciplinary Board of Directors. There is no separate planning or policymaking body for the JIAS. The County Law Enforcement Center provides space for the staff to conduct their assessments.

Target population: Youth of all ages who are taken into custody by law enforcement officers, including

- Delinquents
- Status offenders
- Abused and neglected children.

Use of JIAS is voluntary for police. However, the Lawrence Police Department, the area's largest police agency, requires officers to use it as a matter of policy.

Location/facilities: The Shelter's headquarters are in downtown Lawrence, where the JIAS supervisor has her office. Staff conduct assessments at the County Law Enforcement Building nearby, where they have a basement office at their disposal for conducting interviews. After normal business hours, staff conduct assessments in the Sheriff's conference room.

Hours of operation: Response within 15 minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services provided

Assessment: Intake counselors respond to the Law Enforcement Center within 15 minutes of being paged or called by the police dispatcher. Upon arrival, the intake counselor discusses the circumstances of the case with the officer and finds a convenient place to interview the youth. The counselor can request the officer to remain nearby, if there is a concern that the youth will misbehave during the assessment interview. In any case, there are other officers in the vicinity at all times.

The primary purpose of The Shelter's assessment process is to determine a safe place for the youth to go until the next working day. The intake counselor administers two state-mandated forms, the Problem-Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) and the Juvenile Intake and Assessment Questionnaire. Depending on the case, the counselor may also consult the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) or the youth's probation officer. Based on the results, the counselor determines the least restrictive placement that is appropriate and available for the youth. Unless the arresting officer has signed over the decisionmaking authority to the counselor, he or she next contacts the officer for approval or rejection of the recommended placement. Based on the officer's decision, the counselor then arranges the youth's release to parents, to detention, to a shelter, or another setting. For youth who will not be released to parents, intake counselors arrange transportation by law enforcement officers, SRS, or others. In certain circumstances, staff can transport youth to community settings themselves. If no immediate placement is available (or a youth must wait for out-of-state family to arrive), counselors can call in The Shelter's volunteer attendant care program, which provides one-on-one supervision at the police station for up to 24 hours or through weekends and holidays.

When parents arrive to pick up a child, the counselor provides crisis intervention, conflict resolution, and referral suggestions for them. The counselor also prepares a one-page assessment report, which contains a brief summary of the intake circumstances, the placement outcome, and the referrals suggested. For juvenile offenders, this report is shared with the District Attorney, the Juvenile Court, and if appropriate, the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS). For non-offenders, information-sharing is discretionary, depending on the nature of the case. The information is shared with SRS if the youth is truant, there is suspicion of abuse or neglect, or if family conflict, ungovernability or similar issues are a serious concern. Information is sent to the DA and the Court for nonoffenders who required an out-of-home placement or whose circumstances are likely to involve court proceedings.

Follow-up: The next working day, the JIAS supervisor forwards assessment reports to the District Attorney, Court, and SRS, highlighting any cases that may deserve special attention. She also

Release to detention has become a simpler process since the county opened its own detention facility in March 1995. Shelter staff report that previously, they often spent considerable time calling detention centers elsewhere, trying to locate a bed for a Douglas County youth.

contacts the family of every youth that was released home and discusses the counselor's referral suggestions, facilitating the contact with services if necessary. The supervisor recontacts the family 90 days later to determine whether the family followed through on the suggestions or needs further help.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities:

The program now participates in the statewide Juvenile Intake and Assessment System MIS. This system permits direct entry of information contained in the state's Juvenile Intake and Assessment Questionnaire and the POSIT. In addition to reports that are generated at the state level, The Shelter can prepare some standard reports on their own caseload and processing.

The program is not formally linked to any other databases. The assessment is based primarily on self-report information, although police can share arrest history information with intake staff. The program also has a record of its own previous contacts with the youth. There is no systematic information-sharing with the schools.

Staffing and budget

Staffing for the program consists of a full-time supervisor and five intake workers, who are all employed by The Shelter. One intake worker covers the day shift. The others are part-timers, who are on call nights and weekends. In hiring staff, the program looks for a bachelor's degree plus experience, preferably including both court and Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) exposure. On-call employees include current court and SRS personnel.

The annual budget for the program is \$128,000, including \$57,000 from the state JIAS grant. The remainder of the costs are divided equally between the City of Lawrence and Douglas County.

Outcomes

In 1995, the program handled 726 intakes, almost half of them known to the JIAS from previous intakes. Forty-three percent (43%) were juvenile offenders and 57 percent were non-offenders. The vast majority of referrals (87%) came from the Lawrence Police Department. Forty-six percent of youth were release to a parent, relative, or friend, while 24 percent went to detention. The balance went to shelters (15%), an SRS worker (7%), or other places (8%). Intakes have gradually increased over the years, and are now nearly double what they were in 1989. Intakes of non-offenders have always outnumbered intakes of offenders.

The program surveys law enforcement, SRS, and other contact agencies annually about their satisfaction with the program. Otherwise, the program has not been formally evaluated. However, law enforcement, court, and SRS observers believe that it has resulted in

- Great savings of law enforcement time

- Fewer juveniles being held in jail and detention facilities
- An increase in the number of children taken into custody by police (initially)
- Making better information available to the District Attorney and the Court
- Greater access to services for youth and families
- Less need to pursue formal court proceedings for children in need of supervision.

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** Originally, law enforcement agencies were somewhat resistant to the program, but they are now quite supportive.
- **Net-widening.** Observers believe that in the early years the program led to some increase in the number of youth being taken into custody. More recent increases in intakes are thought to be a function of independent changes in police crime control strategy. The program is credited with dramatically reducing the need to hold juveniles in jail or detention. By statute, staff have no input into decisions to divert youth from prosecution.
- **Relationships with service providers.** No issues have surfaced.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** The JIAS does not use consent forms, but staff caution youth not to discuss the facts of the current case and have been trained to honor refusals to complete the POSIT or answer other assessment questions. For communications with agencies other than the Court, the District Attorney, or SRS, the program obtains oral or written permission from parents. The District Attorney's Office was involved in the original planning for the program, but defense attorneys were not.

Future prospects

The program has had long-standing support from local government and expects its support to continue.

Defense of indigent juveniles is contracted out to several private attorneys.

The Utah Site

Salt Lake County Juvenile Receiving Center

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Jon Appleman, Program Manager

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Salt Lake County Division of Youth Services

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History

The Salt Lake County Juvenile Receiving Center (JRC) began operations in September 1994. In response to concern about the growing burden on law enforcement of handling youth who were arrested but did not qualify for detention, a legislative task force was convened early in 1994 to address Utah's detention guidelines. A multi-agency study group involving law enforcement, juvenile justice, and youth service providers came up with the plan for the JRC, which subsequently won the legislature's endorsement and \$200,000 in pilot funding. The program was designed to provide an immediate response to the needs of law enforcement officers who have youth in custody, immediate accountability for delinquent youth, and immediate intervention to meet the needs of youth and families.

Program structure: The JRC is managed and staffed by the Salt Lake County Division of Youth Services, a county agency which operates a wide range of programs for at-risk youth and families, including shelter care, group homes, youth and family counseling, and diversion. Staff from the Third District Juvenile Court and the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office also are stationed at the JRC part-time. Other partners in the program include Salt Lake Valley Mental Health and the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), who are on-call to assist in assessing or placing youth who need special attention. The JRC has no policymaking board apart from the Advisory Board that oversees all DYS programs. The Advisory Board includes representatives from law enforcement, the Juvenile Court, and various other youth-oriented agencies. Sometimes the Board has appointed subcommittees to deal with JRF issues. DYS also sponsors an Allied Agency Coordinating Council that meets bimonthly and includes representatives from 15 law enforcement agencies, juvenile detention, and other juvenile justice system agencies.

Target population: Youth aged 8-17 who are taken into police custody, including

- Delinquents who do not meet admission guidelines for detention

- Other juveniles whom police cannot or should not release immediately to a parent or guardian, including truants, runaways, other status offenders, and youth suffering a mental health crisis.

The program does not target abused and neglected youth, although officers have occasionally brought youth in solely for that reason. Use of the JRC is voluntary for police officers.

Location/facilities: The facility is housed in one suite of a single-story office building. The accommodations include a small public waiting room, an administrative office, and a large open room that contains the intake desk, a lounge area, staff cubicles and private conference space. Arrested youth come in through a locked door at the back of the building and enter directly into this large room. The building is not secure, and youth are not physically restrained from leaving. The JRC is across the street from the agency's Youth Services Center, where crisis counseling, interim shelter, and other resources are available to runaway and ungovernable youth and their families.

The program is scheduled to move into a newly constructed Youth Services building in July 1996. This location, which will also house the Youth Services Center and other DYS programs, will provide considerably more space and amenities for the JRC.

Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Services provided

Assessment: Upon entry to the JRC, intake staff check the youth's history on the statewide court MIS. If there are outstanding warrants or other conditions that make the youth detainable, the law enforcement officer will be directed to transport him or her directly to the detention center. Likewise, the youth will be turned away if there is a medical problem requiring emergency treatment. If a youth appears agitated or out of control, law enforcement officers will stay around until the youth appears calmer. Generally, however, police complete a brief referral form and leave within 5 to 30 minutes. Should the program determine that a youth is detainable after the officer has left, the Sheriff's deputy on duty will provide transportation.

The primary functions of the JRC's assessment are to determine the most suitable immediate disposition for youth brought in by police and to make youth and their families aware of community resources that may be available to help them. Therefore, intake counselors do not conduct a lengthy assessment interview, but attempt to identify the most pressing problem areas. Typically, the intake counselors spend little time with status offenders, because the DYS Youth Services Center across the street is specifically designed to provide assessment, clinical services, and follow up for runaway and ungovernable youth. Status offenders usually are escorted there within 20 to 30 minutes of their entry to JRC. Staff spend more time with delinquent offenders, especially if they are runaways as well.

In all cases, counselors prepare a one-page intake summary. They also keep detailed case notes logging all events and phone calls concerning the youth while he is at the center, as well as assessment findings, and any conclusions they have drawn. Parents are contacted after the counselor has had a chance to talk with the youth, usually within 30 to 45 minutes of entry to JRC. When the parent comes in, he or she is first referred to the court services worker, if there is a worker on duty. This worker will explain the court process and give the parent some idea of what to expect. If no worker is on duty, intake counselors will suggest that the parent return during the worker's regular hours. Then an intake counselor meets with the parent and informs him or her of services that are available through DYS and other agencies in the community.

If a youth appears to be suicidal or shows other signs of several mental health crisis at any point while he or she is at the JRC, staff call and consult with Valley Mental Health Center (VMHC)'s crisis team. If necessary, VMHC will respond to the JRC and interview the youth privately. If immediate hospitalization is recommended, JRC arranges it. Otherwise, VMHC provides follow-up recommendations, typically at least an outpatient appointment at VMHC. If a youth appears to need out-of-home placement and is already in DCFS custody, counselors will consult DCFS staff by telephone. After hours, counselors now are authorized to refer youth to the Youth Services Center's interim shelter across the street and alert DCFS in the morning. In cases of suspected child abuse and neglect, a DCFS worker must come to the JRC in person to make a determination about placement.

The JRC aims to release all youth within 4 hours. Stays at JRC currently average about two hours and 15 minutes. The program has no further involvement with the case once the youth has left with a parent or been transferred to the Youth Services Center.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities:

The program has no computerized MIS of its own. All the information collected is stored in paper files, which are readily accessible to intake counselors if a youth re-enters the facility. All statistical reports are tallied by hand.

Staff have a terminal for the statewide juvenile court MIS, where they routinely check each youth's prior court history, including abuse and neglect cases. They do not routinely exchange information with any other agencies. However, staff do exchange some information with schools when a youth is brought in for some school-related problem, such as truancy or an incident that occurred on school property. A formal program is under discussion with the largest of the county's four school districts. JRC and school district staff hope to enlist five of the junior high schools in a more structured exchange of information on students who pass through the JRC.

Although the Salt Lake County JRC is one several JRCs now operating in Utah, there are no plans to create a statewide database for them. According to DYC staff, there is concern in some quarters that such a database would contribute to net-widening in the juvenile justice system.

Staffing and budget

Staffing for the program includes

- **Intake staff**, including the Program Manager and six full-time and five part-time intake counselors. These workers are employed by DYS.
- Two **bailiffs** provided by the Sheriff's Department. They provide coverage from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and 4 p.m. to midnight on Saturday and Sunday.
- A **court services worker**, who is on duty weekdays from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Coverage of these hours is rotated among several court employees. (The program hopes to expand the court involvement to 8 hours per day in the next fiscal year.)
- Three or four **student interns** majoring in sociology, criminology, or related fields and a senior citizen **volunteer**.

Intake counselors are required to have a bachelor's degree or two years of experience working with youth. Most have more extensive experience and some have worked with DYS for several years.

The JRC's annual operating budget is \$392,000, which is provided through a contract from the State Division of Youth Corrections (DYC). This budget covers all expenses except the Sheriff's personnel, who are now supported directly from the Sheriff's budget. The program began with pilot funding provided by the 1993/94 State Legislature and the Legislature has continued to include the program in the DYC appropriations. Originally the court workers' time was donated by the Third Circuit Juvenile Court. However, at the end of the first year, the court withdrew its workers because of money and manpower shortages. After a four-month hiatus, court involvement was restored when Salt Lake County DYS agreed to pick up the cost of overtime pay for court workers stationed at the JRF.

The current building did not require extensive renovations. The construction budget for the new JRC is about \$500,000, which is being supported by the county.

Outcomes

In 1995, the JRC had 5193 intakes, 51 percent of them for delinquency, 21 percent for ungovernability, 13 percent for runaway, and 13 percent for other problems. About one in five intakes involved a repeater; repeat intakes for status offenses were about twice as likely as repeats for delinquency. All police agencies in the county have used the service but the bulk of the referrals come from the Sheriff's Office, the Salt Lake City Police, and the West Valley Police. About 48 percent of youth were released to a parent or guardian and 39 percent went to the Youth Services Center. One percent left on their own, while the remainder went to detention, a DCFS-authorized shelter, or another location.

The JRC has not been formally evaluated. However, the agencies involved attribute the following results to JRC:

- Savings in law enforcement time
- Some increase in arrests, but probably slight
- Quicker consequences for delinquent conduct (without JRC, it may be weeks or months before youth see a court service worker)
- Earlier treatment intervention
- Reduction in court cases involving ungovernability.

None of the agencies involved is aware of any negative community feedback.

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** Although the original DYS vision for the JRC included one-stop shopping, the current program has a narrower agenda and on-site presence of other agencies is limited. Court Intake questions whether maintaining a worker at the JRC is the best use of their limited resources, in part because the worker lacks sufficient information to make any immediate decisions about case handling while a youth is at the JRC. In addition, many of the youth brought in are first-time or low-level offenders who would ordinarily be assigned to court interns.
- **Net-widening.** Although the agencies involved admit that net-widening is a legitimate concern for such programs, they have not noticed any substantial increase in arrests or caseloads as a result of the JRC.
- **Relationships with service providers.** No resistance from provider agencies has been noted.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** JRC partners do not believe that the program poses any dangers to juveniles, because the mission of intake counselors is quite narrow. Staff get oral permission from parents to share information with schools or other agencies if that becomes necessary. The JRC has no standard information release or disclosure forms. The contracted public defender for the county has had no real contact with the program, but is not aware of any complaints from youth or parents.

The program is not aware of any negative community reaction.

Future prospects

Continued legislative support for the program appears likely. As a result of the favorable feedback from participants in the Salt Lake County JRC, especially law enforcement, DYC is moving to

implement juvenile receiving centers elsewhere in the state. Seven other centers are already in operation. Elsewhere, the centers are based at detention centers and are operated directly by NYC staff.

The Colorado Site

Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)

701 Johnson Road

Golden, CO 80401

Mary Anne Zanella Nickle, Executive Director

303-278-8703

303-278-0043 (fax)

History

The Jefferson County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) opened on October 23, 1995. The vision for the program originated with a multi-agency juvenile justice planning effort that began in September 1993, under the leadership of the District Attorney. Among the priorities identified by this planning group were: (1) a multi-disciplinary assessment center and (2) swift, certain, consistent consequences for delinquency. A special committee was formed to jointly address these priorities and began meeting in January 1994. By April 1995, the group had secured start-up funds and selected an Executive Director, who hired the assessment staff and took charge of operational planning. The JAC trained and brought law enforcement agencies into the system one by one, so that staff would have some time to refine their procedures.

Program structure: The JAC has a Steering Committee composed of 35 agencies, including all 13 law enforcement agencies in the county, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, County Probation, the District Court, numerous public and private providers of education, intervention, or treatment services to youth, and other stakeholders. The lead agency, which employs the assessment team and the Executive Director, is Jefferson Center for Mental Health (JCMH), a nonprofit provider of mental health and crisis intervention services. Other agencies represented at the JAC site include the District Attorney's Office, the Jefferson County School System, and the Jefferson County Department of Social Services (DSS).

Target population: Youth aged 5 through 17, including

- Nondetainable delinquents and youth under 10 who have committed delinquent acts but are below the age of juvenile court jurisdiction
- Status offenders, including truant, runaway, homeless, and ungovernable youth
- Youth threatening suicide or showing signs of mental health crisis.

Use of the JAC is optional for police. For youth who do not appear to be a danger to themselves or others, often the determining factor in bringing the youth directly to the JAC is the officer's inability to rapidly locate the child's parent or guardian. For youth who are not taken into custody or who are

contacted by police during the hours that the JAC is closed, officers can request follow-up by submitting a referral form to the JAC.

Location/facilities: The program is located on school property in a prefabricated building donated by the school district. It contains a reception area, private staff offices, and a large room with a waiting area and assessor cubicles around the perimeter. The building is staff secure only. Youth are not physically restrained while on the premises, nor are they prevented from leaving if they insist. A juvenile commitment facility and the Sheriff's Office, which has booking facilities available to all law enforcement agencies, are in the same neighborhood.

Hours of operation: 7:30 a.m. to midnight, Sunday through Thursday; 7:30 a.m. to 2 a.m., Friday and Saturday. The Family Adolescent Crisis Team (FACT), which is co-located with the JAC, can be directly accessed by beeper after hours for suicide/mental health emergencies or in cases where parents are refusing to take custody of a child.

Services provided

Screening/preliminary assessment: Law enforcement officers who want to use JAC services for a youth in custody are instructed to call ahead so that assessment specialists can do a preliminary phone screening for appropriateness. Youth who are detainable are directed to detention. Those requiring emergency medical attention or detoxification are directed to appropriate medical facilities. If the youth is a runaway, staff will try to arrange a shelter bed and have the officer take the youth directly there. Other youth are brought to the JAC, where staff do a more thorough screening and determine the appropriate person or place to take immediate custody of the youth. Officers wait while the detention screening is completed, so they can transport if needed. Law enforcement officers also are asked to remain with a youth that appears threatening or out of control until staff feel that his behavior poses no risk. Usually, law enforcement officers are able to leave within 5 to 30 minutes.

At this point, an assessment specialist talks briefly with the youth and determines whether it is appropriate for him or her to return home. If a mental health or a family crisis is involved, the specialist will consult with the on-site FACT staff, who provide round the clock crisis intervention in cases of suicide threat, parent/child conflict, and ungovernability. If the youth can be released home, JAC contacts the parent to come in and pick the child up. If not, the staff arrange an alternative placement at a shelter or other setting. The JAC is required to release youth within 16 hours. The average time to release is about 5 hours.

For homeless, runaway, or ungovernable youth without a delinquent charge, this is usually the end of the JAC process. They are referred to FACT or other agencies for follow-up.

For delinquent youth, the process is more extensive. When the parent arrives, staff advise the parent and child of their legal rights, explain the services of the JAC, and the availability of an in-depth assessment and case management. Families that agree to participate in the assessment process are given a follow-up appointment. Delinquents and truants that are referred to the JAC by police or

school resource officers, rather than brought in, are offered the same service within 3 to 5 days of the referral. Families contacted as a result of referrals are more likely to refuse JAC services than families that are seen in person at the time of arrest, however. If the family refuses service, JAC assessment specialists usually have no further involvement with the case.

Whether or not the family remains active with the JAC, the District Attorney's on-site liaison will meanwhile conduct a complete check of the youth's delinquency record. If there are District-level charges he will screen the case and make a filing recommendation to the District Attorney. In some cases, the DA Liaison may inform JAC assessors that a child can avoid prosecution by agreeing to participate in assessment and case management; if so, JAC staff inform the family of that option.

Assessment: The in-depth assessment normally takes 1½ to 2 hours. Staff use several instruments, among them the Colorado Youth Offender Level of Supervision Inventory (which covers criminal history, substance abuse, education/employment issues, family, peer and other domains), a Risk and Resiliency checklist, a medical history form, and if indicated, a substance use survey. In the process, assessment specialists identify other caseworkers that are active with the family and get permission to share information with them. They also ask the on-site educational liaison to obtain pertinent school information.

Case management: If the youth already has a case manager elsewhere or will be placed on diversion with another agency, the assessment specialist simply shares information with those workers. If the child has no caseworker and will not be prosecuted by the DA, JAC staff develop a case plan and a client contract. Contracts are individualized, but generally are most demanding for youth who are being placed under JAC supervision in lieu of prosecution. Often, youth are required to participate in drug education classes or other formal programs in the community for which they must pay a fee. For many children, especially young ones, contracts are done in small increments so as to provide them with short-term readily attainable goals. Assessment specialists follow clients who are participating in a case management contract for up to six months. Typically, case management involves telephone monitoring of progress rather than face-to-face contacts with the youth and family.

Information-sharing/MIS status and capabilities: Initially, the JAC operated entirely with a paper system. It is now converting to a computerized system that will contain client demographics, delinquent history, history of JAC contacts, caseworkers involved with the youth, and current contract requirements (if any). The MIS does not contain therapeutic information. Gradually, the system will become a central repository of information on all youth who have come through the center. Right now, it can take several days to pull together a youth's history from the multiple law enforcement and other justice-related databases that contain information on Jefferson County youth. In time, however, law enforcement officers with a JAC "repeater" in custody will be able to call in for information and make a more informed decision about the best way to handle the case. The JAC partners also look

Some youth are charged with offenses that will be handled by a municipal court rather than the District Court. In general, these cases involve violations or misdemeanors. For some charges, law enforcement has the option to file the case with the District or municipal court.

forward to using the MIS database for planning and evaluating their services, including the merits of early intervention with various types of youth.

Aside from its own MIS, the JAC can directly access the statewide court information system, which contains a youth's District Court history. In addition, the Educational Liaison can access the school MIS.

The JAC will soon be linked to the Colorado Office of Youth Services Detention Screening database, which will contain results for all youth who have been assessed with that form statewide. Also, the DA Court Liaison will soon have access to NCIC/CCIC. Over the longer term, the Advisory Committee is pursuing a more ambitious goal--to develop a system that integrates law enforcement, juvenile justice, social service, and school information--if privacy concerns can be satisfactorily addressed. Meanwhile, to comply with state and federal statutes, the District Court has issued a court order permitting the key agencies involved in the program to share delinquent histories and school information.

Staffing and budget

Staffing at the site consists of

- The **Executive Director**, employed by JCMH, who is responsible for overall program direction and facility management.
- Five **assessment specialists**, employed by JCMH. They are responsible for all assessment and case management.
- The **Family and Adolescent Crisis Team (FACT)**, which is jointly staffed by JCMH and the Department of Social Services. The team has one supervisor, a part-time mental health consultant, seven clinical staff, and one support staff. This team has separate and distinct responsibilities from the JAC, but is on-site for the same hours, is available to consult with assessors and clients if needed, and takes JAC referrals. The FACT support staffer provides reception services for the entire building.
- The **District Attorney's Liaison**, who assists in screening cases for prosecution, collects delinquent histories, and acts as liaison between JAC and law enforcement agencies. He is available by pager after regular business hours.
- The School District's **Educational Liaison**, who obtains school information for JAC staff and consults on cases where there are school problems, in addition to duties unrelated to JAC.

Assessment specialists are required to have a bachelor's degree and one year's experience or six years of experience. All of the current staff have a bachelor's degree in a related field and prior experience working in residential facilities for youth, commitment facilities, or shelter care.

The total program budget is estimated at \$650,000. Approximately \$120,000 of this amount is grant funding, which covers the five assessment specialists, rent, and facility expenses. A state Youth Crime Prevention Intervention (YCPI) grant provided \$100,000, with a Community Services Block Grant and foundation money making up the balance. Other on-site staff and much of the equipment are contributed by participating agencies. The Educational Liaison and the DA Liaison were new positions, while the FACT team was transferred from another location. The school system provides the site and the building and takes care of janitorial services.

Outcomes

During the first five months, the JAC handled 285 intakes. About 45 percent were transported directly to JAC, while the others were referrals. Direct intakes have been increasing. About eighty percent of the youth were charged with delinquent offenses, while the rest were status offenders.

Partners feel that it is too soon to really assess the JAC. However, various partners suggested that the program has

- Saved law enforcement time
- Speeded the exchange of information among agencies, which contributes to more appropriate detention decisions and quicker filing decisions by the DA
- Found alternatives to detention for some youth
- Produced more comprehensive assessment information about the youth served and accessed services for them sooner
- Provided additional leverage to keep youth in school. (Staff note that about three-fourths of assessed youth have some school-related problems.)

The partners are not aware of any opposition to the program in the community or among other agencies.

Other issues

- **Obstacles to implementation.** The partners report that the process of planning the program, reconciling different agendas, and finding resources was long and difficult. At one point, it appeared that the whole effort would dissolve without arriving at a program. Managers feel that the current program is severely understaffed. The

program is also struggling to build a management structure that suits the collaborative nature of the JAC.

- **Net-widening.** The partners do not believe that the program has significantly altered the numbers of youth taken into custody or charged by police, although some increases might be expected. They note, however, that it would be hard to separate the effects of the JAC from other trends. Juvenile arrests had been increasing prior to inception of the JAC, perhaps partly as a result of reduced tolerance of drug and alcohol offenses and a new statute resulting in more expulsions of youth from school (and thus, more youth at liberty to commit crimes). Nor do the partners believe that the JAC has affected the detention population much. Most of the youth served would not have been candidates for detention anyway.
- **Relationships with service providers.** According to the partners, the most significant issues--which revolved around fears that JAC would duplicate existing services--were thrashed out during the planning process. Concerns among outside agencies may be minimized by the fact that the JAC is not a treatment provider.
- **Protection of juvenile rights/due process.** Before receiving a full assessment, all youth and their parents must sign a disclosure form describing the purpose of the process and the information-sharing that will occur among the JAC agencies. Additional releases are obtained for information exchanges beyond the JAC agencies. Youth who are facing District-level charges also must sign a form advising them of their legal rights and explaining their immunity from prosecution for admissions or statements they make to JAC staff in connection with the charge that brought them to the center. Staff report that they spend considerable time going over this form, because it is lengthy and complex. A private attorney who participated in the early planning has recommended that these procedures be reviewed to ensure that they fully protect the confidentiality of juveniles.

Future prospects

The partners expect that it will take a couple of years to build a stable funding base for the program. The biggest challenge will be replacing the YCPI grant. Some program enhancements are under discussion, including the possibility of integrating detention screeners into the JAC and moving to 24-hour operations.