

**NEBRASKA JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE (JDAI)
LANCASTER COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ASSESSMENT**

Prepared by:

**Bart Lubow, Consultant Annie E. Casey Foundation
Carmen Terrones, Consultant Annie E. Casey Foundation
Monica Miles-Steffens, State JDAI Coordinator
Michele Lueders, Detention Alternatives Specialist**

July 25, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Nebraska began involvement with the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in 2011 beginning with Douglas County and expanding to Sarpy County in 2012. The Administrative Office of Probation assumed the leadership role of statewide JDAI efforts in 2013. Otoe County was the first expansion site to participate in (JDAI) in the State of Nebraska. In 2017, Lancaster County joined the expansion efforts in Nebraska as the fourth JDAI site.

An important first step to implement JDAI is a site-specific assessment that analyzes the juvenile justice system. The System Assessment is an effort to understand in both programmatic and practical terms how the juvenile justice system operates. Information is gathered through a series of interviews with key juvenile justice stakeholders, including community representatives, review of data reports and a visit to the juvenile detention facility. It is a qualitative review of how the site's juvenile justice system functions and the development of the use of the eight core strategies of JDAI. The System Assessment compliments the site's Detention Utilization Study (DUS), which is a quantitative review of youth in the juvenile justice system. Together, the System Assessment and the Detention Utilization Study are intended as guides for development of a Phase One/Year One work plan that includes measurable outcomes and timelines for detention and system improvement activities in Lancaster County.

We acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of the community members involved in the assessment process and thank everyone for their insight into the unique strengths and needs of Lancaster County. We thank Lancaster County Human Services Division for providing the assessment team space to conduct interviews. We are particularly indebted to Sara Hoyle for her time and effort arranging the logistics of this visit and for ensuring that the State JDAI team was able to connect with essential community stakeholders while we were on site. Finally, a special thank you to the Lancaster County Board and Lancaster County Steering Committee for their commitment and strong leadership to the JDAI work.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The assessment team was led by Annie E. Casey Consultants, Bart Lubow and Carmen Terrones. Staff from the Juvenile Division of the Administrative Office of Probation as well as members of the state JDAI collaborative participated on the assessment team. The assessment team visited Lancaster County on February 5th, 6th and 7th, 2018 and the Lancaster County Youth Services Center February 7th, 2018. Prior to the on-site visit, the team had access to basic quantitative and qualitative information. On site, the team conducted a series of interviews with local stakeholders to understand the county's status regarding the eight core strategies of JDAI. The stakeholders interviewed included representatives from: law enforcement, prosecution and defense attorneys, detention and probation personnel, separate juvenile court judges, state and local court administrator, probation involved community-based service providers, local Department of Health and Human Services personnel, local government officials, and school administrators. The observations shared in this document are based on collective themes from the interviews as a whole. For organizational purposes, the information gathered through the data collection, visits and interviews is presented as observations that are grouped in accordance with the eight core strategies of JDAI. However, please note that the strategies are often intimately connected and may therefore be relevant under multiple headings.

We recognize that it may be uncomfortable for a system to subject itself to review. We also know that a three day visit is not exhaustive or definitive. Therefore, this abbreviated visit will significantly understate the many strengths and talents of those who serve in the Lancaster County juvenile justice system. This analysis attempts to identify the areas in Lancaster County that the JDAI core strategies can be implemented to improve system practices and enhance detention reform. A preliminary report was shared with the jurisdiction to correct any factual errors. While the system assessment may seem overwhelming, collaborative efforts among the State JDAI Coordinators, Annie E. Casey consultants, and the strong commitment of Lancaster County professionals will assist in prioritizing the recommendations within the report. There is no expectation that all efforts will be addressed at once. Rather it is recommended that a strategic work plan be developed to implement reform efforts over time. We look forward to working together to build on the strengths of the juvenile justice system and the community with the goal of improving outcomes for youth and families.

COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP

Collaboration through consensus building allows different agencies, branches of government and community representatives to devise strategies that work best to promote community safety and successful youth. Collaboration and leadership by multiple agencies and community members is a core governance strategy used by JDAI and is the key element for new JDAI sites to build an efficient and responsive juvenile justice system. Without strong authority and leadership to ensure interagency coordination, comprehensive systemic change can become a daunting challenge. Lancaster County has renamed the Juvenile Justice Review Committee to the Lancaster County JDAI Collaborative, which will continue to serve as the community collaborative leading the implementation of JDAI in Lancaster County. A core group of system stakeholders currently meets monthly and will serve as the Steering Team for the initiative.

Observations:

- Site stakeholders generally understood the purpose in conducting interviews and seemed to have received basic information about JDAI.
- As can be expected when launching a new initiative, site stakeholders identified varying ideas and priorities around juvenile justice and detention improvement efforts. Some stakeholders were confident in the role they play, while others were not as clear on what their role may be. This provides further opportunity for open dialogue and ongoing education as the initiative moves forward.
- Throughout interviews, the team observed some frustrations between varying agencies over policies, practices and sharing of information. One example expressed by Law Enforcement regarded delays when a request to detain a youth is made, which in turn does not allow them to return to their other job duties in a timely manner.
- Community representatives interviewed expressed a desire to be more actively included in decision-making and solution oriented discussions.
- Lancaster County appears to have a strong network of professional service agencies involved in the work with juveniles. The interview team would recommend further inclusion of Community Based Organizations with deep ties to neighborhoods most affected by crime and detention if they exist.
- Lancaster County has consistently held Tuesday morning staffing sessions at the detention center for several years, with the goal of interagency communication regarding youth in detention. Through the interview discussion, there was an interest by some stakeholders in exploring the benefit of adding additional team members (such as public defender and county attorney).
- There appears to be opportunity to enhance other staffing discussions that are occurring at an individual agency level. Other jurisdictions have found success in addressing challenging cases through an intentional interagency staffing process that

helps develop the least restrictive plan for a youth and family and can better coordinate cross system resources.

- One of the first steps for a JDAI site is to come to consensus regarding the purpose of detention. Recognizing the role of statute, and the statutory change since these interviews, Lancaster County will need to come to consensus on policies and practices for those youth who have previously been detained for a perceived risk to themselves.
- The information shared through the interviews demonstrated a historical reliance on out of home placements as the way to respond to family struggles. Many people interviewed recognized that “awaiting placement” cases drove detention utilization.
- Lancaster County appears to collect a lot of data at the agency and individual program level. The team did not see how individual agency data is connected and utilized for analyzing system trends and cross agency decision making purposes.
- Lancaster County collects significant data at the individual program level and participates in the Evidence Based Nebraska evaluation efforts for those programs funded by Community Based Aid funding. These efforts will continue to be beneficial in examining program effectiveness.
- Everyone interviewed, demonstrated a clear passion for wanting the best outcomes for youth and families in the juvenile justice system and community as a whole. Through the interview discussions, the team saw evidence of system stakeholders working hard toward these goals, yet operating in silos. Examples given during the interviews included the perceived inconsistency and/or consensus on which system a youth should be involved in (DHHS versus Probation), and schools reporting lack of or inconsistent information regarding next steps for youth involved in the system.
- Stakeholders interviewed discussed tension between the county and state. Concerns were expressed regarding funding, unfunded mandates and the state leading juvenile justice policy reforms.

Recommendations:

1. As the formal collaborative body, the JDAI Collaborative should complete efforts to establish regular consistent meeting dates and times to monitor the Phase One/Year One Work Plan that will be developed. Inclusion of system and community stakeholders in this development will be critical to maximize participation and effective outcomes. When finalized, provide education to system stakeholders and community as a whole on the role of the JDAI Collaborative.
2. Membership on the JDAI Collaborative and identified sub-committee’s should be diverse and representative of professionals, community organizations, and youth/families impacted by the juvenile justice system. Sub-committees that are developed should focus on the priority areas outlined in the System Assessment.
3. Develop a plan to implement cross systems training. This training should focus on improving system partners understanding of everyone’s unique role within the system and increase collaboration between agencies.

4. The JDAI Collaborative should examine the different staffing processes that are in place in Lancaster County. Intentional efforts should be made to ensure all key stakeholders have a voice in the staffing. Examination of the effectiveness for each system point in addition to frequency of this staffing should be evaluated. Model JDAI sites have implemented a daily detention staffing process to expedite young people that are detained.
5. Participate in the Fundamentals training facilitated by the JDAI State Team. This training will cover the objectives and eight core JDAI strategies, development of work plans, and consensus on the purpose of detention.
6. Key stakeholders should become knowledgeable in JDAI, its values, principles, and strategies. Members of the JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team are recommended to review: *Two Decades of JDAI, A Progress Report: From Demonstration Project to National Standard*; *Dangers of Detention*; and, *Pathways Series 2: Collaboration and Leadership*; and *No Place for Kids*. All of these publications and more can be accessed through the JDAI help desk at www.jdaiconnect.org.

COLLECTING & USING DATA

JDAI is a data driven initiative. Data, drawn from all sources in the system, is reviewed regularly to paint an accurate picture as to how the juvenile justice system is operating. Utilizing accurate data, policies and practices can be implemented that protect public safety while reducing reliance on secure detention and creating better outcomes for youth.

Observations:

- During interviews, it was reported individual agencies have raw data, however it was unclear how this data is brought together by system stakeholders for collective analysis to make policy decisions.
- Lancaster County does not have an individual or specific agency identified to gather, analyze and present data reports for the county. The Human Service Director is very involved in data oversight, however the interview team recognizes that a Director level position may not have the time to support the JDAI and other system initiatives at the detailed level of data collection required.
- Lancaster County Human Services appears to be the place that people rely on to have basic system data, which is collected because as Human Resources agency writes numerous grant requests and reports.
- During interviews, concerns were voiced around sharing data based off of historical situations, where data was shared and in turn misinterpreted. It was unclear if Lancaster County has a process in place to outline what data can/should be shared at the interagency level and how this data should be shared for public distribution.

Recommendations:

1. The Juvenile Justice Institute is developing the baseline Detention Utilization Study for Lancaster County. The JDAI Collaborative should review the report with technical assistance from the state coordinators to identify trends, areas for digging deeper, and identifying a target population.
2. The JDAI Collaborative should become familiar with JDAI data requirements and work with the state and other site coordinators to enhance the ability to capture and present relevant data that will inform policies and practices.
3. It is recommended that Lancaster County commit to developing strategic reports so stakeholders can monitor trends related to the initiative. In order to do this, it is recommended that Lancaster County designate an individual that focuses on data collection, analysis and presentation.
4. Other sites have benefited from developing a daily or weekly detention population sheet, which is disaggregated by race, gender, age and ethnicity and should be shared with stakeholders. This may be something Lancaster Co. would want to consider.
5. There must be a clear agreement on what data is shared and how it is used. Transparency is critical in system enhancements. Lancaster County should consider a standard agreement, such as an MOU around a collaborative data sharing process.
6. The JDAI Collaborative should develop and implement training, with the support of state technical assistance, on utilization of data to drive decisions for system stakeholders. This effort would include the development and agreement upon common definitions for Lancaster County. If definitions have already been agreed upon, these definitions need to be shared with all stakeholders for their understanding.
7. Review *Pathways Series #7, By the Numbers: The Role of Data and Information in Detention Reform*.

OBJECTIVE ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PRACTICES

One of the fundamental principles of JDAI is that detention decisions must be based on objective screening instruments that are developed through a collaborative process involving key stakeholders. An objective risk assessment instrument (RAI) assess a youth's risk of failing to appear for scheduled court hearings and/or committing a new delinquent act prior to adjudication. Objective criteria, such as the nature of the offense and the youth's offense history, produces a risk score that indicates the youth's suitability for secure detention, referral to a detention alternative program, or release to a parent or guardian. RAI's bring objectivity, fairness and efficiency to the detention screening process. Objective admission criteria are a critical part of ensuring only the right youth are placed in detention.

Observations:

- Nebraska Statute provides that the Administrative Office of Probation utilize a standardized Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI). The tool is to be administered by trained staff and the tool can be overridden with a supervisor's approval.
- There are probation officers available to complete the RAI 24 hours a day, however it was learned not every youth entering detention is screened using the RAI.
- In general, key stakeholders identified the purpose of secure detention as maintaining public safety, ensuring the safety of the youth, and ensuring youth appear in court (i.e. flight risk) pending disposition. However, a variety of stakeholders expressed the need for utilization of detention for other reasons including; a belief by some that without the use of detention there is nothing holding youth accountable; and that detention is needed for repeat runaways, probation violations, serious offenses and family safety concerns. This indicates there is not consensus regarding the purpose of detention across stakeholders.
- While the local probation office utilizes the standardized RAI, its impact on admissions seems minimal because of different factors; high override rates, and large number of admissions for warrants or violations, which are automatically detained. Data needs to be examined on how often youth are detained for the above reason.
- Reported through interviews, it was consistently reported that awaiting placement cases drive utilization significantly and many of these cases involve readmission to detention following "failure" in prior placement. The RAI has not historically been administered in these cases. Data should be monitored regarding the new policy and impact on this population.
- Stakeholders shared efforts already underway regarding detention reform in the juvenile drug court. It was reported that a previous practice of utilizing detention as a sanction is no longer in use after work with national drug court technical assistance.
- Given the distribution of new arrest offenses that were generally shared during interviews, it does not seem likely that many youth would be classified for detention based upon arresting offense and prior record. Hence, better RAI screening will only go a short way to reducing detention utilization to minimal levels.
- A new practice recently went into effect, where Judges may mark warrants to screen for alternatives to detention. The team would recommend digging deeper with data to see how this new practice is impacting detention utilization.
- Law Enforcement expressed concern for long waits for intake screening; which doesn't allow them to get back to their patrol duties.
- Through interviews it appears multiple stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of the RAI.
- It appears that race/ethnicity is collected differently by law enforcement and probation at arrest and subsequent intake screening. There may be an opportunity to explore more consistent identification for DMC purposes.
- Youth detained from Lancaster County are almost exclusively placed in the Lancaster County Youth Service Center.

Recommendations:

1. Per the JDAI Phase 1 Milestones, the JDAI Collaborative will need to facilitate a discussion about the purpose of detention for Lancaster County.
2. Training is needed for all stakeholders on the RAI tool and objective admission process.
3. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the RAI, Lancaster County should monitor data around the warrant/order for immediate custody orders to evaluate how many youth were ordered directly to detention versus the youth who were screened and possibly placed on an ATD.
4. Collaborative efforts should occur using the data collected on reasons for overrides of the RAI to determine what policy or practices could be modified to achieve better outcomes for young people in Lancaster County.
5. The JDAI Collaborative should collaborate with probation to monitor outcomes for youth screened using the RAI, overrides and effectiveness of alternatives to detention.
6. To learn more about objective decision making and developing detention risk assessment instruments, review the *Pathways Series #3, Controlling the Front Gates: Effective Admissions Policies and Practices*.
7. JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team members should participate in the RAI e-learning training through JDAI Connect.
8. Also consider reviewing *Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment, A Practice Guide to Juvenile Detention Reform*, available at www.jdaiconnect.org.

ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION

The primary purpose of detention alternatives is to provide alternative forms of supervision to youth who would otherwise be detained. The Alternatives to Detention (ATD) must be appropriate to ensuring that youth appear in court at required hearings and remain arrest free prior to disposition. Pre-adjudication detention alternatives are not intended as “treatment” for youth who are detention eligible. Alternative programs are also a way of addressing the needs of post adjudicated youth without resorting to secure detention as a sanction. The key to effective utilization of alternative to detention programs is that youth assigned to alternatives, must be truly placed as an alternative to being in secure detention.

Observations:

ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION (ATDS)

- Lancaster County has been pro-active on the development of promising practice programs and interventions for young people.
- Lancaster County has a relatively extensive list of programs for youth who get in trouble. These include some programs that are intended to keep youth out of court, e.g. diversion, early assessment and PACS.
- Programs designed to divert low risk youth from the system must be diligent to avoid net widening and over supervision. The team would encourage Lancaster Co. to continue to monitor data and policies in this area. Some of the pre-adjudication programming could possibly “raise the rates” regarding system responses to juvenile offending (e.g., the diversion program is a 90 day regimen; PACS supervises pre-adjudication cases, including using drug testing and EM).
- During interviews, there appeared to be uncertainty on the criteria and/or process on how youth are admitted to ATD programs within Lancaster County.
- The shelter appears to be utilized as a primary alternative to detention. It was reported the average length of stay in shelter is at least 30 days. Based off of this information, it appears shelter may be used less for short-term family reunification planning, but used more for holding purposes for youth waiting on long-term placements which is consistent with the observed culture of reliance on out of home placement.
- Youth are in secure detention awaiting placement in non-secure facilities. Holding a youth in secure detention only to be released to non-secure programming is counter intuitive.
- Service gaps mentioned during interviews included drug/alcohol services; mental health services, interpreter services and family crisis interventions.
- Lancaster County commits a commendable amount of local resources along with sizeable grant funds for programs and services, including ATD’s, for youth in the community. The county has established a structured process for the consideration and award of these funds to local providers. Some providers expressed that it can be uncomfortable to be in competition for resources with fellow providers. The team would recommend that the county continue to monitor their process to ensure fidelity, transparency and collaboration.

Recommendations:

1. The JDAI Collaborative could benefit from expanding their membership to include ATD providers.
2. The JDAI Collaborative, with the inclusion of ATD providers, should examine current ATD and Probation intake data to identify effectiveness of current ATD’s (i.e. numbers and types of youth placed, length of stay, outcomes, etc.), gaps, and target populations for any identified ATD expansion.
3. Given the awaiting placement issue, this site should explore barriers in developing more community based programming.

4. Examine data on the effectiveness of ATD programs, to include a comparison of where youth are coming from compared to location of ATD's/programs.
5. Training for all stakeholders on the purpose and admission criteria for all ATD programming in Lancaster County.
6. Participate in Fundamentals Training provided by the state JDAI technical assistance team to help all stakeholders further understand the role of ATD's in detention reform and system improvement.
7. JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team members should participate in the Alternatives to Detention e-learning training through JDAI Connect.
8. For more information on developing and using alternative to detention, review *Pathways Series 4, Consider the Alternatives*.

CASE PROCESSING

Efficient case processing ensures that youth are held in secure detention as briefly as possible. Furthermore, reducing unnecessary delays in case processing is essential to limiting lengths of stay in detention, ensuring efficient use of non-secure alternatives, increasing the likelihood that youth will appear for court hearings, reducing re-arrest rates while pending court and a variety of other system improvement outcomes. There are specific court practices and policies that are directly relevant to detention reform goals but also serve to establish a culture of effective advocacy, efficiency, timeliness and accountability.

Observations:

- Many stakeholders interviewed implied that the overwhelming majority of cases are resolved in timely ways, in larger part due to high plea rates and proffering of best offers by county attorney early in the case. The court should review data at these points to ensure youth are moving through the system as quickly those interviewed reported.
- Those interviewed consistently reported young people lingering in detention fell into two categories; cases in which transfer to adult court is sought (not many, according to some) and awaiting placement cases in which youth have had multiple prior placements.
- Interviewees reported other point of delays include; completion of psychological evaluations, translation services, and awaiting placement.
- Conditional releases are used at various stages of a case (pre-adjudication, post adjudication, post disposition). For some it is used as a way for young people to "earn" their way on to probation, however the youth don't receive "credit" for the time they are on a conditional release. Based on interviews, there appears to be inconsistency between judges and the utilization of Conditional Releases.
- Sites around the country have seen a positive impact on waiting placement issues through the implementation of effective in home services. Lancaster County does have MST, however some reported there is insufficient demand. Data should be

examined and shared regarding in home service utilization at all system points. Collaborative efforts to increase in home service capacity should be explored.

- Data provided shows variability by judge regarding detention utilization.

Recommendations:

1. The JDAI Collaborative should create a system map that can be examined to determine whether there are unnecessary delays in handling of cases that may be addressed. Particular attention should be given to a) court continuances, b) Pre-adjudication timeframes and c) probation violations. It will be critical to have defense, prosecution, judiciary, and probation to assist in this process.
2. The JDAI Collaborative should provide training for system stakeholders to educate other system stakeholders and community partners on their role in the juvenile justice system.
3. Lancaster County needs to define conditional release and minimize when it is utilized. (Pre-adjudicated, post-adjudicated, pending VOP). Concerns that data maybe skewed because of how frequently these are utilized.
4. JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team members should participate in the Case Processing e-learning training through JDAI Connect.
5. JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team members should review practice guide *Timely Justice* on JDAI Connect.
6. For more information on Case Processing review Pathways #5 - Reducing Unnecessary Delay: Innovations in Case Processing, available on JDAI Connect.

SPECIAL DETENTION CASES

Special detention cases include youth who are detained for violations of probation (VOP), for warrants, and youth who are awaiting placement. Youth detained for technical violations of probation and warrants are often low risk youth who have broken the rules and have frustrated the adults responsible for them. They may not pose a threat to public safety or fail to appear in court, but they need to be held accountable for their behavior. Effective population management involves developing policies, changing practices, and implementing programs designed to safely reduce the presence of these cases in secure detention facilities.

Observations:

- As noted, awaiting placement cases seem to be the primary driver of detention utilization in Lancaster County.
- Given the rates of out-of-home placements, an assumption is there are many “probation failures”. Lancaster County needs to explore more deeply violations of probation. Data on those detained for technical violations vs. new law violations should be examined. Information shared by the county attorney made it clear that the majority of new arrest cases handled by their office were either youth already on probation or youth who had previously completed probation. It may be that few

youth are formally classified as being in detention for probation violations, but a majority have been on probation and returned to court for some reason.

- Warrants are often the admission reasons for program placement failures. It does not seem to be the case that there are high rates of FTA (the county even has a service, operated by Human Services, to minimize FTA warrants, but it has a minimal caseload, which indicates few FTAs generally).
- Violations of conditional releases was discussed by several stakeholders as a reason youth end up in detention.
- Mental health issues were deemed a common reason for “special detention cases” (not because they required special services, but because those cases resulted in program failures, absconding, warrants and probation violations).
- Probation reported the recent statutory change regarding implementation of graduated incentives and sanctions. A new graduated response grid is being developed. An increased emphasis on incentives and targeted and swift sanctions could greatly impact probation violations in this jurisdiction.

Recommendations:

1. The JDAI Collaborative should partner with probation to develop strategies to reduce the use of detention for technical and warrant cases; and, strategies to expedite pending placement cases. Probation should inform the JDAI collaborative on graduated response efforts as they are developed and implemented.
2. Mental health experts need to be at the table to discuss concerns highlighted through interviews to ensure the needs of youth are being met.
3. JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team members should participate in the Special Populations e-learning training through JDAI Connect.
4. To learn more about special detention cases, consider reviewing Pathway Series 9, Special Detention Cases: Strategies for Handling Difficult Populations.

CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT

The JDAI emphasis on decreasing the unnecessary use of detention does not eliminate the existence of, or use of, secure detention for certain youth. There are those youth whom represent a risk to public safety, or who would fail to appear in court for further proceedings if released, that would be strong candidates for pre-adjudicative and post-adjudicative detention. Acknowledging that we will have youth in our secure facilities, it is incumbent upon our system to provide a safe environment for those youth and the staff who supervise them.

Observations:

- Administrators and staff at the detention center seem very competent and proud of what goes on inside the facility.
- The facility itself, on observations, was clean, orderly and not unusual in any respect.
- The detention center has worked collaboratively with local partners to meet mental health needs of the youth. Therapists are available to assess youth for crisis situations and assist staff on safety planning. Staff expressed frustration and concern for being able to meet the needs of this population.
- The local school district provides teachers on site to provide year round education and life skill services.
- Nebraska juvenile detention centers are governed by statutory juvenile detention standards developed by the Nebraska Crime Commission. The facility director reported that the facility undergoes an annual state review of conditions and they are always in compliance.
- It appears there would be an opportunity for the facility, Nebraska Crime Commission and state JDAI stakeholders to partner on developing a cross-walk between JDAI standards and state standards.

Recommendations:

1. The county and state could benefit from completing a cross-walk of state standards and JDAI conditions for confinement to help inform ongoing best practices.
2. As a part of JDAI implementation, futuristically, Lancaster County Youth Service Center should participate in a facility assessment, which can be supported by the State JDAI Collaborative, other NE JDAI site facility directors, and State JDAI Coordinators.
3. JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team members should participate in the Conditions of Confinement e-learning training through JDAI Connect.

REDUCING RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES

Reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system is a core strategy of JDAI that permeates all other strategies. This work requires that current and future policies and practices to be viewed through an ethnic and racial lens to determine whether they are having a disparate impact on youth of color. While many factors beyond the control of the juvenile justice system influence disparate detention rates for youth of color, a credible justice system should ensure that all youth, regardless of race or ethnicity, are treated similarly.

Observations:

- Various stakeholders reported that there were substantial immigrant populations in Lancaster County.
- Lancaster County has an established RED committee that meets quarterly. They attended the Georgetown certificate program several years ago and have since implemented a school based diversion program serving predominately youth of color.
- Through the interview process it was observed that issues of RED were referenced regarding programs in place to address DMC issues. It was not clear how race/ethnicity/gender data is discussed in policy level decision making.
- Some community organizations expressed a desire to dig deeper into RED issues and to have more active discussion about additional strategies to impact youth in their neighborhoods. They would like to have more coordination with data discussions.
- The RED committee has developed common definitions. It was not clear how often these are reviewed or who ensures all entities are utilizing these definitions.
- It was observed by the interview team that the majority of stakeholders interviewed were not very diverse. While Lancaster County is not extremely diverse in general, there may be opportunity for the RED team to explore strategies for recruiting a more diversion juvenile justice work force.

Recommendations:

1. The Detention Utilization Study will provide baseline data on youth of color in Lancaster County. As Lancaster County moves forward with JDAI, all data should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender. With identified shifts in population in the county, there is opportunity to be proactive in meeting the needs of changing populations.
2. Data should be utilized to support the expressed desire to create additional programs/services for youth from specific neighborhoods, experiencing economic and other struggles to prevent them from entering the juvenile justice system.
3. Implement ongoing racial and ethnic diversity training for all system stakeholders.
4. To learn more about viewing juvenile justice system improvement efforts through a racial and ethnic equity lens, the RED Committee should consider reviewing the *Pathways Series 8, Reducing Racial Disparities in Juvenile Detention*.
5. JDAI Collaborative and Steering Team members should participate in the Eliminating Disparities e-learning training through JDAI Connect.
6. Stakeholders should also consider reading *Adoration of the Question: Reflections on the Failure to Reduce Racial & Ethnic Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System* (2008) and, *The Keeper and the Kept: Local Obstacles to Disparities Reduction in Juvenile Justice Systems and a Path to Change* (2009), the W. Haywood Burns Institute. Both are available at www.burnsinstitute.org or www.idaiconnect.org.