

Washington State Judicial Branch
2015-2017 BIENNIAL BUDGET REQUEST

Decision Package

Agency Administrative Office of the Courts

Decision Package Title Juvenile Court and Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Staff

Budget Period 2015-2017 Biennial Budget

Budget Level Policy Level

Agency Recommendation Summary Text

Funding is requested for intervention programs and detention alternative initiative services to maximize juvenile court services and operations. Probation and detention programs require policy level coordination and quality assurance. The requested positions are 1 FTE for a data analyst and quality assurance specialist and 1 FTE for JDAI statewide coordinator.

The request is made on behalf of the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Statewide Steering Committee, and the Washington State Center for Court Research.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
001-1 General Fund State	\$ 202,000	\$ 192,000	\$ 394,000
Staffing	FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
FTEs (number of staff requested)	2	2	2

Package Description

NEED

Data and Research Specialist (1 FTE)
Since 2000, Washington State juvenile courts have entered data on risk and needs of juvenile offenders into an assessment database. All youth who receive intervention services through juvenile court undergo a risk and needs assessment (Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment). The Risk Assessment software collects and populates the database through an

external vendor. The entire assessment process to manage juvenile offenders includes static risk assessment, dynamic needs assessment, case management strategies, case plans, assignment to evidence based interventions, and measurement of recidivism and other outcomes. While a sophisticated data collection process exists for probation, similar data collections systems and infrastructure for detention centers does not exist.

The Washington State Center for Court Research lacks sustainability to support the juvenile courts to extract relevant data and conduct analysis to influence public policy, funding, and court oversight of programs, the assessment, and staff. Detailed juvenile court probation program data generated in Washington is nationally recognized but absent adequate research support, the data sources continue to grow without a proportional growth in the courts' ability to make informed choices about reforms aimed at targeting services to court involved youth and their families. Systematic data related to detention and alternative programs does not exist. The lack of assigned research and data analysis to support juvenile court probation and detention services limits effectiveness.

The legislature requires annual reporting of data by each juvenile court for probation services (CJAA report/Block Grant Report as defined in RCW 13.40). Absent support from the Washington State Center for Court Research, detailed outcome reporting is not available. The AOC also has a statutory obligation, as defined in RCW 2.56.030, to collect and compile statistical data and make reports of court business.

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) (1 FTE)

JDAI reflects a series of statewide reform principles that guide use of secure juvenile detention which include detention risk assessment and alternatives to juvenile detention. The mission of JDAI is to eliminate inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure confinement for juveniles and redirect resources to fund alternatives to secure confinement without risking safety of families or the public. The objective of the statewide steering committee is to promote implementation of eight JDAI principles to improve detention screening, usage, alternatives to detention, and measure impacts on youth of minority populations. Washington juvenile courts do not have a standard data collection system for detention. The ten individual courts that are identified as "JDAI pilots" have created internal systems to screen offenders and collect detention data.

These pilot courts are supported by the statewide coordinator. The interest in JDAI is growing, but as the coordinator position is currently designed, JDAI is unable to expand. Because of this limitation, courts who are not identified as JDAI courts do not have screening tools or detention data. There is no statewide effort to collectively show detention use and alternatives in juvenile court. Aside from advocating for data system upgrades, policy level analysis that promote implementation of JDAI principles would be the responsibility of the JDAI coordinator and research staff team.

SOLUTION

Statewide support and promotion of probation and detention reform efforts require dedicated staff attention with an equal focus on data and policy. Lesser levels of program support will result in no advancement of best practices for detention reform and an actual decrease in probation research support (time limited funding source). Absent dedicated research and policy staff for probation and detention, the performance of juvenile court operations will continue to be undocumented and disjointed.

COMPARISON

Data and Research (1 FTE)

The Research Associate will maintain critical evaluation and reporting requirements mandated but not funded by the Legislature related to juvenile offender management systems (detention, assessment, and services). Currently, a .5 research associate is being funded from resources from the Washington State Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA) and the Executive Branch (JRA). This is a temporary accommodation to meet the statutory demands of the legislature. Funding the position via this agreement is absolutely not sustainable. Funding for this position is coming from funds that otherwise support direct evidenced-based services to system youth. Development of detention data on a statewide basis has not been done to date. Investment in data development and reporting will inform budgeting, create alternatives to secure detention, and reinvest in programs.

JDAI (1 FTE)

Advancing JDAI as a statewide initiative benefits all courts who use detention. If funded, the research and policy analyst would be responsible to promote best practices within the courts and developing strategies and systems to easier manage data that can be used to evaluate detention practices.

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

This package contributes to the Judicial Branch Principle Policy Objectives as identified below.

Fair and Effective Administration of Justice in All Civil and Criminal Cases.

Washington courts will openly, fairly, efficiently and effectively administer justice in all criminal and civil cases, consistent with constitutional mandates and the judiciary's duty to maintain the highest level of public trust and confidence in the courts.

Juvenile probation and detention service, based on proven best practices, improves fair and efficient administration of justice. The most important element of probation services and detention (based on JDAI principles) is for youth in the juvenile justice system to be placed in programs and assigned to levels of confinement consistent with their risk level. These goals can only be accomplished with policy support and outcome measures. Courts do not want probation or detention systems to assign youth to programs if they pose a risk to the youth.

Accessibility. *Washington courts, court facilities and court systems will be open and accessible to all participants regardless of cultural, linguistic, ability-based or other characteristics that serve as access barriers.*

Probation programs and secure detention are used regularly, based on objective and subjective determination of risk. Probation assessment assigns youth to evidence based programs and JDAI strategies include assessment that objectively informs the court on the need for secure confinement. These assessments greatly influence the path of intervention for youth and need uniform application across juvenile courts. Assessment tools objectively evaluate the youth and provide additional detail for decision makers. While the Washington Risk Assessment unifies the standard for probation services, use of some or all JDAI principles and strategies will standardize detention screening practices across all juvenile courts.

Commitment to Effective Court Management. *Washington courts will employ and maintain systems and practices that enhance effective court management.*

The wellbeing of youth in the juvenile justice system can be defined by various practices for probation and detention managed by Washington's juvenile courts.

Data and Research Specialist

Correct application of risk assessment tools enhance effective court management by directing resources to populations that are most in need of supervision, services, and alternatives to formal confinement.

JDAI

Confinement will be necessary to provide protection to victims, youth, families, and the public in general. However, the juvenile justice system has developed and validated tools to inform courts on appropriate application of confinement, a system that has been heavily relied upon. Formal confinement is the most expensive option available to a court. Stakeholders from counties and state are equally interested in attending to the wellbeing of youth in our system while at the same time have proven strategies to provide alternatives to secure confinement. If implemented, detention reform consistent with JDAI will promote strategies to improve court management of juvenile offenders.

Appropriate Staffing and Support. *Washington courts will be appropriately staffed and effectively managed, and court personnel, court managers and court systems will be effectively supported.*

Local court operations will be better managed if probation and detention system enhancements are staffed and supported at the statewide level. The requested positions are critical if improvements, consistent with probation quality assurance and JDAI principles, are to be applied statewide. Currently there is no complete picture of juvenile detention usage across the State. The mandates of the current JDAI sites is burdensome and not reasonable for some courts to adopt. Once the policy and research analyst position is funded, critical infrastructure to support JDAI can be built, data systems altered, assessment tools consolidated. Once these accomplishments are done, all courts in Washington State can make adjustments to align their practices with JDAI principles without falling prey to the roadblocks that currently exist.

Measure Detail

Impact on clients and service

Trial courts serve the public, and juvenile court services include probation and detention programs. The youth and families are directed to juvenile court because of law violating behavior. Various interventions and restrictions are applied to youth in an attempt to reduce anti-social behavior and promote pro-social behavior. The outcome of these various strategies and programs is measured, data analyzed, and then used to sustain programs and interventions that show an impact at stopping re-offending behavior. The requested positions are critical to continual measurement of effectiveness and continual improvement, which is the hallmark of the juvenile court continuum of intervention.

The JDAI statewide steering committee promotes principles and strategies in courts that are not currently identified as JDAI sites, while creating mechanisms to ease the process so all courts make efforts to adopt JDAI strategies. The JDAI principles outline detention practices that courts support, but workload associated with adopting JDAI practices has caused reforms to be unattainable to many courts. The steering committee will rely on the research and policy analyst position to address these potential barriers on behalf of juvenile courts.

Clients of JDAI also include juvenile courts, administrators and detention managers. The work of the steering committee will impact the interest that juvenile courts, the detention centers, and the county executive branch have to implement detention enhancements consistent with JDAI.

Lastly, direct clients of JDAI are the youth and children served across the state by juvenile court services. The wellbeing of youth in the juvenile justice system are directly impacted by judicial

decisions made about confinement. The more alternatives that are created and sanctioned as part of JDAI, the more appropriate orders can be made while minimizing disruption to a family or school, which might in fact be protective factors for a youth.

Impact on other state services

N/A

Relationship to Capital Budget

N/A

Required changes to existing Court Rule, Court Order ,RCW, WAC, contract, or plan

N/A

Alternatives explored

The current agreement to fund .5 FTE for probation research specialist is temporary and not sustainable. Funding for the position otherwise would be spent to provide services to youth and families.

The JDAI statewide steering committee was populated and organized in mid-2013. Prior to this request for 2.0 FTE, there had not been an organized effort to collect and analyze statewide data for the purposes of detention reform.

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs and budget impacts in future biennia

The funding request is for 2 FTE that will have ongoing responsibilities to the AOC, statewide steering committee, and local courts. The need for staff funding is ongoing.

Effects of non-funding

If the positions are not filled, the juvenile court systems of probation and detention will have reduced effectiveness. To date, the probation system has yielded local and state savings. The JDAI principles are spreading throughout the state, but lack cohesion and data collection. The ability to promote best practices for probation and detention requires data, quality assurance, and outcome measurement. Juvenile courts' ability to provide targeted and effective interventions requires these positions. If they are not funded, juvenile courts risk not complying with data and reporting standards mandated by the state. Furthermore, JDAI courts will continue to operate in isolation, additional courts will not meet JDAI standards, and recruitment for a new statewide coordinator will not be fully funded. There will be no centralized data collection process or statewide understanding of detention needs. Under the current structure, some courts have advanced their practices but those improvements will not be duplicated across other juvenile courts if dedicated research and policy staff resources are not assigned.

Expenditure calculations and assumptions and FTE assumptions

The estimated cost of 1 FTE coordinator and policy analyst and 1 FTE at Center for Court Research is included as an estimate. The coordinator/policy analyst FTE is calculated as the equivalent of a range 62 employee at AOC (\$93,059 salary and benefits at the top step annually).

The estimate for the research specialist FTE is calculated as a range 65 (\$98,550 salary and benefits annually). In addition, \$5,000 per FTE has been added for equipment, furniture, etc.

The responsibilities of these positions are equal parts research and policy analysis. There are also front end responsibilities to work with the current AOC data applications to modify or use in order to implement a reliable system of detention data collection. Once the current system is altered to allow data entry, the research analyst will be able to communicate with local courts and other stakeholders (steering committee and legislature) about statewide impact of detention usage.

Object Detail	FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
Staff Costs	\$ 192,000	\$ 192,000	\$ 384,000
Non-Staff Costs	\$ 10,000	\$ 0	\$ 10,000
Total Objects	\$ 202,000	\$ 192,000	\$ 394,000