

**GOOD NEWS ABOUT STRATEGIC PLANNING
IN JUVENILE JUSTICE:
THE JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE**

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Indeed, in all 13 (Michigan) counties that participated in the Jurisdictional Planning Assistance Program, we are seeing cost savings and improved services to youth as a result of this problem-solving approach.

Honorable Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan, Michigan Supreme Court
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The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS)¹ Center for Research & Professional Development (CRPD), a division of the Outreach Programs of the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University, delivers training and technical assistance services to local, state, and tribal nation juvenile justice systems across the United States. One of the popular technical assistance services is the strategic planning workshop called the Jurisdictional Planning Assistance or JPA. Over 20 JPAs have occurred in the past three years through support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (a division of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice) and from the State Court Administrative Offices (SCAO) of the Michigan Supreme Court and the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS). JPA evolved from efforts to replicate in rural-urban jurisdictions many of the earlier impressive juvenile detention reforms developed by the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)² of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

¹ The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) is a new professional association for juvenile justice practitioners that includes the Council of Educators of At-Risk and Delinquent Youth (CEARDY), Juvenile Justice Trainers Association (JJTA), National Association of Juvenile Correctional Agencies, and National Juvenile Detention Association.

² Initial JDAI sites included large metropolitan jurisdictions such as Cook County, Illinois (Chicago), Multnomah County, Oregon (Portland), and New York City.

BACKGROUND

In 1995, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) awarded a grant to the National Juvenile Detention Association (NJDA) and the Youth Law Center (YLC) to implement a time-limited, problem-specific intervention with smaller jurisdictions to prevent and reduce crowding in juvenile detention facilities. The evolution of this project led to the reorganization of the Center for Research & Professional Development and to the emergence of a slightly different approach to detention reform. Using many of the reform strategies developed through the JDAI, NJDA-YLC targeted smaller, rural-urban jurisdictions with a brief intervention that emphasized systemic change. The strategy moved beyond detention issues to include all juvenile confinement options available to the local juvenile justice jurisdiction, thus expanding the JDAI detention reform concepts to include all out-of-home placements. The mark of success was the jurisdiction's reinvestment of secure placement funds into an expanded continuum of services or the decision not to build a bigger detention facility.

Phase 1: Reform Efforts in Rural-Urban Jurisdictions (1995-2000)

The first efforts of the project (1995-2000) had many similarities to the JDAI project. The development of a survey instrument allowed a project advisory committee to make informed decisions about the particular jurisdiction, its institutional problems, and its potential for successful reform. NJDA/YLC emphasized the importance of (a) an identified champion within the jurisdiction to spearhead the change process and (b) access to adequate juvenile justice data so that the change process could be data-driven. Finally, the intervention consisted of a team of consultants that spent time with key stakeholders in the jurisdiction working on specific problems.

JDAI project director Bart Lubow was very cooperative and supportive.³ Many JDAI consultants also served on the NJDA/YLC project teams. Most important was the involvement of Paul DeMuro. He was a central figure in many of the early JDAI interventions, and his understanding of juvenile detention reform contributed significantly to their success. DeMuro brought vast experience and knowledge along with the full understanding of what had worked through JDAI. DeMuro's involvement as the senior consultant to the NJDA/YLC project eliminated many implementation problems and led to greater efficiency in the use of project resources.

The NJDA/YLC project differed from JDAI in a couple ways. First, it focused on the smaller, rural-urban jurisdiction.⁴ Second, the focus on the full range of juvenile custody facilities expanded the intervention to include statewide systems and training schools. Finally, the amount of resources available for a strategic intervention was significantly less, and these resources were not given to the jurisdiction. This meant that the goal of sustainability had to be accomplished through a more time-limited intervention. This proved to be an important distinction.

Phase 1 primarily used tactical interventions to reduce crowding. These included: (a) developing a comprehensive continuum of services; (b) controlling

³ Lubow provided permission to NJDA to adapt its JDAI simulation, "Emerald City Faces the Music," for use in the Jurisdictional Planning Assistance.

⁴ JDAI began a statewide detention reform initiative in Illinois where a major issue is rural detention services and practices.

admissions to detention through structured decision-making and graduated sanctions (Juvenile Sanctions Center, 2003); (c) improving data collection and move to data-driven decisions; (d) developing alternatives to secure detention (e.g., intensive home supervision, electronic bracelets, non-secure placements or shelters); (e) reducing admissions, changing the intake screening, refusing to admit or detain certain categories of youth (e.g., status offenders, municipal offenders, sentenced youth, waived youths) cap the facility population (through court order, agency policy or other authority); (f) restricting the use of detention, limiting the number of youth per sleeping room, eliminating sleeping on floor in dayrooms and hallways, specifying room size, holding probable cause hearings; (g) reducing the average length of stay; (h) maintain an appropriate staffing ratio; (i) increasing programs and services proportionally in response to the increased numbers of youth in the facility; and (j) changing and expanding the institution's capacity, building new beds or a new facility, remodeling the physical plant. The use of tactical interventions yielded only partial success, and it confirmed the importance of systemic interventions as the foundation of sustained change.

Phase Two: Reinvestment and the Jurisdictional Planning Assistance (2001-2005)

In 2001, NJDA proposed a different strategy for the delivery of strategic planning technical assistance based on the evaluation of Phase 1 results. The new strategy, the Jurisdictional Planning Assistance, had the following characteristics:

1. The core group is the key to systemic change. Therefore, the stakeholder core group is paramount. If the jurisdiction cannot guarantee the participation of the essential core group members, it would not qualify for a JPA.
2. The intervention must be intensive but highly time limited. JPA is for jurisdictions that want a new way of looking at juvenile justice issues and solving juvenile justice problems. Therefore, JPA became a two-day training workshop with limited follow-up technical assistance.
3. The intervention also needs to be information intensive. This means that the JPA training workshop should supply a large amount of usable information for system reform and program development.
4. Participants understand interventions better when they are involved in a “real life” situation to apply these newly learned concepts and principles. Therefore, NJDA secured permission from JDAI to adapt its powerful Emerald City simulation for use in the JPA.
5. To make the simulation even more relevant, it incorporates juvenile justice data from the participating jurisdiction without the general knowledge of the JPA participants.
6. JPA departs from the JDAI mission of detention reform by applying the reform principles to a wide range of systems problems.
7. JPA uses a slightly different language to address the potential resistance that occurs when a jurisdiction seeks outside assistance. Instead of implying that the jurisdiction operates its juvenile justice system poorly, JPA uses reinvestment to characterize strategies that maximize the use of tax dollars saved through better or more effective placement decisions.

8. The theme and unifying concept of the JPA is “confinement as process” or the adoption of a process-orientation as an indicator of systemic change.

WHAT IS JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE (JPA)?

JPA is a technical assistance and strategic planning process, consisting of limited, problem-specific consultation in advance of and following the JPA workshop. JPA works best in jurisdictions and systems that seek an honest, sometimes radical, reassessment of the way it does business, including a re-visiting of how vision and mission influence decisions about restrictiveness and appropriateness of its interventions. JPA is a practical intervention that allows stakeholders to move toward cost reduction through better decision-making. The goal of the JPA workshop is a community-based plan of action, developed and endorsed by the jurisdiction’s core group, that moves the juvenile justice system toward a more cost-effective and cost-efficient way of doing business. Community safety and the development of appropriate youth and family services are a major training focus.

Local leader(s) complete an application to host a JPA, and a local contact person arranges participation from a specific list of stakeholder categories, where a representative(s) from each stakeholder category commits to participate in the two-day event. CRPD assembles a JPA consultant-trainer team with expertise that matches the problem areas identified through the application process. Completion of the application and commitment by stakeholders to attend are critical variables in the decision to hold a JPA.

Day One of JPA includes a delineation of key concepts on juvenile justice systems effectiveness, especially (a) core values, (b) vision and mission statements, (c) development of a continuum of services, (d) effective assessment strategies emphasizing a balance of strengths and deficits, (e) using formal assessment and structured decision-making to match youth with appropriate programs and services, and (f) the use of data-driven decisions in the application of graduated sanctions.

Day Two of JPA targets (a) local issues, (b) a small group problem simulation, and (c) action planning. Local issues typically include minority overrepresentation, sex offender treatment programs, gender-specific services, and mental health and substance abuse problems. The highlight of the second day is the simulation.

The JPA simulation, “Emerald County Faces the Music,” responds to a range of issues about how to make the system smarter through better decision-making. While these issues include detention crowding, they also have addressed budget crises surrounding out-of-home placements, decisions about whether to build a facility, and questions about how to develop programs for special needs offenders, to name a few. JPA consultants agree that the reinvestment approach increases stakeholder receptiveness to new ideas when approaching a critical review of their system in the absence of a major crisis.

The Emerald County simulation weaves the local jurisdiction’s presenting problems into a scenario where it has been sued and the court has required a quick remedy or face stiff fines. Through a manipulation of issues and circumstances, participants do not realize that the data in the simulation are, in reality, their own. This permits stakeholders to participate in the simulation more openly since

hypothetical problem-solving ideas are not personally threatening nor do they generate turf or boundary issues.

Participants work in small groups of about ten. Group decisions are tied to real juvenile justice costs within the jurisdiction, demonstrating how a reduced reliance on the most expensive placements can create funds for an expanded continuum of community-based services. Stakeholders realize that the reinvestment of existing institutional moneys may be sufficient to develop new strategies for youth.

Revelation that the simulation numbers are their own, i.e. a reflection of their decision-making practices, causes a greater commitment to the reinvestment process and energizes participants for the action planning phase. Action planning begins during the final hours of the second day, and it becomes the point of departure for future meetings of the core group.

Michigan Initiative for Reinvestment in Juvenile Justice (MIRJJ)

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) is responsible for management and operations of the local court systems in Michigan counties with the Department of Human Services (DHS) formerly the Family Independence Agency (DHS) responsible for a significant portion of children's services funding and delivery. Representatives from both agencies participated in several early JPA workshops. Statewide issues surrounding changes in the structure of the judiciary, funding issues, and costs of out-of-home juvenile placements prompted SCAO and DHS to use JPA as a vehicle to help local jurisdictions address these challenges and to improve the effectiveness of the local courts. Additionally, reports of savings from the initial Michigan counties that completed a JPA on federal funds indicated that these counties annually reduced their placement expenses by \$13 for every \$1 invested in JPA. SCAO and DHS have supported JPA in over 12 Michigan counties.

JPA OUTCOMES

The responses to JPA have been largely immediate and positive. Here is a partial list of outcomes from selected JPA sites:

1. Monroe County, Michigan. Core group supported (a) a reduction in the out-of-county placement budget by \$1,134,000 over three years without a threat to public safety and (b) a reconfigured use of detention bed space for new staff-secure treatment programs.
2. State of Maine. In response to statewide institutional crowding, core group actions led to a 70% reduction in detention of girls and a 33% reduction in detention of boys.
3. Tohono O'odham Nation, Arizona. Core group reduced overuse of its secure detention facility and expanded the staff secure group home and day treatment programs, increasing the delivery of substance abuse and mental health services.
4. Berrien County, Michigan. Core group supported juvenile detention use below the rated capacity following JPA. Detention crowding existed for 17 consecutive years prior to JPA. Before the JPA, juvenile court held 135 youth in residential treatment; since JPA the average has been 50 youth. The juvenile court saved \$250,000 per year by eliminating out-of-state and out-of-county detention and

- by developing multi-systemic therapy (MST) and two additional community-based programs.
5. State of Alaska. The state juvenile justice services director reported over \$440,000 of savings within the first six months, which was used to enhance probation supervision and add staff training.
 6. Morgantown, West Virginia. The regional office of Department of Health and Rehabilitation Services formed new partnerships with private vendors to create in-home, after school, and prevention services that reduced excessive costs (\$20-25 million per year) of out-of-state placements.
- Participants, stakeholders, and juvenile justice system leaders have offered formal and public words of support for the JPA process. Here are a few.

We are enthusiastic about the changes here because of the excellent participation of mental health and legislative representatives in the executive group. [JPA] directly impacted our successful efforts to change statutes regarding mental health and create the Memorandum of Agreement between Department of Corrections and Mental Health.

~ Bartlett H. Stoodley, Associate Commissioner for Juvenile Services, Maine

[JPA] changed the way the court and the county look at juvenile justice. We have more consistency, and many programs in the county have changed as a result.

~ Hon. Pam Moskwa, Monroe County Circuit Court Judge, Michigan

Detention as process made a difference. Before [JPA], there was a blanket approach to all youth. Now treatment is individualized so that each child and his/her family receive more appropriate and more effective services.

~ William David Bruce, Tohono O'odham Nation Juvenile Court Administrator, Arizona

Establishment of the core group was definitely a key to our improvements. In addition to concrete changes, there have been huge changes in the quality of relationships between stakeholders. Walls between agencies and individuals have come down. Whereas before, there was a lot of blaming, defensiveness, suspicion, and animosity, now there is willing collaboration. When issues come up, there is communication and problem solving. This is particularly obvious with law enforcement, prosecutors, and courts.

~ Elvin Gonzalez, Berrien County Juvenile Court Administrator, Michigan

[JPA] helped non-professionals understand the issues that mental health and court staffs face, including the costs of various options, the need to build local programs, the need to rehabilitate youth.

~ Hon. William Ervin, Isabella County Circuit Court Judge, Michigan

JPA lead to the decision to build a 24-bed detention facility. We started out believing in a 100-bed facility. The JPA workshop and ability to look

at the data helped bring all members together with similar focus, whereas before everyone had their own idea of what the problems were.
~ Connie Basham, Tippecanoe County Commissioner, Indiana

LESSONS LEARNED

JPA evaluation studies reveal a common litany of lessons learned from strategic planning efforts: (a) collaboration is foreign and difficult, but worth it; (b) a champion and judicial leadership are essential; (c) common values and shared vision and mission statements are essential; (d) competent data are essential; (e) good planning contributes to significant change; (f) change is fragile; (g) structured decision-making (logical and rational decisions) increases system effectiveness; and (h) a core group of stakeholders drives the process. The abundant communication and brainstorming among stakeholders seems to empower individual stakeholders to move toward the shared vision.

Unique to JPA are several additional lessons:

1. The focus on making the system smarter appears to be an effective way of securing cooperation and participation from local stakeholders in systems where radical changes are not indicated. Reinvestment or resource reallocation⁵ asks individuals who are responsible for key decision-making to think about smarter and more cost-efficient ways of implementing the juvenile justice system, especially during difficult economic times. A secondary gain is the ability of a more effective system to avert a crisis.
2. Jurisdictions that have accomplished the greatest amount of reinvestment and system improvement are those that use the momentum from the JPA to initiate the core group as soon as possible afterwards.
3. It is critical to get the right people to the table. That is, getting attendance and participation from each category of stakeholders is essential. External funding is very important here. Local leaders who have participated in other community-based group strategies for system improvement remark that their ability to get the right people involved seems easier when there is an investment of outside funds. Likewise, ownership of the JPA increases when some of the moneys, e. g., costs of the training site, lunch, and refreshments for participants, comes from the host jurisdiction.
4. JPA starts with a clear and formal assertion that the people resources in the jurisdiction are sufficient to craft an effective solution to its problems; however, there must be some sort of event that focuses the energy of the key stakeholders. Therefore, JPA is a time-limited, problem-specific strategy for building local capacity and momentum.

SUMMARY

The strength of the JPA is its ability to provide a quick, problem-specific, community-based intervention to initiate and sustain change that does not require a long-term commitment of funds or technical assistance. If change is to occur and if it is to be sustained, the motivation comes from the individuals who are in the

⁵ C.S. Lowe, "Resource Reallocation: The Clark County Experience," *Juvenile Sanctions Center: Training and Technical Assistance Program Bulletin*, Vol. 2 (Reno, NV: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2004).

system and in the community. JPA provides a common experience for core stakeholders that is powerful enough, with some occasional follow-up technical assistance, to cause them to rethink, reinvest, and reform their system.

The next steps for JPA include a formalization of the concepts and practices. NPJS recently completed a video that summarizes the JPA workshop, highlights the outcomes from two Michigan counties, and provides perspectives from three state directors of juvenile justice programs. This paper, that video, and JPA brochures are available means to disseminate the accomplishments of strategic planning. Additionally, CRPD recently completed the first stage of an evaluation of JPA outcomes, and a more comprehensive explanation of the JPA concepts and outcomes will be available soon for distribution through NPJS.

Another step is the expansion of the strategic planning intervention to other juvenile services agencies. NPJS believes this concept applies to child welfare equally well. Many of the challenges facing child welfare appear similar to those in juvenile justice, and a significant number of children and youth are part of both systems.

The time-limited, problem-specific strategic planning workshop offers many jurisdictions a way to jump-start a community-based plan of action to improve juvenile justice services. The NPJS Jurisdictional Planning Assistance experience suggests that a high intensity, two-day workshop with the key juvenile justice stakeholders can begin a change process that is relevant to other juvenile-serving professions. Other agencies, organizations, and foundations can supply additional, problem-specific, long-term technical assistance that supports the community energy and focus resulting from the JPA.