

State Summary

Total FY2012 Federal Investment (JABG, Title II, EUDL and Title V): \$663,199

FY2011 Federal Investment: \$1,380,991

The current overall funding levels for juvenile justice in Iowa represent a **54% decrease from the FY2011 funding level.**

Overview

In FY2012, Iowa was awarded \$633,199 for the Title II and Title V Programs of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) Program, and the Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) Program. The funds are administered by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC), which serves as the state advisory group (SAG) for implementing JJDP in the state.

Iowa's strategy for JJDP implementation is to equitably distribute the majority of its funds as block grants to its eight judicial districts. Funds flow from the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJ) to the judicial districts' probation agencies which then direct them toward the funding of contracts to provide community-based programs and local detention alternatives for youth. By allocating funds to local jurisdictions as block grants, the JJAC preserves the localities' discretion to decide which among the best evidence-based approaches are most appropriate to their local context.

Consistent with research on best practices for at-risk and delinquent youth, the JJAC directs all of the federal funding it receives to alternatives to adjudication and detention that strengthen and maintain youths' connections to their families and communities, while upholding youth and community safety. Since 2008, none of Iowa's JJDP dollars have gone into detention or out-of-home placements. This is accompanied by a systemwide philosophy that community-based alternatives should be the approach of *first* resort for all but the most serious offenders. As a result, ***the state has reduced its detention holds by 29% for all youth since 2007, and by 38% for African-American youth.*** Iowa is also one of 38 states that have leveraged their federal dollars and received additional private support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to implement the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).

Still, like all other states participating in the JJDP, Iowa has had to contend with **a reduction of the federal investment in juvenile justice; 54% in the last year alone – this represents a 39% decrease in JABG funding, a 33% decrease in Title II funding, and the elimination of all EUDL and Title V funding.** To help counter the trend of dramatic reductions in the federal investment, the state has directed substantial resources to improving the effectiveness of their juvenile justice systems in addition to delivering services to youth and families. Some of the state's initiatives are outlined below.

School-to-Court Initiative

As part of the state's system improvement efforts, the Iowa CJJP is seeking to understand the scope and root causes of juvenile delinquency. Anecdotally, the problem appears to be related to exclusionary school discipline policies that favor removal of some youth from schools, and their referral to the juvenile justice system. A number of activities are underway to examine and address the flow of youth from Iowa's schools to its juvenile justice system. An overview of those activities is provided below.

Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Iowa City, Sioux City, and Waterloo: CJJP is in the process of collecting standardized data sets from five local metropolitan school districts and police departments to establish a baseline of information regarding the referral of youth from the school to juvenile court. Separately, CJJP is also working with the Department of Education to collect standardized information (from the respective districts) on youth removed (i.e., suspended or expelled) from the school setting. The school data, which includes office referrals and removals (suspensions and expulsions) will be compared and linked with arrest and juvenile court referral data to identify the scope of the school-to-court pipeline. CJJP sought and received approval from the state's attorney general's office for an information-sharing agreement (as a protection regarding confidentiality) that affords access to basic school incident/office referral information from local school districts, and data on removal incidents from the state's Department of Education.

All Districts: The JJAC and CJJP have supported the development of [School-to-Court: Local Strategies](#), a training and tool kit, created to assist local planning of strategies and policies regarding misbehavior of youth in schools. The training effort has as an emphasis on the reduction of school incidents, arrests and referrals to juvenile court for all youth, but specifically for minority youth. CJJP is interested in the potential to assist state and local Department of Education efforts to stem the flow of youth from schools to the juvenile justice system, and is seeking to provide additional training/discussions in select local sites.

Promotion of Best Practices

Juvenile Court Officers (JCO) Training: Funding to the judicial districts has, in part, supported judicial district best-practice efforts. Extensive training has been provided to all staff in the use of the Iowa Delinquency Assessment instrument and motivational interviewing.

Functional Family Therapy Training: With support of JJDP funds, several jurisdictions in the state are utilizing functional family therapy, a widely recognized evidence-based family therapy program, to reconnect juvenile offenders to their families in a positive and supportive manner.

Aggression Replacement Training: JCOs have also hired a contractor to provide training for juvenile justice system actors on techniques in aggression replacement training (techniques that have had success reducing aggressive behaviors), among other empirically grounded approaches.

For a complete listing of the programs and outcomes funded by the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning and the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, contact Marie Williams at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice at williams@juvjustice.org, or 202-467-0864, ext. 113.