

Juvenile Justice Fact Sheet Series: Community-Based Alternatives

March 2015

Prevention	Diversion	Community-Based Alternatives	Community Corrections Facilities	Detention	Juvenile Correctional Facilities	Parole/ Probation	Reentry	Adult System
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What Are Community-Based Alternatives?

Community-Based Alternatives (CBAs) refer to a wide range of approaches designed to limit youth getting involved more deeply in the juvenile justice system, particularly to prevent secure confinement of youth and reduce the negative outcomes associated with placing youth in locked facilities. The goals of CBAs are to hold youth accountable and maintain public safety, while allowing youth to stay in their communities. CBAs include various programs that range in the level of intervention they provide to youth. For example, a youth can receive in-home services (potentially in partnership with their family) or out-of-home services like attending a day or evening reporting center or being referred to mental health or substance abuse treatment. However, all of these services are providing in the youth's community.

Research on Community-Based Alternatives:

Over the past decade, research has provided guidance on how to respond to youth who come into contact with the juvenile court system. In order to reduce recidivism, research recommends keeping youth with a low-risk of reoffending out of the juvenile justice system altogether, while providing youth with a medium- or high-reoffending risk with appropriate, effective therapeutic services in a setting that provides the minimum amount of supervision possible to maintain public safety. For all youth, providing more punishment than necessary, including placing youth in correctional facilities, can actually increase the likelihood of recidivism.

Therefore, states across the country have invested in creating a range of CBAs to increase the number of youth served in communities. CBAs have been shown to reduce recidivism and can be used effectively for high-risk youth; a recent national study of CBAs for high-risk youth showed that 86% of the youth remained arrest free while in the program and 93% remained living at home at the end of services. In addition, CBAs are cost-effective. National data shows that incarcerating a youth costs \$240/day, while providing CBAs is only \$75/day.

An example of an effective CBA is the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) program, which provides families with a clinician on call 24/7. The clinician engages the youth in positive activities and works with parents. MST has been shown to reduce out-of-home placements, keep youth in school, improve family relations/functioning, and reduce youth's rearrest rate and drug/substance use. In Ohio, MST costs between \$7,500-\$9,500 per family for 3-5 months, compared to \$50,000 for a three-month stay in a juvenile correctional facility.

Community-Based Alternatives in Ohio:

In Ohio, CBAs programs are supported both at the local level and through five statewide programs outlined below, which provide funding support to keep youth in local communities instead of in community corrections or DYS facilities. Since these programs have been implemented, Ohio's juvenile correctional population has dropped from over 2,600 youth in 1992 to just over 450 youth in 2014, an over 80% decrease.

- RECLAIM (Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors): RECLAIM, which began in 1994, is formula-based, meaning all 88 Ohio counties are eligible for funding if they qualify under the formula. RECLAIM funding goes to a wide range of programs selected by the courts, including advocacy, alternative schools and educational services, drug testing, diversion, intensive supervision and wraparound services, life skills, and restitution.

- **Targeted RECLAIM:** Targeted RECLAIM is in place in 15 counties throughout the state: Allen, Ashtabula, Butler, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Licking, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Medina, Montgomery, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull. Money under Targeted RECLAIM must be used for evidence-based programs, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, the EPICs program (Effective Practices in Community Supervision), Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and high fidelity wraparound services.
- **Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Projects (BHJJ):** BHJJ focuses on youth ages 10-18 with a mental health diagnosis. The twelve counties currently participating in BHJJ are Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Holmes, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Summit, Trumbull, Wayne, and Wood; Butler, Champaign, Fairfield, Logan, and Union previously participated. BHJJ money must be used for evidence-based programming, including Functional Family Therapy, Multidimensional Family Therapy, and a Life Skills Programs.
- **Competitive RECLAIM** – Competitive RECLAIM was initiated in fiscal year 2015 (FY15) and is a competitive grant program to support local courts in implementing research-based CBAs. In FY15, DYS distributed \$2.2 million to fund 29 unique programs in 24 counties across the state.
- **Youth Services Grant** – Each year, each juvenile court receives a set amount of funding from DYS to provide services to youth. However, there are no parameters regarding how this funding is spent locally.

Costs: In FY15, Ohio spent \$58.4 million on over 600 CBA programs serving 80,000 youth (based on program admissions) across the state through RECLAIM (\$30.6 million), Targeted RECLAIM (\$6.3 million), BHJJ (\$2.6 million), the Youth Services Grant (\$16.7 million) and Competitive RECLAIM (\$2.2 million). In the same time period, the state spent \$91.6 million incarcerating less than 500 youth in juvenile correctional facilities.

Outcomes and Recidivism: A 2014 study by the University of Cincinnati found that RECLAIM served mostly White youth with a low to moderate risk of reoffending. Youth served in the RECLAIM program had a 16% recidivism rate, compared to a 39% and 50% recidivism rates for youth sent to community correction and DYS facilities respectively. A similar study of Targeted RECLAIM in 2012 showed that youth served in Targeted RECLAIM programs were nearly three times less likely to be incarcerated compared to similar youth sent to DYS facilities. Finally, a recent review of BHJJ showed that nearly 72% of the youth served by BHJJ successfully completed the program and only 3.5% of these youth were subsequently sentenced to a DYS facility.

Conclusion:

Regardless of a youth's risk level or level of needed supervision, for the right youth an effective CBA can keep youth and their communities safe and increase the likelihood that the youth will succeed, while costing significantly less than incarceration. Ohio should continue to direct youth to CBAs, particularly programs that are research- or evidence-based and successfully reduce recidivism.

Resources:

Justice Policy Institute, *The Costs of Confinement: Why Good Juvenile Justice Policies Make Good Fiscal Sense*, (May 2009), available at http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/09_05_rep_costs_of_confinement_ji_ps.pdf.

Jeff Kretschmar, Ph.D., Fredrick Butcher, Ph.D. & Dan Flannery, Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University, Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education, *An Evaluation of the Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Initiative: 2006-2013*, available at <http://begun.case.edu/behavioral-healthjuvenile-justice-program>

Ohio MHAS, *Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Projects*, <http://mha.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=136> (last accessed December 15, 2014).

Ohio Department of Youth Services, *Targeted RECLAIM*, <http://www.dys.ohio.gov/dnn/Community/TargetedRECLAIM/tabid/211/Default.aspx> (last accessed December 15, 2014).

Edward Letessa, Lovins, Brian, and Lux, Jennifer, *Evaluation of Ohio's Reclaim Programs* (April 30, 2014), available at <http://www.dys.ohio.gov/DNN/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JtVZ6JcbUc4%3d&tabid=131&mid=764>.

Ryan Labrecque and Myrinda Schweitzer, *Targeted RECLAIM; 2012 University of Cincinnati Outcome Study January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012: Final Report* (2014), available at <http://www.dys.ohio.gov/DNN/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=DzdJuObsiu4%3d&tabid=131&mid=764>.

Lipsey, et al., Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (2010), *Improving the Effectiveness of Juvenile Justice Programs: A New Perspective on Evidence-Based Practice*, available at <http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/cbp/cbppaper.pdf>

Mark W. Lipsey & Francis T. Cullen, *The Effectiveness of Correctional Rehabilitation: A Review of Systematic Reviews*, 3 Ann. Rev. L. & Soc. Sci. 297 (2007).

This fact sheet is one of a fact sheet series about Ohio's juvenile justice system by the Ohio Juvenile Justice Association.

If you have any questions, please visit OJJA's website or contact Erin Davies with the Juvenile Justice Coalition at edavies@johio.org or 614-400-5548.