

THE JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE: AN OVERVIEW

History



The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in December of 1992. It was developed in response to the growing number of youth being held in secure detention across the country for non-violent acts. It currently operates in 40 states, including Georgia, and is housed within the Council of Juvenile Court Judges.¹

Purpose



To help jurisdictions reduce their reliance on secure detention while ensuring public safety through the establishment of more effective and efficient systems that accomplish the purposes of juvenile detention.²

Objectives



- To eliminate the inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention
- To minimize failures to appear and incidents of delinquent behavior
- To improve conditions in secure detention facilities
- To redirect public finances from building new facility capacity to responsible alternative strategies
- To reduce racial, ethnic, and gender disparities

Strategies



- Collaboration between major juvenile justice agencies, governmental entities, and community organizations
- Use of accurate data to diagnose the system's problems and identify real solutions
- Objective admissions criteria and instruments to replace subjective decisions that inappropriately place children in custody
- Alternatives to detention to increase the options available for arrested youth
- Case processing reforms to speed up the flow of cases so that youth don't languish in detention
- Reducing the use of secure confinement for "special" cases like technical probation violations
- Deliberate commitment to reducing racial disparities by eliminating biases and ensuring a level playing field
- Improving conditions of confinement through routine inspections

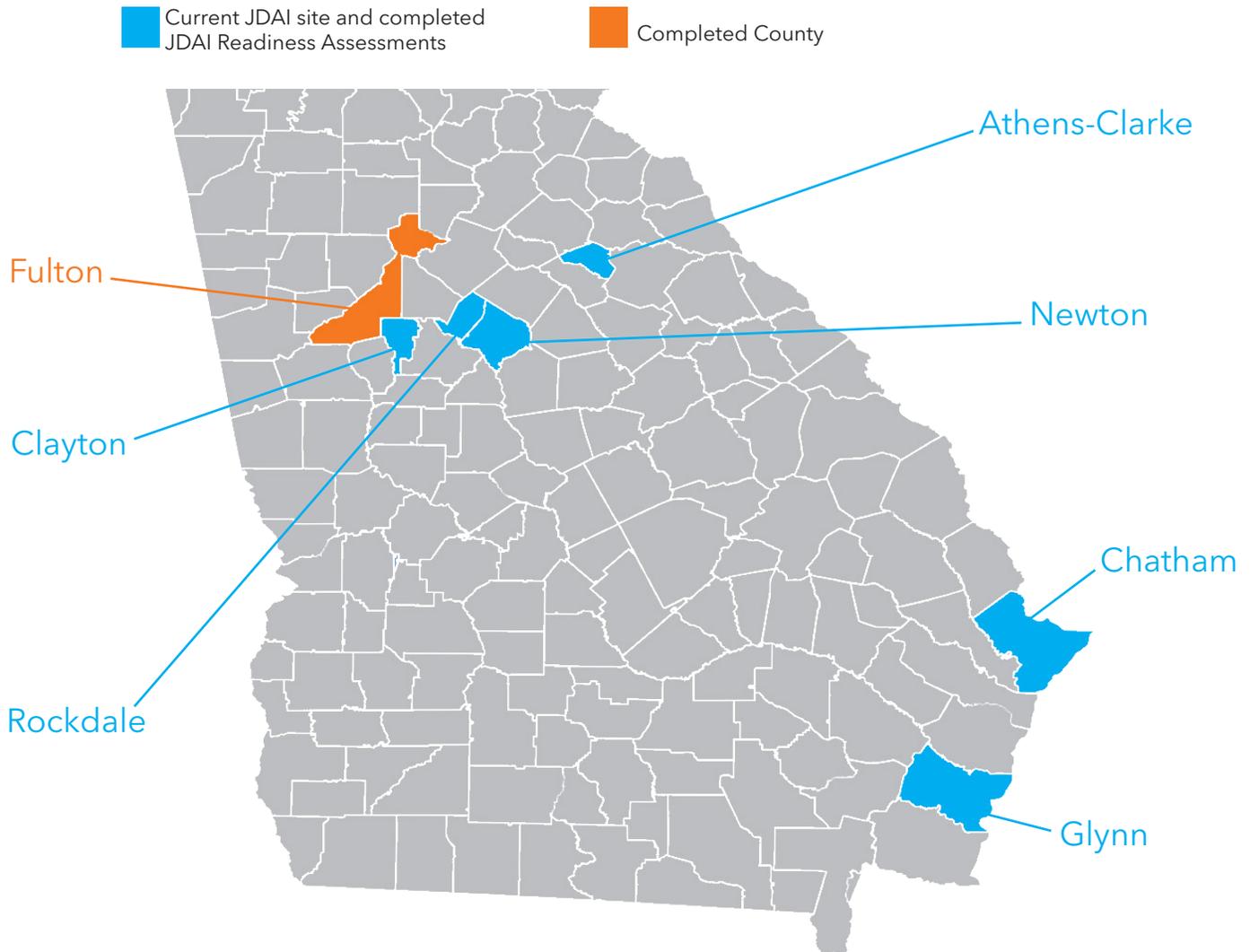
HISTORY OF JDAI IN GEORGIA



In 2015, a state-level committee was established by Governor Nathan Deal and the Georgia Criminal Justice Reform Council to improve the delivery of juvenile justice services and expand JDAI efforts throughout Georgia. The committee, called the State Steering Committee for JDAI, consists of juvenile court judges and representatives from stakeholder organizations. While some communities instituted JDAI as far back as 2003, statewide rollout of JDAI began in 2016 after an initial phase of assessment.³

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JDAI IN GEORGIA

Currently, six counties in Georgia are JDAI sites and all have completed JDAI Readiness Assessments. As of 2017, one additional county has completed JDAI Readiness Assessments.⁴



JDAI NATIONWIDE OUTCOMES

As of 2016, there were 197 JDAI sites in the United States, representing 300 local jurisdictions and 10 million youth ages 10 to 17. Recent data gathered from these sites suggests the following trends for JDAI-involved areas:

Trend	Indicator	Pre-JDAI Baseline	2016 Data	% Change
Reduced reliance on juvenile detention	Average Daily Population (ADP)	8,780	4,967	-43%
	Annual Admissions	188,948	95,939	-49%
Reduced commitments to state custody	State Commitments	17,457	7,432	-57%
Reduced juvenile crime	Felony Petitions	79,391	48,770	-39%
	Delinquency Petitions	42,562	29,770	-31%
Remaining challenges with racial equity and overrepresentation of youth of color	Percent of ADP that are youth of color	75%	80%	
	Percent of annual admissions that are youth of color	70%	76%	
	Percent of state commitments that are youth of color	70%	83%	

Sources for Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

- 1 "Georgia JDAI," Juvenile Detention Alternatives for the State of Georgia, <https://georgiajdai.org/>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 "Deal Launches Juvenile Justice Committee," Office of the Governor, 2015, <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2015-07-29/deal-launches-juvenile-justice-committee>; "Report of the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform," Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform, 2017, https://gov.georgia.gov/sites/gov.georgia.gov/files/related_files/press_release/Report%20of%20the%20Georgia%20Council%20on%20Criminal%20Justice%20Reform%202017.pdf.
- 4 Temple, Whitney, interview by Camille Pendley, October-November 2020.