



After more than two decades promoting an agenda to safely reduce the use of secure detention, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has, in recent years, looked to expand the juvenile justice reform conversation from the front end to the deep end of the system. As summarized in *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*, the benefits of reducing post-dispositional confinement – for kids and public safety – are abundant. In 2013, six local sites began to pilot an expanded focus of JDAI, one that takes aim at commitments and other out-of-home placements. This year, we will look to identify a second cohort of local sites to tackle this expanded JDAI agenda. Following are brief answers to some of the big questions that JDAI sites might have.

#### What are the goals of deep end reform?

Put simply, *the primary goal of deep end reform is to safely and substantially reduce the use of post-dispositional confinement in all of its forms*. That, of course, includes state commitments to correctional institutions or training schools, but also placements in residential treatment centers, group homes and all other forms of out-of-home congregative care. Other goals of deep end reform include reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the use of out-of-home placement, improving youth outcomes and increasing family and community involvement.

#### Why is deep end reform necessary in JDAI sites?

As we have learned through the JDAI annual results reports, many JDAI sites have experienced similar or sometimes greater reductions in commitments than in detention admissions since becoming involved in the initiative. The local deep end focus is premised on the idea that reductions could be deeper, more strategic and more sustainable if, sites were to tackle the issue of reducing commitments and other placements head on.

#### What can local sites expect from pursuing a deep end focus of JDAI?

Much like in traditional JDAI, sustainably reducing deep end placements requires comprehensive reform. It means identifying the key drivers of out-of-home placement and opportunities for change in policy, practice and programming, and then planning and implementing those changes. Reform may include new programs, innovative probation practices or refined decision-making tools, but it almost surely does not entail just one of those in isolation. As JDAI sites might expect, deep end reform also means increasing the breadth and depth of collaboration across system and community partners, identifying and addressing racial and ethnic disparities, and using data to shape system decision-making on everything from high-level policy decisions to individual interactions with youth and their families.

### Specifically, What Will Be Expected of Local Sites in Year One?

The first year as a deep end site is spent getting prepared for an expanded focus of JDAI and determining key opportunities for safely reducing the use of post-dispositional out-of-home placement. From the outset deep end sites need to consider who else ought to be at the table. The focus on the dispositional end of the system may demand a greater presence of state (if not already involved) and community partners, and most of the pilot deep end sites have found this new work to require more involvement from frontline probation staff and supervisors. Sites will also need to either expand the duties of the JDAI coordinator or identify someone to take on this work. Sites must also take into consideration how to structure this work to ensure it will expand, not *replace* JDAI.

For a new deep end site, much of the first year is consumed with system assessment, analysis and prioritizing reform opportunities. Using both quantitative (e.g., system trends, dispositional decisions) and qualitative data (e.g., review of policies and practices; interviews and surveys of staff, youth, families and other stakeholders), sites lift up opportunities and obstacles for safely reducing post-dispositional confinement. Finally, sites begin to prioritize key reform areas, positioning themselves to move towards planning and implementation. Year one also includes a deep end fundamentals training and an inter-site meeting for sharing site experiences and innovations from the field.

### What will be expected in year two and beyond?

Having completed system assessments and determined key priorities in year one, sites will (if they haven't already done so) develop work plans and move into implementation. While some priorities will differ across jurisdictions based on assessment findings, the deep end work will almost certainly begin with a focus on a few key areas. These include addressing dispositional practices, seeking opportunities to improve the use of risk assessment instruments and other tools to inform dispositional recommendations, as well as looking more closely at technical violations, which comprised 30% or more of out-of-home placements in each of the six sites of the first cohort. Focusing on these areas lifts up the need to increase family engagement and to dig deeper in data analysis to understand dispositional decisions, the use of technical violations and racial disparities in the deep end. Other priority areas that have arisen among the current cohort of pilot sites include expanding the continuum of community-based services, improving probation case planning, developing programmatic alternatives to commitment and placement, increasing diversion options at the front end of the system and increasing support for best practices in juvenile defense.

### What does technical assistance consist of?

As the Casey Foundation and sites work towards making the deep end focus a success worth replicating across interested JDAI sites, we are experimenting with two different approaches of technical assistance. Some sites are receiving technical assistance that is somewhat more intensive than a new JDAI site would receive from its Technical Assistance Team Leader (TATL). For these sites, Casey staff and consultants visit regularly (once a month or more) and work closely with site coordinators, system leaders and other stakeholders in each phase of the work. During the first phase of work, a team from Casey completes an on-site system assessment (similar to traditional JDAI), works with the jurisdiction's data team to complete a quantitative analysis, presents key findings to site leaders and stakeholders, and works closely with the site to determine reform

priorities and develop a work plan.

Other sites are taking a more self-guided approach to the work. For these sites, Casey Foundation staff and consultants spend significantly less time on-site, and during the first phase of work, sites use tools and guidance provided by the Foundation to complete their own quantitative analyses and system assessments. For these sites, Casey staff are available for consultation and technical assistance as requested. Self-guided sites have a monthly inter-site phone call and had an inter-site meeting to kick-off the work and gain exposure to what to expect in the months ahead.

Both intensive and self-guided sites attend deep end inter-site meetings, receive common learning opportunities and, most importantly, have access to the same kinds of targeted technical assistance to address reform priorities. *Please note that, at this point, local JDAI sites interested in applying to become a new deep end site do **not** need to indicate which approach would be the best fit for their jurisdictions.*

#### **What other support will the Casey Foundation provide?**

In addition to technical assistance, all local deep end sites receive an annual site support grant of \$50,000 to cover coordination, meetings, travel and site-specific priorities (this has included everything from consultants to help with assessments and data analysis software to support for local juvenile defense advocacy). The Foundation will also convene one or two inter-site meetings per year to share experiences and innovations in deep end reform.