
JDAI Year-End Report

2020

JDAI



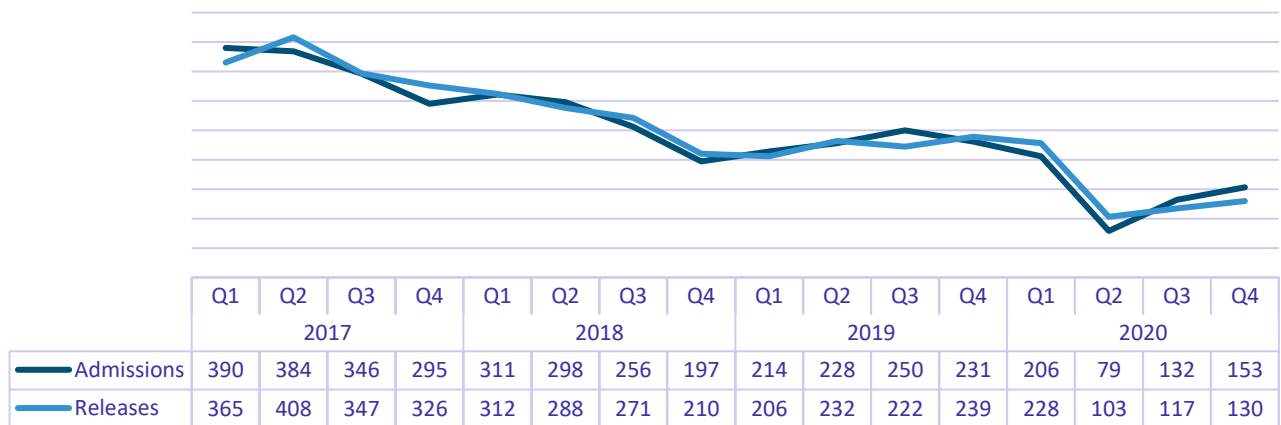
Year-End Overview

State-Level Snapshot

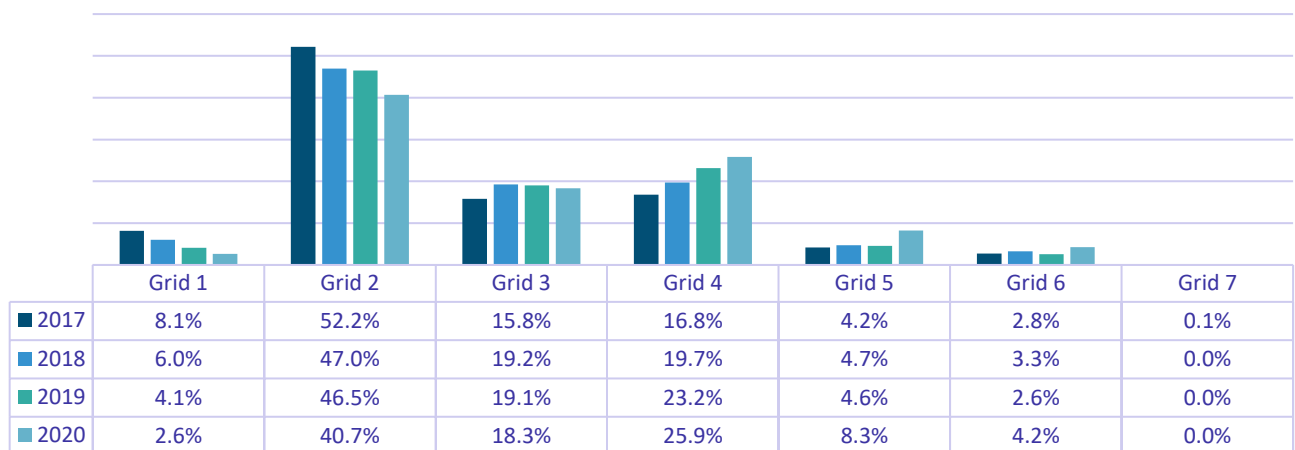
In 2020 the work of JDAI was driven by the following goals, with equity at the center:

1. Ensuring equitable outcomes in youth serving systems, by deliberately targeting reform efforts to youth of color.
2. Improve cross system collaboration at every decision point within youth serving systems to meet the unique needs of each youth and family.
3. Guarantee equitable access and appropriate pro-social opportunities that promote positive youth development.
4. Assure fidelity to the JDAI 8 Core Strategies and share power with youth, family, and community in all reform efforts.

MA DYS Detention Trends

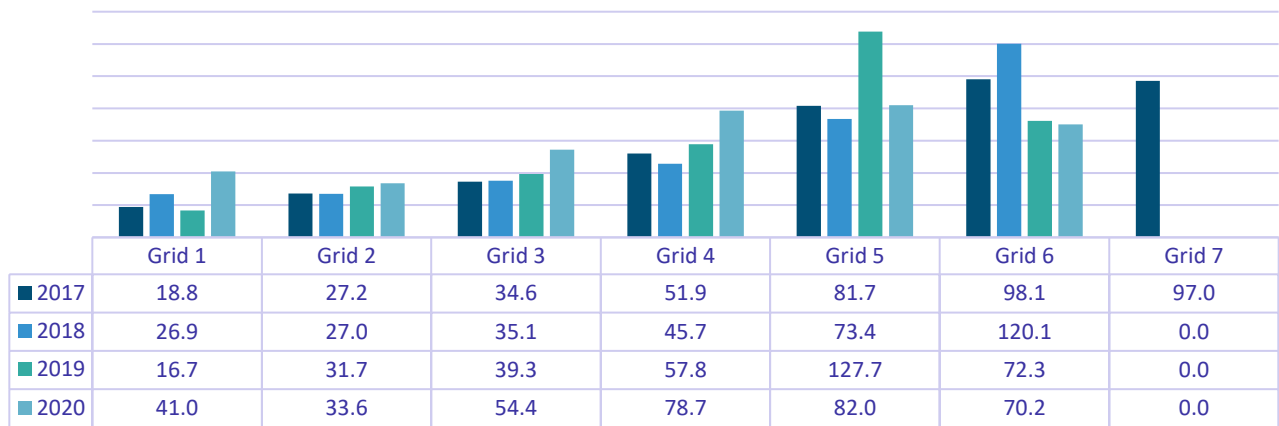


MA DYS Detention Admissions Trends by MSO Grid



In 2020, 40.7% of detention admissions were Grid 2 charges (*DYS assigns each youth a Grid Level reflecting the most serious offense for which they have been committed. Grid Levels range from one (least severe) to six (most severe)*).

MA DYS Detention Average LOS by MSO Grid



In 2020, youth with a grid level 5 charge had the highest average length of detention (ALOD) at 82.0 days. Also, important to note in 2020 youth with a grid 1 level charge had an ALOD of 41 days in detention.

JDAI's work with Action! By Design, a community design studio

JDAI worked with a community design studio to re-envision the future work of JDAI. As part of this work a community wide survey and three community design workshops were conducted that asked participants to reimagine our juvenile/child welfare system. These activities led to the vision of the School to Prison Pipeline Summit.

Summit on Eliminating the School to Prison Pipeline

The School to Prison Pipeline is the most impactful pathway leading youth into the Juvenile Detention System, particularly affecting youth of color. To further the work of JDAI to reduce the unnecessary and harmful use of secure detention for low-risk juveniles and ensure that the right youth is in the right place for the right reason, we believe JDAI needs to focus on eliminating the School to Prison Pipeline and addressing racial and ethnic disparities in schools. By bringing stakeholders together across public education, juvenile justice, child welfare, and those with lived experience to establish a community of practice to address the School to Prison Pipeline, we believe we can create long-lasting, impactful change centered in equity and justice.

JDAI County Grants

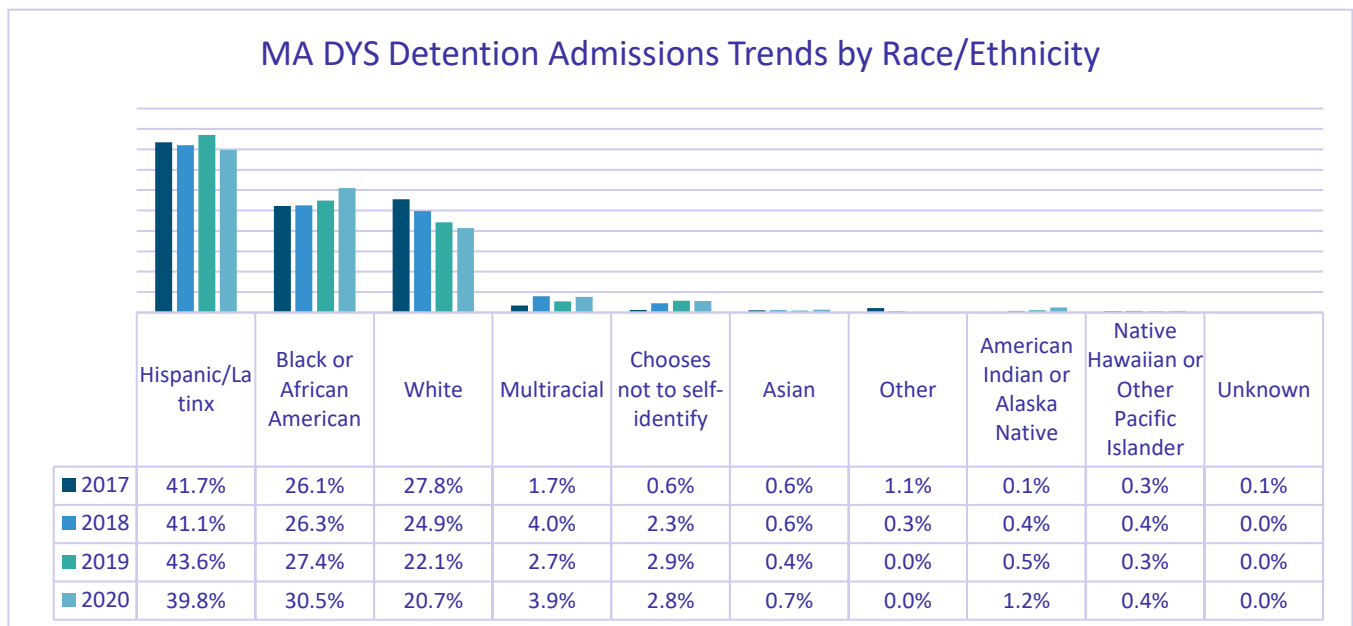
This past year JDAI oversaw six projects that had received \$50,000 awards through a competitive RFP process to develop or expand a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency collaborative approach for reducing reliance on detention that included meaningful participation by youth and families and actionable strategies for promoting racial equity and inclusion. Projects were as follows:

- *Merrimack Valley Services School Mentoring*: Implement an evidence-based mentoring and school attachment program for court-involved youth in two high schools, recruiting adult mentors who are embedded in the school environment and matching them with youth referred to the program by Juvenile Probation.

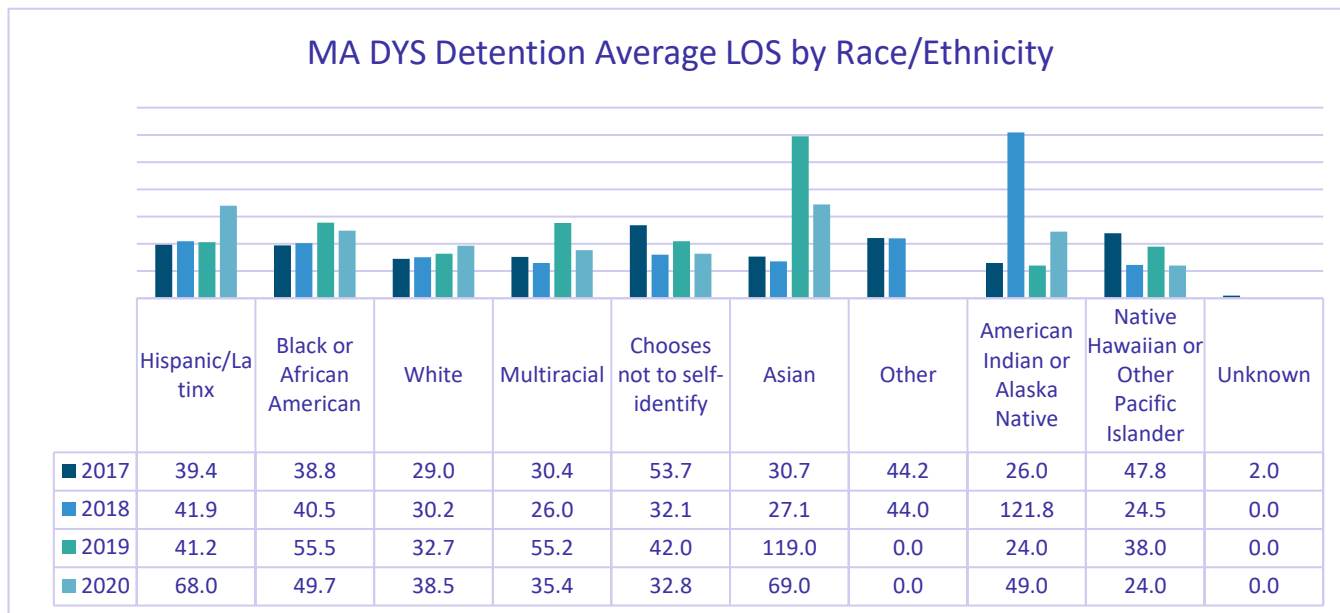
- *Youth Advocacy Foundation*: In partnership with Department of Youth Services North East Region and Dr. Uman Taylor of Harvard brought forth a project that focused on training staff on how to support young people in addressing their racial identity. The program is rooted in adolescents' exploration of their ethnic-racial identity.
- *Trinity Boston Foundation* Incorporating Youth Voice: Develop a replicable model for establishing a JDAI Youth Committee, including providing youth with mentorship, training and education and working with them to develop surveys and focus groups to help bring a youth voice to decision-making processes.
- *More Than Words, Inc.* Diversion for higher risk youth: Implementing an intensive work training and youth development diversion model targeted toward higher risk youth.
- *Health Law Advocates, Inc.* Expanding Mental Health Advocacy: A project expanding the Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids (MHAP for Kids) to Holyoke providing free legal assistance to help youth in low-income families overcome obstacles to mental health services.

Race Equity

In 2020, JDAI's work was centered around the vision of re-imagining a Massachusetts Juvenile Justice system that is anti-racist, restorative, and developmentally appropriate.



In 2020, Hispanic/Latinx youth had the highest detention admission rate at 39.8%. While detention admissions for black youth were at 30.5% and 20.7% for white youth.



In 2020, Hispanic/Latinx youth had the highest average length of stay in detention at 68 days. While average length of detention for black youth was 49.7 days and 38.5 days for white youth.

Activities

Seeing RED 2.0 Documentary Film/ Racial Equity Series

For the past four years JDAI Massachusetts has been using the film *Seeing RED* as a tool for facilitated interagency discussion sessions on racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. We received ongoing feedback from our stakeholders that the voices of youth and families were missing from the documentary and from the discussion. Further, in the summer of 2018 we conducted a series of youth focus groups to inform our 11th annual conference. A theme that emerged from the focus groups was the impact of racial trauma on system involved youth. JDAI has been developing a second 40-minute documentary video: *Moving from Change to Transformation: in youth serving systems through the voices of youth and families of color*; this documentary aims to give voice to the racial trauma experienced by youth and families involved with child serving systems.

In conjunction with the aims of this film, JDAI hosted two quarterly *Racial Equity Series meetings*, with leading thinkers, authors, and lectures in the field of race equity. This series was focused on the following topic areas *The Effects of Racial Trauma on Youth Identity*; *The Latinx Racial Experience in America*; and *The Effects of Racial Trauma on the Family Unit*. By participating in the race equity series, participants walked away with increased awareness of how race and ethnicity directly impacts youth and families who are involved in the juvenile justice and other youth serving systems.

JDAI Racial Trauma Policy Brief/ Webinar Series

In June 2020, JDAI released a policy brief titled *Racial Trauma*. The purpose of this brief was to bring awareness to the trauma experienced by black youth and the importance of addressing racial trauma when developing treatment plans and interventions for black youth involved in the juvenile justice/child welfare system. Following the release of this policy brief JDAI hosted two webinars that showcased subject matter experts on racial trauma. The webinars highlighted two programs that focus on youth's social identity to counter the effects of racial trauma. Wee the People is a Boston based social justice organization that supports parents and practitioners by creating high impact and celebratory experiences when engaging in uncomfortable discussions about race with young people. The second project showcased in the webinar was a partnership between Dr. Uman Taylor of Harvard and the DYS Northeast Region detention that supported youth in exploring their ethnic-racial identity.

JDAI Listening Tour

JDAI is supporting community partners by creating a safe space for frontline staff who work with youth and families in engaging in conversations about race equity. In September, JDAI staff began conducting regionally led conversations on race equity for DYS front line staff to have a safe space to discuss how race impacts themselves and their role at DYS. In addition, JDAI has held one Listening Tour Facilitator training in November 2020, to maximize capacity of trainers for the scheduled upcoming regional Family Resources Centers.

The JDAI team supports participants in four two-hour sessions that aim to unravel staff's experience with racial and ethnic disparities in their personal life, daily work, and assess current agency policies and practices with the goal of having staff develop tangible, actionable, and equitable recommendations for their agency leadership staff.

In partnership with Department of Children and Families Family Resource Centers JDAI will be conducting racial equity workshops in each FRC region focused on the goal of reducing racial inequities and assuring that all children and families receive the right services and supports at the right time.

"If you get called something for so long it's going to stick cause eventually you gonna believe it. If no one is telling you otherwise you gonna believe it. It's like the law of attraction if someone says you are something and you are not fighting against that that's what you become." - Youth



County-Level Snapshot

JDAI's work is rooted in our county-level collaborations. Even with each county being guided by the same goals the work varies depending on what each collaborative chooses to focus on, who is a present and active participant of the collaborative, and the context of the local community. There are six active JDAI county collaboratives, with a seventh (Berkshire County) coming online in 2021. Below you will find a snippet from each county.

BERKSHIRE

The JDAI Systems Assessment was completed at the beginning of 2020 as the first step toward expansion into a new county. From a look at data and through various stakeholder interviews, the systems assessment is a valuable way to gain insights into the parts of the juvenile justice process in the county. It serves as a starting point toward a committee work plan. Below is a snippet from the report:

"Another source of pride was that the county understands its challenges and steps up to meet them. The community clearly has a great baseline to start a JDAI collaborative given the themes of "commonality and common goals". One of the stakeholders mentioned that Berkshire County has a high potential because of their agreeability and willingness to try something new."

BRISTOL

Bristol County JDAI took the year to re-educate on the goals, mission, vision, and 8 Core Strategies of JDAI in hopes that a collective knowledge base will lead the group to further action on juvenile justice reform.

PRESENTATIONS:

- JDAI 101
- Dangers of Detention
- Citizens for Juvenile Justice present on New Bedford Police Department's juvenile arrest data disaggregated by race.
- Bryan Stevenson's Documentary of Juvenile Reform: *True Justice*

The committee formed a strong collaboration with NECS and wrote the DYS/JDAI Grant to connect dually involved and high needs youth or have to a NECS Coach. NECS has served over 8 youth and are still currently supporting the youth to achieve their goals.



ESSEX

Essex County continued to focus on eliminating gang violence and supporting its youth and families in addressing the heightened needs brought on by COVID. To mitigate gang violence the Resiliency Independent Safety & Education (RISE) program which works with at risk and proven risk youth between the ages of 13-18 who reside in Lawrence. RISE has been expanding its partnership with the Department of Youth Services (DYS) to enhance community support services for DYS involved youth upon their reentry into the community.

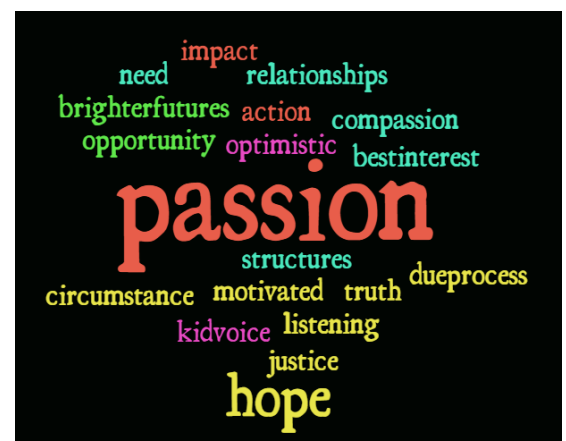
In 2019, through the support of JDAI, *Merrimack Valley Services* School Mentoring was awarded a grant to implement an evidence-based mentoring and school attachment program for court-involved youth in two high schools. Youth are referred by juvenile probation and are matched with adult mentors who are embedded in the school environment. The program achieved its targeted goals of matching 30 youth, who were involved with the Lawrence Juvenile Court, to adult mentors. This year the program used a portion of JDAI's additional funding to secure a Chromebook for every student who was sharing one with their siblings.

HAMPDEN

Hampden County JDAI had a year // COVID hit, did you hear? // Things shut down // We all got turned around // But we persevered // Our committee continued to meet // **School support, mentorship, restorative justice** were our focus – what a feat! // Take a look – these words anchor our work:

MIDDLESEX

Through the support of JDAI the Youth Advocacy Division implemented the Identity Project Curriculum at the Northeast Regional Youth Services Center in Middleton, Massachusetts. The program is rooted in adolescents' exploration of their ethnic-racial identity. The Identity Project curriculum contains the following modules: Unpacking Identity; Group Differences – Within and Between; Stories of Our Past; My family history; Symbols, Traditions and Rites of Passage; Photo processing and storyboards; Ethnic-racial identity as a journey.



SUFFOLK

In the past year Suffolk County has been dedicated to involving **YOUTH VOICE**. Focusing on **EMPOWERING** youth voice in juvenile justice **REFORM** by starting and implementing Suffolk County JDAI Youth Committee.

"The adults saw how effective we could be and our potential. We showed them that youth can do big things even within DYS." – Youth Co-chair



WORCESTER

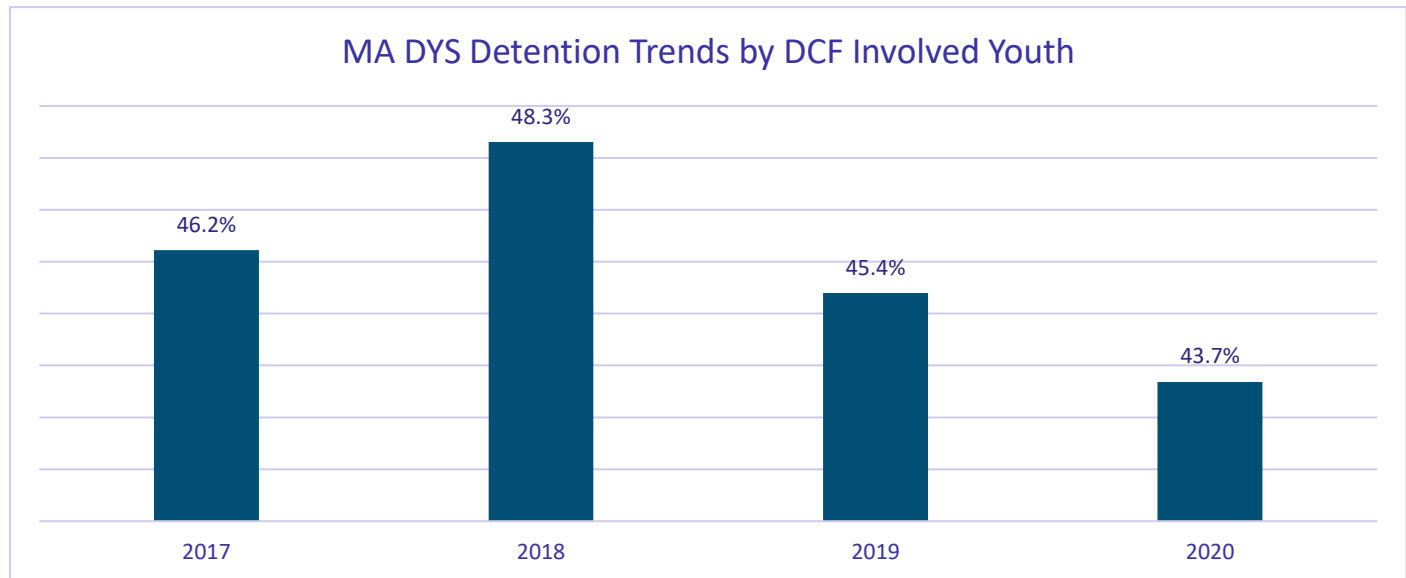
Worcester County JDAI was not immune to COVID's wrath // But our committee still had a path // A virtual world we all became accustomed to // Am I supposed to be looking at me, or you? // We charted a plan for **restorative justice** and **community voice** // Rejoice! // Gratitude is due for our group worked hard // Here, look what sets our committee apart:

empathy
equity passion
thoughtfulness
patience interest
empowerment
fairness
honesty mindfulness
collaboration
support
compassion
justice

2021 Outlook

Dually Involved Youth

JDAI will continue to work with DCF both at the State and local level to address the unique needs of this population. At the State level JDAI will be working closely with the Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board (JJPAD)'s Community Based Interventions (CBI) subcommittee as they begin to explore the Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) system which was designed to divert youth from the delinquency system. At the local level counties will continue to explore local initiatives such as the Worcester County Dually Involved Case Conferencing project.



In 2020, dually involved youth made up 43.7% of the detention admissions. While detention admissions have seen sharp declines, admissions for DCF involved youth have remained constant.

JDAI Massachusetts Race Equity Plan

The Massachusetts Governance committee will be embarking on the development of a race equity plan for Juvenile Justice/Child Welfare agencies. The development of this plan will consist of two phases. The initial step will be a racial equity strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis that will use race as its predictor of access, outcomes, and opportunities. The second step will be working with agencies that participate on the Governance committee to develop a race equity practice model that we hope will be adopted by Juvenile Justice/Child Welfare agencies as part of their agency operations. By placing racial equity at the forefront of our work, we hope the outcomes from the SWOT analysis, and the operationalization of a race equity practice model will ensure that future planning decisions reduce disparities, promote service level equity, and improve community engagement.

2021: Upcoming JDAI Events

- Release of Seeing RED 2.0 documentary *Moving from change to transformation*; through the voices of youth and families of color.

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- Action by Design community conversations: *School to Prison Pipeline Summit*
 - Webinar on the Latinx Racial Experience in America.
 - Relaunch JDAI Dashboards.
 - A conversation with system involved youth: The Impact of Racial Trauma on Youth of Color.
 - JDAI COVID Relief Grants