

GETTING IT RIGHT: Realigning Juvenile Corrections in Ohio to Reinvest in **WHAT WORKS**



The **SCHUBERT CENTER FOR CHILD STUDIES** in the College of Arts and Sciences at Case Western Reserve University bridges research, practice, policy and education for the well-being of children and adolescents.



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“GETTING IT RIGHT” FUNDAMENTALS

While changing social conditions, reductions in juvenile crime and state budget challenges contribute to the juvenile justice environment generally, Ohio has engaged in a number of critical efforts to “rightsize” its fiscal and programmatic approach to advance what works for justice-involved youth. These include:

- Partnership-building between state and local juvenile court judges
- Fiscal incentives to promote community-based best practices
- Technical assistance and collaborative learning communities with court and university partners to enhance the capacity of community-based providers
- External pressure and support through monitoring of Settlement Agreement and community stakeholder forums
- Adoption of uniform assessment tools, quality assurance tools and ongoing evaluation
- Concurrent investment in smaller, regional secure custody facilities (CCFs) with reduction in state correctional facilities
- Passage and implementation of strategic policy and budget reforms
- State agency buy-in and leadership to advance outcome and evidence-based practices

In August 2014, a few months after the latest in a series of state juvenile correctional facility closures in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) announced Competitive RECLAIM (Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors), a new category and allocation of continuous funding to support the implementation of evidence-based community programs (EBPs) serving young people throughout the state. This unprecedented fiscal policy, combined with the deliberate decision to close the latest state facility (Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility), is a clear commitment by DHS to actualize the policy promise enacted in the state budget in 2011 — to reinvest a percentage of savings from the closure of juvenile correctional facilities into community- and home-based programs that can demonstrate success. This new financial investment also marks a significant evolution within DHS — moving from initial investments in community programs to better targeting those dollars toward community intervention programs that are “research-supported, outcome-based.” In doing so, Ohio is at the forefront of national juvenile justice reform and realignment efforts and serves as a model for other states looking to “rightsize” their own institutional footprints by moving away from costly correctional placements to more effective, community-based options.

How did Ohio get here? State and local partnership building, investments in community-based alternatives to juvenile corrections, including EBPs such as Targeted RECLAIM (TR) and the Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) initiative, problem-solving with court and university partners, ongoing program evaluation, and specific policy reform initiatives are among the features that contributed to this gradual movement away from institutional placements. Other important factors are at play as well, including changing social conditions and reductions in juvenile crime, as well as the pressure of class-action litigation on the state and a Settlement Agreement that helped accelerate efforts to expand community programs. This brief documents the major strategies, events and conditions that created this fundamental and ongoing shift in how young people who enter the juvenile justice system are treated. **While these efforts are still a work in progress, this milestone marks a critical fiscal realignment policy concerning the importance of creating and sustaining strategic investments in what works for justice-involved youth.**

(See Figure 1A-B for a timeline of major events and shifts in population since 1992.)

BEGINNINGS

Ohio's nationally-recognized RECLAIM model, created in 1992 in HB 152 and piloted in 1994, was implemented statewide in 1995, more than a decade after DYS was made a stand-alone agency in 1981. RECLAIM was developed in response to overcrowding in DYS institutions and a growing need for local alternatives to secure confinement. In 1992, 3,784 youth were admitted to juvenile state facilities across the state and juvenile violent crime rates were about to peak nationwide and in Ohio. **(Figure 2 illustrates juvenile felony adjudications were at their highest in Ohio in 1996 at 15,857 adjudications).**¹ RECLAIM created an important state-local partnership using fiscal incentives for courts to develop or contract with community-based options in order to keep youth adjudicated of less serious offenses in local programs. By diverting youth from DYS institutions, courts had the opportunity to increase the funds available locally through the RECLAIM funding formula.

While the original RECLAIM approach contributed to a major expansion in local programs and some innovation in community program development, few basic requirements or guidance about effective interventions existed, nor were there tools for assessing which youth might most benefit from such interventions. As such, there was no guarantee of program quality or effectiveness. A 2013 breakdown of the

types of RECLAIM community programs, illustrates that a majority of the funding for these programs goes to probation services (21%) and residential treatment (18%).² While mental health counseling and substance abuse services are also funded, each of these only account for five percent of the total subsidy grant funding. The study also found that juveniles enrolled in diversion and prevention programs had significantly lower recidivism rates compared to those enrolled in more intensive services like day treatment and residential programs. DYS maintains information on the 600+ individual RECLAIM programs from their funding applications, including budgets and outcome measures, but given limited resources for program evaluation or monitoring, it is difficult to assess their effectiveness beyond recidivism.³ Despite some of the information limitations, the RECLAIM model created a strong foundation for developing an array of alternative programs at the community level and DYS has continued to build on this to further advance best practices.

Juvenile crime began to decrease nationally and in Ohio in the mid-1990s. Nevertheless, passage of more punitive state criminal justice policies, such as mandatory sentences for offenses involving guns and expanding offenses for which children could be treated like adults and sent to criminal court (bindover and serious youth offender laws), contributed to an increased reliance on correctional

placements for juveniles. While the overall numbers of commitments to DYS began to steadily decrease in the mid to late 1990s, the percentage of youth committed to DYS compared to total felony juvenile adjudications, after initially falling from 21.3% in 1992 to 16.7% in 1997 (2,521 youth of 15,096 adjudications) began climbing again to 21% in 2000 (2,196 youth of 10,069 adjudications), and did not decline again to 16.2% until 2008 (1,303 youth of 7,999 adjudications) **(Figure 3)**. The latest figures show that of the 4,636 felony adjudications in 2013, only 9.9% (459) were committed to DYS.

A SHIFTING CORRECTIONS FOOTPRINT

Juvenile corrections literature has noted that limiting the size of living units matters in terms of better outcomes among children held in confinement.⁴ Locating facilities physically closer to a young person's home community also has positive benefits.⁵ Recognizing these principles, DYS has also increased its use of community corrections facilities (CCFs) for placement of felony-adjudicated youth. The concurrent growth of CCFs represents another part of the state's efforts to reduce the use of state correctional facilities and maintain young people in their community where possible. **Thus, while placements in DYS institutions have significantly decreased, with the opening of the first CCF, a growing number of adjudicated youth have been placed in CCFs throughout the state (see Figure 1B for comparison of CCF admissions and DYS commitments).**

Ohio is at the forefront of national juvenile justice reform and realignment efforts and serves as a model for other states looking to "rightsize" their own institutional footprints by moving away from costly correctional placements to more effective, community-based options.

FIGURE 1A
TIMELINE OF MAJOR OHIO JUVENILE JUSTICE MILESTONES AND DYS INITIATIVES

1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RECLAIM Legislation First CCF Opened
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RECLAIM Pilot
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RECLAIM Statewide
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gun Spec Law, HB 1
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious Youthful Offenders Law, SB 179
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RECLAIM Formula Revised, Prohibiting Ineffective Programs, HB 95
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S.H. v. Stickrath Conditions Lawsuit Filed RECLAIM Data Monitoring and "Logic Model" Application created - FY 2005
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RECLAIM Evaluation
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHJJ Implemented in 6 Counties
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHJJ Expanded
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S.H. v. Stickrath Settlement Agreement Approved
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DYS Community Program Line Established in FY 2010 Budget OYAS Implemented and Evaluated
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted RECLAIM (TR) Implemented JDAI Adopted in 5 Counties DYS Regionalization Effort Started
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Research-Supported, Outcome-Based" language adopted for RECLAIM IMHJJ Task Force, and Reform Laws, HB 86 Corrections Savings Reinvestment in EBPs in Budget Policy, HB 153
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-Time Savings from Corrections Reinvested in EBP Training (First time per HB 153) TR Expanded to 8 More Counties
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-Time Savings per HB 153 Expanded BHJJ \$1 Million Earmark in FY14-15 State Budget BHJJ Expanded Counties BHJJ 5-Year Evaluation
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scioto Facility Closure, 3 Facilities Remain \$2.2 Million Ongoing New Dollars One-Time Savings per HB 153 Maintained RECLAIM, CCF & DYS Evaluation JDAI Expanded Counties Creation of Competitive RECLAIM Grant for EBPs

The first CCF was opened in November of 1992; in 1993 there were only 59 admissions to that CCF. Eleven more CCFs have opened for a total of twelve CCFs and a combined bed capacity of 355 (See Figure 4 for a map of CCFs and other specialized community programs). CCFs range in their size (from 16 beds to 44 beds), types of programming and level of security.⁶ In addition to the smaller size and more open environment of many of the CCFs, youth held there may benefit from being in a location closer to home, which can facilitate more family visitation and communication. However, due to programming options and limitations, many CCFs accept youth from across the state. While this allows youth to access programming (ie. sex offender or gender-specific treatment), it can hinder opportunities for family and local community engagement. Despite the important physical and programmatic differences between a state DYS correctional facility and a CCF, both are still places of secure confinement for youth (all but two of the 12 CCFs are "locked"), rather than evidence-based community programs. Although CCFs offer a promising alternative to DYS facilities, research

suggests that low and moderate risk youth are better served in non-residential community-based interventions. Specifically, a report by the University of Cincinnati found that **recidivism rates for low-risk youth served in the community are more than two to four times lower than similar youth placed in a CCF or DYS facility.**⁷ Even moderate-risk youth who remain in the community reoffend at significantly lower rates than those placed in a CCF or DYS facility.⁷

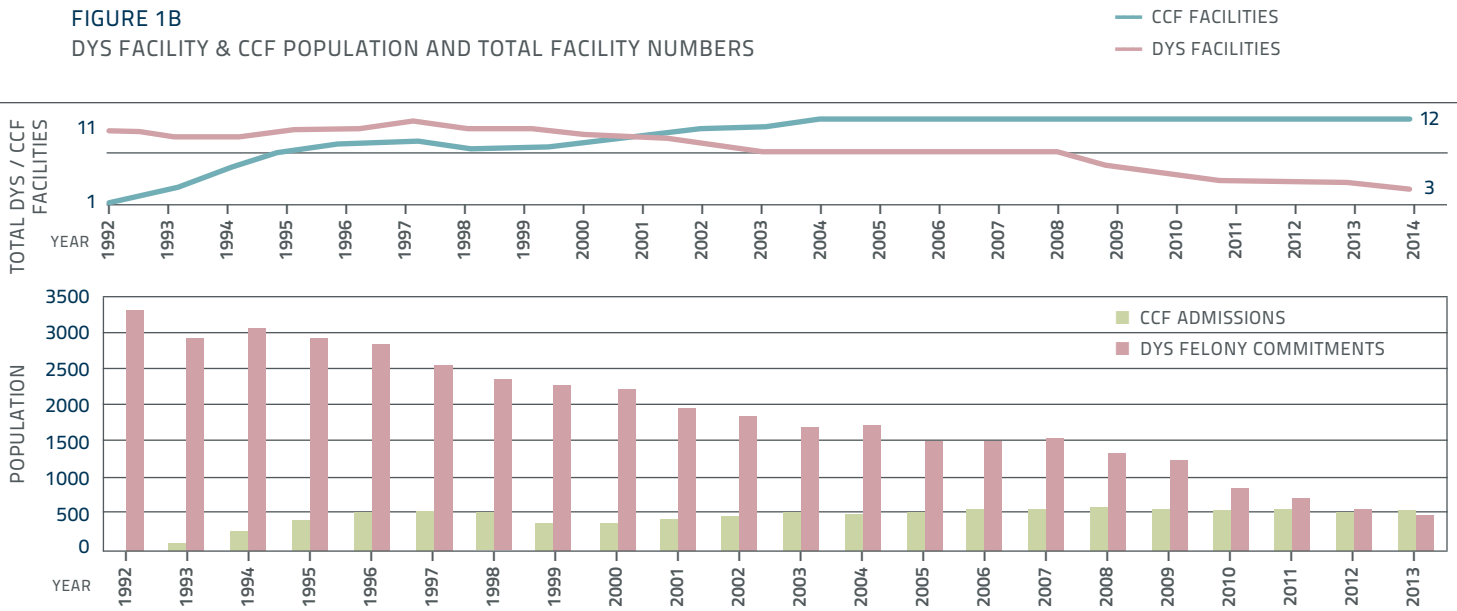
In 2013, an additional 528 youth were admitted to community corrections facilities resulting in 987 adjudicated young people being confined to either a DYS or community corrections facility. Thus, while only 9.9% (459) of the 4,636 juvenile felony adjudications in 2013 were confined to DYS, if CCFs are included in this count, 21.3% (987) of these youth were committed to either a DYS facility or a CCF (Figure 3). Although this brief focuses primarily on DYS's advancement of EBPs through its fiscal realignment strategies in reshaping its institutional footprint, this progress occurs in the context of a parallel growth in CCFs. Recognizing this larger role of CCFs, DYS has invested in improving the level

of programming within the CCFs, in part through the implementation of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) as part of the treatment milieu.

As CCFs have grown, the number of state juvenile correctional facilities has decreased significantly during the same period, in large part by necessity in response to overall cuts in the state budget. When RECLAIM began, there were 11 DYS correctional facilities. Although the Buckeye Youth Center and Training Center for Youth were closed in 1993, there were new facilities opened later and there would not be another closure until 1998. From 1998 to 2003 a DYS facility was closed about every two years. It would be six years before Ohio closed another correctional facility in 2009, followed by more closures until the closure of the Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility in May, 2014 (see Figure 1 for timeline of progression of DYS closures and CCF openings).

The filing of a class action lawsuit in 2004 concerning the conditions of confinement in the DYS facilities and the resulting Settlement Agreement in 2008 created significant pressure on the state to

FIGURE 1B
DYS FACILITY & CCF POPULATION AND TOTAL FACILITY NUMBERS



reduce unnecessary and costly secure confinement beds, but also served as a catalyst for securing resources to develop a comprehensive strategy for maximizing the use of community-based alternatives.⁸ Unlike the previous facility closures, Scioto marked the first time that DYS closed a facility specifically due to a decreasing population and desire by leadership to be intentional about realigning correctional savings to enhance evidence-based programs. Today, Ohio operates three state correctional facilities, in addition to placing some youth in any of the 12 CCFs and having contracts with a few other non-profit residential programs for specific populations of youth. Moreover, working closely with input from juvenile courts, **DYS has successfully removed all adjudicated girls from state correctional facilities and instead contracts with a CCF and three residential treatment providers for alternative placements** (doubling its community options for girls).

The DYS agency budget illustrates this significant shift in dollars from state corrections to community level interventions. The “Reclaim Ohio” line item accounts for the agency’s primary operating budget and includes funding not

only for local community programming but for state correctional facilities and CCFs as well.^{9,10} The “community programming” portion consists of all of the juvenile court subsidy grants, both RECLAIM and Youth Services grants, as well as funding for EBPs through TR, BHJJ, and other competitive grants and initiatives. As **Figure 5** reflects, in 2009, 52% of the agency spending went toward correctional facilities, 7% to CCFs and 17% to community program; in 2015, 38% is projected for correctional facilities, 9% for CCFs and 25% for community programming.

DYS STATE-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP WITH JUVENILE COURTS

The support of CCFs is consistent with DYS’ overarching philosophy that values keeping young people in their communities where possible and relying on local courts and other public and private juvenile justice stakeholders to determine which interventions would best rehabilitate children while holding them accountable for their actions and keeping communities safe. **The genesis of RECLAIM grew from this value in meaningful state-local partnerships to ensure options for juvenile court judges and has provided a**

solid foundation of trust and collaboration between DYS and the juvenile courts for the continued evolution of RECLAIM and all of its related community program investments.

Creating a cost-sharing funding formula that incentivized courts to place youth in their own community, while not penalizing them for committing youth to DYS with serious offenses, allowed local communities to take more ownership of their young people. Over time, in addition to their own probation and supervision services, courts began to contract with providers to better meet the needs of delinquent youth. By offering guidance through limited requirements and some information-sharing through opportunities like the RECLAIM Advisory Committee, DYS began working more in partnership to assist courts in serving youth locally. DYS also consistently sought to protect RECLAIM funding in the state budget. In fiscal years necessitating budget cuts, DYS opted instead to absorb budget cuts in part through reductions in correctional facilities. In doing so, DYS signaled the value of sustaining these community investments to judges and local communities, as well as to policymakers.

FIGURE 2
DYS FACILITY AND CCF ADMISSIONS
BY FELONY JUVENILE ADJUDICATIONS

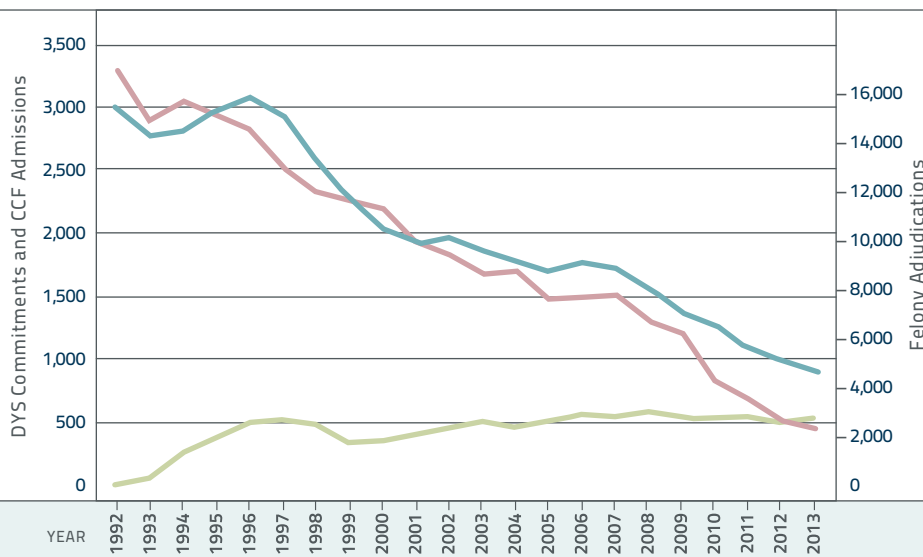
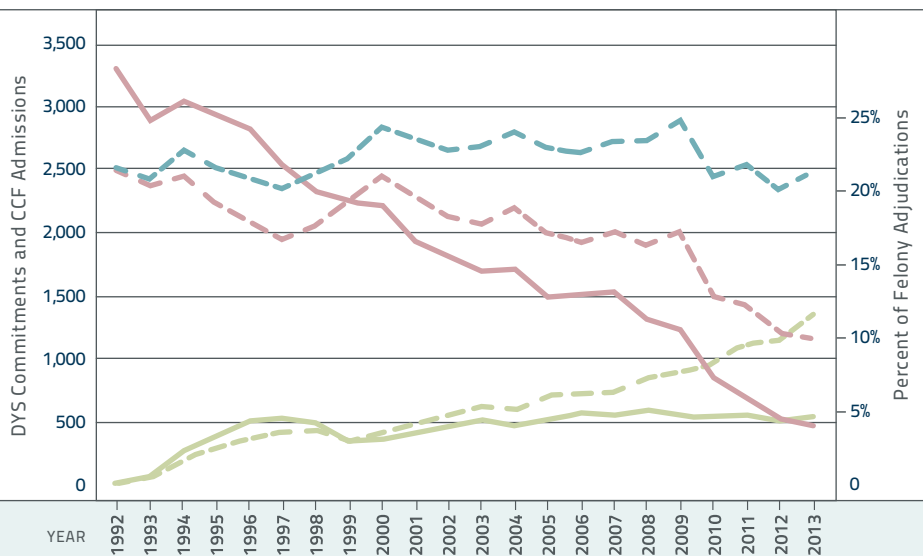


FIGURE 3
DYS FACILITY AND CCF ADMISSIONS
AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
JUVENILE FELONY ADJUDICATIONS



ALIGNMENT OF KEY FACTORS – FACILITY CLOSURES, STATE BUDGET, SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND BEST PRACTICES – TO ADVANCE WHAT WORKS

In 2009, DYS closed two juvenile facilities to increase operational efficiencies, reallocate funds in order to meet the requirements of the conditions of the Settlement Agreement, and expand community-based options for youth. Closing the two facilities provided a combined savings and reallocation of approximately \$24 million annually. While much of these savings were returned to the state general revenue fund, DYS dedicated a portion of the savings to the creation of a new community program line within the “Reclaim” allocation of their 2010 agency budget in order to help advance its regionalization plan.⁹

A regionalization plan was developed by DYS as part of the monitoring of the 2008 Settlement Agreement, with assistance from juvenile justice experts and university partners. It involved a series of coordinated strategies designed to reduce the unnecessary and costly placement of youth in correctional facilities through more effective community options, thus helping to advance the original RECLAIM program to achieve specific youth-related outcomes. These strategies included:

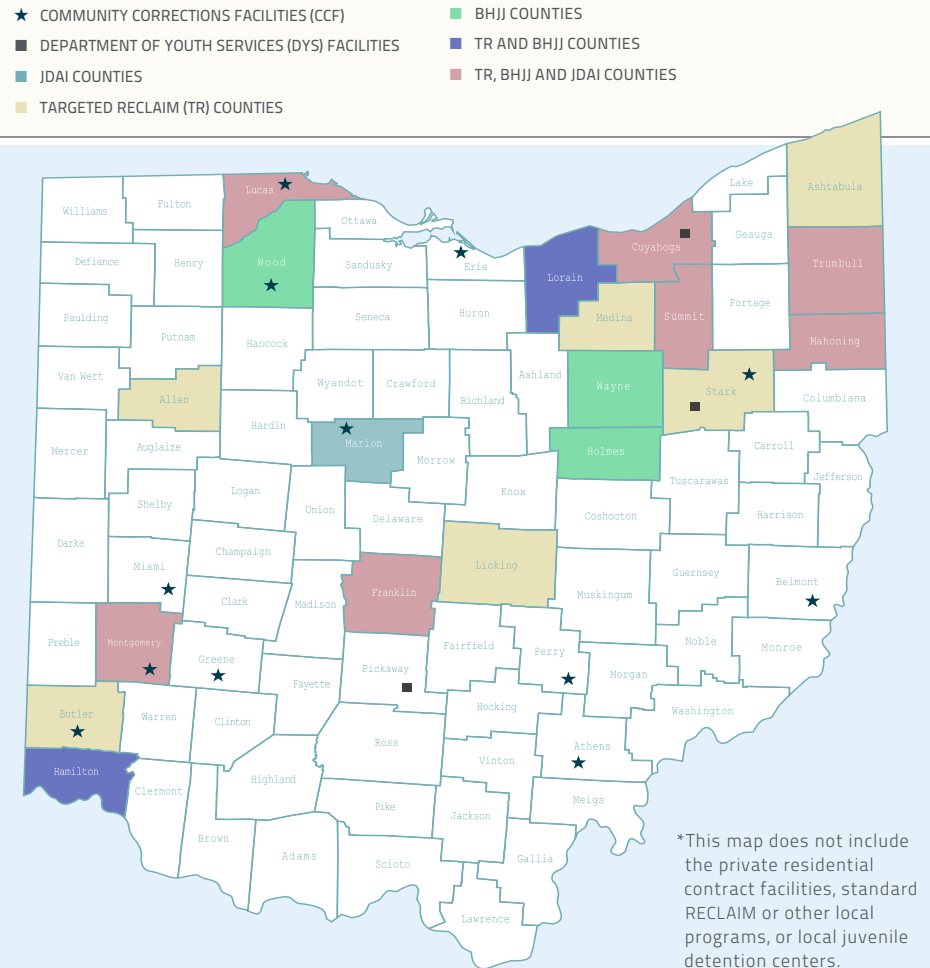
- Implementation of the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) tool to better assess and place youth in appropriate treatment options;
- Creation of TR and its implementation in the six counties with the highest placements of youth into DYS with commitments to reduce felony admissions to DYS by a specific amount, to use the OYAS and to use model or evidence-based programs to divert youth;
- Continued investment in the BHJJ initiative in the same six high-commitment counties, serving moderate/high-risk youth with significant mental health and/or substance abuse needs;

- Conversion of CCFs to include CBT in its treatment milieu in order to enhance the level of services provided to youth; and,
- Engagement with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in five pilot counties to begin to better identify and divert youth from deeper system involvement through the use of effective alternatives to detention.

A number of positive developments occurred through the coordinated implementation of these efforts; DYS points to the reduction in the DYS population overall as one of its most significant indicators of success. For example, while all of Ohio's counties saw some decline in DYS placements, the six TR counties outpaced the reductions in other counties and currently represent 50%, rather than the original 63% of total DYS admissions.^{7,11} Since its creation in 2010, TR has expanded from six counties receiving a total of \$2.8 million in funding to fifteen counties for a total of \$6.3 million in grant funding. An evaluation by the University of Cincinnati found that TR youth were 2.4 times less likely to be incarcerated after completing the TR programs than youth committed to state facilities.⁷ Similarly, an evaluation by the Begun Center for Violence Prevention and Research Education at Case Western Reserve University, found that young people served by the BHJJ program experienced a number of positive developmental outcomes, including an increase in youth functioning and a decrease in trauma symptoms, problem severity and substance use, as well as a more than fifty percent reduction in the risk of out-of-home placement.¹²

A related systemic outcome of the regionalization effort was the further progression of the collaborative approach between DYS, researchers and local partners, together with the adoption of quality assurance measures. One requirement for participation in TR and

FIGURE 4
MAP OF CCFs AND DYS SPECIALIZED COMMUNITY PROGRAMS*

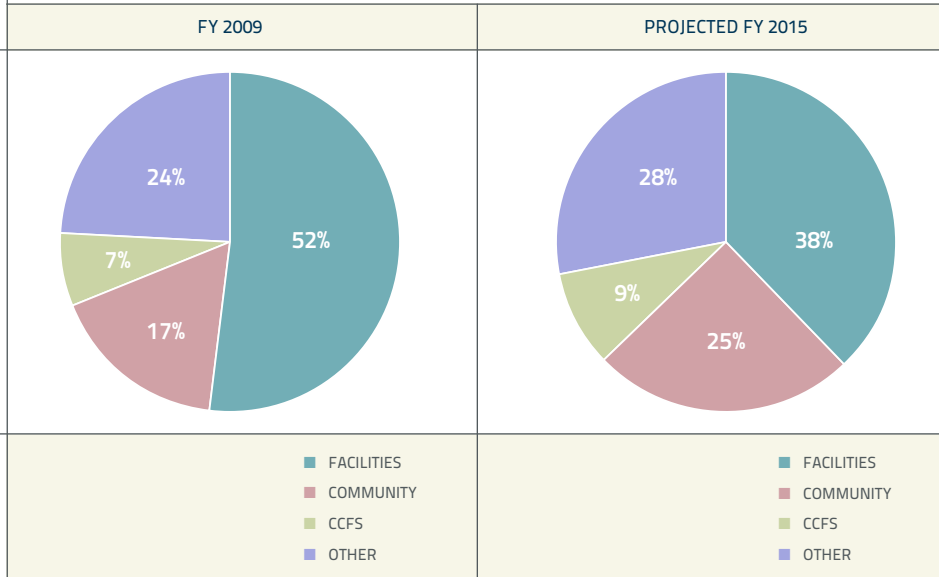


BHJJ, for instance, was that the counties meet quarterly to review youth data. These meetings became opportunities for shared learning communities where counties, along with DYS and university partners, could discuss both program challenges and successes and provide support to one another. As counties saw the value of their efforts and learned from each other, their appreciation for and investment in evidence-based programming grew. **This cooperative learning and research-supported approach, with technical assistance for implementing best practices, rather than a heavy-handed, top-down mandate, has contributed to a sense of shared purpose between the state and its local partners.** DYS officials note the

importance of this ongoing collaboration with researcher-practitioner learning communities as foundational for further advancements in EBPs.

Statewide community stakeholder meetings were another outgrowth of the Settlement Agreement and have also served to build public support and political will for investing in evidence-based community programming. At these annual meetings, elected officials, relevant state agency administrators, juvenile judges, juvenile court administrators, community providers, detention and CCF administrators, researchers, advocates and other stakeholders are invited to learn more about DYS and the youth in

FIGURE 5
 DYS ANNUAL RECLAIM BUDGET - COMPARING STATE FACILITIES,
 CCFS AND COMMUNITY SPENDING (2009 vs. 2015)¹⁰



its system. Highlights from the past year, including evaluation findings and program initiatives, are presented and participants engage in discussion and provide input to DYS as it sets future priorities. **This public forum helps to create operational transparency and system accountability as well as to build support for DYS budget priorities and generate opportunities for future collaborations.**

LEVERAGING STATE POLICY TO PROMOTE COST-EFFECTIVE OUTCOMES

Since the birth of RECLAIM in state policy in 1992 and its formula revisions in statutory and budget language in the mid-2000s, state policy has at times served as an important vehicle to advance institutional change both within DYS and among its local partners. **From a policymaker perspective, the RECLAIM program has been a prudent investment, particularly given the high price tag of placement in a state correctional facility which has an average per diem cost of approximately \$561.28 per youth confined (approximately \$204,867 per year) (see Figure 6 for a review of the growing cost of confinement**

in DYS facilities).¹³ This figure places Ohio among the top 10 states with the highest costs of youth incarceration.¹⁴ **A recent evaluation found that Ohio saves “between \$13.60 to \$40.40 for every \$1.00 spent on RECLAIM programming instead of placement in a CCF or DYS facility.”**¹⁵

In 2011, a coordinated campaign effort to reform the juvenile justice system by appealing to public leaders’ interest in return on investment helped lead to passage of HB 86. HB 86 and the state budget bill (HB 153) included specific policy language to strategically support DYS in its shift toward evidence-based community programming. Importantly, these policies adopted two key pieces of language. First, in reference to how RECLAIM funds should be used, it added, “research-supported, outcome-based programs and services, to the extent available, shall be encouraged.”¹⁶ Prior to this, there was no mention of effective programming included in the use of RECLAIM dollars. Second, HB 153 (and subsequent state

budgets) adopted precise realignment language permitting the “reallocation” of a percentage of correctional institutional savings, including from closures, “to expand Targeted RECLAIM, the [BHJJ] Initiative and other evidence-based community programs.”¹⁷ For the first time, the state budget explicitly linked the opportunity for correctional savings to be repurposed specifically for EBPs.

Passage of legislation, while significant, is only one step in the process. Effective policy implementation for institutional change requires organizational will and leadership. DYS capitalized on this important legislative reform by almost immediately setting out to determine how much funding could be captured from unexpended, unencumbered savings from the correctional budget line the following fiscal year. In the first fiscal year, FY 2012, DYS reallocated \$106,200 in correctional savings to one-time investments in juvenile court training on various EBPs. Although the dollar amount alone was not large, the change in internal budget practices was important. DYS was now regularly monitoring and capturing savings which were previously used for other areas of operation or absorbed into the general revenue fund, to create a pool of one-time dollars that courts could use to expand their knowledge and use of EBPs. The next year, DYS reallocated over five times more for a total of \$560,914 in correctional savings for training in EBPs. This reallocated amount remained steady at \$514,436 for EBP training and some quality assurance measures in the most recent fiscal year.¹⁸ In total this represents over one million additional dollars of reallocated funds specifically to advance EBPs. **While these efforts are a pivotal part of the cultural shift within the agency, DYS took an even more dramatic step forward this year in leveraging this realignment policy to create sustainable funding for EBPs when it closed the Scioto facility.**

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SEIZING OPPORTUNITY IN FACILITY CLOSURE SAVINGS FOR LONG-TERM REALIGNMENT & REINVESTMENT: THE EVOLUTION OF RECLAIM TO COMPETITIVE GRANTS

In closing the Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility in May 2014, DYS made clear its goal of reducing unnecessary correctional costs while improving outcomes for the young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. DYS announced that \$3.8 million of funds saved from the closure would be permanently reallocated as on-going funding for community programs: \$2.2 million for community-based EBPs through competitive grants and \$1.6 million for CCF related investments. While \$3.8 million represents a small percentage of the total operating costs for the Scioto facility, **this reinvestment signals the importance of going beyond simply capturing and redeploying correctional savings, to intentionally shifting priorities and creating a sustainable source of funding for community programs.** Moreover, rather than channel these funds through the traditional RECLAIM formula, DYS chose to specifically invest in community programs grounded in data and research about what is developmentally appropriate and effective for this population of youth.

In August 2014, DYS launched its “Competitive RECLAIM” initiative with the following statement: “Our realignment of funds points to our commitment to community-based programming and supports for youth. It reflects ongoing collaborative efforts to serve youth in

the right environment with the right treatment.”¹⁹ The Competitive RECLAIM request for proposal identified three distinct categories of funding to support a community continuum for youth:

- (1) Diversion grants serving low risk (of reoffending) youth;
- (2) Evidence-based program grants serving moderate/high risk youth; and
- (3) Community-based in-home treatment grants serving youth regionally.

All three categories include important quality requirements as part of the application, including: an expectation that local courts collect data and participate in program evaluation and regularly scheduled meetings (learning community); the identification of a target population and use of the OYAS for all youth in the program; and, support of DYS’s use of quality measures, including the articulation

and reporting of outcome measures by the local program. These outcomes may include indicators of healthy adolescent development in addition to recidivism measures. The RFP included a list of evidence-informed and EBPs as a resource as well a requirement for courts to work with a university or experienced community partner to develop a quality assurance plan (and allowing grant funds to pay for this technical assistance).

While all three of the Competitive RECLAIM grants incorporate quality assurance measures, the regional in-home-based treatment grant offers a unique opportunity for transformative systems change. It does so in at least two ways. First, by requiring both evidence-based and home-based treatment, the Competitive RECLAIM grant recognizes the adolescent developmental importance of working with families in their own communities to better address the

FIGURE 6
DYS JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY AVERAGE YOUTH PER DIEM COST



challenges of troubled young people.²⁰ Second, by requiring a group of at least four counties to collaborate in the grant, it reinforces the value of shared community resources and efficiencies, as well as the extended treatment potential made possible by working in partnership.

Collectively, these grants demonstrate a remarkable evolution in the RECLAIM approach. Starting from a purely fiscal incentive program to encourage courts to use local alternatives rather than placing large numbers of youth into DYS facilities, a portion of funds were later used to create Targeted RECLAIM and support BHJJ to target the highest-admitting counties and to develop local evidence-based options to reduce incarceration in state facilities. After successfully reducing overall admissions and expanding DYS diversion efforts, with the latest release of its Competitive RECLAIM grants, DYS has evolved the concept of RECLAIM to a new level of quality assurance. Moreover, by emphasizing diversion, these grants elevate the potential for preventing deeper system involvement by youth.

NEXT STEPS

Competitive RECLAIM grants will be released in early 2015 and local and national juvenile justice stakeholders and other policymakers will be watching Ohio to see how this fiscal reinvestment strategy works. If local courts and community partners are willing to meaningfully engage in this process, it could fundamentally shift how DYS and the state of Ohio address the needs of court-involved youth. In doing so, DYS may realize its mission “to improve Ohio’s future by habituating youth and empowering families and communities”²¹ and serve as an important example of this “rightsizing” realignment approach and the power of partnership in meeting the developmental challenges and opportunities of its young people. ■

DYS has evolved the concept of RECLAIM to a new level of quality assurance. Moreover, by emphasizing diversion, these grants elevate the potential for preventing deeper system involvement by youth.

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GETTING IT RIGHT:

Realigning Juvenile Corrections in Ohio
to Reinvest in What Works

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List of Abbreviations:

BHJJ – Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice

CBT – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

CCF – Community Corrections Facility

DYS – Department of Youth Services

EBP – Evidence-Based Programs

JDAI – Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

OYAS – Ohio Youth Assessment System

RECLAIM – Reasoned and Equitable Community and
Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors

TR – Targeted RECLAIM

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