The Reception center started in 1998 as a pilot project funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. After a year as a pilot, the Reception center proved its worth to the community and was subsequently funded by Multnomah County DCJ.

Why the project started:

In 1997, over 1,200 non-detainable youth a year were being brought to the Mult Co Detention Center where they were exposed to more delinquent youth and behavior.

As Mult Co. embraced the JDAI, County officials started talking with community stakeholders about how to eliminate unnecessary incarceration and prevent less delinquent youth from moving further into the system and further engaging in criminal behavior.

Creating a public-private partnership, Multnomah County Juvenile Justice, Portland Police Bureau, Portland Business Alliance, and New Avenues For Youth, came together to support the creation of the Reception Center. Each of these partners had different vested interests at heart.

For Multnomah County, the Reception Center was a way to reduce the number of non-detainable youth incarcerated, to increase community prevention and to prevent youth from needing deeper services through the Juvenile Justice system.

For the Portland Business Alliance, the Reception Center was an innovative way to support community policing and to assist in addressing liability issues affected by youth behavior.

For Portland Police, the Reception Center was a way to reduce the time an officer would be off the street dealing with juvenile detention processes, help support officers engaging with non-detainable youth to assess for safety and risk factors, and an opportunity for officers to participate in a social service intervention.

For New Avenues for Youth, a homeless and high-risk youth services agency, the Reception Center offered an opportunity to prevent youth homelessness by providing prevention services for high-risk youth and families.

History of locations:

During the Reception Center’s first year of operation the program operated out of an office inside the Portland Police Central Precinct. This early attachment to a law enforcement facility was crucial to the overall success of the project. Through coordination with police, both the social service agency and police officers were able to better understand each other’s needs and work collaboratively.

In 2000, a Memorandum Of Agreement was signed between Multnomah County law enforcement agencies, the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice Department, the Portland Police Bureau, and New Avenues for Youth. The MOA committed police officers to provide support to non-detainable youth to assess for safety and risk factors, and to participate in a social service intervention. The MOA also resulted in the number of youth served by the Reception Center more than doubling.

Most recently, the Reception Center has relocated to 738 NE Davis. At the new location, the Reception Center is collocated with Haven’s Matson House youth program serving runaway and court-referred youth. Although the Reception Center and Haven’s Matson work very closely together, the programs focus distinctly, and occupy different areas within the facility.

The Reception Center model:

Eligibility:

Youth 11-17 years of age, who have been arrested for a status offense (curfew, runaway, MIP), shoplifting, theft of $100 or less, or any misdemeanor or behavior condition.

Youth not eligible for Reception center services:

Youth 17 years old or older, who have been arrested for a person to person crime, have a warrant or an out of state warrant, or have been convicted of a felony or a violation of a parole, probation, or immigration law.

Youth are eligible for services if they are non-detainable and have been referred by law enforcement, Juvenile Justice, or community agencies.