

Objective Screening Tool for Detention Decisions: Its Impact on Law Enforcement

How does it impact officers?



How does the objective screening process impact law enforcement officers when they apprehend youth for delinquent conduct?

The use of an objective screening process has **significant implications for patrol officers in their dealings with youth**. Some of the resulting changes make the process easier and more efficient for officers, but other changes will limit their discretion.

- **New procedures and protocols.** The objective screening process to guide detention decisions will require officers to learn and follow new procedures and protocols whenever they arrest a young person.
- **Altered relationship with youth.** Reliance on a detention screening tool may limit the discretion officers may have enjoyed previously to place youth in detention, or to threaten detention as a consequence for continued misconduct.
- **Reducing uncertainty and wasted time.** Objective screening can make the detention process more predictable for officers, and save officers time they would otherwise spend transporting youth who pose few risks to detention.

Lower detentions frees up public funds

Taken together, participating jurisdictions have reaped enormous benefits from their involvement with JDAI.

- Altogether, youth residing in **participating sites spent 1.4 million fewer nights in secure detention** in the 2015-16 fiscal year than in the baseline years before each site entered JDAI.
- By lowering detention populations, juvenile detention reform has **enabled at least 56 participating jurisdictions to close housing units** within their detention facilities or close facilities entirely. These jurisdictions reduced the capacity of their detention facilities by more than 2,000 beds.
- These bed reductions have **freed up more than \$100 million per year** in public funds that would otherwise have been spent on construction or operations of these jurisdictions' detention facilities.

“ When we rolled out the risk screening tool, we did a training for our officers, and it really brought the officers on board. They liked the clear policies and procedures, and they appreciated that law enforcement had a say in formulating the tool. ”

— JIM DOMVILLE, DEPUTY CHIEF
CRESSKILL POLICE DEPARTMENT, BERGEN COUNTY, NJ

Right kid + right reason + right time