

# 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