

Profile of Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Funding: Iowa

Overview

In FY2014, Iowa received \$393,667 through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's formula and block grant programs.¹ This is down nearly 68% since the start of the decade, when Iowa received \$1.24 million in federal juvenile justice formula and block grants. A large part of this decrease is due to the zeroing out and earmarking in recent years of several funding sources. In FY2010, Iowa received \$551,600 in Juvenile Accountability Block Grants (JABG). Those funds have been zeroed out in Congress' two most recent budgets. Similarly in FY 2010, Iowa received \$84,945 in Title V funding, which is now earmarked for non-JJDPA purposes. Title II funds - which remain in the federal budget - meanwhile, have decreased from \$551,600 in FY 2010 to \$393,667 in FY 2014. The funds are administered by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC), which serves as the state advisory group (SAG) for implementing JJDPA in the state.

Iowa's strategy for JJDPA implementation has been to equitably distribute the majority of its funds as block grants to its eight judicial districts. Funds flow from the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) to the judicial districts' probation agencies which then use them to fund contracts that provide community-based programs and local detention alternatives for youth. By allocating funds to local jurisdictions as block grants, the JJAC preserves the localities' discretion to decide which among the best evidence-based approaches are most appropriate to their local context.

Consistent with research on best practices for at-risk and delinquent youth, the JJAC directs all of the federal funding it receives to alternatives to adjudication and detention that strengthen and maintain youths' connections to their families and communities, while upholding youth and community safety. This is accompanied by a system-wide philosophy that community-based alternatives should be the approach of first resort for all but the most serious offenders. As a result, the state reduced its detention holds by 29% for all youth between 2007 and 2012, and by 38% for African-American youth during that same time period.

Iowa is also one of 38 states that have leveraged their federal dollars and received additional private support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to implement the Juvenile Detention

State Summary

FY2014 Federal Investment under JJDPA: \$393,667

FY2010 Federal Investment under JJDPA: \$1.24 million

The current overall funding levels for juvenile justice in Iowa represent an almost 68% decrease so far this decade.

¹ All numbers are based on data provided through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Available at: <http://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov>.

Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). Still, like all other states participating in the JJDP, Iowa has had to contend with a reduction of the federal investment in juvenile justice.

To help counter the ongoing trend of dramatic reductions in the federal investment, Iowa has directed substantial resources to improving the effectiveness of their juvenile justice systems in addition to delivering services to youth and families. Some of the initiatives that the state has undertaken in recent years are outlined below.

School-to-Court Initiative: As part of the state's system improvement efforts, the Iowa CJJP has sought to understand the scope and root causes of juvenile delinquency. Anecdotally, the problem appears to be related to exclusionary school discipline policies that favor removal of some youth from schools, and their referral to the juvenile justice system. A number of activities examined the flow of youth from Iowa's schools to its juvenile justice system. An overview of those activities is provided below.

All Districts:

Promotion of Best Practices Juvenile Court Officers (JCO) Training: Funding to the judicial districts has, in part, supported judicial district best-practice efforts. Extensive training has been provided to all staff in the use of the Iowa Delinquency Assessment instrument and motivational interviewing.

Functional Family Therapy Training: With support of JJDP funds, several jurisdictions in the state are utilizing functional family therapy, a widely recognized evidence-based family therapy program, to reconnect juvenile offenders to their families in a positive and supportive manner.

Aggression Replacement Training: JCOs have also hired a contractor to provide training for juvenile justice system actors on techniques in aggression replacement training (techniques that have had success reducing aggressive behaviors), among other empirically grounded approaches.