

# Implementing Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System Improvement in Hawaii

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**The Crime and Justice Institute (CJI)** at Community Resources for Justice strives to make criminal and juvenile justice systems more efficient and cost effective, and to promote accountability for outcomes.

We take pride in our ability to improve evidence-based practices in public safety agencies and gain organizational acceptance of those practices in difficult work environments. We create realistic implementation plans, put them into practice, and evaluate their effectiveness to enhance the sustainability of corrections policies, practices, and interventions.

CJI provides nonpartisan policy analysis and practice assessment, capacity- and sustainability-building technical assistance, research and program evaluation, and educational activities throughout the country.

## BACKGROUND

Hawaii's juvenile justice system needed to change. Three out of four youths released from the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF) were returning to the facility within three years. To those unfamiliar with juvenile justice research, this was surprising given the profile of youth at HYCF. With a high proportion of youth at HYCF for misdemeanor offenses and little prior history of court involvement, why were so many coming back into the system? Considering the cost of placing youth in this facility is almost \$200,000 per bed per year, in-state leaders recognized the need for change.<sup>1</sup>

Probation admissions in Hawaii had been stable for the past seven years and there had been no major changes to the underlying offenses for which youth were placed on supervision. Yet, lengths of probation had risen 155 percent. Also concerning was that probation lengths were similar for misdemeanor and felony offenses, and the lengths varied drastically across circuits—the average length of probation in one circuit was 15.7 months, but was 26.6 months in another circuit.

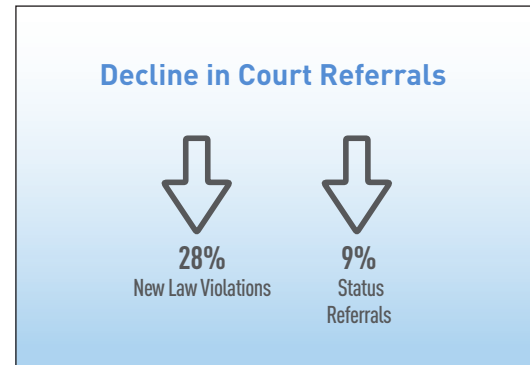
In 2013, Hawaii established a task force and enlisted the help of the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) and the Pew Charitable Trusts to reduce the out-of-home population, while protecting public safety, holding youth accountable and improving outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system. That task force issued recommendations that served as the basis for Act 201, which the legislature passed and the governor signed into law in 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Hawaii Juvenile Justice Working Group Final Report, December 13, 2013

Later that same year, the state was selected as one of the initial sites for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System Improvement Initiative to receive training and technical assistance from CJI to support implementation of the state's improvements.

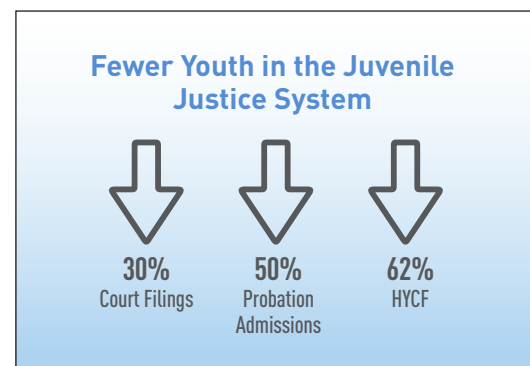
## EARLY RESULTS

It has been two years since Hawaii enacted Act 201, a comprehensive set of juvenile justice improvements, and the state is already experiencing positive public safety results. Twenty-eight percent fewer youth are being charged in court for new law violations and court filings for status offenses are down 9 percent.<sup>2</sup>



Because fewer youth are entering the system, there are fewer placed on probation. In fact, probation admissions are half what they were in FY 2013. And, the HYCF population has reached its lowest point with just 23 youth in the facility.<sup>3</sup>

With fewer youth coming into the system, juvenile justice stakeholders now have more time to dedicate to each youth and to truly do the job of rehabilitation. Juvenile Client Services, the probation division within Family Court, is an example of one agency that has invested heavily in improving their effectiveness to better serve youth.



## IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN PROBATION

Following the passage of Act 201, Juvenile Client Services has focused on improving the consistency of probation supervision across the four Judicial Circuits and infusing evidence-based practices into their everyday work with youth. To assist the state with these efforts, OJJDP funded CJI, through its Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System Improvement Initiative, to provide intensive training and technical assistance to Hawaii.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.courts.state.hi.us/news\\_and\\_reports/reports/annual\\_report\\_stat\\_sup\\_archive](http://www.courts.state.hi.us/news_and_reports/reports/annual_report_stat_sup_archive)

<sup>3</sup> Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility population data source: Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility Monthly Population Sheets

This assistance aims to build the state's capacity to provide effective programs and practices and to sustain them over time.

CJI has assisted Hawaii with the following priorities identified by the state:

- Selection and rollout of a statewide risk and needs assessment tool to guide decision-making, establish supervision levels, and assist with referrals to programs and services;
- Development and implementation of a graduated response system, including earned discharge credits and other rewards to reinforce the prosocial behavior of youth and sanctions to extinguish antisocial behavior;
- Establishment of a multi-agency collaborative to provide coordinated services to individual youth involved in different systems; and,
- Training and professional development to enhance the supervision skills of probation staff.

In sum, this assistance helps probation officers develop stronger rapport with youth, make evidence-informed decisions, develop meaningful case plans, and help youth successfully complete probation.

With improved supervision practices delivered consistently statewide, Hawaii expects to see better outcomes for youth. Toward this end, CJI has also assisted the state to set up systems for data collection and performance measurement. This will allow the state to continue to measure the impact of implementation of the improvements on the Hawaii juvenile justice system.

Following is more detail on the implementation of probation's priorities.

## Risk and Needs Assessment Tools

CJI trained members of the Risk and Needs Assessment subcommittee to help them understand the steps involved in implementing a standardized risk assessment and created a customized implementation plan that specified the steps the state should take to select, implement, and validate the assessment tool.

To build the state's capacity to select the best fit assessment instrument, CJI developed the Informed Guide to Juvenile Risk Assessment. The guide specifies selection criteria in these areas: cost, ease and time required to administer the tool, functionality, training and support, and validation.

Also, in preparation for tool selection, CJI trained staff on the stages of and methods for implementing a risk and needs assessment.

Armed with this information, the subcommittee responsible for risk assessment selection chose the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI™). This marked the first time Hawaii put in place a statewide risk and needs assessment tool to better determine the individual needs and best services for youth in the juvenile justice system. As part of this process, CJI also helped establish an initial quality assurance process to ensure that staff understand how to properly score the assessment and do so proficiently. Over a 3-month period, staff participated in scoring exercises and reached as high as 94 percent proficiency on scoring the YASI™.

## Graduated Responses

CJI coordinated with juvenile probation staff to develop the Behavioral Intervention and Support System – a graduated response system to support youth success on probation supervision.

To sustain the use of the graduated response system by probation staff over time, CJI developed a train-the-trainer curriculum and manual and trained 15 in-state staff on the system. After successfully completing the training, these staff became certified Behavioral Intervention and Support System trainers and have trained staff statewide.

## Stakeholder Collaboration

To improve stakeholder collaboration, a multi-agency collaborative, known locally as an interdepartmental cluster, has been established. The purpose of the cluster is to provide coordinated services for high-needs youth involved with multiple youth-serving agencies. CJI worked with staff to develop procedural guidelines, a tracking form to document referrals and outcomes for cases referred to the cluster, and a memorandum of agreement to facilitate data sharing and case tracking across state agencies.

## Training and Professional Development

CJI delivered training to more than 100 system stakeholders across the state, including probation administrators, supervisors, program specialists, field staff, intake staff, drug court staff, and Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility staff on the Principles of Effective Intervention, risk assessment implementation fidelity, and effective case management. Additionally, a coaching model was developed to train designated staff on how to support colleagues on the use of effective case management techniques. To further promote staff development, CJI created a core competencies training curriculum and implementation plan for juvenile probation officers in Hawaii. CJI has also delivered presentations to judges, line staff and other system stakeholders on implementation progress and research on effective practices in the juvenile justice field.

## Data Collection and Performance Measurement

CJI worked in collaboration with judicial staff to develop performance measures based on legislative requirements and monitor progress on implementation of policies including the use of graduated responses and diversion.

Hawaii continues to build its capacity to extract and analyze system data. To support these efforts, CJI has created report templates and data dashboards that staff can use to generate tables and graphs.

## NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, Hawaii understands the importance of institutionalizing the practice improvements and sustaining them. In partnership with CJI, Hawaii will build on early progress by expanding the capacity of agencies to continue the work once CJI's training and technical assistance period ends. Specifically, CJI will prioritize developing data reporting templates to be used to regularly share progress and outcome results. CJI will also provide ongoing support to staff on messaging to the broader stakeholder community the impact of juvenile justice improvement in Hawaii.

The Aloha Spirit statute in Hawaii states, "Aloha' is the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence." Hawaii's efforts to improve juvenile justice in Hawaii embody Aloha by prioritizing the success and well-being of each youth in the system and the impact that success will have on the entire community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
CONTACT:

**Tessa Upin**

Crime and Justice Institute  
at CRJ

TUpin@crj.org

or (617) 366-7284

[www.crj.org/cji](http://www.crj.org/cji)



**CRIME AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE**

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