

Attach the form to all entries. Entrants must complete all sections for the entry to be considered complete. A copy of this official entry is available electronically at [www.pacounties.org](http://www.pacounties.org). Please indicate if this is a secure detention or alternative program award entry.

Owner /Contracting County Chester County County Class Third  
Address 505 South Waverly Road City West Chester Zip 19382  
Contact Name George Arvey Title Program Administrator  
Department Chester County Youth Center Phone (610) 793-5910  
Fax (610) 793-4535 Email cavey@chesco.org

### PROJECT INFORMATION

Title The Repurposing of Juvenile Detention Start Date 1994

Each application must be submitted with two signatures. Place appropriate signatures on two of the lines below:

George Arvey  
Chair of the Board of County Commissioners

[Signature]  
Facility Chief Executive Officer

Oversight Board (where applicable)

### PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Attach a separate program narrative document to the form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below. Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type.

A separate program narrative document must be attached to this form that addresses each of the following subject areas, and does so in the order presented below.

- A description of the identified need and the background including what programs were in place before the current project, if any, and how it led to this effort.
- A description of the project, including any evidenced-based approaches to divert individuals from further penetration into the juvenile or adult justice system, community involvement strategies, formation of stakeholder groups, county-wide planning strategies, etc.
- A description of expectations and measurable goals, including supporting data.
- A brief description of how the project was evaluated and any lessons learned.
- A brief description of the community, including a description of key stakeholders, organizations, and county departments that were involved in the project.
- A description of how the activities described in a project started in the past were altered or will be continued based on experience, including plans for leveraging additional resources.
- A description of any costs associated with the project and how it was funded; cost savings, if any, and any change in community acceptance, reductions in insurance costs, or inspection improvements that resulted from the program.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Please attach any supporting documentation to demonstrate the impact of the project in cost or population outcomes, or other data to demonstrate the considerations utilized in determining the scope or design of the project. Scoring will be based on factors including the entrant's description of the problem, the soundness of the approach, and success in meeting goals and objectives. Award submissions will receive consideration for outcomes or best practices supported by data.

Entries must be typed in a Word-document, Times New Roman, 10-point type. Entries must be received by close of business on February 13, 2015. Winners will be announced during the CCAP Spring Conference, March 22 - 24, 2015.

More information: Brinda Carroll Penyak, [bpenyak@pacounties.org](mailto:bpenyak@pacounties.org)

## CCAP Best Practices Award Nomination

The Chester County Youth Center would like to nominate its Juvenile Detention Alternative Programs for the Best Practices Award for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania Award (CCAP). In looking at the research, Detention reform and repurposing has been underway for the past twenty years. Currently, we have three diversionary programs run by our Detention Center: 1) an Electronic Home monitoring Program (EHM), 2) a Weekend Respite for girls (WRP), and 3) an Evening Reporting Center (ERC) for boys. In broadening the scope of our agencies duties by employing an open system view, we are prepared for the influences of our environment, outside organizations, and the current research. This has created complex goals: "custodial care" versus diversionary, community-based programs especially in the field of Juvenile Detention. Some may ask are we shooting ourselves in the foot by creating programming that is in direct opposition to our "custodial care" Detention model but we feel by expanding our services we can help to reach more at-risk youth involved with the Juvenile Probation (JPO) and our Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) Departments..

Detention services fall under the community safety goal of Pennsylvania's Balanced and Restorative Justice; Act 33, enacted in January of 1995. Youth held in secure detention facilities increased nationwide by 72 percent between years 1985 to 1995 (Steinhart, 1999). Holman and Ziedenberg's 2006 report titled *The Dangers of Detention*, revealed many of the harsh realities youth witness and endure in custody. Holman & Ziedenberg's study revealed that there can be a significant impact to incarcerating youth in detention centers (2006). Examples of the impacts of detention can be an increase in recidivism and re-offending, the youth being pulled deeper into the justice system, detaining youth can interrupt a youth's natural process of "aging out" of their delinquency, detention stays affect a youth's reenrollment in school upon release, and a youth's reduced success in the job market.

Although public safety and crime reduction are goals that drive the juvenile justice system, the costs of confinement and budget issues are a constant part of daily conversations among leaders in the field. The National Juvenile Justice Network (2010) states that "focusing on cost alone drastically oversimplifies the issues faced when trying to rehabilitate youth" (p. 6). "The goal is not simply to treat the youth in the least expensive way possible, but rather to invest enough resources in a youth so that he or she may become a successful, productive member of society, thereby contributing to society's overall financial and social well-being" (National Juvenile Justice Network, 2010, p. 6).

The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched a project known as the Juvenile Detention Alternatives (JDAI) in December of 1992. "JDAI's purpose was straightforward: to demonstrate that jurisdictions can establish more effective and efficient systems to accomplish the purposes of juvenile detention" (Steinhart, 1999, p. 4). Agencies like the Annie. E. Casey Foundation and the National Center of Juvenile Justice, Models for Change Initiative, have organized and created successful and replicable models of detention reform. Their projects are aimed at safely reducing detention center populations through better informed system policies and practices and the use of effective community-based alternatives (Steinhart, 1999). At The Chester County Youth Center, we feel that we are creating a model of using our center for more than just detention services. By repurposing our facility, we have created additional programs and diversified our services.

The Chester County Youth Center has administered the Electronic Home Monitoring program since 1994, approximately 21 years. The Electronic Monitoring/Home Detention Program in Chester County was established by the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County to be a cost effective alternative to secure detention for alleged/adjudicated delinquents. The purpose of electronic monitoring use is to allow juveniles to be released from detention to return home where they will have limited access to the community, but still be able to attend school, work, or be involved in approved activities. The program functions at the direction of the court under an agreement between the juvenile, parent/guardian, and the court. The program addresses the key issues of public safety and

juvenile accountability, while reducing the use of secure detention services. In 2014, there were 378 EHM participants, with an 85% successful completion rate.

The Evening Reporting Center program began as a 2-year grant funded project in 2010. At the end of the 2 years grant funded period and with the success of the program, the Chester County Youth Center took on the the program under its needs-based budget. The ERC is rooted in Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles and is an effort to keep youth in their home community by providing meaningful community-based interventions as an alternative to secure detention. This program is designed to serve Chester County pre-adjudicated and adjudicated delinquent adolescent males between the ages of 12 and 18 years old. Youth may be placed as part of a graduated sanction system due to a violation of court ordered conditions or pending adjudication. The ERC program capacity is 12 youth. The ERC is a short-term program with a projected average length of stay of 30 program days or six weeks. The ERC program served 49 youth in 2014; 32 of these youth had a successful completion giving an overall 65% success rate. Youth who are unsuccessful and were removed from the program can be attributed to an unexcused absence from the ERC program, a major electronic monitor violation as many youth are involved with both EHM and ERC, a major violation of program rules, a positive urine test due to drug use during enrollment in the program, and/or an unexcused absence from school.

The Chester County Youth Center's Girls Weekend Respite Program (WRP) was established in April of 2011. The mission is to present an opportunity for a graduated response to violations of supervision offering age appropriate activities, competency development, and life skill classes that will promote better decision making. The WRP objective is to provide the Chester County Juvenile Dependency and Delinquency Courts with a diversionary program for dependent and delinquent females, so that Out of Home Placement and Detention Services are not required. The WRP program has been used as a preventative measure, an intervention, and a reunification for a child returning home from an Out of Home Placement. We strive to increase the understanding of the behavior needed to prevent the youth from becoming further involved in the Juvenile Justice System. The program times begin with an arrival at 3pm on Friday afternoon and conclude Sunday at 3pm when a parent or guardian arrives to picks the child up. The weekend in comprised of 5 competency programs, examples are Life Skills, Drug and Alcohol Education, Coping Techniques, Decision Making, homework support, and Team Building Exercises. Our WRP program outcomes are to have the girls maintain and/or improve school attendance, avoid violations of supervision/avoid new charges, remain in their home communities, participate in meaningful community service, and remain diverted from Out of Home Placement/Secure Detention. The WRP had 11 participants in 2014 with a 91% successful completion rate.

There are 2 major factors that impact detention utilization; the Detention Risk Assessment and the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS). Both of these assessments align with the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) which was rolled out in April 2012. The purpose of JJSES is "to enhance the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its balanced and restorative justice mission by employing evidence-based practices with fidelity at every stage of the juvenile justice process; collecting and analyzing the data necessary to measure the results of these efforts; and, with this knowledge, striving to continuously improve the quality of our decisions, services, and programs." (Penn State, EPISCenter). The detention risk assessment is a tool used by probation officers that is a "written checklist of criteria that are applied to rate each minor for specific detention-related risks" (Steinhart, 2006, p. 8). A score is generated from the assessment which helps the probation officer in their recommendation to either detain the juvenile or release them home to their family. Lastly, the YLS/CMI (Case Management Inventory) is "an internationally recognized instrument for evaluating criminogenic risk and need factors in juvenile offenders" (Carns & Martin, 2011, p. 10). Vincent and Guy (2012) state that "the YLS is one of the most well-researched instruments for assessing the risk of general reoffending for male and female juvenile offenders ages 12 to 17" (p. 2). Both of the above assessments have had significant impacts on Juvenile Detention services which are why our facility needed to repurpose its mission.

Juvenile Probation departments are now using what is called a service matrix. A service matrix is comprehensive document with clear guidelines regarding treatment of clients. We want The Chester County Youth Center to show up multiple times on this matrix, as a menu of services that we can provide, and not for just the single option of detention.

In looking at the future of our center, we need to provide a continuum of alternatives to secure custody. Our community-based programs, such as the Electronic Home Monitoring program, cost as little as eight dollars a day in Chester County. This is just one more cost effective way for delinquent youth to stay in their home communities. The future and viability of Juvenile Detention Centers in Pennsylvania revolves around the notion that we must be able to provide an extensive mix of services to address the complex issues of the youth that we serve. The Chester County Youth Center repurposed its mission when we moved into our new facility in June 2006. Since then, we are constantly looking at new and creative ways to be the best at what we do.

Submitted by Carrie Handy Avery, B.A., M.S.

Chester County Youth Center Program Coordinator

[cavery@chesco.org](mailto:cavery@chesco.org)

610-793-5910 ext. 5014

## References

- Holman, B. & Ziedenberg, J. (2006, November). The dangers of detention: The impact of incarceration youth in detention and other secure facilities. *Justice policy institute report*, 1-19.
- Models for Change: System reform in Juvenile Justice. (2006). John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, Illinois. Retrieved from <http://www.modelsforchange.net/about/States-for-change/Pennsylvania.html>.
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