

COUNTY LEADERSHIP IN JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM:

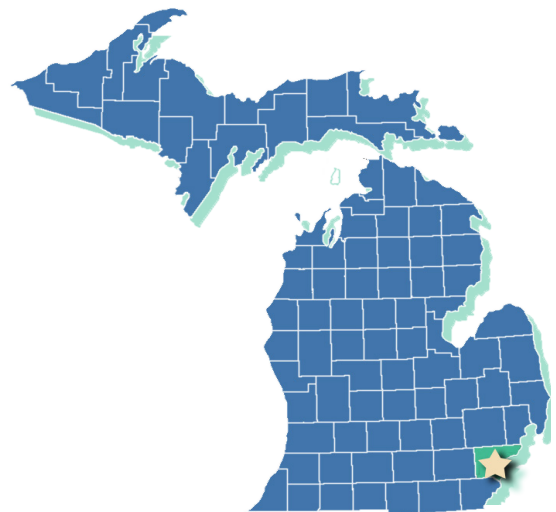
WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Population (2013 Census Estimate): 1,775,273

Youth Population: 431,391 (24.3 percent)

**Main Community Makeup: 99 percent Urban,
1 percent Rural**

Persons Below Poverty Level: 23.8 percent



THE IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

Until 2000, Wayne County's juvenile justice system was administered by the state. Throughout the 1990s, its juvenile justice system faced a number of problems, including overcrowding and rapidly rising costs: The state ward caseload reached 3,500 juveniles and costs increased 260 percent in less than a decade. Both the state and Wayne County realized these expenditures were unsustainable and the current system was not meeting its responsibility to help troubled kids and protect public safety. When the opportunity arose for Wayne County to take over control of the juvenile justice system, local leaders knew it would be better for all parties—the county, the state and the juveniles in the system—for the system to be county-administered. So, beginning in 2000, Wayne County took over administration of its juvenile justice system and today remains the only county in Michigan that is 100 percent responsible for a full continuum of juvenile justice services.

THE CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

Wayne County realized that the state's system was relying on a one-size-fits-all approach that simply matched youth with open beds in detention facilities instead of identifying and addressing a youth's risk, needs and appropriate treatment options. This meant that many low-risk youth were unnecessarily being placed in the juvenile justice system, leading to poor outcomes and high costs. Recidivism rates were over 50 percent and high escape rates contributed to a revolving door of kids in and out

of court or detention, and many youth were being placed in detention primarily for technical violations, not for new crimes.

Juvenile justice in Michigan was overcrowded—so overcrowded that 200 kids were sent to detention centers in other states—and no one contested that the system wasn't working. In 1996, Michigan's Department of Human Services announced it would relinquish control of the juvenile justice system to any county willing to take responsibility for its delinquent youth, and Wayne County jumped at the opportunity.

The state and county entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that realigned responsibility and authority for all mandated juvenile justice services to Wayne County. This new arrangement provided the platform for Wayne County to build a new system of care that would focus on outcomes and performance-based measures and contain a continuum of prevention, diversion and treatment services.

Wayne County created a long-term strategy to transform the delivery of services to youth in the juvenile justice system, based on **four main goals**: 1) **To provide a continuum of service options, based on a youth's needs and risks**; 2) **To locate services close to the families of youth**; 3) **To reinvest savings in community-based services and provide incentives for local responsibility**; and 4) **To create a contract-based, privatized services network that focuses on adaptability and resiliency**.

WAYNE COUNTY'S MODEL

To meet its goals of transforming and improving the juvenile justice system, Wayne County developed a contract-based system that allows for a single point of intake and assessment through its Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), which is the hub of a network of five Care Management Organizations (CMOs). Wayne County put out a request for proposals when seeking the CMOs, and in particular sought agencies that represented their

HIGHLIGHTS

- Development of an objective screening and assessment tool
- Creation of single point for intake and assessment
- Increased focus on a continuum of service options based on needs and risks
- Increase in preventative programming
- Overall diversion of youth from juvenile detention as a sanction
- Decrease in recidivism
- Decrease in juvenile justice expenditures

"We worked with the mental health agencies to make sure the JAC met all the mental health requirements and the mental health agencies agreed to accept JAC assessments as determinants of eligibility."

—Daniel Chaney,
Director of the Juvenile Services Division of Wayne
County's Department of Children & Family Services

communities with experience in mental health and substance use issues. The agencies were asked to develop partnerships and, if they did not have experience with the juvenile justice system, to learn from other organizations that did. Wayne County pays each CMO a set amount every month, and each CMO is responsible for providing supervision, services and resources—based on assessments and conditions ordered by the Court—for a group of juveniles in a particular geographic region.

Wayne County has implemented a comprehensive system of performance management to gauge and report the progress of its juvenile justice program to achieve outcomes that clients, tax payers and stakeholders expect. The county has a Juvenile Justice Services Dashboard, which tracks a variety of measures, including new diversion cases, new prevention cases, recidivism, juveniles diagnosed with mental illness, expenditures and more. **The county measures progress against its own trends (not against other counties or localities), within the mission and goals of the department.** It asks, "Is the system of care efficient, effective and are the youth's needs and risks aligned with the least restrictive level of intervention?"

Daniel Chaney

Director of the Juvenile Services
Division of Wayne County's
Department of Children &
Family Services



JUVENILE PROGRAMS

- Juvenile Assessment Center
- Care Management Organizations
- First-Contact and Youth Assistance community programs
- Community Policing
- Correct Course diversion program
- Functional Family Therapy
- Multi-systemic Therapy
- Attendance Participation and Support
- Community Health, Outreach, Intervention and Clinical Engagement Services

Providing Behavioral Health Services

In its beginning phases, the Wayne County model had to focus just on fixing the corrections portion of juvenile justice, but has evolved over the years into an integrated continuum of prevention, diversion, juvenile corrections and post-care (re-entry) services for at-risk and adjudicated youth. In 2006, the county began doing cross-systems work with mental health agencies.

More than 50 percent of youth entering Wayne County's juvenile justice system are diagnosed with emotional, behavioral, substance abuse or mental health disorders. These youth are assessed at the JAC (which is a Medicaid-approved children's mental health agency), and then assigned to a CMO that connects them to a Community Mental Health (CMH) treatment provider. The CMO is responsible for coordination of services and a CMH provider treats the specific behavioral health needs of the juvenile. **This system supports the least restrictive treatment for each youth and blending mental health and juvenile justice services to increase the probability of successful home-based treatment.** Treatment options include wraparound services and evidence-based services such as Multi-systemic Therapy, Trauma Focused Therapy and Functional Family Therapy.

New programs and home-based interventions for troubled teens and their families have expanded across the entire county. This strategy has reversed the unnecessary conviction of at-risk adolescents and their sentencing into the formal justice system just to get the help they needed in the first place.

Communication and cooperation across agencies has been key, says Daniel Chaney, Director of the Juvenile Services Division of Wayne County's Department of Children & Family Services. "The primary challenge was that juvenile justice and mental

health agencies spoke a different language," he explains. "We worked with the mental health agencies to make sure the JAC met all the mental health requirements and the mental health agencies agreed to accept JAC assessments as determinants of eligibility. That allowed us to keep everything going through one point at the JAC and then assign kids to the right community-based services."

SUCCESSES AND OUTCOMES

Since the beginning of its reform effort, **Wayne County has decreased the daily number of youth in detention from more than 500 to approximately 100, and estimates that more than 5,000 juveniles have been diverted from the juvenile justice system.** Where there were once 700 juveniles from Wayne County in state training schools, where youth are sent post-sentencing and often remain for several years, there are now only two. The recidivism rate has dropped from 56 percent in 1998 to 16 percent in 2013. Cost savings have also been significant: **Residential care costs have decreased from \$115 million per year in 1998 to around \$45 million this year,** and the convicted juvenile caseload, the most costly to the county, has been reduced by 75 percent.



Alisha Bell

Wayne County
Commissioner

County support of these programs continues to be exceptionally strong. “This is one of the issues we agree unanimously on,” says Wayne County Commissioner Alisha Bell. “Every time the county executive asks us for funding, we always find the money. We all recognize that you can pay now or you can pay later when it comes to crime, and providing children with these services cuts those costs down the line.”

LESSONS LEARNED

Know you can’t fix everything at once: Although the whole system was failing, Wayne County recognized that it first had to get issues with secure detention under control, before moving to other problems in the system. By focusing on a discrete issue, the county was able to effectively use its resources and show that its new model worked on a smaller scale before expanding it.

Make sure all partners speak the same language, but this can take time: It’s important that all participants in the system understand and use the same language, but different agencies and systems have different terminology and operating methods.

Wayne County pays each CMO a set amount every month, and each CMO is responsible for providing supervision, services and resources—based on assessments and conditions ordered by the Court—for a group of juveniles in a particular geographic region.

“The learning curve for dealing with the court was pretty steep for private community agencies,” says Dan Chaney. With a focused effort on cross-systems understanding, barriers come down and real solutions begin to emerge. By taking the time to get everyone on the same page in terms of communication and definitions, Wayne County’s juvenile justice system now functions smoothly across all the different partners involved.

Taking a big picture look at the problem allows for a clearer solution: Because all the services related to juvenile justice are provided under one administrative umbrella, Wayne County leaders can see where all the elements fit together and where attention is needed to provide better outcomes and/or address financial issues.

NACo is a proud partner of the Resource Center Partnership, sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. We would like to thank the Foundation for its assistance in producing this publication and its continued support in helping to educate county officials about opportunities to improve their juvenile justice systems. For more information about this publication or the *Models for Change* Initiative and the Resource Center Partnership, please contact Kathy Rowings, NACo Justice Program Manager, at krowings@naco.org or 202.942.4279.

We would also like to thank the following individuals for their time and contributions to the development of this publication: Alisha Bell, Vice Chair of the Wayne County Commission; Daniel Chaney, Director of the Juvenile Services Division of Wayne County’s Department of Children & Family Services; and Franklin Cruz, Senior Program Manager at the Justice Management Institute.

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