
The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative and Multnomah County: A successful system reform partnership

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In 1992, Multnomah County was facing a number of challenges with its juvenile detention center

A federal lawsuit for unconstitutional conditions of confinement

Chronic crowding; daily emergency release meetings to comply with a federally mandated cap resulting from the lawsuit

A lack of meaningful alternatives to secure detention

A lack of any real data regarding detention populations

No real collaborative planning or oversight

Multnomah County became one of the earliest sites to implement the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

JDAI uses eight interconnected strategies to enable jurisdictions to safely reduce reliance on secure detention

PURPOSE:

To demonstrate that jurisdictions can establish more effective and efficient systems to accomplish the purposes of juvenile detention.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Eliminate inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention
- 2) Minimize failures to appear and incidence of delinquent behavior
- 3) Redirect public finances to successful reform strategies
- 4) Improve conditions in secure detention facilities
- 5) Reduce racial and ethnic disparities

CORE STRATEGIES:

Collaboration

Use of accurate data

Objective admissions criteria and instruments

Alternative to detention

Case processing reforms

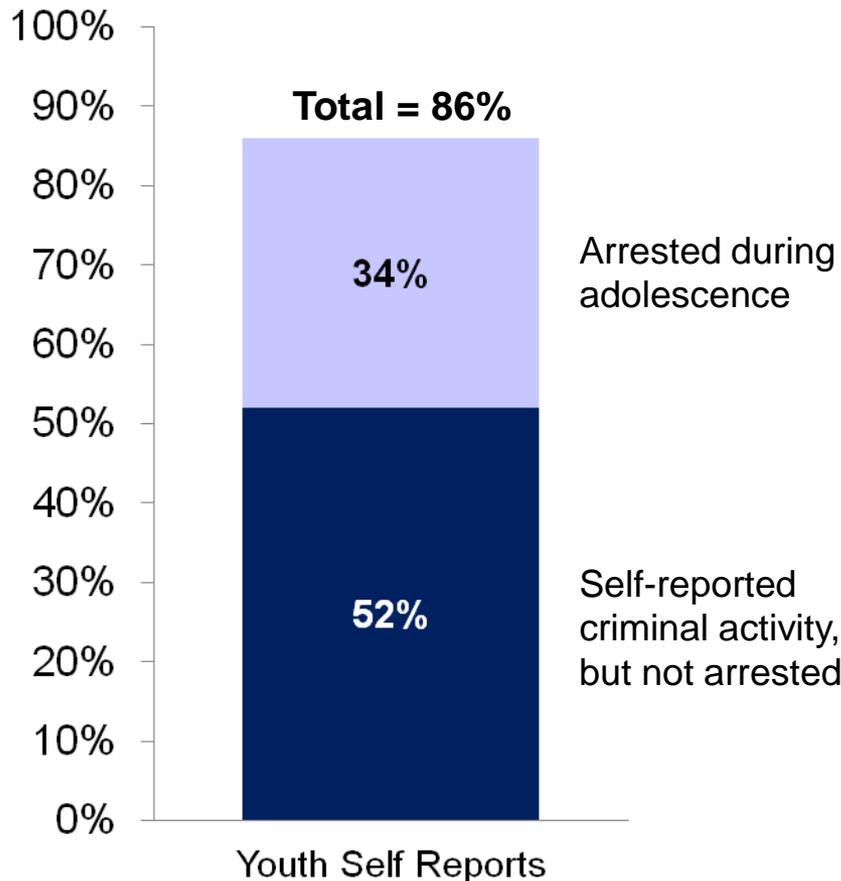
Reducing the use of secure confinement for 'special' cases

Deliberate commitment to reducing racial disparities

Improving conditions of confinement

Research shows that most juveniles engage in criminal behavior, but don't continue into adulthood

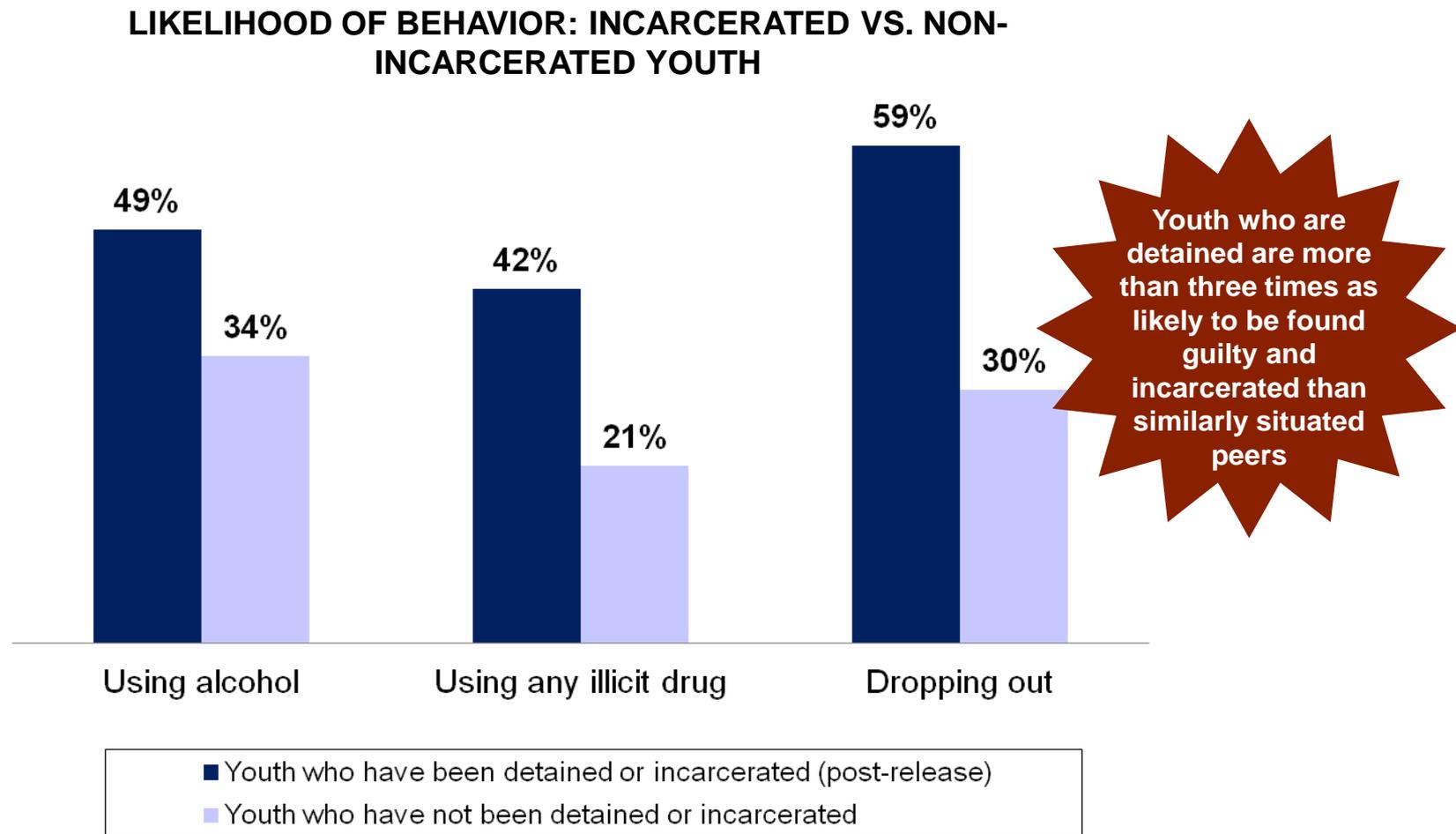
YOUTH SELF REPORTING CRIMINAL ACTIVITY



Most youth age out of criminal behavior on their own

- ▶ Longitudinal studies begun in the 1950s show **most juvenile offenders age out** of criminal behavior
- ▶ Researchers believe this is because the **transition to young adulthood 'cements' bonds to society** and deters most from continued criminality

Detention leads to worse outcomes. After release, detained youth are far more likely to drop out of school and use drugs and alcohol

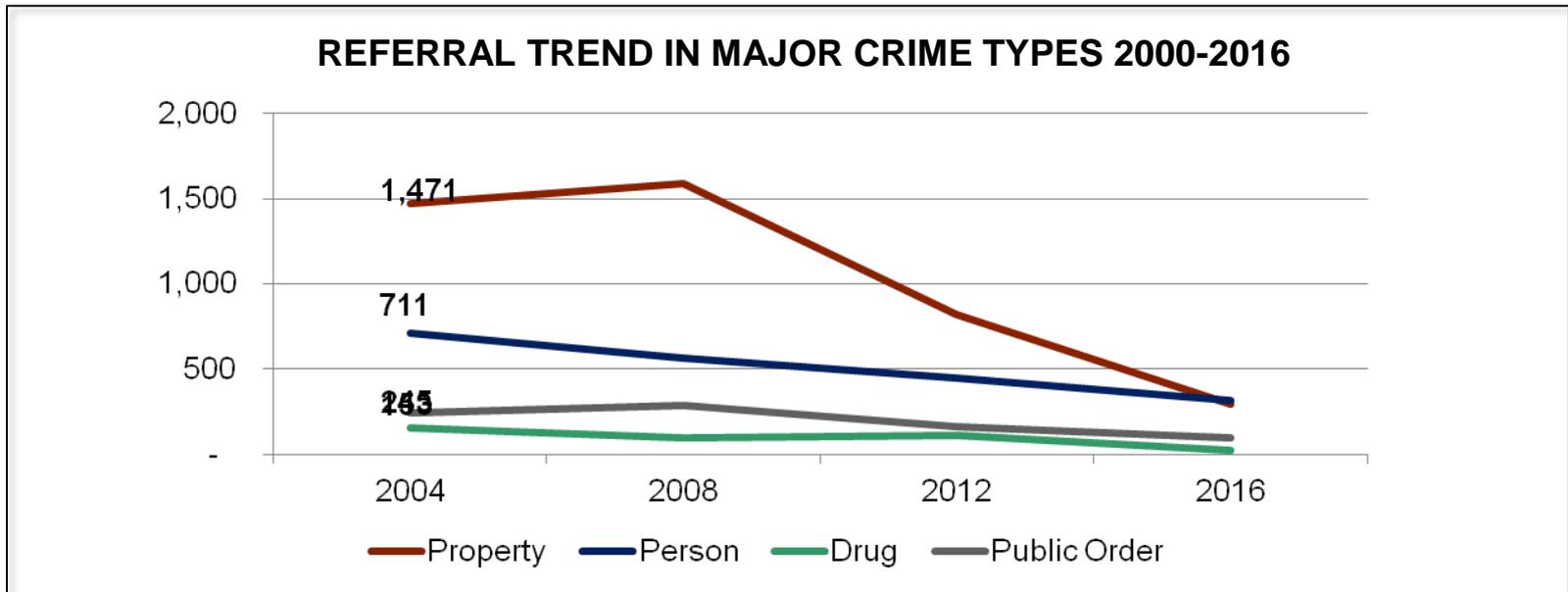
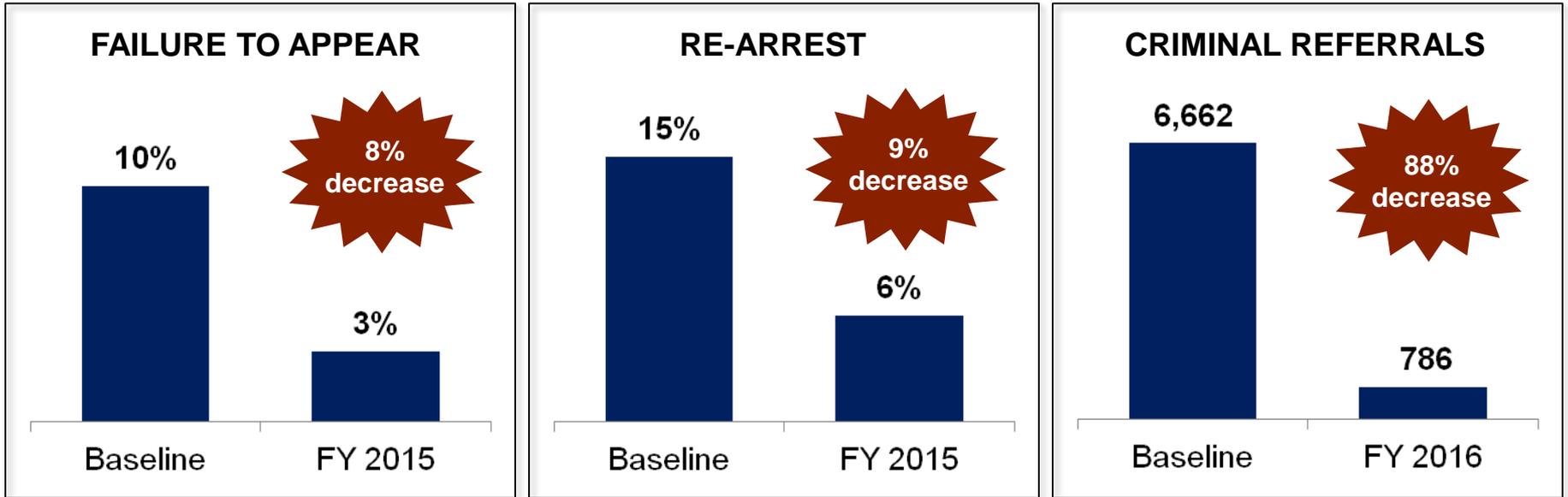


Through JDAI, Multnomah County implemented key reforms that resulted in significant, sustainable improvements in detention practices

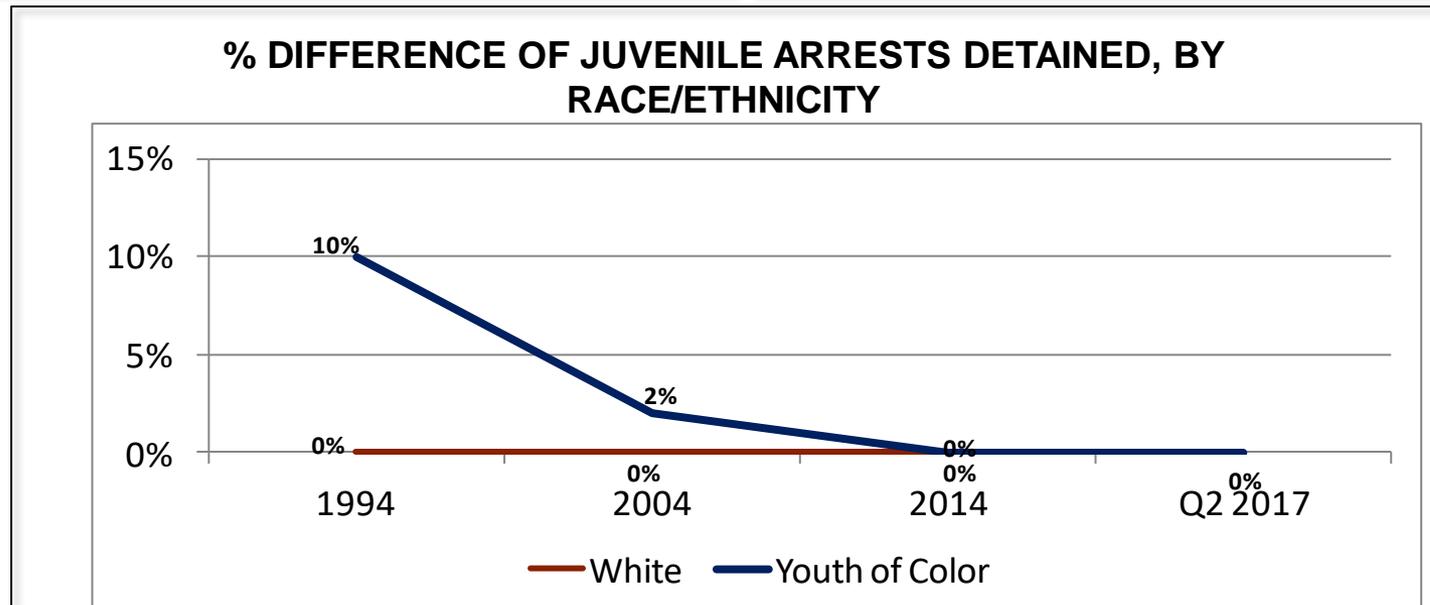
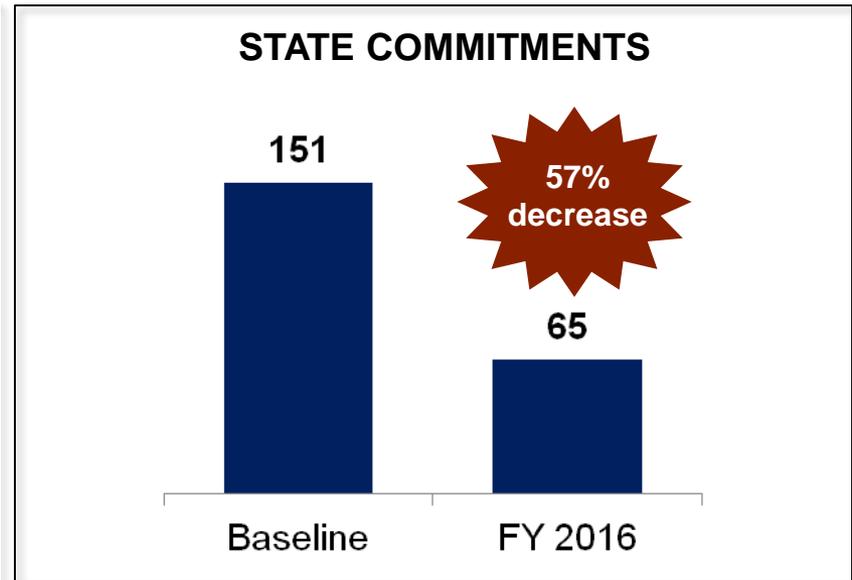
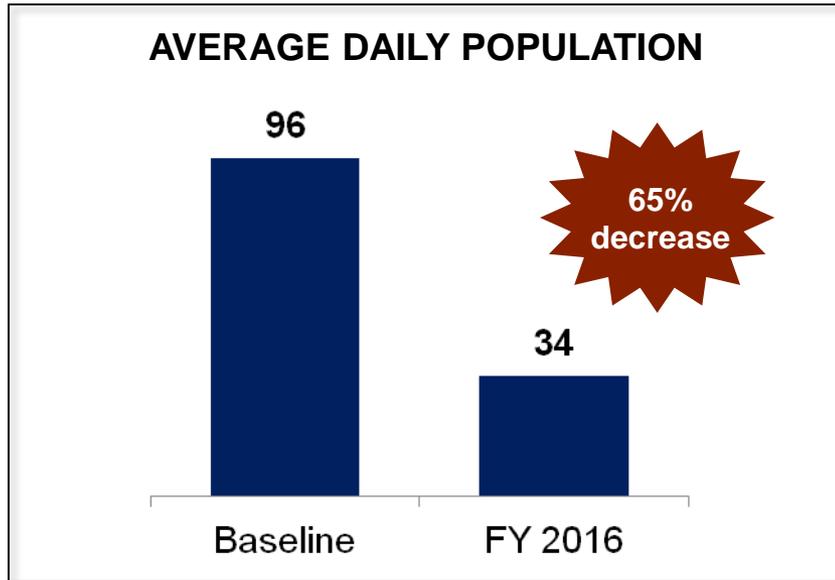
KEY DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

- ▶ Designed and tested an objective risk assessment instrument to guide admissions decisions
- ▶ Established an array of community-based alternatives to secure detention
- ▶ Commenced the 11:00 meeting where stakeholders meet to staff cases set for preliminary hearing; discuss release/hold recommendations and release plans
- ▶ Expedited case processing to reduce length of stay
- ▶ Opened the Juvenile Reception Center
- ▶ Established protocol with the DA's office with the goal of diverting more youth at the front end into culturally specific community services and supports
- ▶ Implemented a graduated sanctions grid to reduce probation violations, which will soon include a more robust list of responses including incentives
- ▶ Formed the Juvenile Justice Council, a collaborative body designed to oversee and push for continued detention reforms

Moreover, measures of public safety are vastly improved



As a result, juvenile incarceration in Multnomah County has plummeted and racial disparities have improved



The County was able to close detention beds, freeing up millions of dollars that could be redirected into other county initiatives

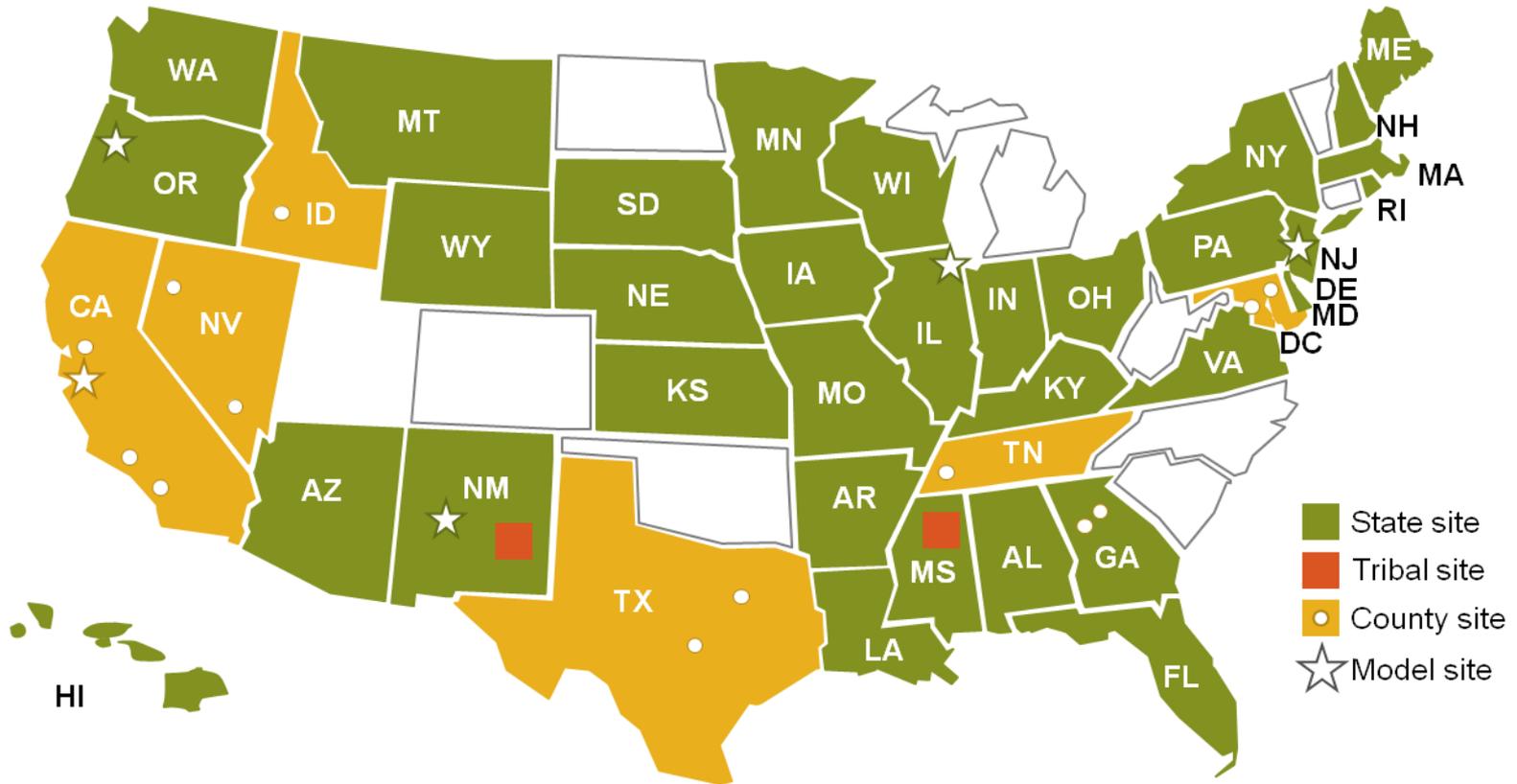
If we were still detaining youth at the rate we were prior to JDAI, we would have had 472 more admissions to detention last year at a cost of \$2.14 million dollars to the County.

Multnomah County now hosts JDAI sites from around the country to share its story and provide insight into challenges many sites face

MODEL SITE ACTIVITIES

- ▶ In more than 15 years as a JDAI model site, Multnomah County has served as a learning laboratory for other jurisdictions
- ▶ Approximately 130 delegations have attended Multnomah County model site visits over the past 17 years
- ▶ About 3,000 policy-makers and practitioners have visited to learn from Multnomah County's experience

Multnomah County's efforts have helped influence the expansion of JDAI to more than 300 counties, spanning 39 states, the District of Columbia and two Tribes



One in four youth live in a community that participates in JDAI.