
The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative and Multnomah County:

A successful system reform partnership

Date: February 9, 2012

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 dearth 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

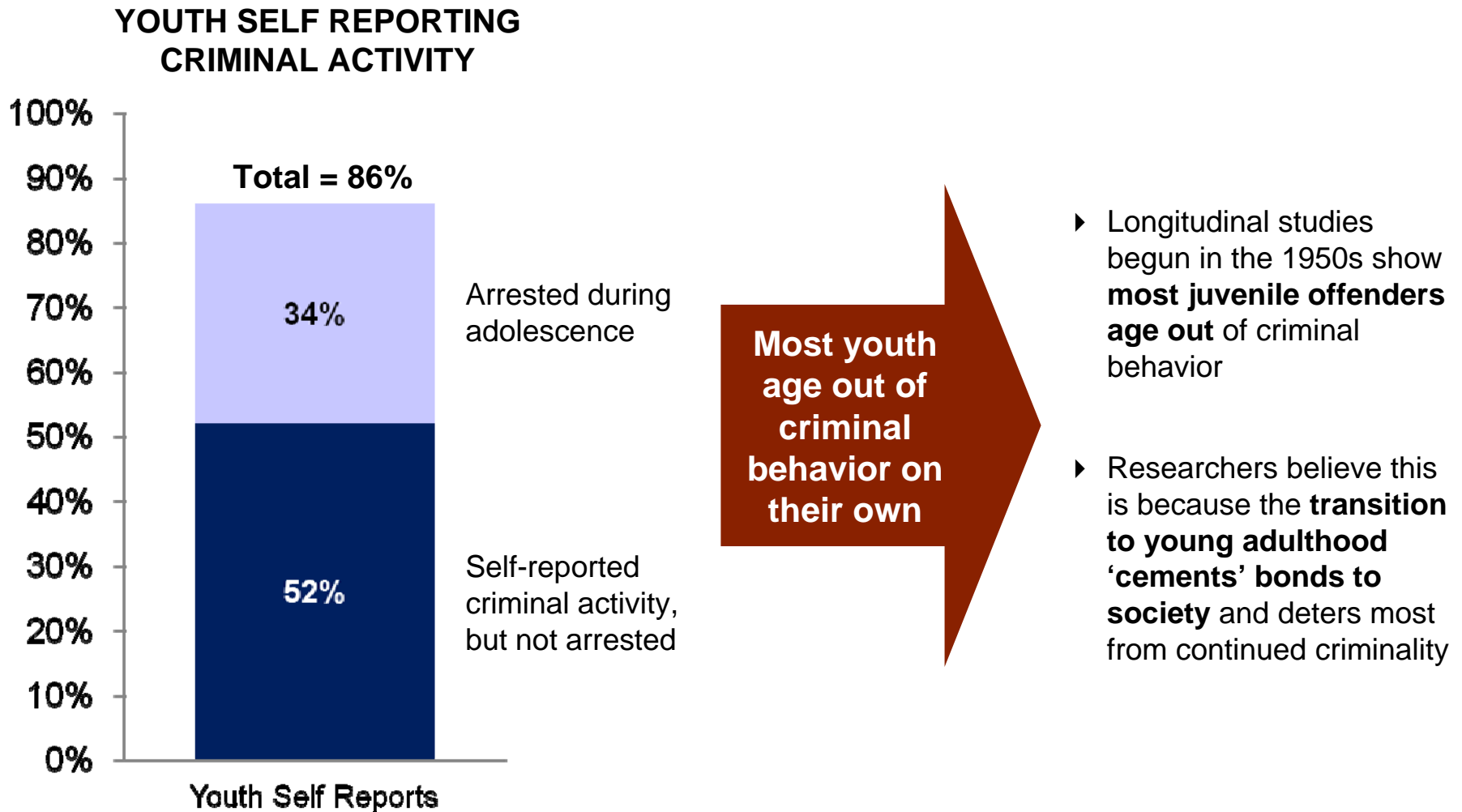
Case processing reforms

Reducing the use of secure confinement for 'special' cases

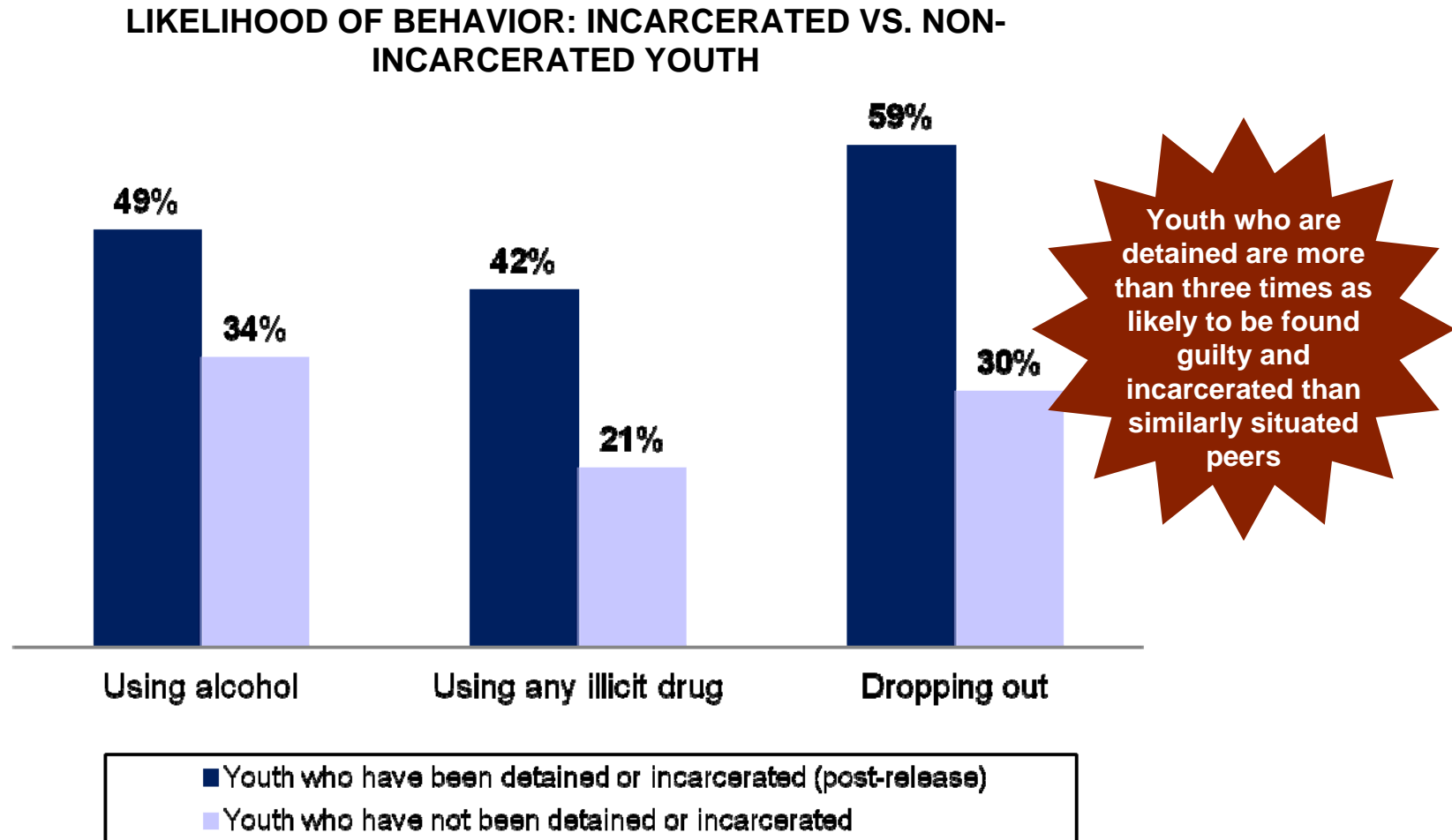
Deliberate commitment to reducing racial disparities

Improving conditions of confinement

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



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



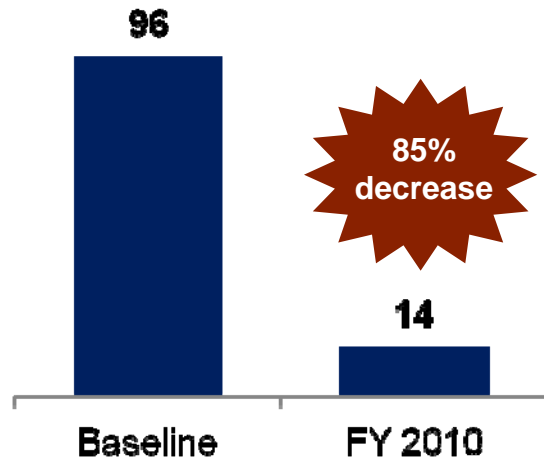
Through JDAI, Multnomah County implemented key reforms that resulted in significant, sustainable improvements in detention practices

KEY DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

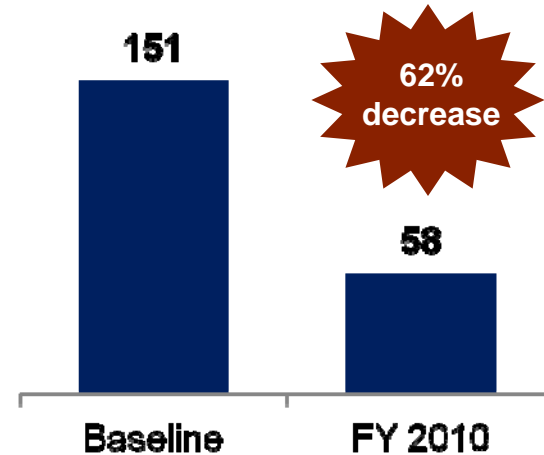
- ▶ Designed and tested an objective risk assessment instrument to guide admissions decisions
- ▶ Established an array of community-based alternatives to secure detention
- ▶ Commenced the 11:30 meeting where stakeholders meet to staff cases set for preliminary hearing; discuss release/hold recommendations 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
- ▶ Implemented a graduated sanctions grid to reduce probation violations
- ▶ Formed the Juvenile Advisory Council, a collaborative body designed to oversee and push for continued detention reforms

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

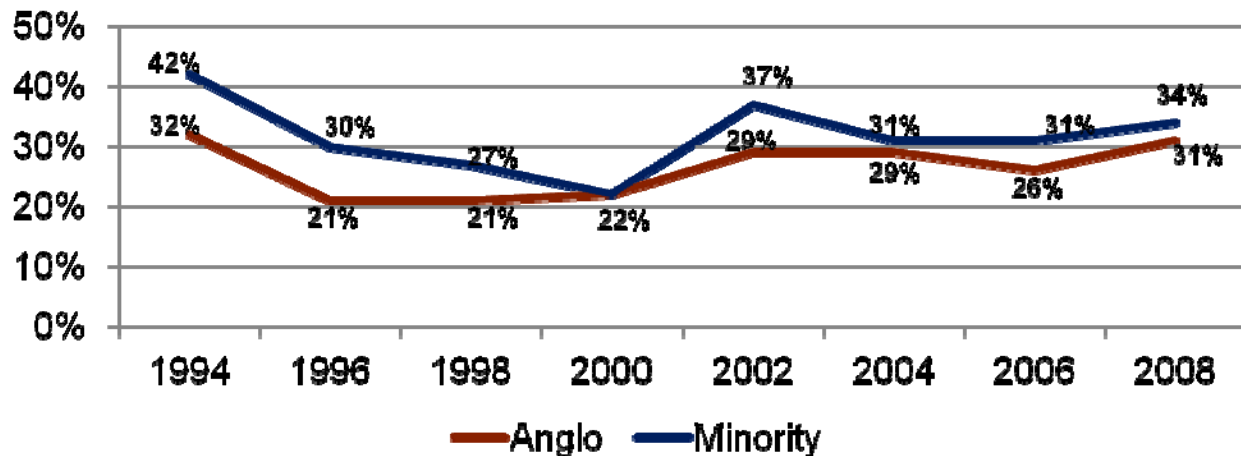
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION



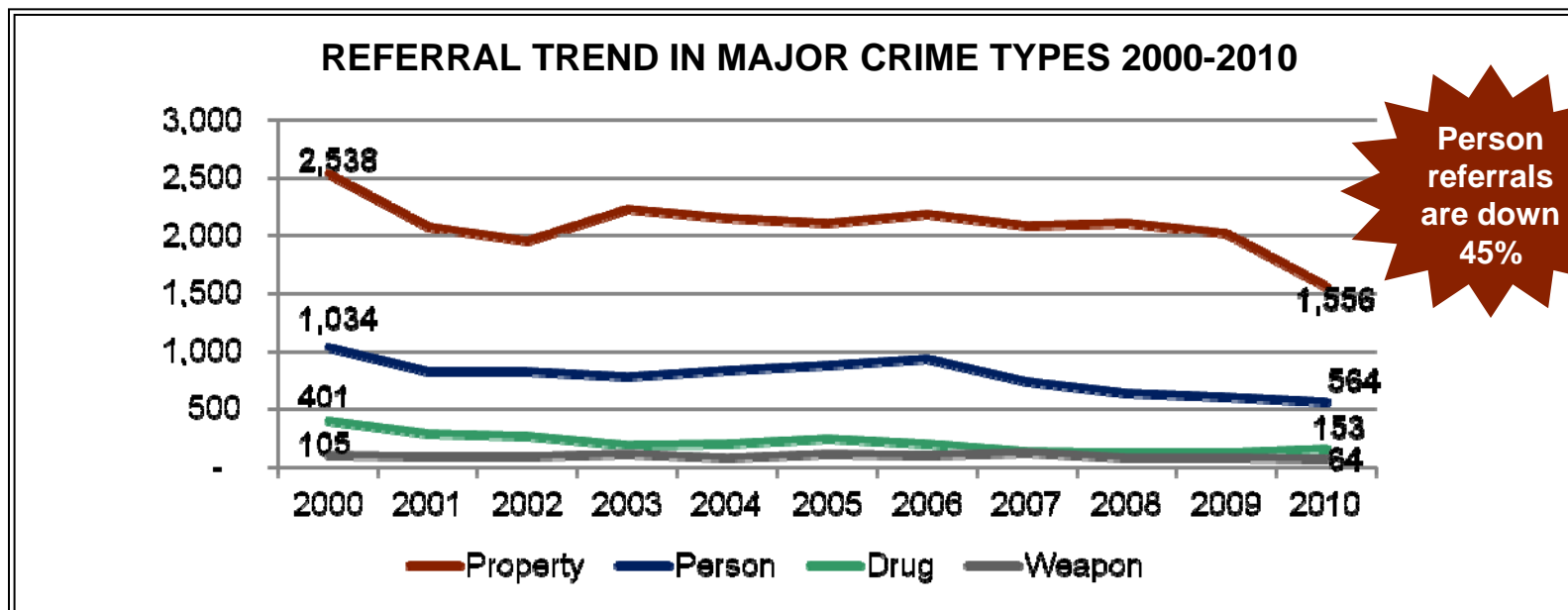
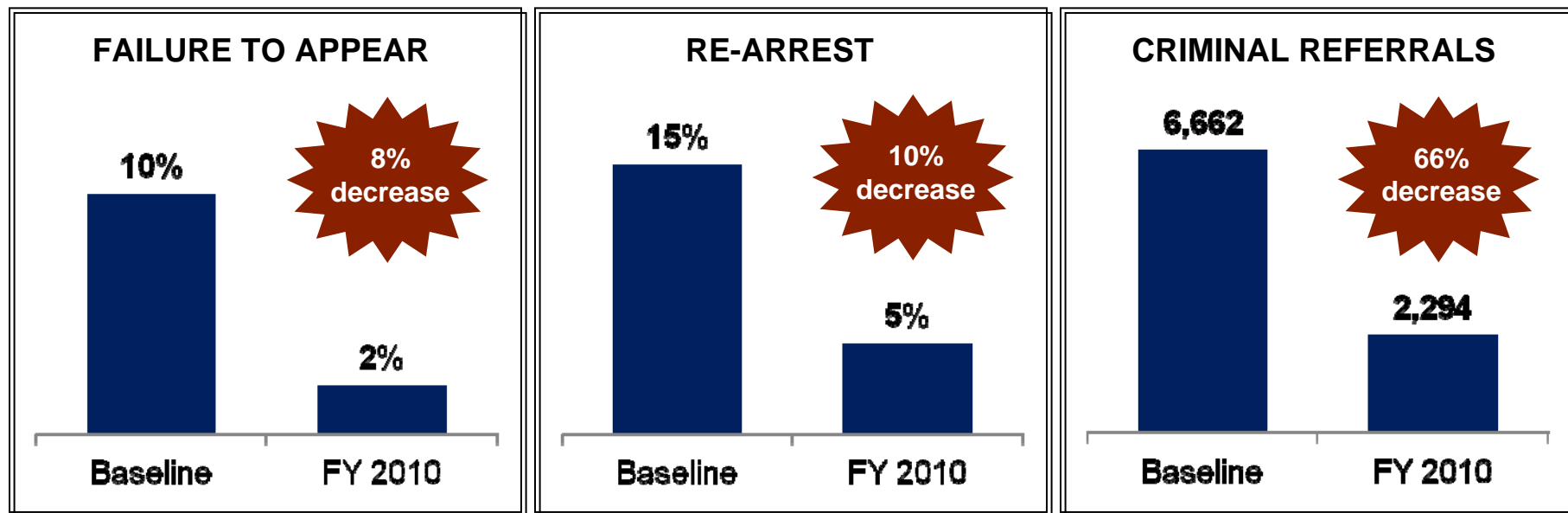
STATE COMMITMENTS



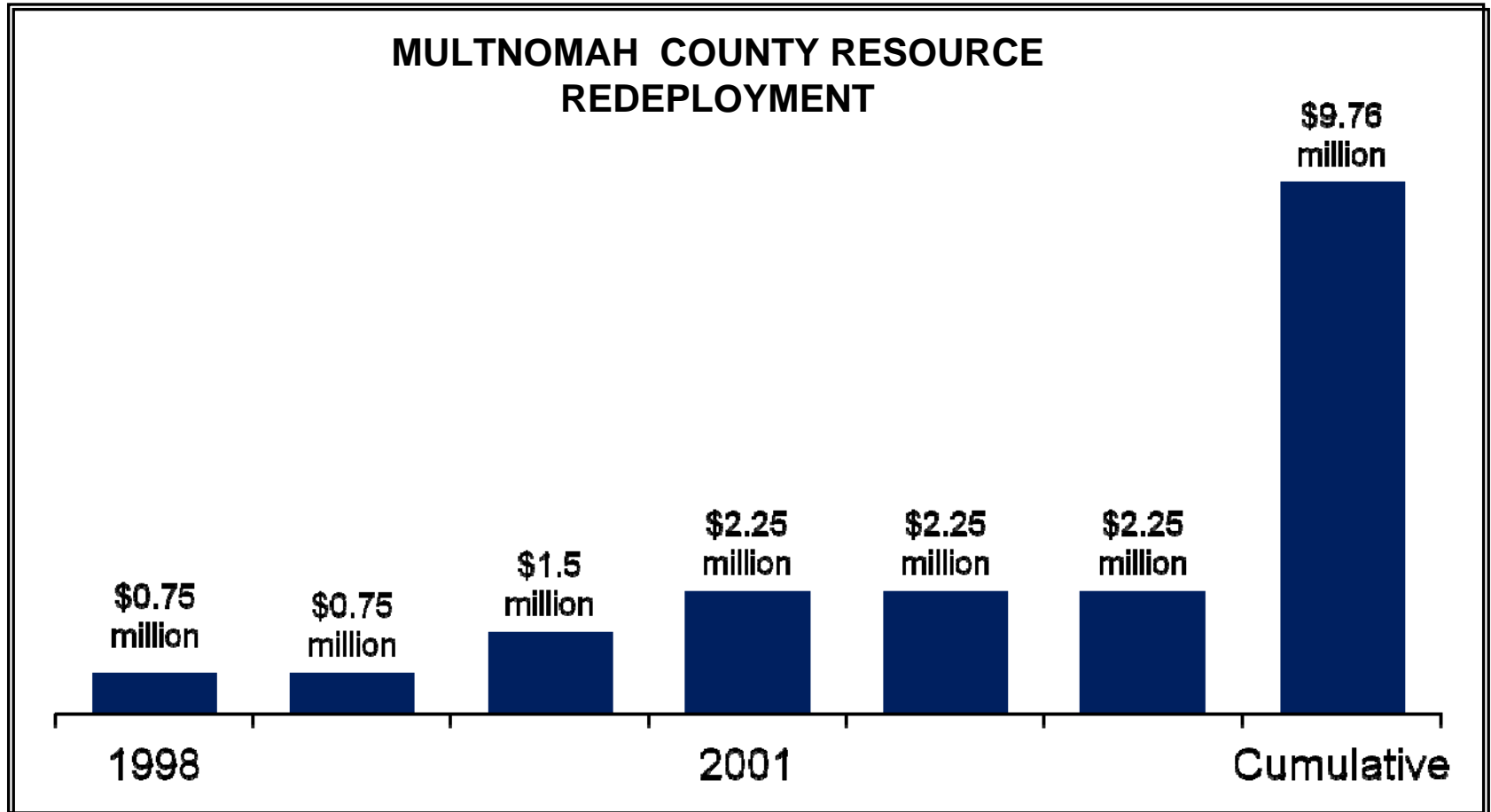
% OF JUVENILE ARRESTS DETAINED, BY RACE/ETHNICITY Multnomah County, OR: 1994 - 2000



Moreover, measures of public safety are vastly improved



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



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 10 years as a JDAI model site, Multnomah County has served as a learning laboratory for other jurisdictions
- ▶ Approximately 100 delegations have attended Multnomah County model site visits over the past decade
- ▶ About 2,500 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 39 states and more than 150 local jurisdictions

