

OJJDP FY 2021 Title II Formula Grants Program State of Rhode Island

2021 – 2023 Three Year Plan

Plan for Compliance with the Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Core Requirement

I. Identification

OJJDP RED Data Worksheet:

Rhode Island identified statewide data at various points of contact in the juvenile justice system. An expanded RED data worksheet is also used to include other points of contact in addition to those required for reporting to OJJDP. The data worksheet used for this report contains data from calendar year 2020. Rhode Island has not submitted data for local jurisdictions due to conditions that exist such as the size and population of the state. Rhode Island can also sufficiently demonstrate that data systems exist, and data is collected at the state level in terms of the administration of juvenile justice within the state.

Various separate and distinct databases were used in the compilation of the number of youth from point of arrest to point of detention (i.e. a RI State Police UCR database for arrest data, the Department of Children, Youth and Families' RICHIST system, and the RI Family Court's case management system). Two of these systems allow for a breakout of race by Hispanic youth and Mixed/Other youth, however the RI State Police UCR data does not breakout Hispanic. They only have categories of multiracial or unable to determine so all are included under Mixed/Other. Also, the Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander categories are combined at all data points. Since the later category is so small, it would result in an insufficient number of cases for analysis.

The most current data for analysis is not always available early enough after the end of the calendar year for analysis and submission. Data is requested from various state agencies and is then validated and tabulated for the data worksheet. Therefore, in order to compare data with the prior year's RED submission, Rhode Island is using the calendar year data for 2020 for submission with the FY 2022 Title II Formula Grant application to OJJDP. This is within the 3-year timeframe required by OJJDP.

Data for the population at risk was gathered from the Easy Access to Juvenile Populations website for juveniles ages 10 to 17. Population data was used from 2020.

In past years, arrest data was collected by the Department of Public Safety Grant Administration Office from law enforcement agencies. This was data collected to adhere to certain core

requirements of the JJDP Act when apprehending and detaining juveniles. Record is maintained on the nature and characteristics of juveniles detained and is self-reported by all law enforcement agencies monthly. These reports only focused on juveniles securely and non-securely detained by police. Other juveniles may have been released at the scene, transported home, brought directly to the RI Training School or to Court. Accordingly, these numbers differed from other statistics such as court petition data, etc.

For the reporting of 2018 through 2020 arrest data, Rhode Island moved to using Uniform Crime Reporting/National Incident Based Reporting System data collected by the RI State Police from all local/state law enforcement agencies. Rhode Island is in the process of updating and enhancing the current data collection database to be able to drill down further into types of crime by race and ethnicity as well as by jurisdiction.

Much of the data needed to complete the data worksheet comes from the RI Family Court management information system. The data for diversion at Family Court intake, petition (charges filed) and waived/transferred to adult court data also comes from the RI Family Court. This data shows duplicated counts in that it represents the number of cases. If a juvenile had more than one case, then each case is counted.

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) provides data on detention and confinement in the secure juvenile facility. DCYF, which is Rhode Island's only child welfare agency, operates the only secure detention facility for youth in Rhode Island, the RI Training School. Adolescents are placed on probation by the Family Court either as an alternative to incarceration at the RI Training School or as the final part of their sentence after being incarcerated at the RI Training School.

Pretrial detention is represented by the number of unadjudicated/pre-adjudicated juveniles who were in the care or custody of the RI Training School at any time during the calendar year. DCYF now has data that separates out adjudicated/sentenced and unadjudicated/pre-adjudicated youth. The data used are a count of the number of juveniles who traveled through the RI Training School in 2019 and 2020. These are duplicated counts as one juvenile may have been unadjudicated in the same calendar year they were adjudicated. Hispanic youth may be in any of the race categories. Race categories are non-Hispanic. DCYF through Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, and with the help of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, continues working to enhance the quality and availability of data on racial and ethnic disparities.

Rhode Island has also included data reported to the RI Family Court by local law enforcement agencies on juveniles diverted to Juvenile Hearing Boards (JHBs) rather than to the court. JHBs are panels of community volunteers who review eligible lower-level or first-time offenses as an alternative to court. JHBs cannot see youth previously found delinquent by RI Family Court. Youth who go before a JHB and complete requirements may only have an arrest record remaining rather than a criminal court record (some police departments also destroy the arrest record), and sanctions are restorative in nature. The data provided here represents the number of youth reported by police as referred to JHBs in 2020. Initially there were 30 JHBs statewide, but most closed in March-April 2020 due to the pandemic. The way Rhode Island collects data on JHB cases does not allow for detailed crosstabs analyses by type of offense, race/ethnicity, age, re-arrest and similar variables. The state continues to work toward enhancing this data to allow further breakdown.

**Rhode Island
OJJJD RED Data Worksheet
Calendar Year 2020**

		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Other/ Multi	Total
Population Data		57,154	8,729	609	3,594	22,980		93,066
Arrest¹	#	918	386	0	10	not avail	5	1,319
	%	1.61%	4.42%	0.00%	0.28%			1.42%
Diversion²	#	662	290	8	23	392	312	1,687
	%	72.11%	75.13%		230.00%			127.90%
Pretrial Detention³	#	41	47	1	0	51	14	154
	%	4.47%	12.18%		0.00%			11.68%
Secure Confinement⁴	#	21	16	0	0	28	3	68
	%	2.29%	4.15%		0.00%			5.16%
Transfer to Adult Court⁵	#	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%			0.08%

Additional Data Point:

Juvenile Hearing Board⁶	#	125	22	0	5	31	0	183
	%	13.62%	5.70%		50.00%			13.87%

¹ Crime information is based on data received from local/state agencies. Source: RI State Police, UCR (Uniform Crime Reporting / National Incident Based Reporting)

² Data represents a duplicated count of cases (if a juvenile has more than one case, each case is counted) Source: RI Family Court (This data does not include JHB data which are diversion at the arrest point of contact.)

³ Data represents a duplicated count of the number of juveniles who traveled through the RI Training School during the year (one juvenile may have been detained at facility more than once). Includes unadjudicated/pre-adjudicated youth. Source: DCYF

⁴ Data represents a duplicated count of the number of juveniles who traveled through the RI Training School during the year (one juvenile may have been detained at facility more than once). Includes post-adjudicated/sentenced youth. Source: DCYF

⁵ Data represents a duplicated count of cases (if a juvenile has more than one case, each case is counted) Source: RI Family Court

⁶ Data represents the number of cases brought before the community based Juvenile Hearing Board (referred by police department rather than to court) Source: RI Family Court

Overall, from 2019 to 2020, there was a decrease in Juvenile Arrests of 40%, mostly due to the COVID 19 pandemic. There was an increase in Diversion at the Family Court level of 70%, however the number of juveniles diverted at the point of arrest through the Juvenile Hearing Boards decreased 55% since most JHBs closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic and did not begin reopening until that fall or winter. While there was this improvement in the number of arrests from calendar years 2019 to 2020, percentage of arrest calculations to show that:

- Disproportionality is most significant with Black youth statewide at almost every point of contact aside from cases diverted and those transferred/waived to adult court.
- Hispanic youth cases involving secure detention and resulting in secure confinement have decreased slightly, and the number of cases diverted through Family Court Intake has also increased.
- To achieve statistical equality, the volume of arrests needs to decrease for Black youth, and diversion needs to increase.
- The volume of cases involving pretrial detention and disposition commitments should decrease.

	White				Black				Hispanic				Total			
	2019	2020	# Change	% Change	2019	2020	# Change	% Change	2019	2020	# Change	% Change	2019	2020	# Change	% Change
Population Data	58,515	57,154	-1,361	-2.33%	8,833	8,729	-104	-1.18%	22,875	22,980	105	0.46%	94,443	93,066	-1,377	-1.46%
Arrest	1,424	918	-506	-35.53%	741	386	-355	-47.91%	not avail				2,193	1,319	-874	-39.85%
Juvenile Hearing Board	250	125	-125	-50.00%	79	22	-57	-72.15%	71	31	-40	-56.34%	404	183	-221	-54.70%
Diversion	400	662	262	65.50%	189	290	101	53.44%	207	392	185	89.37%	991	1,687	696	70.23%
Pretrial Detention	45	41	-4	-8.89%	54	47	-7	-12.96%	64	51	-13	-20.31%	184	154	-30	-16.30%
Secure Confinement	21	21	0	0.00%	37	16	-21	-56.76%	35	28	-7	-20.00%	100	68	-32	-32.00%
Transfer to Adult Court	0	0	0	0.00%	2	0	-2	-100.00%	0	1	1	0.00%	2	1	-1	-50.00%

Therefore, RED reduction activities should be focused on the higher concentration of these minority youth at the points of arrest and secure detentions/confinements. Focus should also continue to be on increasing the number of cases diverted before any court referral through Juvenile Hearing Boards, and at RI Family Court intake.

II. Action Plan

The goal of Rhode Island’s R/ED advisory group is to decrease racial and ethnic disparity in the Rhode Island juvenile justice system by improving systems and policies to help divert minority juveniles into community alternatives that keep arrested youth out of the justice system, increase awareness and effectiveness of community alternatives, and build cultural competency of those working with juveniles at risk. Rhode Island for Community and Justice (RICJ) is a statewide non-profit community organization with broad linkages to advocacy, service and educational agencies allowing more effective outreach into minority communities. With support under the Title II Formula grant, RICJ convenes the Community Advocacy Coalition (CAC, formerly the R/ED Advisory Group), a statewide consortium of community, non-profit and youth programs, government, and professionals from across the justice system. Rhode Island’s R/ED plan is in response to the data discussed above.

1. What do your RED numbers tell you about your jurisdiction?

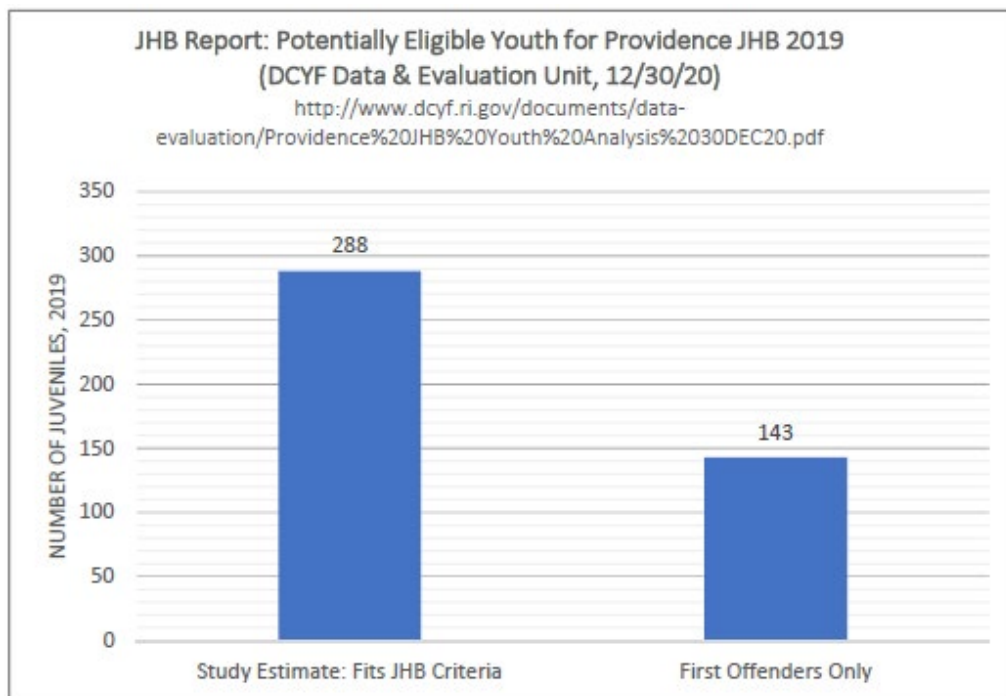
We continue to see a steady decline in the number of young people at the Rhode Island Training School. A total of 222 youth (84% male and 16% female) were in the care or custody of the Training School at some point during 2020, down from 284 during 2019. However, youth of color are disproportionately more likely than White youth to be in the care and custody of the Rhode Island Training School. During 2020, Black youth made up 28% of youth at the Training School, while making up 9% of the age 10-17 population in Rhode Island. Hispanic youth made up 36% of youth at the Training School, while making up 25% of the age 10-17 population in Rhode Island.

	% of Total Juvenile Population 10-17		% of Juveniles at Rhode Island Training School (Pretrial and Sentenced)	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
White	62%	61%	23%	28%
Hispanic	24%	25%	35%	36%
Black	9%	9%	32%	28%
Asian	4%	4%	1%	0%
Other/Multi	NA	NA	8%	8%
American Indian	<1%	<1%	1%	0%
Total	94,443	93,066	284	222

In addition, we see from the OJJDP RED Data Worksheet data for calendar year 2020 that:

- A higher percentage of Black youth were arrested (4.42%) than White youth (1.61%).
- Black youth continued to be arrested at disproportionately higher rates than White youth (ratio to whites = 2.75).
- Based on the number of arrests, a higher percentage of Black youth were in pretrial detention (12.18%) than White youth (4.47%).
- Black youth’s cases were more likely to result in pretrial detention (ratio to whites = 2.73) and disposition commitments (ratio to whites = 1.81) than White youth’s cases.

Also, almost two-thirds (62%) of juveniles referred to the RI Family Court in 2020 were first-time offenders. Only 5% of offenses were violent offenses (*2021 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook*, p. 96). At least some of these juveniles may have been eligible for and benefited from pre-court diversion to Juvenile Hearing Boards. Recent research (DCYF, 2020) on juveniles arrested in Providence and petitioned to Family Court in 2019 indicated that between 100 and 288 juveniles could potentially have been eligible for pre-court diversion to a Juvenile Hearing Board. These were predominantly urban BIPOC juveniles with non-serious, misdemeanor offenses; half were first offenses. While it's likely many may subsequently have been diverted through Family Court Intake, community diversion to a Juvenile Hearing Board could have avoided court involvement altogether. This research study has important implications for reducing RED in the Rhode Island justice system.



Expansion of this community diversion through Juvenile Hearing Boards is most needed in the urban core, particularly Providence which accounts for the largest numbers of juvenile arrests and arrests of juveniles of color. In 2020, 26% of juvenile offenses referred to Family Court were committed by youth from Providence and 26% were committed by youth from three other core cities. Of the 70 juveniles arrested in Providence in 2020, 34% were Black non-Hispanic and 47% identified as of Hispanic of any race.

2. What would success in RED reduction look like for your state?

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is the coordinating agency for Rhode Island’s statewide Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). We anticipate RED reduction by adjusting policy and practice to focus on the points of arrest and pretrial detention. We recently received funding to allow us to conduct focus groups with juvenile justice-involved youth and are preparing a report on the findings, so youth voice can be central to policy decision making.

Rhode Island for Community & Justice (RICJ), the Providence and Central Falls JHBs and DCYF partnered to create the Urban JHB Pilot to build the capacity of JHBs to decrease racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. Beginning in 2020, the partnership is providing new resources for urban JHBs, including mental health/substance abuse referrals, pre-hearing assessments, small financial resources to help youth attend programs, tutoring, interpretation, etc., and outcomes evaluation support. The aim is over time to extend this support to all urban JHBs.

As these urban JHBs build capacity, they will be able to take on increased numbers of cases and provide a meaningful RED reduction in the number of juveniles of color sent to court. That would be our eventual goal, as it would at the level of the court.

3. How much do you want to reduce RED next year?

Through our work on various initiatives including JDAI, the REI Work Group, and the Juvenile Hearing Board Work Group, we hope to reduce RED by 20%.

4. Is that reasonable? If yes, why?

We think a reduction in RED by 20% is reasonable given our focus on policy and practice opportunities for change at the points of arrest and pretrial detention, our work to maximize diversion of cases to Juvenile Hearing Boards, our ongoing work to implement a Risk Assessment Instrument in Rhode Island, and to identify more community-based placements for youth in need of mental health services and other supports that can be better met in the community than at the RI Training School. The pandemic negatively impacted the system and availability of services in 2020, however as the year went on, and in the following year, systems began to recover. For example, JHB cases increased from 183 seen by 19 JHBs in 2020 to 260 by 26 JHBs in 2021.

Rhode Island was also fortunate to have been selected as one of only five sites nationwide to participate in the first cohort of the intensive pathways portion of the Equity Learning Series (ELS) offered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Equity in Practice, our technical assistance provider, is focusing on helping youth justice agencies produce and sustain equitable results for youth of color. Rhode Island has recruited a core team of individuals who have direct involvement and authority in the juvenile justice system to create equitable change and we will be working with this team throughout 2022. Two key members of this new Equity in Practice cohort are RI KIDS COUNT and RICJ.

5. What do you need from OJJDP to be successful with your plan?

Additional opportunities for funding and technical assistance offerings. The new RICJ/DCYF/JHB pilot program hopes to demonstrate successful outcomes including cost effectiveness of providing new resources to JHB community diversion. The partnership will need assistance in finding ways to sustain these resources (mental health referrals, pre-hearing assessments, etc.) once the pilot phase is completed.

In the shorter term, the partnership needs assistance with attaining policy and procedural changes in urban police departments and police accreditation standards that promote pre-arrest diversion to Juvenile Hearing Boards particularly for BIPOC juveniles; and in promoting policy changes that allow petitions to Family Court for juveniles clearly eligible for the Juvenile Hearing Board to be returned by the Court to the police department, for community diversion to be used prior to a referral to Court.

6. What safeguards will you put in place to ensure that as you work to reduce RED, you are still protecting the public, holding youth accountable, and equipping youth to live crime-free, productive lives?

Through our work coordinating JDAI, we intentionally convene a diverse group of leaders and stakeholders from across the juvenile justice field in Rhode Island in order to ensure there is collaborative engagement from all parts of the system including DCYF, Rhode Island Family Court, the Office of the Child Advocate, the Attorney General’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, representation from law enforcement, and a variety of community providers. It is critical to this work to include stakeholders with varied expertise when advocating for policy and practice change in order to protect the public and support youth simultaneously. We think it is important to hear directly from young people who have personal experience with the juvenile justice system, and we are including juvenile justice-involved youth in our JDAI Steering Committee moving forward.

Community diversion such as Juvenile Hearing Boards is designed to hold juvenile offenders accountable through sanctions based in restorative justice, while providing access to mental and behavioral health supports that can address deeper issues in the child’s life that may underlie their delinquent behavior. JHBs link the youth and family to a host of positive resources to help build a brighter future. The integral participation of representatives from Family Care Community Partnership (FCCP) agencies, DCYF, and law enforcement ensures that the public as well as the child and family are protected. There is an increasing body of research showing the need to keep lower-risk juveniles out of the justice system. Relatively low re-arrest outcomes for JHB youth suggest that community diversion can help prevent future offending.

III. Outcome-based Evaluation

1. What are your new numbers?

While the number of youth in the care or custody of the Rhode Island Training School for both pretrial detention and secure confinement has continued to decline, down 22% from 284 in 2019 to 222 in 2020, we continue to see racial and ethnic disparities. During 2020, Black youth made up 28% of youth at the Training School, while making up 9% of the age 10-17 population in Rhode Island. Hispanic youth made up 36% of youth at the Training School, while making up 25% of the age 10-17 population in Rhode Island.

In addition, we see from the OJJDP RED Data Worksheet data for calendar year 2020 that:

- A higher percentage of Black youth were arrested (4.42%) than White youth (1.61%).
- Black youth continued to be arrested at disproportionately higher rates than White youth (ratio to whites = 2.75).
- Based on the number of arrests, a higher percentage of Black youth were in pretrial detention (12.18%) than White youth (4.47%).
- Black youth's cases were more likely to result in pretrial detention (ratio to whites = 2.73) and disposition commitments (ratio to whites = 1.81) than White youth's cases
- The number of juveniles diverted to JHBs decreased by 55% from 404 to 183 in 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic and JHBs not meeting.
 - Police departments report yearly to Family Court on JHB juvenile re-arrests.
 - Relatively low numbers re-arrested. Statewide data provided by police departments in 2021: after one year = 11.5%; two years = 14.6%; three years = 13.1%.

2. Did you meet your goals?

No, although Rhode Island did see a decline of 40% in the number of youth arrested from 2019 to 2020 and a continuing decline in the number of youth referred to Family Court and youth at the Training School. These decreases were largely due to the COVID 19 pandemic, and we will look to future comparison of 2020 to 2021 to give a better picture.

3. If yes, what worked? What drove the success? If no, what were the barriers? How might you overcome them next year? What partners do you need?

We had hoped to see a 20% decline in RED from 2019 to 2020. The OJJDP RED Data Worksheet for calendar year 2020 shows that the number of Black youth arrested in 2020 decreased by 48% from 2019, while the number of White youth arrested also declined by 36%, again largely due to the pandemic.

We are seeing some improvements in other areas as well, with an increase of 20.34% in the number of Hispanic youth being seen by Juvenile Hearing Boards. This increase was largely due to the new urban JHBs established in September 2017 in Providence and Central Falls. In 2019, Providence Police referred 49 cases, with only 31 seen by the Juvenile Hearing Board because of problems with insufficient members for a quorum, during over two-thirds of the year; in 2020 Providence saw only 8 cases, closing down with the pandemic for the remainder of the year. Central Falls JHB operated throughout 2019 and had 21 cases; in 2020 due to the pandemic CF JHB saw only 12 cases.

The RI for Community and Justice and Dept. of Children, Youth & Families Urban Pilot partners began working with Providence City Council to rebuild the Juvenile Hearing Board membership and with the Providence Police to expand referrals once the Board is reactivated. Fully operational, the Providence Juvenile Hearing Board would have the ability to see almost 200 juvenile cases per year.

We do not have JHB re-arrest reports from Providence Police for 2019 or 2020; addressing this data issue is a goal of the project. Re-arrest data from Central Falls Police for 2019 showed a 9.5% rate similar to the average statewide rate of 11.7%.

Our biggest successes have been in the areas of diversion and youth being seen by Juvenile Hearing Boards. We attribute these successes to the focus on policy and practice changes at the points of arrest and pretrial detention, our work to maximize diversion of cases to Juvenile Hearing Boards, and our ongoing work to implement a Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) in Rhode Island. More work needs to be done to address racial and ethnic disparities at all points in the juvenile justice system.

4. How can OJJDP help you next year? What do you need from us?

Additional opportunities for funding and technical assistance offerings. The RICJ/DCYF/Urban JHB pilot project provides only small-scale funding of \$10,000 per year for 3 years. The partnership plans to reach out to a variety of potential funders (governmental, foundation and others) to expand the project over the next two years and to sustain it over the long term, and to advocate for urban municipalities to create budgets for JHBs that include such resources for youth, and for the DCYF to continue to provide on-site mental/behavioral health support to JHBs through its FCCP contract system. The partnership will need assistance in finding ways to sustain new resources for community diversion (mental health referrals, pre-hearing assessments, etc.) once the pilot phase is completed in September 2022.

5. How did you protect the public, hold juvenile offenders accountable, and equip them to live crime-free?

Through the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), we intentionally convene a diverse group of leaders and stakeholders from across the juvenile justice system in Rhode Island in order to ensure there is collaborative engagement from all parts of the system including DCYF, Rhode Island Family Court, the Office of the Child Advocate, the Attorney General's Office, the Public Defender's Office, representation from law enforcement, and a variety of community providers. It is critical to this work to include stakeholders with varied expertise when advocating for policy and practice change in order to protect the public and support youth simultaneously. We also think it is important to hear directly from young people who have personal experience with the juvenile justice system. We conducted focus groups with juvenile justice-involved youth in 2021 and are currently preparing a report on the findings. These focus groups provided information from youth about what supports would have helped keep them out of the juvenile justice system and/or improved their outcomes. Early analyses suggest that these supports should include more mental health supports, afterschool programming, and opportunities for paid employment.

The Juvenile Hearing Board intervention is designed to hold juvenile offenders accountable through sanctions based in restorative justice, while providing access to mental and behavioral health supports that can address deeper issues in the child's life that may underlie their delinquent behavior. JHBs link the youth and family to a host of positive resources to help build a brighter future. Relatively low re-arrest outcomes for JHB youth suggest that community diversion can help prevent future offending.

6. What are your goals for next year?

RI will continue to work with Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and Rhode Island for Community & Justice and support them in the goals that they have created for their separate and unique projects related to RED.

Over the next year, we will be working toward the goal of activating Juvenile Hearing Boards in more communities, with a focus on urban communities where most youth of color live. The partnership between Rhode Island for Community and Justice, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and the Providence and Central Falls JHBs that began in early 2020 will examine the outcomes of providing additional resources to urban JHBs, including mental health/substance abuse intake specialists attending JHB hearings to refer; pre-hearing assessments of youth strengths and assets to help plan effective sanctions; small amount of funding per child for programmatic expenses such as youth program fees; interpretation assistance; DCYF epidemiologist-led outcomes research; DCYF diversion officer to help coordinate the project.

2020 presented COVID-19 related challenges for Juvenile Hearing Boards. Most shut down for many months, and while juvenile arrests decreased as well, the current challenge is supporting JHBs re-opening and re-activating. While some Boards ran virtually and others saw smaller numbers of juveniles in-person with safety guidelines in place, it will take time to get others re-activated with new appointments and member training.

RICJ's and RI KIDS COUNT's participation in the Governor's Justice Task Force/Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice led to recommendations in January 2020 that the state "expand the JHB/DCYF pilot program if it proves a successful model in Providence and Central Falls". In 2020, DCYF and RICJ were invited to join the Governor's Innovation League for consulting assistance from the League and the Brown University Policy Lab to help build the success of the pilot program in Providence. With the Providence City Council and Police, the Juvenile Hearing Board municipal ordinance and bylaws were revised, new members began to be appointed, the roles of the JHB Coordinator and FCCP Clinical support were clarified and the referrals process was strengthened. The goal of this work in 2020-2021 is to build the capacity of Providence Juvenile Hearing Board to eventually divert 200 juveniles per year from the justice system.

In addition to the continuing work supporting JHBs, RICJ has been exploring ways to better address school-based arrests and disciplinary and truancy issues that can end up pushing youth into the justice system, potentially utilizing JHB-type interventions to support students while preventing system involvement. RICJ is seeking ways to better promote diversion approaches by police departments, through information about community resources available, a better understanding of criteria making youth eligible for diversion and adopting standards for diversion.

A steady decline of youth at the Training School began after a cap of 148 boys and 12 girls on any given day was placed on the Training School population in July 2008. Some of the decreases in youth at the Training School and on probation from 2019 to 2020 were due to decreases in the number of referrals to Family Court, but DCYF and Family Court also instituted procedures to reduce counts because of risks related to COVID-19. The number of juvenile arrests and referrals has been falling steadily since 2011, and dropped considerably in 2020 primarily due to COVID-19.

Throughout 2021, discussions at the JDAI table, that Rhode Island KIDS COUNT coordinates, pivoted to focus on how to sustain and even accelerate reductions in the number of youth referred to Family Court and at the Training School so that things don't return to "normal" and how to address the persistent racial and ethnic disparities. We are particularly focused on how to reduce the number of school-based referrals to Family Court, and have convened a group to look at school-based referral and the training, community-based resources, and additional school-based mental health professionals that could help reduce these referrals.

We continue to look to Rhode Island KIDS COUNT's continued implementation of the Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) to help address these disparities along with further work to enhance the array of alternatives to detention and incarceration that can allow juvenile justice-involved youth to live safely in the community. We are excited that the recent FY 2023 budget includes funding for at least one in-state psychiatric residential treatment facility for girls with complex behavioral health care needs who are currently being treated out of state, in a hospital, or at the Rhode Island Training School. These types of investments will allow us to divert more youth to community-based settings.