

# **Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative**

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives (JDAI) was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in December of 1992. It was developed in response to the growing number of youth being held in secure detention across the country for non-violent acts. It currently operates in 39 states, including Georgia, and is housed within the Council of Juvenile Court Judges.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the JDAI is to reduce secure confinement through the use of alternatives that ensure public safety while accomplishing the objectives of secure confinement.<sup>2</sup>

## Objectives of JDAI



- To eliminate the inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention
- To minimize failures to appear and incidents of delinquent behavior
- To improve conditions in secure detention facilities
- To redirect public finances from building new facility capacity to responsible alternative strategies
- To reduce racial, ethnic, and gender disparities

## Strategies of JDAI

- Collaboration between major juvenile justice agencies, governmental entities, and community organizations
- Use of accurate data to diagnose the system's problems and identify real solutions
- Objective admissions criteria and instruments to replace subjective decisions that inappropriately place children in custody
- Alternatives to detention to increase the options available for arrested youth
- Case processing reforms to speed up the flow of cases so that youth don't languish in detention
- Reducing the use of secure confinement for "special" cases like technical probation violations
- Deliberate commitment to reducing racial disparities by eliminating biases and ensuring a level playing field
- Improving conditions of confinement through routine inspections

## JDAI NATIONWIDE OUTCOMES<sup>3</sup>

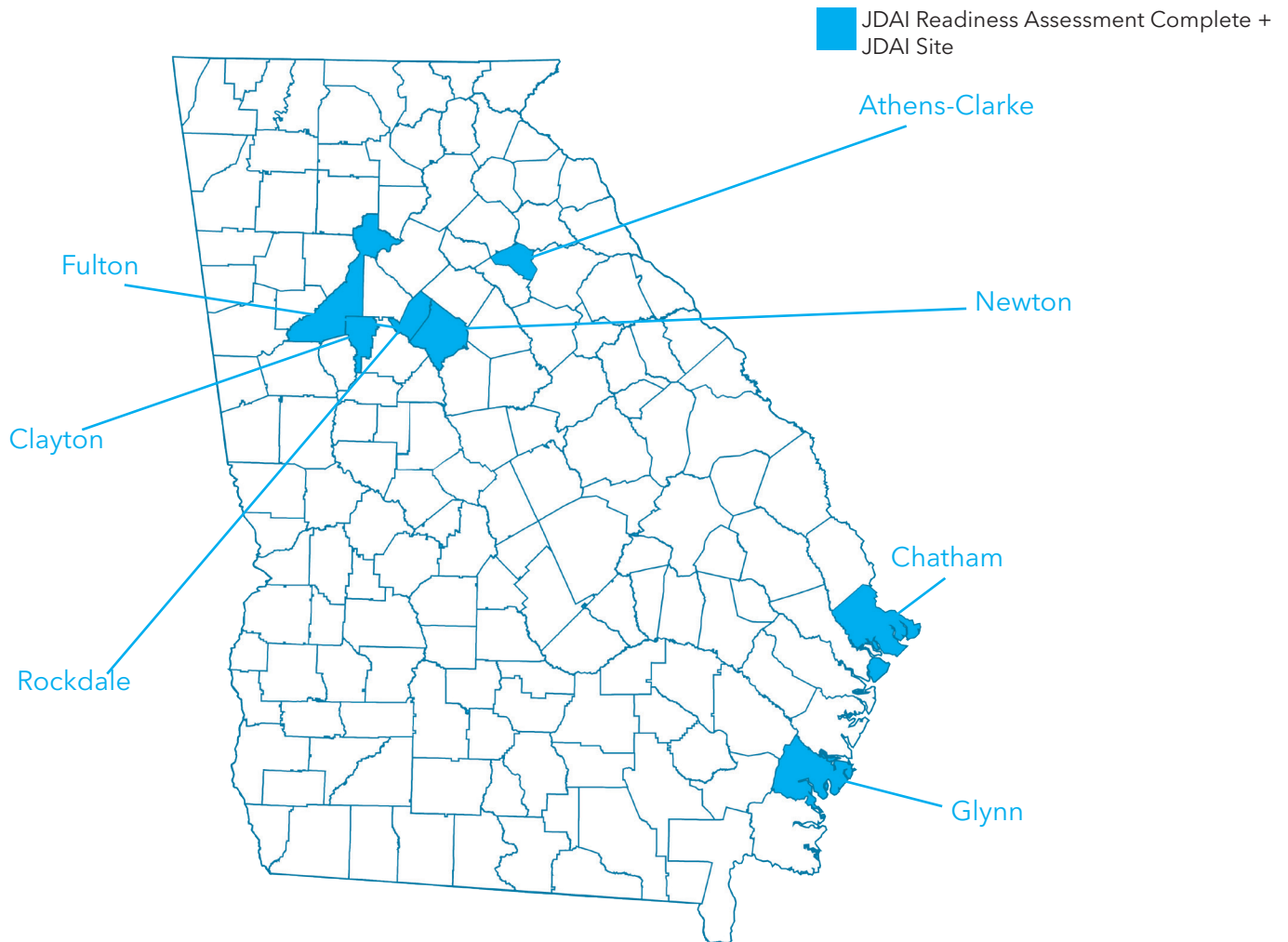
As of 2016, there were 197 JDAI sites in the United States, representing 300 local jurisdictions and 10 million youth ages 10 to 17. Recent data gathered from these sites suggests the following trends for JDAI-involved areas:

Indicator	Pre-JDAI Baseline	2016 Data	% Change	Trend
Average Daily Population (ADP)	8,780	4,967	-43%	Reduced reliance on juvenile detention
Annual Admissions	188,948	95,939	-49%	
State Commitments	17,457	7,432	-57%	Reduced commitments to state custody
Felony Petitions	79,391	48,770	-39%	Reduced juvenile crime
Delinquency Petitions	42,562	29,770	-31%	
Percent of ADP that are youth of color	75%	80%		Remaining challenges with racial equity and overrepresentation of youth of color
Percent of annual admissions that are youth of color	70%	76%		
Percent of state commitments that are youth of color	70%	83%		

## THE JDAI IN GEORGIA

In 2015, former Governor Nathan Deal and the Georgia Criminal Justice Reform Council established the State Steering Committee for JDAI. The committee consisted of juvenile court judges and representatives from stakeholder organizations and was tasked with improving the delivery of juvenile justice services and expanding JDAI efforts throughout the state. While some communities instituted JDAI as far back as 2003, statewide rollout of JDAI began in 2016 after an initial phase of assessment.<sup>4</sup>

Seven counties in Georgia are JDAI sites and all have completed JDAI Readiness Assessments.<sup>5</sup>



## Sources for Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

- 1 "Georgia JDAI," Juvenile Detention Alternatives for the State of Georgia, <https://georgiajdai.org/>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 "JDAI at 25: Insights form the Annual results Report". Annie E. Casey Foundation. <https://www.aecf.org/resources/jdai-at-25>.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative of Georgia, Personal Communication, August 1, 2022.