Juvenile Court is not just a building. We are out in the community providing programs and services to young people and families facing real challenges.
Our health and happiness as individuals and as a society is directly related to our feeling that we are valued and accepted, especially when we are young and finding our way.

Our mission: to advocate for abused and neglected children, provide equal justice for youth who come before us, and to provide leadership in the field of juvenile detention and rehabilitation.

We are committed to:

- Treating all youth and families with dignity and respect
- Ensuring all youth live in a safe and permanent home
- Maintaining effective communication and collaboration
- Reducing repeat offences by offering more effective evidence based programs
- Striving to reduce racial and ethnic disparities
Some people still think the primary role of Juvenile Court is to punish bad behavior or scare kids straight. We’re working hard to change this perception. Why? The more the full scope of what we do is understood and embraced by the community, the more successful we can be.

Statistics make it clear that locking young people up does not work. So ten years ago, with technical assistance and funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, we launched the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)—a bold new philosophy. Working closely with law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and community non-profits, we forged partnerships that are changing the face of juvenile justice.

Here at the Juvenile Court we are out in the community providing programs and services that support the wellbeing of youth and families in Pierce County. This report provides evidence that supports this new approach and describes our specific programs, their costs and what the community gets in return.

Our efforts have led to increased success rates and are proving to be a more effective way to help families and our community to become healthier and safer—all for a lower cost.

We are excited to see young people succeed when they are given the tools they need to face their challenges and mold their own futures. We see the same excitement from the community as we work hand in hand to make it all possible.

Ten years of hard work and willingness to think outside the box has made the Pierce County Juvenile Court a national leader in detention reform.
Start with Helping Children
Speaking and acting on behalf of abused and neglected children is a top priority. Our goal is a safe, permanent home for every child as quickly as possible.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are volunteers who work with abused and neglected youth. 319 CASA volunteers helped 608 children find permanence through adoption, guardianship or reunification. 309 children returned home.

Keep Them in School
We work closely with schools through the truancy program to help students resolve issues, take responsibility, and sign agreements to stay in school.

1,144 truancy petitions were filed in 2013. 454 youth participated in our workshops and 433 signed agreements committing to stay in school.

THREE STRATEGIES THAT WORK

1 Connect Youth and Families to Their Community
We introduce parents and youth to opportunities in their own communities that provide support, skills training, and education.

2 Provide Effective Supervision
We treat everyone we encounter fairly and equitably offering an equal opportunity to access services and treatment options that promote healthy decision-making.

3 Take Action to Prevent
We provide tools, alternatives, and opportunities that steer young people away from hopelessness and alienation and toward growth, inclusion, and contributing to society.

The following program highlights are a sampling of how we put these strategies into action.
Offer Families Alternatives
The court supports parents in asking for an At-Risk-Youth Petition, which requests the court’s assistance in preventing their child from having to enter into the criminal juvenile justice system.

150 families pursued the At-Risk Petition alternative and were supported using case management, skill building, and community service.

Encourage Responsible Behavior
Our Diversion program is a community effort to prevent youth from becoming entrenched in the juvenile justice system. Accountability Boards meet with youth and assign meaningful consequences designed to educate and support them.

Harness the Potential of Probation
Our Field Probation Team works with youth and their families to offer lifestyle interventions that build life skills, teach effective decision-making, and support safe and healthy life choices.

In 2013, 200 youth participated in Aggression Replacement Training. 193 took part in Functional Family Therapy. 439 received Risk and Protective Factor Assessments, which led to a Case Management Plan.

Reshape the Role of Detention
Our new detention model not only provides safe, secure custody for youth needing to be held accountable, it incorporates teaching, coaching, and modeling of good behavior that reflects the life skills needed to responsibly face challenging situations.

Appropriate response and care is based on equitable evaluations. Youth who pose significant risk to the community are held in detention. Those who pose less threat are closely monitored in the community. The court then provides treatment, essential medical/dental services, and connects youth to community resources and educational opportunities.

Applaud Community Volunteers
Implementing Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative principles has dramatically reduced youth detention rates. Health and welfare services led to 526 doctor visits and 2,086 follow ups by our nursing staff.

We rely on the support and passion of many dedicated, community volunteers each year.

Thank You to Our 402 Community Volunteers!
The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative is a national effort with over a decade of positive statistical evidence. Pierce County is proud to be part of its unfolding success.

The Old Incarceration System didn’t Benefit Youth or Our Community

The New Model is Proving to be More Effective

Years of nationwide statistical data provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation proves incarceration actually makes the problem worse. The new model is community based and family focused, which provides better support and guidance through a youth’s most challenging and formative teenage years.

Detention versus Residential Placement

A 2011 A.E. Casey report provides evidence that this new approach works.

Youth detention peaked in 1995, at 107,637 on a single day.

Since 1995, detention has dropped by 41%.

In 2010 only 1 of every 4 locked up youth was confined based on a Violent Crime Index offense.

Why It’s Working

Distinguishing Delinquency from Criminal Behavior

Youth delinquency is most often the result of a teenager’s still-developing brain in relation to their life circumstances. Responding to this behavior from a caring psychological/social perspective is a more effective way to prevent delinquency from becoming criminal behavior.

Recognizing that Incarceration does not Increase Safety

The reality is, juvenile incarceration increases the likelihood of career criminal behavior. California’s statistics highlight how their community-based approach decreased repeat offender rates and reduced juvenile violent crime arrests.

40% of juvenile detentions are due to probation violations and other low-level non-criminal offenses.

Youth Jailed (in thousands)

Violent Arrests (in hundreds)

![Graph showing youth jailed and violent arrests from 1975 to 2010](image-url)
**Positive Results for Pierce County**

In 2012, Pierce County was number two in the nation at reducing average daily population of youth in detention.

Over the past 7 years we have seen an overall decrease in the number of juvenile charges filed in Pierce County.

The number of the most serious offenders, who were committed to the state’s Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Administration, has sharply declined over the same 7-year period.

**Pierce County Youth Populations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Including Adults</td>
<td>819,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 18</td>
<td>197,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-age Children 3-17</td>
<td>164,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Enrolled in School</td>
<td>143,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Not Enrolled</td>
<td>20,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children on Public Assistance</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**2013 Program Expenditures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>3,180,244.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversion</td>
<td>942,487.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>750,463.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives to Detention</td>
<td>590,195.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>414,039.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>2,872,594.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggression Replacement Training</td>
<td>993,347.95</td>
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<td>Chemical Dependency Disp Alt</td>
<td>980,665.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Sex Offender Disp Alt</td>
<td>585,204.46</td>
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<tr>
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<td>575,809.97</td>
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<td>Detention</td>
<td>6,046,567.04</td>
</tr>
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2013 Total Expenditures $17,931,620.19
2013 Total Budget $18,367,810.00

**Pierce County’s Youth Ethnicity**

- American Indian: 2%
- Asian: 9%
- Black: 11%
- Hispanic: 16%
- White: 62%

7,542 Young People were Served by One or More of Our Programs

**Funding Sources**

State: 22%
County: 78%

**Return on Taxpayer Investment**

For every dollar invested in this new approach...

Taxpayers can save from 7 to 10 dollars in the future.

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2013 Total Expenditures $17,931,620.19
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Working out in the community—with community—has led to a steady drop in juvenile felonies and, more importantly, a steady rise in the number of young people feeling connected to community.