

Measurable Progress Series

Redeploy Illinois

This summary of Redeploy Illinois is one in a series of reports highlighting key changes in Illinois' juvenile justice law, policy and practice from 2005 – 2012. For a comprehensive overview of these changes, please see Measurable Progress, available at www.modelsforchange.net.

Redeploy Illinois targets what some juvenile justice advocates have called a “perverse fiscal incentive” to commit youth to the state’s Department of Juvenile Justice. As in many states, Illinois’ juvenile court act authorizes judges to sentence a youth found delinquent to state prisons at no cost to the prosecuting county. On the other hand, if a judge determines the best option for the youth and the community is to keep the youth at home and require the youth to attend counseling sessions, obtain substance abuse or mental health treatment or enroll in after school tutoring, for example, the costs of those services are largely borne by the county or may not even be available.

The Redeploy Illinois program was created to give counties an incentive and provide resources to keep non-violent youth in their home communities, while providing a range of community-based services to the youth and his or her family. Through Redeploy Illinois, counties are encouraged – but not mandated – to apply for funding to provide services locally and agree to reduce juvenile commitments by 25 percent from the average number of non-violent juvenile commitments during the previous three years. Since Redeploy’s creation, participating counties have reduced their commitment of youth to the state’s costly youth prisons by 51 percent, preventing the commitment of more than 800 young people to a juvenile prison. In the East St. Louis metropolitan area, St. Clair County reduced the average annual commitments from 86 before Redeploy Illinois to only 11 commitments in the most recent program year.

The Issues

Redeploy Illinois began in 2005 as a pilot program. At that time, approximately 1,700 teenagers were committed to the state’s youth prisons each year, at an average annual cost of over \$70,000 per youth. Despite the high cost of incarceration, the outcomes were not good: nearly half of those youth were reincarcerated in a juvenile prison within three years. Many of the juveniles coming into the juvenile prison system were good candidates for services at the local level. Between 2000 to 2004, about 45 percent of youth sent to IDJJ had committed a property offense, and 30 percent were there for a “court evaluation,” a 30- to 90-day commitment to a state prison for evaluation of a youth’s needs or, as some practitioners report, to give a teenager a “taste” of prison life at no cost to the committing county. At the same time, state budget crises had prompted some policymakers to look for new ways to control the costs of state government, and juvenile reform advocates pointed to research demonstrating that community-based services for youth can be more successful than separating a child from family members and incarcerating that youth in a setting similar to adult prisons, and at a far lower cost.

Innovations

Bi-Partisan Support of Program Grounded in Evidence-Based Research and Regular Review: Advocates of reform educated state legislators and policymakers about the cost-effectiveness of diverting youth from state prisons through local services. The effort was led largely by the Juvenile Justice Initiative, a statewide advocacy coalition aimed at highlighting and supporting more effective, fair and rational juvenile justice policy and practice across the state. Important partners included Chicago Metropolis 2020, a business-based non-profit organization (recently renamed Metropolis Strategies), the John Howard Association, a more than 100-year-old non-profit serving as a watchdog of the state adult and juvenile prison systems and a range of state and local reform advocates, many of them Models for Change grantees and partners.

The education effort paid off, with bi-partisan support for legislation to create Redeploy Illinois as a pilot program and limited to non-violent offenders. Requiring an annual evaluation and public report on the program's effectiveness, helped pass the legislation without opposition in the Illinois House and by an overwhelming majority in the Senate.

Plan First: The legislation made it clear that the goal of Redeploy Illinois is to deinstitutionalization of juvenile offenders and to enable participating counties their own local plans establishing "a continuum of local, community-based and treatment alternatives for juvenile offenders who would be incarcerated local services and sanctions did not exist." In exchange for the state grant, sites achieve at least a 25 percent reduction in the number of non-violent juvenile to state prisons. Any site failing to meet that goal can be required to pay a penalty to the state.

"Redeploy funding has increased the availability of community services for juveniles and their families; access to intensive treatment,

encourage to create sanctions if those agreed to committed financial

the state convened by other state

Oversight: Rather than give control of the pilot program to a single agency in bureaucracy, the law established the Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board, which is Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), and includes representatives of agencies in the juvenile justice system, the courts, prosecutors, and the Illinois State Board of Education. Convening so many parts of the system around the same table has improved buy-in for the program, allowed many viewpoints to be considered and enhanced understanding and awareness of the program. When Redeploy Illinois started, the juvenile prison system was operated as a division of the adult Department of Corrections. The new Department of Juvenile Justice, which was created in 2006, is represented on the oversight board along with the Department of Corrections.

Evaluation and Annual Reports: Because Redeploy Illinois was created as a pilot program, legislators understood they were not creating a new, massive entitlement program that would grow out of control. The gradual launch also allowed the board to work first with counties most enthusiastic about being able to offer more local options to juvenile judges, with administrators able to monitor spending closely and quickly respond to local concerns and make adjustments when necessary.

The \$2 million start-up appropriation in FY 05 and the \$1.5 million FY 06 appropriation was not sufficient to offer the program statewide, but supported implementation in four diverse pilot sites: the Second Judicial Circuit, which stretches across a dozen largely rural counties in southeastern Illinois; Macon County, which includes Decatur, the "Soybean Capital of the World," and more than 110,000 residents; Peoria County, a mix of urban and rural with more than 186,000 residents; and St. Clair County, a more urban/suburban community across the river from St. Louis with more than 270,000 residents.

The requirement for an annual report to be presented to the Governor and the General Assembly has made certain the Oversight Board has maintained a close watch on spending and the performance of the pilot sites and it has been a useful tool to educate legislators and the general public about the cost-effectiveness of community-based services. The gradual beginning as a pilot and the demonstrated effectiveness through the annual reporting helped

the program grow from the four pilots covering 15 counties to 28 counties in 2012 and an annual appropriation of \$2.4 million.

Results and Lessons

Ongoing analysis by Illinois State University (ISU) and the Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board, has produced significant findings:

- Since its creation, participating counties have avoided sending a projected 883 youth to state prisons, a potential cost savings of more than \$40 million in incarceration costs.
- In terms of dollars alone, the savings are significant. The 2010 Redeploy Illinois Cost Analysis reported more than \$9.2 million in annual savings for youth not sent to state facilities from Redeploy counties. That compares with an annual appropriation of \$2.4 million for Redeploy Illinois.
- Redeploy sites reduced their commitment of youth to IDJJ by 50 percent over their prior three-year average commitment rate, far exceeding the goal of a 25 percent reduction.
- Preliminary results of a cost-effectiveness study of the four original Redeploy Illinois sites show a 14.2 percent incarceration rate for Redeploy Illinois participants. That compares with a 57.4 percent incarceration rate among non-participants.
- Of youth who successfully completed Redeploy services, just over 17 percent were rearrested, compared to over 72 percent of non-program youth in the same sites.
- Even when youth enrolled in Redeploy Illinois services do not complete the program successfully, preliminary analyses appear to show benefits to youth and communities in the form of significantly fewer re-arrests and incarcerations in comparison with other youths from those counties involved with the juvenile justice system.
- Redeploy Illinois has not resulted in an increase in juvenile crime or had an unintended consequence of shifting youth from incarceration in state prisons to placement of more youth in local secure detention. While detention center admissions and lengths of stay increased in other Illinois communities during this period, Redeploy sites decreased detention admissions by an average of 29 percent.

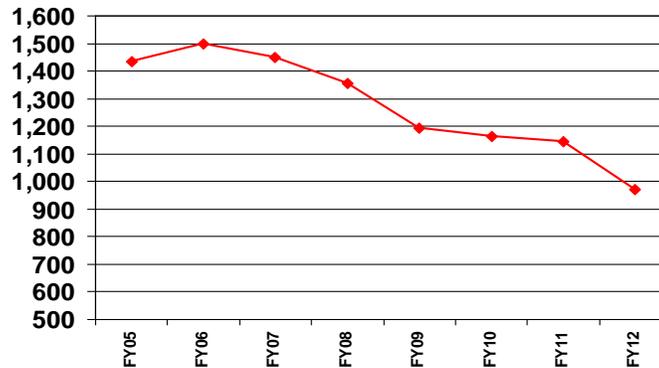
Looking Forward

The coalition of supporters responsible for making Redeploy Illinois a reality remains in place and has grown. The successful diversion of young people away from incarceration has been documented, and the justice system stakeholders in Redeploy Illinois counties have become some of the strongest and most convincing advocates of the value of the community-based approach.

The Oversight Board has laid the groundwork for additional expansion and is developing a comprehensive plan to make Redeploy available statewide. That, of course, will require an increase in the annual state appropriation at a time when government leaders are looking for ways to reduce overall spending. Even though there have been well-documented savings realized to date, some will resist increased funding to make the services available to areas not yet served by Redeploy.

While the reductions in state commitments have been significant and have come from counties previously sending a high rate of young people to state prisons, none of the state's largest counties in the Chicago metropolitan region have participated in Redeploy Illinois. Discussions continue about adjusting the Redeploy statute to permit experimenting with Redeploy in several community neighborhoods of Cook County, instead of requiring immediate participation by the entire county.

Redeploy Illinois has played an important role in reducing the state's juvenile prison population to its lowest in more than two decades, positioning the state to right-size IDJJ capacity by closing two or more facilities. This, in turn, would allow the state to invest at least a portion of the savings into expanded Redeploy Illinois services, improved care within IDJJ facilities and enhanced juvenile aftercare, to ensure that youth released from IDJJ remain safely and successfully in their communities.



IDJJ Youth Population at Close of Fiscal Year

Source: IDOC / IDJJ Data Files

While the reduction in incarceration, coupled with improved youth outcomes and enhanced public safety is impressive, perhaps the biggest success of Redeploy Illinois has been shifting the juvenile justice dialogue in Illinois – from a focus on confinement to the demonstrated efficacy of community-based strategies in improving well-being of young people, families and communities. That shift will pay dividends for years to come.

Resources

Redeploy Illinois, Annual Report, 2010-2011

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=61715>

Redeploy Illinois program in Illinois Compiled Statutes

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/073001100K16.1.htm>

Bringing Youth Home: A National Movement to Increase Public Safety, Rehabilitate Youth and Save Money, National Juvenile Justice Network (July 2011)

www.modelsforchange.net/publications/297/Bringing_Youth_Home_A_National_Movement_to_Increase_Public_Safety_Rehabilitate_Youth_and_Save_Money.pdf

The Real Costs and Benefits of Change: Finding Opportunities for Reform During Difficult Fiscal Times, National Juvenile Justice Network (June 2010)

http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/270/The_Real_Costs_and_Benefits_of_Change_Finding_Opportunities_for_Reform_During_Difficult_Fiscal_Times.pdf

The Costs of Confinement: Why Good Juvenile Justice Policies Make Good Fiscal Sense, Justice Policy Institute (2009)

http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/09_05_REP_CostsofConfinement_JJ_PS.pdf

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