



# **Fiscal Reinvestment in Illinois (Redeploy Illinois)**

## **Shifting Resources to Community Based Services for Youth in Conflict with the Law**

By Elizabeth Clarke

### **Introduction**

- The Redeploy Illinois initiative gives financial support to provide needed social services to delinquent youth in their home communities who might otherwise be sent to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ)
- The lack of local programs and services often plays a significant role in the Court's decision to commit a youth to IDJJ. The funds provided to the Redeploy Illinois pilot sites help to fill gaps in the continuum of programs and services locally available for delinquent youth and their families, allowing local authorities to cost-effectively serve youth locally and reduce their reliance on IDJJ. Commitment to IDJJ costs over \$90,000 annually per bed, while treatment in the community costs less than \$10,000 per youth, so it is far more cost effective to treat youth locally.
- Fiscal incentive for counties to commit youth to IDJJ for assessment, treatment, and supervision in order to avoid spending local resources for those same services, especially when those services do not exist locally, or are not adequate to meet the demand.
- Non-violent youth are less likely to become further involved in delinquent or criminal behavior if they remain in their home communities and receive appropriate services that address underlying needs such as mental illness, substance abuse, learning disabilities, poor decision making, unstable living arrangements, and poor parenting.
- Research on balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) has shown that offenders who participate in BARJ programming have a greater appreciation of the harm their actions caused their victims and communities, that working to repair the harm is therapeutic and promotes positive behavior change.

### **The Redeploy Illinois Program Sites**

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit**

- The five major service options supported by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit's Redeploy Illinois program include:

- Aggression Replacement Training (ART)
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring
- Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)
- Psychological and psychiatric evaluation
- The expected outcomes are increased public safety and enhanced alternatives for positive change for youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system

#### Macon County

- Juveniles served by this Redeploy Illinois program receive a continuum of services based upon their specific needs and risk levels. Services are provided to both individual offenders and their families
- Strategies and sanctions ranging from least restrictive to most restrictive include:
  - Cognitive education and treatment
  - Community restorative boards
  - Gender-specific services
  - Home detention
  - Life skills training
  - Mental health treatment
  - Parent/family support services
  - Quality assessment process (initial and ongoing)
  - Substance abuse treatment
  - Teen court
  - Victim-related services
  - Violence reduction treatment

#### Madison County

- The Madison County Redeploy Illinois program aims to reduce or eliminate the practice of sending youth to IDJJ for the purpose of psychological and risk evaluation

#### McLean County

- Offers individualized, focused services, collaboratively designed for youth who are at risk of commitment to IDJJ

#### Peoria County

- Serves youth on probation who are at greatest risk of being sent to IDJJ for a court evaluation as well as youth who are at risk of being sent to IDJJ for a full commitment
- Services are provided on an annual basis to approximately 80 youth. The youth receive needed services for a period of time ranging from six months to the time when the youth is no longer on probation, depending on need or as specified by Probation. Additionally, if the youth is in need of a psychological evaluation, there are program funds set aside to pay for this service through the Antioch Group or John R. Day & Associates. Both of these organizations also provide therapy for youth who need more intense mental health treatment. When it is determined that a youth could benefit from a residential program, as opposed to being sent to IDJJ for an evaluation, males are referred to the Youth Farm and females to the Children's Home Residential Services. Youth receive evaluation and assessment during this 21-day stabilization period and then transition into the program group.

#### St. Clair County

- Aims to positively impact the lives of youth and their families through local comprehensive evaluations and the provision of evidence-based treatment alternative in the least restrictive setting.

#### **The Redeploy Illinois Legislation**

- Nonviolent offenses and "Technical" Juvenile parole violations account for 70 percent of commitments to the state juvenile prisons – the cost per bed is 9 times the cost of serving a youth locally – and the outcomes are worse for non-violent offenders who are confined. The funds provided to the Redeploy Illinois sites help fill the gaps in the existing continuum of programs and services for delinquent youth, allowing counties to cost effectively serve youth locally and reduce their reliance on IDJJ.
- Many agencies, organizations and individuals advocated for Redeploy Illinois. The Chicago Council on Urban Affairs conducted public opinion polls in Chicago neighborhoods, and concluded that the general public supported the use of community-based alternatives instead of institutionalizing youth. The Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative (IJJ) conducted regional public hearings, and arranged for a legislative hearing on fiscal incentive issue, through which they brought public opinion and evaluation reach to the attention of legislators. IJJ also held a summit in Chicago to present the concept of Redeploy Illinois to the advocacy community.

- The legislation applies only to youth charged with non-violent felonies. Funds can only go to counties or groups of counties. Counties must reduce commitments by 25% over past 3 year average, or pay small fine on each commitment over 25%.
- The legislation encouraged the use of evidence-based programs, required evaluation and required an annual report of outcomes to the General Assembly.

## Summary of Implementation Study Findings

- Other areas for improvement noted in the studies included more consistent participation in training; a need for general community knowledge of, and thus support for, Redeploy Illinois; development of advisory councils; and increasing the availability of male mentors for Redeploy Illinois youth.

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