



October 21, 2020

USE OF COOL BEDS

This memorandum provides examples of programs using “cool beds” for short periods of time as a detention alternative for low-risk juvenile offenders. The purpose of the cool bed is to provide a safe place for youth not involved in the juvenile justice system to address behaviors arising from a mental health crisis, which can be caused by varying issues such as escalating family conflicts.

The term “cool bed” is not uniformly used to describe the facilities providing such services. References to programs with similar services using the terms “youth stabilization facilities” and “respite care,” among others, were also located. The common objective among the varied facilities is to provide a place under close supervision for the deescalation of behaviors in youth whose behaviors do not rise to a level requiring detention or involvement in the juvenile justice system and to reduce the number of out-of-home placements for these youth.

Kansas

Central Kansas Mental Health Center

The varied services provided at the Central Kansas Mental Health Center include crisis services. A crisis hotline is available 24 hours per day and 7 days per week for youth and adults experiencing a mental health crisis. Common reasons for calling the hotline include a major conflict between the child and family members, including conflicts that may reach the point of placing family safety at risk or involving law enforcement.

The crisis services include evaluation and risk assessment and crisis intervention services, including crisis attendant care and a youth stabilization unit. Crisis attendant care provides the supervision needed to ensure safety until a crisis is resolved through the use of one-on-one services.¹ The Martin Youth Center is the Central Kansas Mental Health Center’s youth stabilization facility located in Salina, Kansas. This three-bed facility provides a stay of up to 72 hours in the Crisis House for youth 10 to 17 years of age on the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Serious Emotional Disturbance Waiver. During their stay, the youth receive intensive supports to help with problem resolution and stabilizing behaviors.²

1 <https://ckmhc.org/services/crisis-situations/>

2 <https://ckmhc.org/martin-youth-center/>

Respite care is also available at the Martin Youth Center for children and youth ages 6 to 17 to help address problem resolution and stabilize behaviors. Community resources are also available under the respite care services.

Arizona

Alternative Community Engagement Services Center

The Pima County Juvenile Court Alternative Community Engagement Services (ACES) Center in Tucson, Arizona, was designed to provide youth 8 to under 18 years of age and their families with intervention and referrals to community support resources with the goal of enhancing public safety and reducing the need for and use of secure detention. The ACES Center serves youth referred by law enforcement for misdemeanor domestic violence and status offenses, non-referred youth who need to be removed from an unsafe situation and are transported to the ACES Center by law enforcement, youth and families who are not involved in the juvenile justice system but need intervention and referrals to community services, and youth who no longer need detainment but need time for families to arrange transportation. Among the services provided are crisis intervention and respite services up to 23 hours. By serving as an alternative to secure detention, the ACES Center allows youth and families to have a “cooling off” period when a domestic violence incident occurs.³ The staff are juvenile detention alternative specialists and probation officers trained to work with youth and their families.⁴

California

Alternatives to Detention

In California, Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego’s Alternatives to Detention (ATD) program provides detention alternatives to low-risk juvenile offenders to transition out of the juvenile justice system and avoid recidivism. The ATD program is based on the evidence-based Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), which provides a continuum of community-based and family-supported detention alternatives. The program targets youth who are arrested or referred to probation, but do not require secure detention and would benefit from community-based options. Multiple states use the JDAI process to create ways to reduce the use of juvenile detention. An overview of the JDAI process is available on the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s website.⁵

San Diego’s ATD program serves the central and north central regions of San Diego. The ATD program receives referrals from the court, juvenile probation, the San Diego Police Department, and the San Diego Unified School District Police Department. The ATD program has two core services: intensive case management and a non-secure shelter (or “cool beds”) plus intensive case management. As an alternative to juvenile hall, the ATD program provides “cool beds” in licensed foster care homes as a temporary, safe alternative housing option to

3 http://www.pcjcc.pima.gov/Documents/Brochures/ACES_Brochure.pdf

4 https://tucson.com/news/local/center-a-safe-place-for-kids-in-domestic-violence-related-situations-to-cool-down/article_09e5f98a-9066-534e-8add-d14fcc926973.html

5 <https://www.aecf.org/resources/overview-the-jdai-story/>

youth who need to deescalate and stabilize away from their homes. Following the temporary separation, ATD partners work with the youth and their families on reunification.⁶

April 2019 research findings from the Criminal Justice Clearinghouse's evaluation of the San Diego County Probation Department's ATD program detail the successes of this three-year grant project. When compared to the weighted comparison group, ATD youth had less justice contacts during and post participation and were detained fewer days on average. The evaluation notes, between March 2015 and December 31, 2017, based on 1,268 ATD enrollments, the reduction in overall days detained resulted in a cost difference of over \$10 million between the ATD youth and the comparison group.⁷

San Diego Youth Services

The San Diego Youth Services Cool Bed Program serves youth 12 through 17 years of age who reside in East County. Youth and families are interviewed by a clinician or case manager to determine if the youth meets the program criteria. The youth must not have a history of severe psychosis or violence towards self or others, sexual perpetration, setting fires, or be affiliated with a gang. Parental consent is required for youth to participate. Voluntary short-term (14-day maximum) placements in foster homes in the East County area are available as an alternative to institutional settings for youth who need time away from home during stressful situations. The foster homes are certified and foster families are trained prior to certification. The foster family helps support the youth's return home or to another stable setting. Services provided to the youth and families include individual and group counseling and 24-hour emergency response. Foster families also receive support services.⁸

Missouri

Shelter Care

Through the JDAI process started by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 1992, the 13th Judicial Circuit of Missouri, Juvenile Division, seeks to ensure secure detention is used only when necessary. The JDAI process seeks to improve the existing systems through restructuring to reduce the number of youth unnecessarily or inappropriately detained and improve the conditions of detention. In determining the proper level of detention, the Juvenile Division's policy is to place the youth in the least restrictive alternative available while maintaining public safety. Shelter care is one such alternative available to youth between 10 and 16 years of age who are not a ward of the court and who need placement outside of the parent's or custodian's home to allow for a cool-off period and to establish services for the family. To provide care for youth who qualify for this program, the Juvenile Court partners with Rainbow House and Coyote Hills.⁹

6 <https://www.saysandiego.org/program/delinquency-prevention-youth-development/alternatives-to-detention/>

7 http://sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_4588_25769.pdf; See "Summary" pg. 35

8 https://sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh/services/agency.aspx?pid=SanDiegoYouthServicesCoolBedProgram_61_2_0

9 <https://www.courts.mo.gov/hosted/circuit13/courtoffices/juvdivcollaborative.htm>