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## Juvenile Detention Services

Juvenile detention, a mandated service in Pennsylvania, provides security, safety to the community, opportunities for competency development in youth, psychosocial evaluation, behavioral observation and assessment, consistent exposure to community volunteers such as the clergy and in many cases, short-term treatment planning. Juvenile detention has evolved into an essential service that simultaneously prioritizes the health of the detained child, respects the experience of the victim and preserves the safety of the community.

During the past decade, juvenile detention has faced many challenges and complexities brought about by some of the most significant changes to the juvenile justice system, including implementing principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice as required by the Juvenile Act, Department of Public Welfare regulations regarding restraint, managed care, rising detention populations and an increase in the number of youth with mental health and substance abuse issues in our care. The most complex of all issues has been the severe fiscal concerns juvenile detention has experienced.

Act 148 sets forth the rate of reimbursements for Pennsylvania's array of dependent and delinquent services, including juvenile detention services. Act 148 certified levels for each county are determined through the complicated needs-based budgeting process. Act 148 established the responsibility for payment for detention services at 50 percent county and 50 percent state, except in cases of shelter care where the reimbursement rate is 10 percent county and 90 percent state.

Act 148 was the only funding mechanism available to counties for detention services prior to the availability of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). TANF reimbursement, since its inception, covered allowable costs for a host of child welfare services, including juvenile detention services across the Commonwealth. The only exception to TANF funds occurred for a brief period in the mid 1990's when Title IVA federal monies were available. This brief period set the parameters for the state to grandfather detention services in the state's plan for current TANF funds. According to the FY 05-06 Commonwealth budget, TANF monies could no longer

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be used for detention services after December 31, 2005. The impact of the loss of TANF funds was temporarily softened by the infusion of a separate state appropriation (TANF Transition).

In the proposed Commonwealth Budget for 07-08, the total amount for juvenile detention has increased from \$86.39 million for FY 06-07 to \$91 million in FY 07-08 (a 5.3 percent increase), but because counties are confronted by the loss of TANF and TANF Transition Grant dollars to fund juvenile detention services, this funding is insufficient to maintain service levels without additional county investments. In order to maintain the same service levels — about 21,000 admissions — counties will now be responsible for 50 percent of the costs for this service equaling \$45.5 million. Last year, counties were able to utilize approximately \$1.3 million in TANF transition grants for juvenile detention. Counties need an additional \$44.2 million to compensate for the loss of TANF and TANF Transition funds in FY 07-08.

In order to establish a long term funding solution for juvenile detention, JDCAP supports an increase in the Act 148 reimbursement rate for juvenile detention from 50 percent state/ 50 percent county split to a 90 percent state/ 10 percent county split and a commensurate increase in Act 148 funding.

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