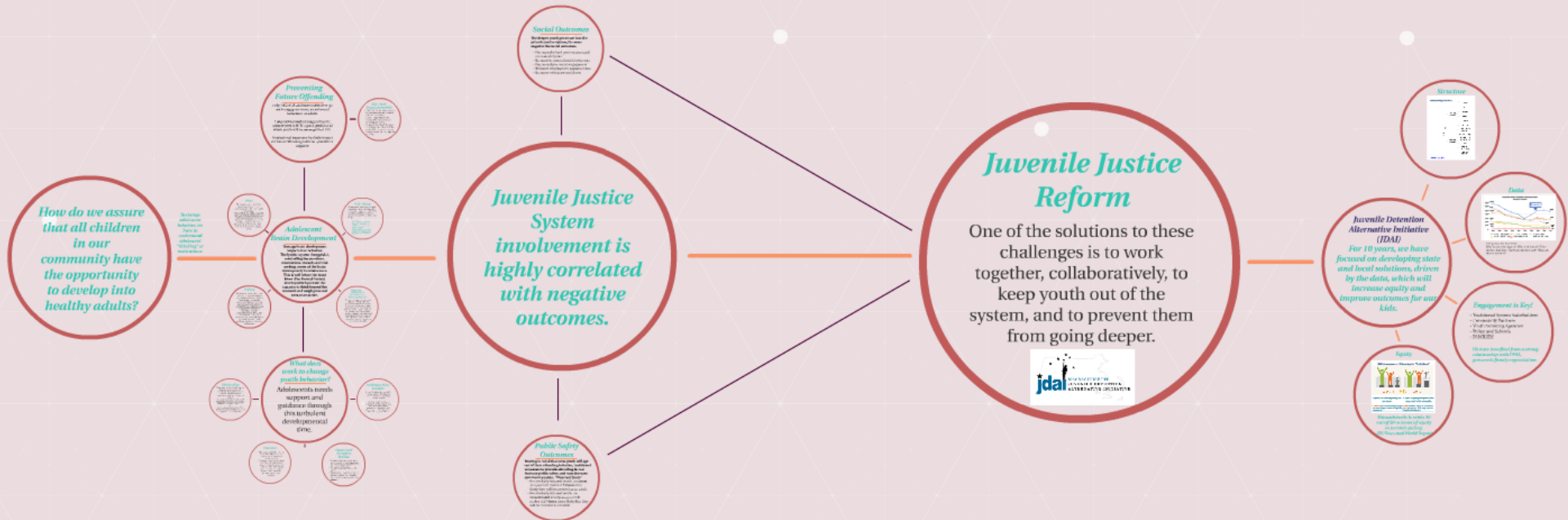


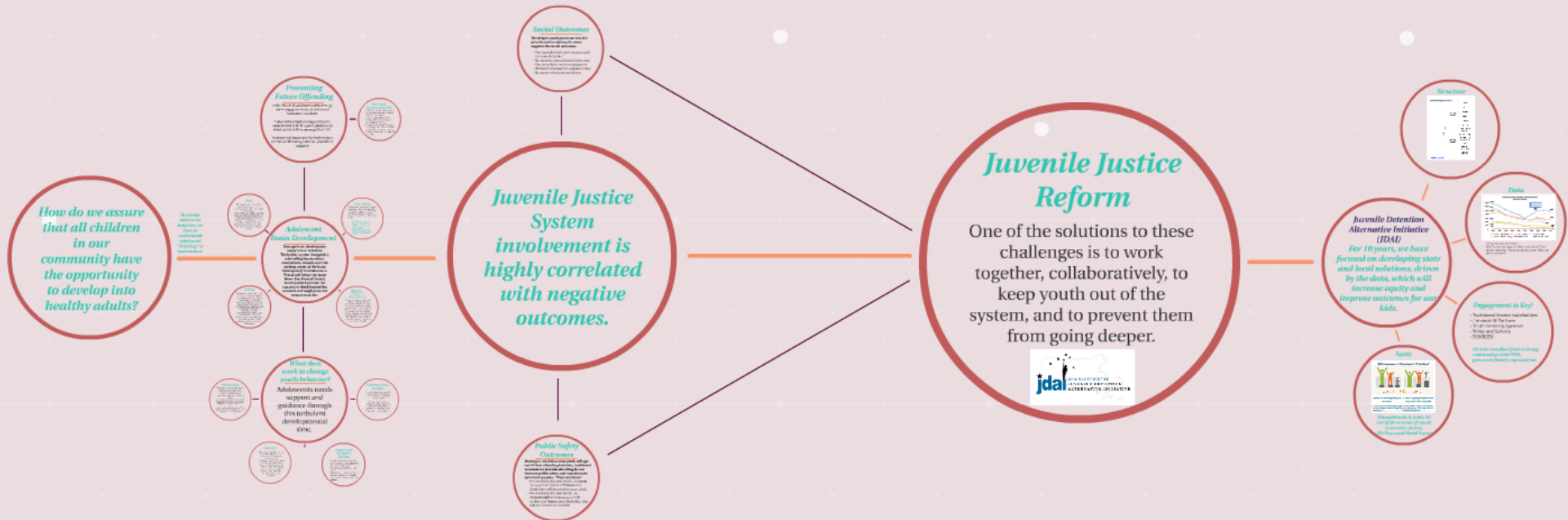
# Improving Youth Outcomes

## Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice Reform



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*How do we assure  
that all children  
in our  
community have  
the opportunity  
to develop into  
healthy adults?*

*To change  
adolescent  
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have to  
understand  
adolescent  
"thinking" or  
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# Adolescent Brain Development

**Teenage brain development impacts teen behavior. The limbic system (Amygdala), controlling the emotions, motivations, rewards and risk seeking center of the brain develop early in adolescence. This is well before the front lobes (Pre-Frontal Cortex) develop which provide the capacity to think beyond the moment and weigh pros and cons of an action.**

cortex is not completely developed by the end of adolescence. This is why teenagers are more impulsive and less able to control their emotions than when they are younger.

- Defiance to authority
- Caring more about what friends think than parents think
- Experimenting with sexual behavior
- Experimenting with drugs and alcohol
- Unsafe Driving
- Risky or unsafe behaviors which can lead to own thrill or to impress others
- Trespassing and property crime
- Allegiance to friends and need to protect them which can lead to threats and fights
- Focus on the self resulting in a lack of consideration for potentially disturbing others (e.g. smoking, drinking, skating on private property, using profanity around families)

## Puberty

hormones released during puberty add a new layer of complexity to adolescent behavior. Changes specifically related to puberty include self-control heightened

## Trauma: Single Event or Repeated/Chronic Distressful Situations

The natural response to a traumatic experience, will be a flood of stress hormones into the nervous system.

# *Risk-Taking*

Evolutionarily, adolescents are hard wired to take more risks than adults and to push back on authority. Full development of their pre-frontal cortex is not complete until 25 years of age.

- *Defiance to authority*
- *Caring more about what friends think than what parents think*
- *Experimenting with sexual behavior (i.e., sexting)*
- *Experimenting with drugs and alcohol*
- *Unsafe Driving*
- *Risky or unsafe behaviors which can be for their own thrill or to impress others*
- *Trespassing and property crime*
- *Allegiance to friends and need to protect reputation which can lead to threats and fighting*
- *Focus on the self resulting in a lack of consideration for potentially disturbing others (e.g., being loud, skating on private property, using foul language around families)*

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## *Peers*

The presence of peers and the importance of peers to an adolescents own self-worth can be understated.

When with peers, adolescents will take more risks than when they are making a decision on their own. Showing off, or impressing the peer group, can impact behaviors. Allegiance to peers will also lead, at times, to defensive or retaliatory action.

# *Puberty*

Hormones released puberty add another layer of complexity to understanding adolescent behavior.

Brain changes specifically associated with puberty include **poor self-control, heightened sensitivity to peer influences and heightened sensitivity to immediate rewards.**

Onset of early puberty has been associated with earlier use of substances, earlier sexual behavior, higher risk of mental health problems, and increased risk for delinquency.



## *Trauma: Single Event or Repeated/Chronic Distressful Situation*

The natural response to a traumatic experience, will be a flood of hormones into the nervous system. Those hormones kick the amygdala system into gear, and shut down the brain's ability to effectively access the pre-frontal cortex. Literally, when exposed to trauma- youth can't think about their decision. For teenagers these hormones will stay in their system for 1-2 hours, as opposed to mere minutes for adults.

# *Preventing Future Offending*

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Only 10% of all adolescent offenders go on to engage in crime, or antisocial behaviors, as adults.

Longitudinal studies suggest that the offense itself is NOT a good predictor of which youth will be amongst that 10%.

Institutional treatment has little impact on future offending patterns - positive or negative.

## *Risk- Need- Responsivity (RNR)*

- Risk – Match the intensity of the intervention with one's level of risk for re-offending
- Need – Target dynamic or changeable risk factors (e.g. criminogenic needs)
- Responsivity – Match the mode & strategies of services with the individual (e.g., motivation for change, mental health, cognitive capacity)

*What does  
work to change  
youth behavior?*

Adolescents needs  
support and  
guidance through  
this turbulent  
developmental  
time.

# *Build Upon Their Strengths*

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is the concept that youth deserve and need to develop competence and have support.

Youth have significantly better outcomes when their strengths are built upon versus punitive responses. We channel to youth what we expect of them by how we, the adults, engage with them.

## *Relationships*

A backbone of youth development is that ALL young people need consistent, caring adults who will support them through their development- through the ups and downs.

This philosophy supports the use of **high quality mentors** and **outreach workers** to meet youth where they are.

Youth connected to positive adults have fewer behavioral issues at school and performance is improved.



# *Incentives*

- Adolescents are highly sensitive to rewards. They affect their risk-assessment aspect of decision making.
- Promises of rewards for certain behavior facilitated stronger responses in adolescences than it did for adults. (Biologically more sensitive to rewards)
- Programs should build-in incentives for pro-social behavior.

## *Support and Strengthen Families*

- Families of young people must be part of the conversation if we are to have any success.
- Family voice should be at the center.
- We know that youth have better outcomes when their families are part of treatment and service delivery

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- Defiance to authority
- Caring more about what friends think than parents think
- Experimenting with sexual behavior
- Experimenting with drugs and alcohol
- Unsafe Driving
- Risky or unsafe behaviors which can lead to injury or death
- Trespassing and property crime
- Allegiance to friends and need to please them which can lead to threats and fights
- Focus on the self resulting in a lack of empathy for potentially disturbing others (e.g. skateboarding on private property, using a car without permission around families)

## Puberty

Changes released during puberty add a new layer of complexity to adolescent behavior. Changes specifically related to puberty include self-control, heightened

## Trauma: Single Event or Repeated/Chronic Distressful Situations

The natural response to a traumatic experience, will be a flood of stress hormones into the nervous system.

*Juvenile Justice  
System  
involvement is  
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outcomes.*

# *Social Outcomes*

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**The deeper youth penetrate into the juvenile justice system, the more negative the social outcomes.**

- Decreased school performance and increase drop out
- Increase in mental health behaviors
- Decreased pro-social engagement
- Reduced employment opportunities
- Increase substance use/abuse

# *Public Safety Outcomes*

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**Bearing in mind that most youth will age out of their offending behavior, traditional responses to juvenile offending do not increase public safety, and may decrease community safety. "Montreal Study"**

- For similarly situated youth, an **arrest** as a juvenile makes it **7 times** more likely they will be arrested as an adult.
- For similarly situated youth, an **incarcerated** setting as a juvenile makes it **37 times** more likely that they will be arrested as an adult.

*Juvenile Justice  
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# *Juvenile Justice Reform*

One of the solutions to these challenges is to work together, collaboratively, to keep youth out of the system, and to prevent them from going deeper.



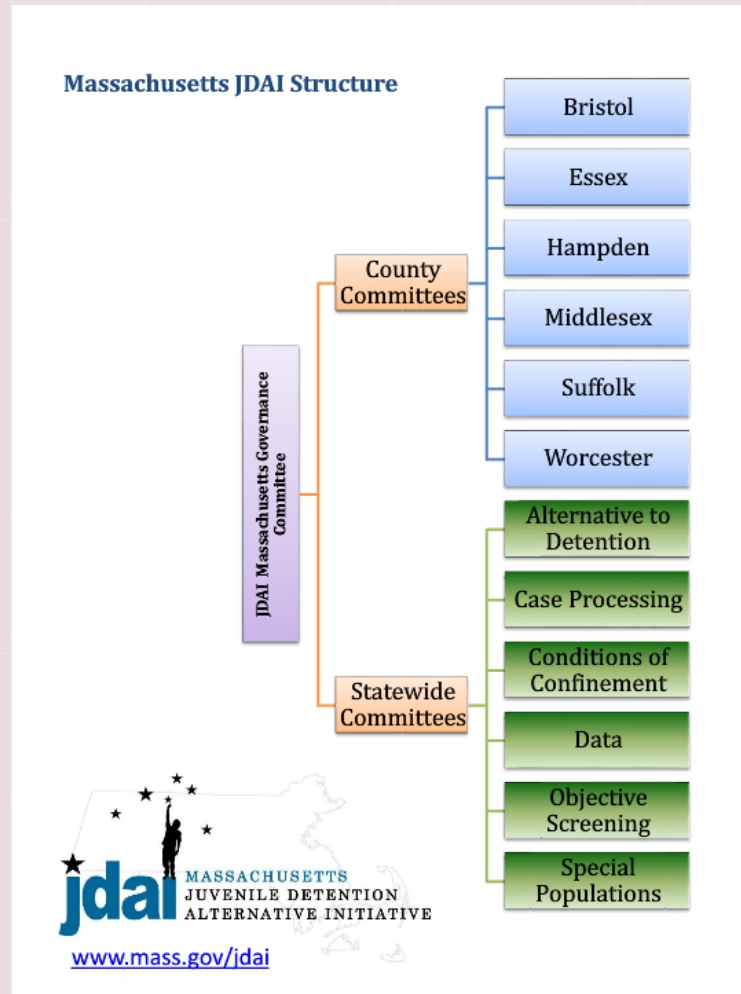


*Juvenile Detention  
Alternative Initiative  
(JDAI)*

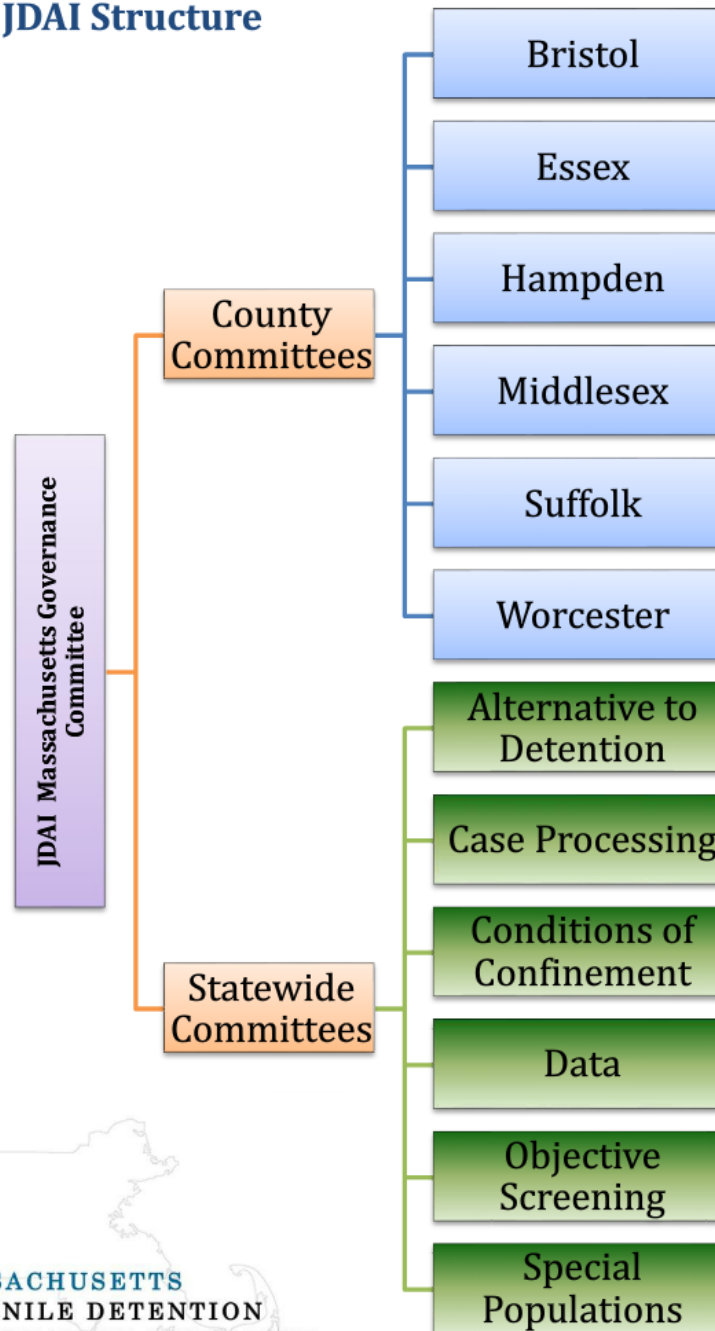
*For 10 years, we have  
focused on developing state  
and local solutions, driven  
by the data, which will  
increase equity and  
improve outcomes for our  
kids.*

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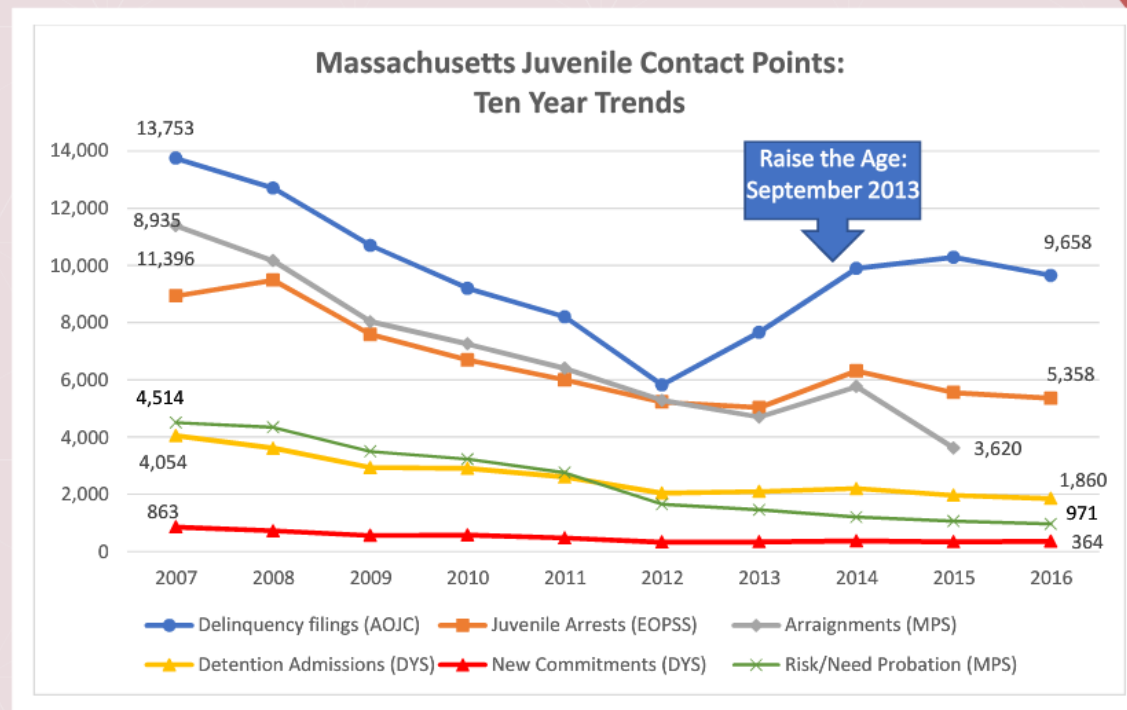
# Structure



## Massachusetts JDAI Structure

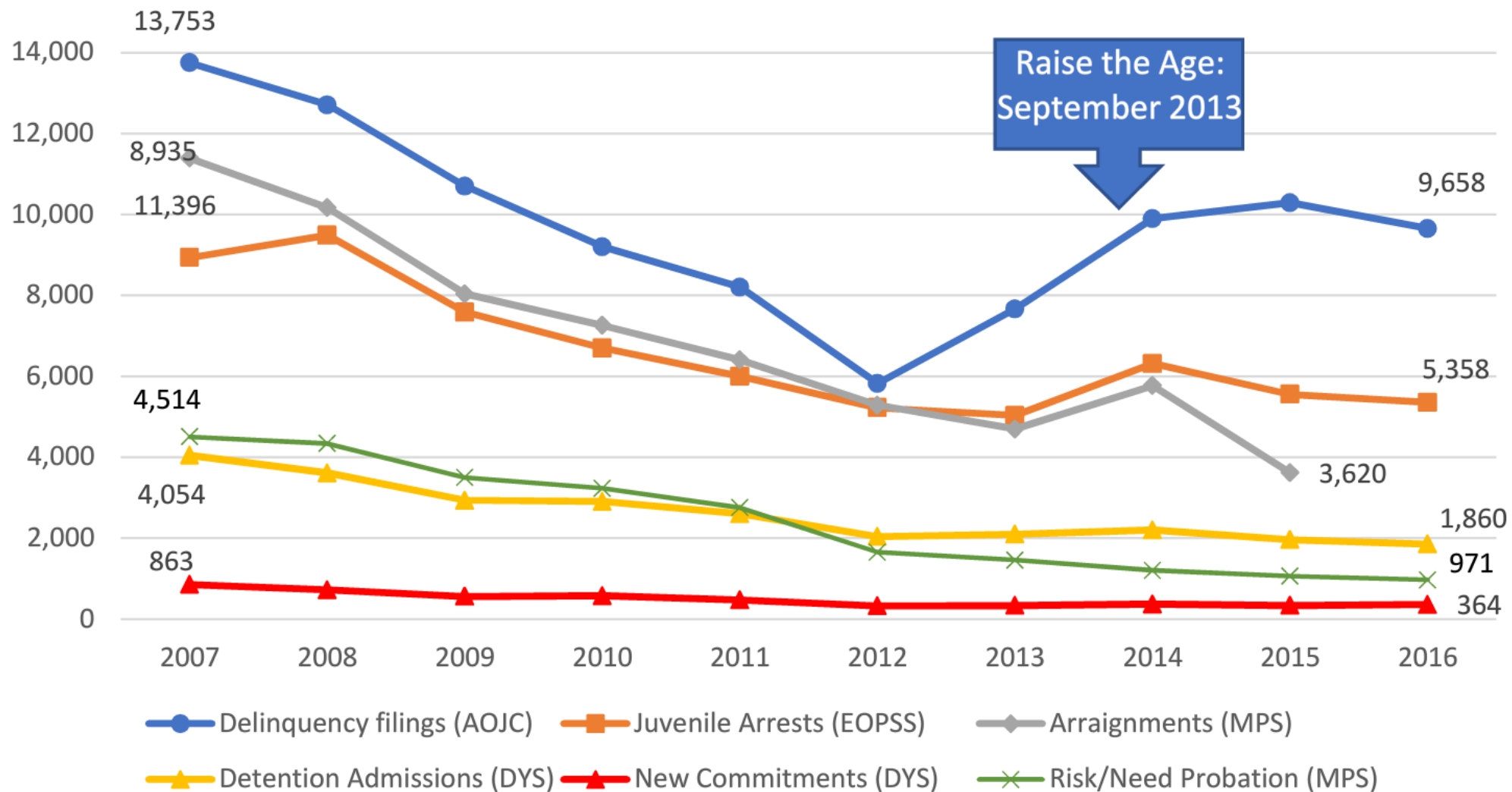


# Data



Using Data to Drive Work:  
Who is enter the system? Who is detained? What do they look like? How long do they stay? What are their outcomes?

## Massachusetts Juvenile Contact Points: Ten Year Trends



Using Data to Drive Work:

## *Engagement is Key!*

- Traditional System Stakeholders
- Community Partners
- Youth Servicing Agencies
- Police and Schools
- FAMILIES!

*We have benefited from a strong relationship with PPAL, grassroots family organization.*

# Equity

JDAI MASSACHUSETTS: Embracing the “Equity Lens”



**EQUALITY**

**VS.**

**EQUITY**

**EQUALITY** is treating everyone the same.

**EQUITY** is giving everyone what they need to be successful.

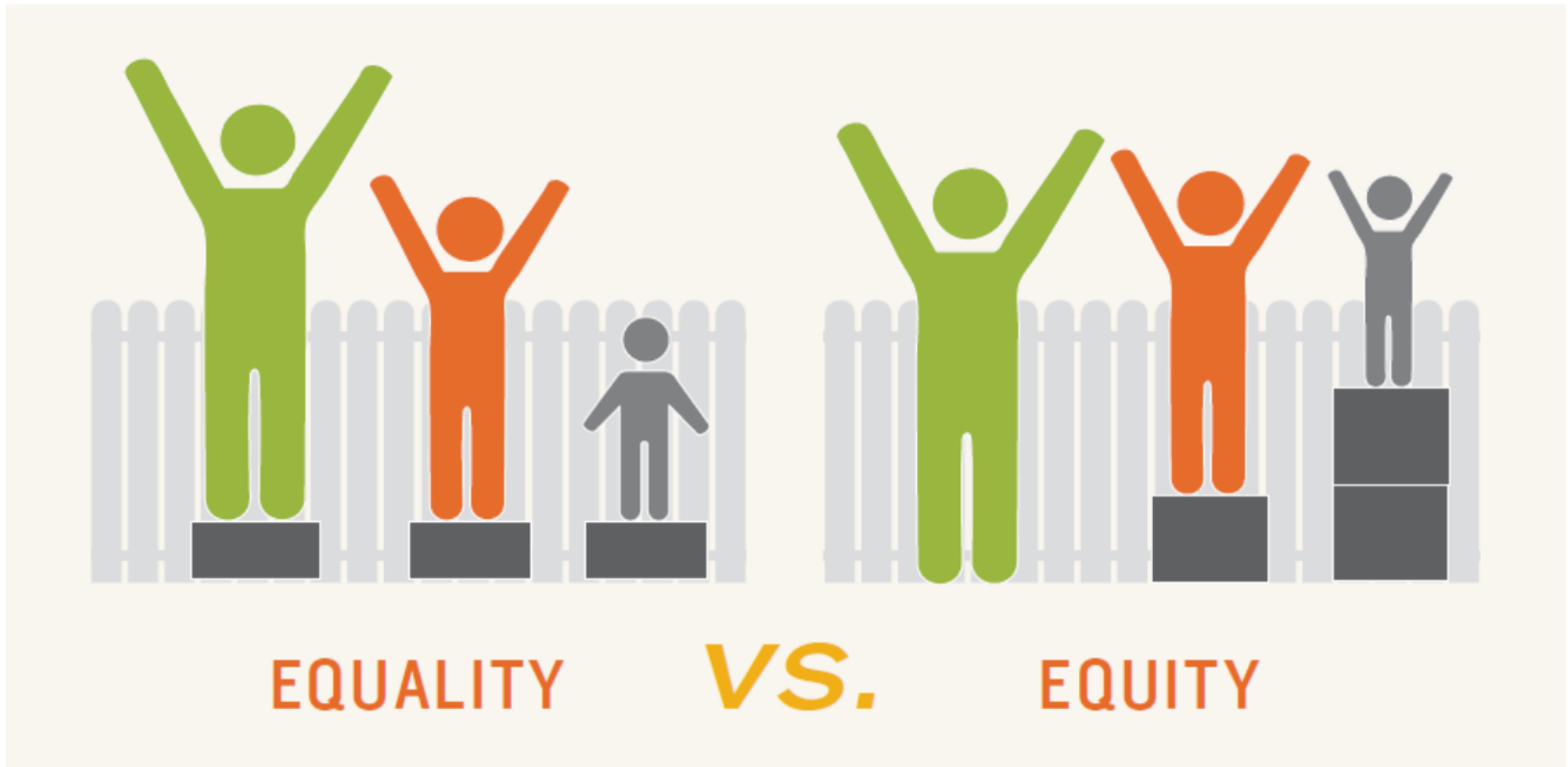
**EQUALITY** aims to ensure that people get the same things in order to enjoy full, healthy lives.

**EQUITY** involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives.

*Massachusetts is ranks 46 out of 50 in terms of equity in juvenile jailing.*

*-US News and World Report*

## JDAI MASSACHUSETTS: Embracing the “Equity Lens”



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# *Juvenile Justice Reform*

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**MASSACHUSETTS  
JUVENILE DETENTION  
ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVE**

