



Youth intake and release

The Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) is part of the Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR). As a pre-adjudication facility, the JDC houses 13- to 17-year-old youth while their cases are assessed by the court. In some cases, youth 18 years and older may also be held at this facility.

This document outlines the major decision points and process by which youth are initially detained, released, or held at the JDC.

Weighing the risks and benefits

Decisions to hold youth at the JDC are given serious consideration for several reasons.

- Research shows that secure correctional settings can have a detrimental impact on young people.
- Detaining youth who are unlikely to reoffend prior to the disposition of their case or fail to appear in court is not in the best interest of the youth.
- Keeping youth in their home environment, while increasing community-based resources for rehabilitation, can better serve youth in finding a positive path forward.
- Removal from the home and community can disrupt family, school, employment, and community ties.
- Secure detention may be appropriate for youth who pose a threat to the community or themselves.

Criteria for JDC admission

When a youth is arrested, they are transported to the JDC if they meet the facility's admissions criteria. Once they arrive at the facility, the staff use a Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) to determine next steps. A youth can receive an RAI score from 3 to 28 points:

- **Score of 3-14:** Youth is released to a parent, guardian, or shelter following the initial admissions process. (Law enforcement or JDC staff may request an override of the score if they believe there is a public safety risk.)
- **Score of 15-28:** Youth is held at the JDC until their first court appearance in front of a judge. A detention hearing is scheduled, and the youth is advised of the court date and time.

Detaining youth at the JDC

While at the JDC, youth receive structured programming that covers their educational, mental health and medical needs, as well as life skills.

The average daily population at the JDC is 35 youth. The average length of stay is 15 days. Most youth appear before a judge within three days.

During the detention hearing, the judge determines whether to continue to detain or release the youth pending the next court hearing. A judge can require the youth be released to a:

- Parent or guardian
- Parent or guardian with electronic home monitoring (EHM)
- Youth shelter

If the judge decides the youth should continue to be held at the JDC, the court will assess the need for continued detention. The court uses a different version of the RAI that is very similar to the JDC RAI. The biggest difference is that the court's RAI is based on the charge versus the arresting offense. The court conducts additional detention reviews for youth who remain detained while awaiting disposition.

Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI)

The research division of the Fourth Judicial District Court first developed the RAI. Today, partners across Hennepin County's justice system guide its use. The tool helps determine whether a youth should be detained. It does so by assessing the seriousness of the alleged offense and the likelihood of pre-trial failure. Pre-trial failure means the youth might commit a new offense before the court date or might not show up for the hearing.

The RAI tool is based on many factors, including the youth's current alleged offense and their previous history. Some offenses automatically require a youth to be held at the Juvenile Detention Center until a detention hearing takes place.

Youth Connection Center (YCC)

When youth do not meet JDC admissions criteria, the arresting officer determines if they should be released or taken to the Youth Connection Center (YCC). The YCC is a safe and supervised space for youth ages 10 through 17 to connect with resources and support, and for law enforcement to facilitate connections to services. This center is a collaboration between Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and The Price Dynamic.

Hennepin County

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