

## November 2014 Serving Youth in Their Home Communities

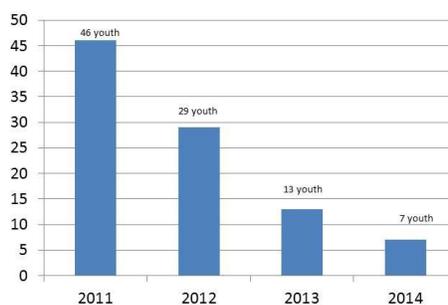
Ashtabula County is one of many counties in Ohio where efforts to serve youth in their home communities are helping to improve outcomes for youth.

Ashtabula is one of 15 counties that receive Targeted RECLAIM, which funds evidence-based and model interventions to address the needs of youth as identified by their risk to reoffend. It is provided to courts that historically have committed the most youth to the department and that have committed to reduce and then maintain DYS admissions. Initially, this included Cuyahoga, Hamilton, Franklin, Summit, Montgomery and Lucas Counties, but the initiative expanded to eight additional counties (Allen, Ashtabula, Licking, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Stark and Trumbull) beginning in Fiscal Year 2012, and one additional county (Butler) in Fiscal Year 2013. The six original counties have reduced admissions to DYS facilities by a total of 691 over the last five years. The nine expansion counties have reduced admissions by 111 over the past three years.

The goal of Targeted RECLAIM is to create better outcomes for youth and create safer communities for everyone by providing services in the community in lieu of DYS commitment when it is appropriate to do so.

Kathy Thompson is the court administrator for the Ashtabula County Juvenile Court. She said, "Before Targeted RECLAIM, we had nothing to offer these kids in this county. We began to look at this issue in 2011, and our efforts kicked off in 2012. Targeted RECLAIM made it possible. Our success has been that we are taking care of our kids here in our county." A total of \$369,191 is being provided to Ashtabula County this fiscal year through Targeted RECLAIM.

### Youth Admitted from Ashtabula to DYS (by fiscal year)



Probation and other court staff participated in a variety of trainings to equip them to provide evidence-based programming to their youth in Ashtabula County. Staff now uses Effective Practices in Supervision (EPICS) and *Thinking for a Change* (T4C).

Brian Perusek, chief probation officer, explains T4C: "This non-residential program lasts for 26 weeks to really give the youth the skills they need to be successful. This is unique for this county." Groups include 8-12 youth and are co-facilitated by male and female staff.

Matt Tucker, T4C group facilitator and case manager, describes how the program works: "You are targeting the youths' underlying thinking and working to show them how their thinking is connected to their actions. Kids say things like, 'I wasn't thinking.' Our goal is to make them more aware that they are in control and that their actions have led to consequences. It helps them understand their thinking about home and school life, thinking ahead and not just in the moment."

Over the last two years, a total of 81 youth have successfully completed T4C in Ashtabula County. Nearly all of these youth would have been sent to a DYS facility had the program not been available.

"The Ashtabula County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile Division, has been extremely fortunate to receive Targeted RECLAIM funding from the Ohio Department of Youth Services," said Judge Charles G. Hague. "Although it is widely known that this court did not receive any funding from the old RECLAIM Ohio program, the Targeted funding has allowed the court to provide much-needed evidence based services to juveniles and their families. Local services have also reduced the court's reliance on out-of-home placements, as well as commitments to DYS."

"Working with the kids in their homes far outweighs sending them away. You're dealing with the kids and the problem. It's hard work, and sometimes we have to just keep trying with the youth. It's an adventure, but it works." Thompson said.