

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

**How Pennsylvania's Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment
Instrument Revalidation Study Advanced Solutions to its
Juvenile Detention Crisis**

CJAB CONFERENCE | APRIL 22, 2025



Workshop Overview

- Introductions
- Juvenile Justice in Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI)
- Detention Crisis
- PaDRAI Revalidation Study
- Translating Research into Practice
- Q/A

JUVENILE JUSTICE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania's Balanced and Restorative
Justice Mission Act 33 of 1995

“...to provide for children committing delinquent acts programs of supervision, care and rehabilitation which provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offense committed and the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community.”



JUVENILE JUSTICE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Advancing Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) through the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES)



JUVENILE JUSTICE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy's Statement of Purpose



We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership to enhance the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its balanced and restorative justice mission by:

- Employing evidence-based practices, with fidelity, at every stage of the juvenile justice process;
- Collecting and analyzing the data necessary to measure the results of these efforts; and, with this knowledge,
- Striving to continuously improve the quality of our decisions, services and programs.

JUVENILE JUSTICE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Juvenile Act

42 Pa. C.S. § 6325. Detention of child

A child taken into custody **shall not be detained** or placed in shelter care **prior to the hearing** on the petition **unless his detention** or care **is required to protect the person or property of others or of the child or because the child may abscond** or be removed from the jurisdiction of the court or because he has no parent, guardian, or custodian or other person able to provide supervision and care for him and return him to the court when required, or an order for his detention or shelter care has been made by the court pursuant to this chapter.

“KIDS FOR CASH” SCANDAL

INTERBRANCH COMMISSION ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

Report



MAY 2010

PaDRAI Development Timeline

2009

- Juvenile Justice System Strategic Planning meeting considers statewide use of a DRAI

2010

- DRAI is required for PCCD grant funding for ERCs
- JCJC endorses DRAI use based upon the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) model
- **Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice Report recommends DRAI use**
- Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) includes DRAI as an element
- PA partners with Annie E. Casey Foundation to develop DRAI

2011

- PCCJPO's Detention Committee expands to include any county using a DRAI (of any form)

PaDRAI Development Timeline

2012

- Work begins to meld county instruments into a single statewide tool, along with developing policy and procedures

2013

- Draft of the newly named PaDRAI is completed, along with policy statements, procedures, and a training module

2014

- Implementation study is conducted and subsequently published
- Implementation study findings inform changes to PaDRAI

2015

- First Validation Study is conducted and subsequently published in early 2016

PA DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

The PA Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI) is designed to measure risk to **re-offend and/or failure to appear** during the specific period while the youth is **awaiting** his/her **Juvenile Court hearing**.

PA DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

The PaDRAI is **not** designed to **measure longer term risk to re-offend**, **nor** is it designed to **determine whether a youth should be held accountable** prior to his/her Juvenile Court hearing.

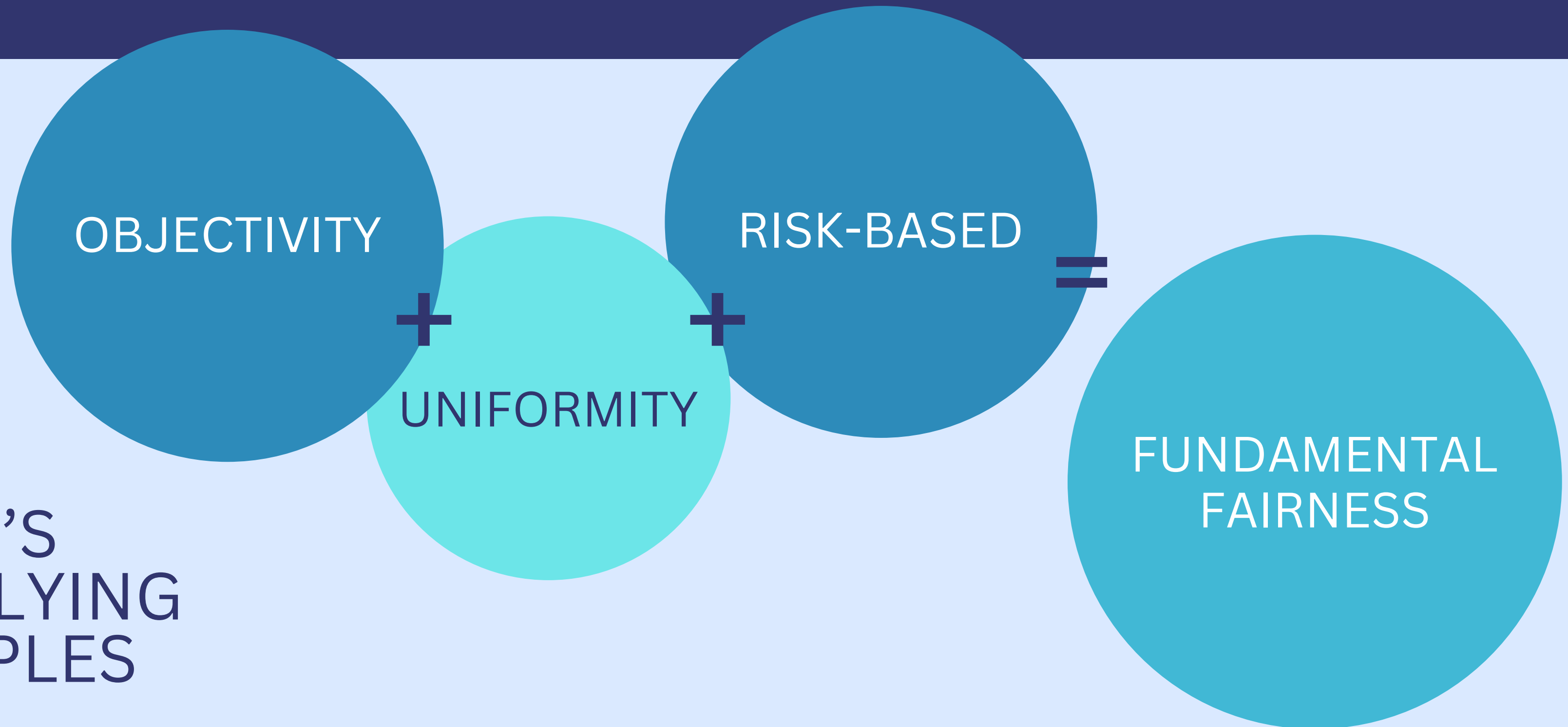
There are other instruments and processes for these purposes.

PA DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Why use the PaDRAI?

- To **improve** upon something that we already do.
- To **increase objectivity and consistency** in the detention decision process.
- To **properly identify** youth who pose the greatest risk for reoffending or failing to appear.
- To encourage the proper **use of alternatives** to detention
- To ensure **FUNDAMENTAL FAIRNESS** in the detention decision process.

PA DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT



PADRAI'S
UNDERLYING
PRINCIPLES

PA DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Partnerships and Collaboration

- Benefits of research partnerships
- Objectivity
- Meaningful data translation
- Advocacy – We are out there!

Detention RAIs and Reform

- Juvenile Justice reform – National landscape
- Detention screening and utilization
- ‘High Stakes Decision-Making’
- Average daily detention population (ADP) =
 - how many go in, +
 - how long they stay

PA DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

PaDRAI Validation

“Validation refers to the process of confirming the predictive value of the [Pa]RAI in relation to specific outcome measures.” Steinhart, 2006

- **Goal:** Assessing the extent to which youth who are screened into a detention alternative, or straight release via the PaDRAI , remain arrest free and appear for all pre-dispositional court hearings.
- **Key Question:** Is the PaDRAI successful in its assessment of youth in terms of their appropriateness for non-detention supervision pending case disposition?

PA DETENTION RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Results Snapshot

91.9% successful completion rate for the 731 cases of youth whose supervision exactly matched the PaDRAI's recommendation.

- Just 2.1% obtained new delinquency charges, with only 5 cases of felony-level persons offenses.
- 3.8% failed to appear for a court hearing and 2.1% absconded/AWOL'd or committed some other violation.
- As the composite score on the PaDRAI increased, there was a statistically significant increase in youths' likelihood of an unsuccessful outcome.

FAST FORWARD...

AS OF FEBRUARY 2025

14

Detention facilities
ceased operations in
Pennsylvania from
2006-2021.

15

Detention
facilities currently
operating.

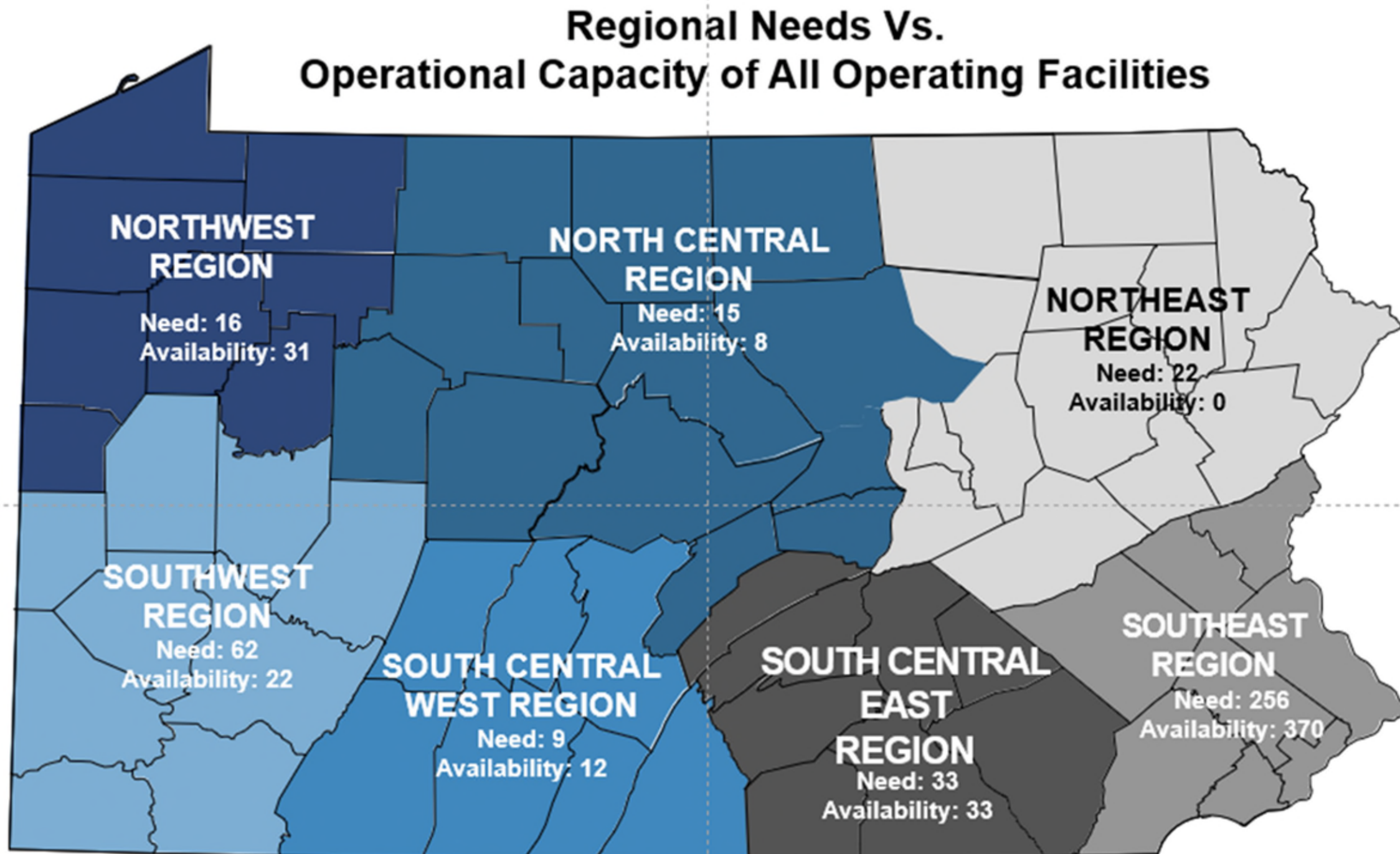
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Juvenile detention facilities
serve just 7 counties (and will
not accept any youth outside of
the operating county). The
operating capacity of these 9
facilities is 307, while the
licensed capacity is 338.

60

Counties vying for beds
at just 6 juvenile
detention facilities. The
operational capacity of
these 6 facilities is 169,
while the licensed
capacity is 199.

JUVENILE DETENTION CRISIS IN PA



*Middle Creek Detention Center and Manor Detention are included in these figures.

Updated version of a map in Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. (2023). *Pennsylvania Secure Detention Gap Analysis*. Available: <https://www.jcjc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION ROLE



The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission is responsible for:

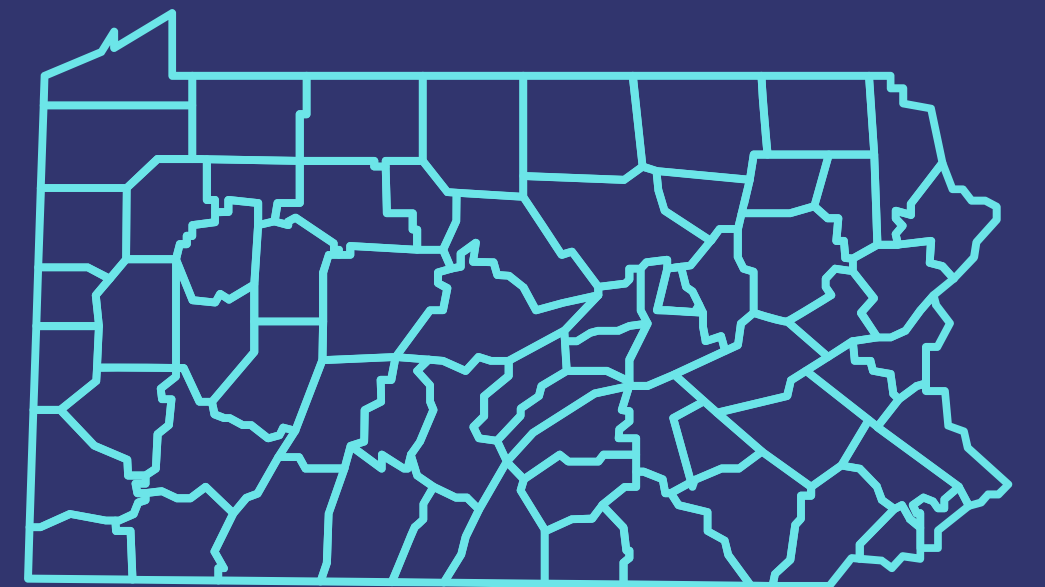
- Advising juvenile courts concerning the proper care and maintenance of delinquent and dependent children
- Establishing standards governing the administrative practices and judicial procedures used in juvenile courts
- Establishing personnel practices and employment standards used in probation offices
- Collecting, compiling, and publishing juvenile court statistics
- Administering a grant-in-aid program to improve county juvenile probation.

PADRAI REVALIDATION STUDY FINDINGS

1. When used as designed, the PaDRAI is a valid tool.
2. Proper use of the PaDRAI promotes fundamental fairness and reduces bias.
3. Case processing timeliness is also critical for non-detained youth.
4. ATD continuums should be realistic, well-defined, and include a graduated level of supervision.
5. Mandatory detentions and discretionary overrides should be continuously evaluated.

Translating Research into Practice

Help counties interpret and apply their local
PaDRAI data against the backdrop of the
statewide Revalidation Study



COUNTY-LEVEL DATA

Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI)

Your County Data Packet

- *PaDRAI Revalidation Study* County-Level Data
- 2023 PaDRAI County-Level Data



August 2024

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

“It is easy to miss just how fundamental high-quality data is for everything, and how fundamental people are to data quality. Respect them, show them the bigger picture, and help them grow into roles as data creators and data customers.”

PADRAI DATA

Revised: 08.2024

PENNSYLVANIA JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM PaDRAI

The Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI) is an objective assessment tool that helps probation officers and probation departments decide whether to securely detain a youth, release the youth to an alternative to detention (ATD), or release the youth to the custody of a parent or responsible adult while the youth is awaiting their juvenile court hearing. The PaDRAI is designed to minimize bias while promoting fair and transparent decisions for the use of secure detention and ATD. The PaDRAI generates a score based on objective, evidence-based risk factors. These six risk factors are: the most serious alleged offense, additional related charges or pending charges, current supervision status, prior adjudication or consent decree findings, history of failure to appear, and history of escape or runaway.

41 Departments
UTILIZED THE PaDRAI

94%
Detention
Admissions Were From
PaDRAI-USING COUNTIES

11,378

PaDRAIs
in 2023

63% INCREASE*
Since 2022

91%

YOUTH

Released or on an ATD
per the Tool's
Recommendation Were
SUCCESSFUL**
in the Community

7%

PaDRAI Resulted in a
**DISCRETIONARY
AGGRAVATING OVERRIDE**

5%

Override to
**SECURE
DETENTION*****

vs.

2%

Override to
ATD

Note: Data Reflects PaDRAIs Completed in Calendar Year 2023 and Entered into PaJCMS.

* In January 2023, Counties Were Encouraged to Administer the PaDRAI on Every New Allegation to Promote Fundamental Fairness, Resulting in a Policy Change in Some Counties, But Not All.

** Success Is Defined as the Youth Appearing for His or Her First Scheduled Court Hearing and Not Re-Offending While in the Community Awaiting the Hearing.

*** Best Practice Indicates That Override to Detain Rates Should Be 20% or Less.

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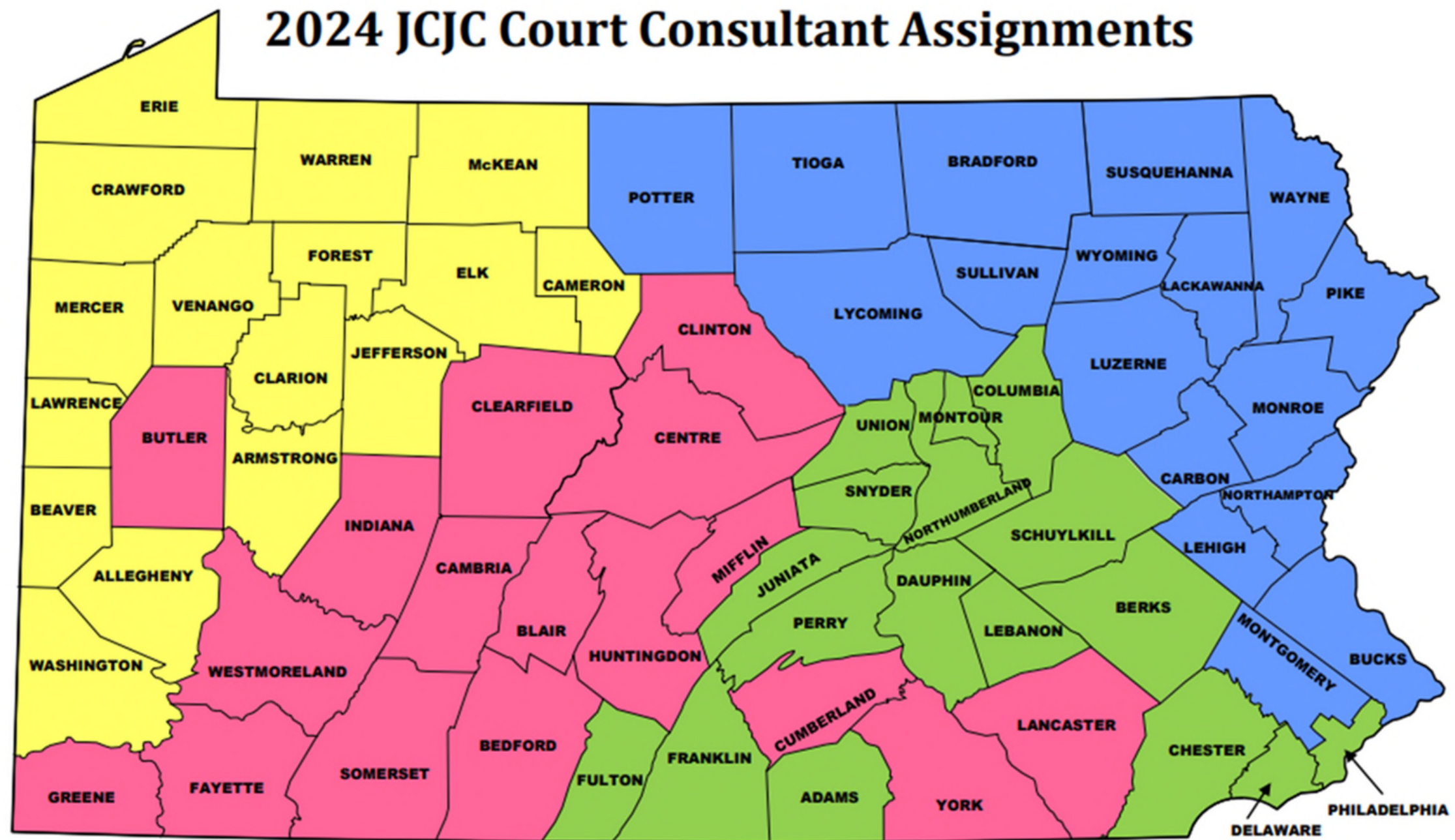
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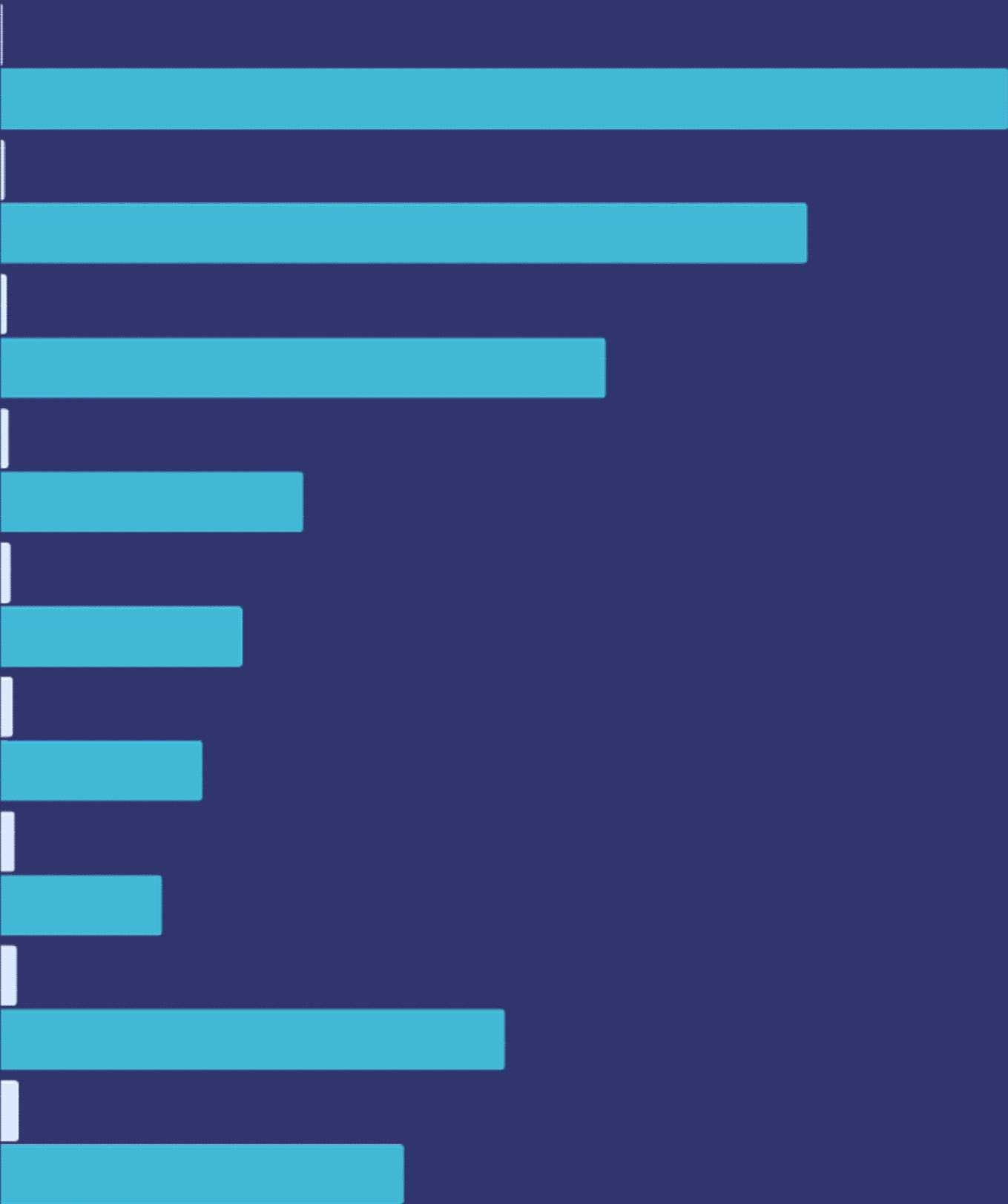
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Questions?