



Investing in Care, Not Custody

Expanding Diversion and Alternatives to Detention in New Mexico

In New Mexico, too many young people enter detention for behaviors that could be safely addressed through community-based care. Diversion and Alternatives to Detention like New Day's Reception and Assessment Center (RAC) model offer safer, more cost-effective, and more equitable responses.

These diversions and alternatives improve youth outcomes and public safety.

What Is a Reception and Assessment Center (RAC)?

A Reception and Assessment Center (RAC) serves as a safe and supportive drop-off point for law enforcement when a youth does not meet detention criteria, doesn't have a place to go, and needs temporary supervision and support. It also serves as a safe placement for youth exiting detention who don't have a viable placement at home.

- 24 hour drop-off location for Police, School Police, Juvenile Probation, and Albuquerque Community Safety
- Immediate assessment and service connections for behavioral health, substance use and case management
- Emergency shelter placement and case management for youth exiting detention
- Recidivism Reduction — over 90% complete RAC program without new charges
- Provides communities a way to respond with care, not custody

The Challenge of Dual-System Involved (Crossover) Youth

Youth involved in both child welfare and juvenile justice systems **face compounded barriers**. When these systems fail to coordinate, young people fall through the cracks, cycling between detention and unstable placements. Without timely support, many end up in the deepest end of the juvenile system, where few exits exist.

Youth Shelters like New Day are uniquely situated with expertise to work with and support Crossover Youth.

The Need for Statewide Investment

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) allocates funds for **Diversion and Alternatives to Detention**.

To meet statewide needs, JJAC investments should prioritize:

- ☑ Expanding Alternatives to Detention and Diversion Programs that work to safely reduce detention populations
- ☑ Ensuring Data Transparency to track detention trends and respond to the unique *local needs* of each region
- ☑ Building Cross-Systems Coordination between child welfare, community-based agencies and juvenile justice

With regional jails at capacity and youth often detained for lower-level offenses (such as Battery on a Household Member), it's time to strengthen diversion and alternative to detention programs statewide.

September 2025: New Day Housed 6 RAC youth for a total of 69 days. All successfully completed RAC. One youth who aged out of both Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare systems gained long-term Supportive Housing through New Day