

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CAPITAL DISTRICT COUNTIES – PUBLIC SAFETY (JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY)

Community Profiles

Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties are situated in the southern part of the North Country region of New York State. Together, they form an area known as the “Capital District”. Albany County has the largest population, with the other three counties being of average size. All counties with the exception of Saratoga County obtain a higher than average proportion of their revenues from federal and state aid, a sign of economic distress.

2005	Albany County	Rensselaer County	Saratoga County	Schenectady County	NYS County Average¹
Population	294,565	152,538	200,635	146,555	192,424
Revenue from State and Federal Aid	29.4%	29.2%	25.1%	31.4%	26.1%

¹Excludes New York City

Background

In 1991, the Division for Youth closed the Highland Regional Secure Detention Facility, where the four Capital District counties sent most juveniles requiring secure detention. This facility was in Ulster County, about 80 miles south of Albany. Other facilities commonly used by the counties ranged from 130 to 280 miles away, and only had availability on a first-come, first served basis. After Highland closed, youths in need of care in a secure facility had to travel to Westchester or Erie counties, and their home county had to pay for a sheriff’s deputy to transport the youth. Because of the distance, families and social workers could not visit the youths to provide services and/or support.

Leaders from the four Capital District counties entered into a compact, creating the Capital District Youth Center, Inc. (CDYC), a public benefit corporation, in December, 1994. CDYC proposed to build an 18 bed juvenile detention facility in Albany County. Operation of the facility would be funded by partner counties paying a per diem rate.

Outcome

CDYC was charged with responsibility for financing and building the facility. The Capital District Secure Detention Facility officially opened in November, 1997 and was filled to capacity by December, 1997. The facility occupancy rate remained at 94-96 percent for first few months, inducing the board to construct an eight bed expansion, which opened in 2000. The facility currently runs at occupancy rates between 88 and 92 percent annually. Approximately 300 to 345 youths from about 35 counties across New York State stay at the facility each year.