

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Scope of the Problem and Indicators of Need

The juvenile justice system differs significantly from the system of adult corrections. The state has recognized that juveniles require rehabilitative intervention strategies that differ from those of adults. As such, juveniles who enter the court system in New Jersey become the responsibility of the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC), a division of the Department of Law and Public Safety (Office of the Attorney General). The JJC's primary responsibility is to provide for the care and custody of juvenile offenders committed to the agency by the courts; it also provides supervision of juveniles who are on aftercare or parole. The JJC must balance its public safety role with its duty to hold juveniles accountable for their offenses. The sanctions imposed by the JJC focus less on punishment and more on treatment and rehabilitation to prevent future criminal acts. That said, juveniles 14 and older who commit serious offenses can be tried as adults and sentenced to incarceration in either an adult correctional facility or a youth correctional facility. (Youth correctional facilities are geared at 18 to 26 year-old adults, not juveniles.)

Juvenile offenders represent possibility – the chance to provide care and opportunities that will prevent future criminal activity. Appropriate interventions, such as diversions to non-custodial programs and comprehensive treatment when juvenile offenders are in JJC's custody, can prevent low-level juvenile misbehavior from growing into adult crimes and can provide juveniles with the opportunity to find their full potential. The following information profiles New Jersey's committed juveniles, including the parts of the state from which they come. It includes a description of the juvenile justice system in New Jersey. It then outlines demographic characteristics of committed juveniles and some of the health and well-being challenges they face, and concludes with a discussion of the problems many of these adolescents face when they return to their communities.

In 2004, there were 908 juveniles admitted to juvenile detention facilities—a 16.7 percent decline over the last half-decade.¹ On any given day in 2004, 961 adolescents resided in juvenile justice institutions or residential facilities—down 16.3 percent from the average rate in 2003.² Adjudicated juveniles who have been tried within family court may be sentenced to any combination of the following sentences: probation, commitment to a JJC non-residential facility (or day program), and commitment to a secure JJC facility. According to the JJC, nearly one-third of all JJC commitments in 2004 resulted from a violation of probation rather than a new delinquency charge. Of the remaining adjudicated juveniles, nearly a quarter (23.5 percent) had committed offenses against others; 16.9 percent a drug offense; 13.9 percent a property offense; 7.9 percent a disorderly conduct and obstruction of justice offense; and 5.3 percent a weapons offense.

¹ Juvenile Justice Commission. Fall 2005. "Juvenile Justice Matters: Summary Data Report 2004." 3 (2).

² Juvenile Justice Commission. Fall 2005. "Juvenile Justice Matters: Summary Data Report 2004." 3 (2).

While most adjudicated juveniles are male, during the past two decades, girls have accounted for a growing share of the delinquent population. In 2003, girls composed 26 percent of arrests, compared to 19 percent in 1984—a 37 percent increase. The most prevalent reason girls were arrested in 2003 was for running away, which is technically considered a juvenile/family crisis situation.³ Boys accounted for higher percentages for all other offenses and for a higher percentage of violent offenses than overall offenses.

Minority adolescents are disproportionately represented among the JJC population at all stages of the process. They are more likely to be arrested, referred to court, adjudicated delinquent, placed in county detention facilities, and committed to the JJC than their white counterparts. They are also less likely to be diverted by the court from adjudication proceedings. Of the population of 10 to 17 year-olds under the care of JJC, 40 percent were minorities in 2004.⁴ Non-white juveniles accounted for 82 percent of all admissions to secure detention facilities and 62 percent of all adjudications of delinquency.⁵

An overwhelming majority of these young people come from some of New Jersey's high poverty places (see Figure 1). In all, four out of every five committed juveniles in 2004 came from Camden, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, Middlesex, and Mercer counties. While only 46.6 percent of all juveniles live in these counties, they make up a disproportionate 80.6 percent of those committed.⁶ Camden constitutes the county with the most commitments of juveniles to JJC facilities; one in three committed juveniles come from Camden County alone.⁷ The concentration of troubled adolescents in counties with distinct pockets of poverty, particularly Essex and Camden, suggest a connection between delinquency and impoverishment.

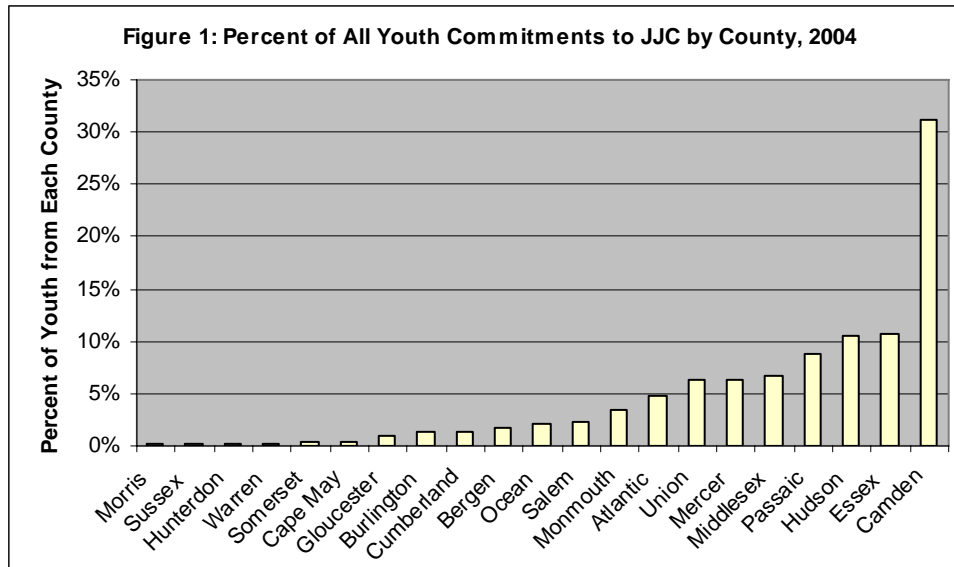
³ Juvenile Justice Commission. Spring 2005. "Juvenile Justice Matters: Young Women in New Jersey's Juvenile Justice System." 3(1)

⁴ Juvenile Justice Commission. Spring 2006. "Juvenile Justice Matters: Minority Youth Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System." 4 (1).

⁵ Juvenile Justice Commission. Spring 2006. "Juvenile Justice Matters: Minority Youth Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System ." 4 (1).

⁶ Author's Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau. 2004. American Community Survey and Juvenile Justice Commission. Fall 2005. "Juvenile Justice Matters: Summary Data Report 2004." 3 (2).

⁷ Juvenile Justice Commission. Fall 2005. "Juvenile Justice Matters: Summary Data Report 2004." 3 (2).



Source: Juvenile Justice Commission. Fall 2005. "Juvenile Justice Matters." Vol. 3 (2).

In part due to the lack of family and community resources available to many of these children, committed juveniles enter JJC with a number of health problems and familial issues. Research has found that substantial numbers of New Jersey children enter the juvenile justice system unnecessarily because their families cannot otherwise access needed mental health services. In Middlesex County alone, 999 children were placed in juvenile facilities for this reason in 2001.⁸ The New Jersey Office of the Child Advocate estimates that 21 percent of juveniles committed to the JJC have a serious emotional disorder and, at any one time, approximately 200 young people in detention centers are experiencing serious mental health disorders.⁹

In addition to their need for mental health services, many of these young people face barriers to rehabilitation that require intensive assistance and attention. According to an analysis from the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, among the juveniles committed to the JJC during the first quarter of 2003:¹⁰

- 60 percent needed residential substance abuse treatment;
- 39 percent had a history of involvement with the Division of Youth and Family Services child welfare system;
- 15 percent had a dual diagnosis of mental health and substance abuse treatment needs;
- 33 percent had Attention Deficit Disorder;

⁸ U.S. General Accounting Office. April 2003. "Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: Federal Agencies Could Play a Stronger Role in Helping States Reduce the Number of Children Placed Solely to Obtain Mental Health Services." GAO 03-397.

⁹ New Jersey Office of the Child Advocate. November 22, 2004. "Juvenile Detention Center Investigation: An Examination of Conditions of Care for Youth with Mental Health Needs: Executive Summary."

¹⁰ Stout, Bruce D. June 2003. "Community Re-entry of Adolescents from New Jersey's Juvenile Justice System." Re-Entry Roundtable: University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, and New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute.

- 26 percent had a history of having been prescribed psychotropic medication;
- 26 percent had a parent or caregiver who had been incarcerated;
- 22 percent had a parent or caregiver with a history of drug abuse.

Not only do committed juveniles enter into juvenile facilities from troubled communities, but they also return to them once they are released. Many times, a committed young person is returning to a neighborhood with a high concentration of crime, violence, poverty, and unemployment as well as a chaotic or unstable familial situation. If their needs for assistance with mental health, physical health, or familial issues are unaddressed while under the care of JJC, they are less likely to succeed when they return to their communities. Indeed, these obstacles often prove insurmountable to many and a majority will be re-arrested and re-convicted for crimes they commit once released.¹¹ Committed juveniles average 6.7 separate delinquency adjudications—meaning that, once they enter JJC and are released, they tend to re-engage in illegal activity.¹²

Acquiring training, work-related skills, and a good education is key to their success when they return to their communities. Unfortunately, many face barriers that limit their ability to re-engage in school. One of these is their limited and oftentimes tumultuous school attendance before commitment to a juvenile facility. One report found 45 percent of juveniles in the care of New Jersey’s JJC had not been attending school and 42 percent had been expelled prior to their commitment.¹³ There are also a number of logistical and administrative barriers they face when they return from commitment. Many schools are reluctant to permit the re-admission of young people from juvenile facilities and may steer students to other institutions such as local adult schools. Others require students to re-enroll if they have absences totaling more than 45 days, while other schools do not enroll at mid-semester. In addition, schools may not accept credits earned in a youth detention facility or do not accept partial credit for courses that have not been completed due to an adolescent’s release schedule. These inconsistencies discourage returning juveniles from re-engaging in school and truncate their educational careers.

New Jersey’s JJC has several core missions, including fostering public safety, providing secure facilities for juvenile offenders, and supervising juveniles in aftercare and parole. The state’s juvenile facilities hold a disproportionate share of minorities and children with families living in poorer places within the state. Many face familial and community strains including instability and a lack of safety. A number of committed adolescents also struggle with substance abuse and mental illnesses. Additional barriers face these children when they return to the community after commitment, particularly

¹¹ Stout, Bruce. June 20, 2003. “Community Re-Entry of Adolescents from New Jersey’s Juvenile Justice System.” Re-Entry Roundtable: University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, and New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute.

¹² Juvenile Justice Commission. Fall 2005. “Juvenile Justice Matters: Summary Data Report 2004.” 3 (2).

¹³ Giles, David R. June 20, 2003. “School Related Problems Confronting New Jersey Youth Returning to Local Communities and Schools from Juvenile Detention Facilities and Juvenile Justice Commission Program.” Re-Entry Roundtable: New Jersey Institute for Social Justice and New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute.

because educational institutions are not always prepared or willing to re-admit students. It is imperative that state budget allocations address these specific needs.

Juvenile Justice Programs

While the juvenile justice system is a small part of the criminal justice system, there are significant differences between the juvenile system and the adult corrections system. Unless a minor is charged with a crime as an adult, he or she will go through the juvenile justice system. Unlike the Department of Corrections, the juvenile justice system focuses on providing appropriate services and placement in a continuum of care and rehabilitation. It is important to ensure that the state uses the money entrusted to it to provide services for troubled youth and youth involved in the criminal justice system.

The juvenile justice system is administered by the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC). The JJC was created in 1995 in response to the Governor’s Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice’s findings about necessary reforms. The Council specified the need for a centralized authority in the state’s juvenile justice system for planning, policy development and the provision of services. The JJC is under the direction of the Attorney General and is administered in (but not of) the Department of Law and Public Safety.

The primary obligations of the JJC are: the custody and care of all juvenile offenders committed or transferred to the Commission; operating secure state juvenile facilities; developing programs and services for juveniles within its jurisdiction; promoting the integration of state, county and local facilities, services and programs—including probation and parole; administering the State/Community Partnership Grant Program; and preparing an annual State Juvenile Justice Master Plan that identifies all facilities, services and future needs, and assesses the effectiveness of available facilities and programs.¹⁴

The budget section regarding Juvenile Justice, unfortunately, provide few details about how funding is used and divided between the different functions of the JJC.

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Note: Some services related to Juvenile Justice are related to other areas and are addressed under other chapters, including Corrections & Re-entry, Mental Health, and Child Welfare.

¹⁴ N.J.S.A. 52:17B-170.

Detailed Program Information

Juvenile Justice Commission

***Program Purpose and Description:*¹⁵**

The JJC provides a continuum of care that ranges from day programs to secure, residential facilities. The day programs are intended to provide both an alternative sentencing option for juveniles with low-level crimes and also for juveniles on probation. Residential Community Homes seek to provide specialized care for juveniles with mental health, substance abuse, and emotional disorders. The JJC's secure facilities operate juvenile detention centers in which juveniles are committed for a pre-determined period of time. JJC also provides funding for county and local governments to set up prevention and early intervention services. Finally, the Office of Juvenile Parole and Transitional Services receive funding to assist juvenile parolees returning to their community.

Day Programs

The several day programs operate in cooperation with municipal and county agencies and community organizations. These day-long programs provide a variety of educational, vocational and skills training, and counseling services for juveniles who are placed on probation by the courts.

Atlantic City Day Reporting Program

The Atlantic City Day Reporting Program seeks to work on educational and vocational skills as well as other family and community factors and includes participation in community service projects. Each juvenile is matched with a mentor, who meets with the juvenile while in the program and outlines a plan for after the juvenile is released.

Burlington Day Program

The Burlington Day Program has the capacity to serve 25 male and female probationers. The participants range in age from 13 to 18 years old and spend at least six months in the program. The program provides programming aimed at building a positive attitude, effective decision-making, accountability, conflict resolution, goal setting, building stronger familial relationships, and obtaining employment.

Cumberland Day Program

The Cumberland Day Program has the capacity to serve 15 to 20 male and female participants between 14 and 18 years of age. Students come from Cumberland County and the northern tip of Salem County. The program provides vocational education

¹⁵ The content of the program description for the Juvenile Justice Commission comes directly from the NJ JJC website at http://www.njjjc.com/info_intro.htm.

opportunities through the Cumberland Community College and community service projects through work with the City of Bridgeton.

Elizabeth Day Program

The Elizabeth Day Program is operated by the Juvenile Justice Commission and receives a grant funded through the Urban League of Union County, Inc. Twenty-five to 30 participants from Union County are involved for an average length of six to eight months. Students are provided with group counseling, educational classes, and daily community service. Catholic Charity Services and the Union County Adult High School provide educational classes through a contractual agreement.

Liberty Park Hudson Day Program

The Liberty Park Hudson Day Program is located in Jersey City and serves the communities of Jersey City, Hoboken, Union City and Bayonne in Hudson County. Participants are involved in one of three work sites—building maintenance, basic food preparation skills, or paper recycling. They also attend the Liberty Park “Twilight” School in the late afternoon and evening.

Monmouth Day Program

The Monmouth Day Program is for males and females between the ages of 14 and 18. Juveniles must be Monmouth County residents who have been sentenced to probation. The average length of stay ranges from four to six months. The program seeks to provide educational, pre-vocational, community service projects and counseling services to juveniles. These services are supplemented by educational trips, organized recreational opportunities, anger management classes, health and family life instruction, and substance abuse awareness workshops.

Through its Division of Local Programs and Services, the JJC also awards grants to county and local governments to develop and operate prevention programs that reach young people as soon as their behavior puts them at risk of delinquency. The JJC also participates in community collaborations, an initiative designed to link each youth with a community mentor.¹⁶

Residential Community Homes

The JJC also operates 14 Residential Community Homes and contracts with private providers to operate two additional Residential Community Homes. These homes can accommodate a total of approximately 375 juvenile offenders.¹⁷

Albert Elias Residential Community Home

¹⁶ http://www.njjc.org/divisions_after.htm.

¹⁷ For a description of each of the Residential Community Homes, see www.njjc.org/group_centers.htm.

Albert Elias Residential Community Home is a 20-bed residential program located in Mercer County which is designed to serve younger male juvenile offenders. The majority of the residents at the Albert Elias Program range from 13 to 16 years of age. Juveniles attend educational classes, including filming and editing, as well as participate in wilderness activities. The program is located on the estate of Charles Lindbergh, the site of the infamous "Lindbergh baby" kidnapping. Youth provide tours and are responsible for maintenance of the historic house.

Camden Community Service Center/Transition Program

The Camden Community Service Center can accommodate a total of 50 male juveniles. The program provides a variety of services and is designed to provide a continuum of care so that, as the residents demonstrate progress, they are given more responsibility. Part of the Camden site is designated as a transitional program. A separate ten-bed unit serves paroled youth or those who are completing the final stages of their commitment so that youth may "step up" to a more restrictive setting or "step down" to a less restrictive setting as necessary.

Campus Program

The Campus Program serves up to 40 males with serious substance abuse issues. The program includes instruction on the impact of substance abuse as well as a vocational program that includes horticulture, building maintenance, small engine repair and technology.

D.O.V.E.S. Residential Community Home

The Developing Opportunities and Values through Education and Substance Abuse Treatment Program (D.O.V.E.S.) provides residential substance abuse treatment for females of ages 13 to 18. The length of stay is generally 6 to 12 months, and up to 12 participants may be accommodated at one time. The program provides substance abuse care and treatment as well as academic, vocation and recreational opportunities. All facilities serving female juveniles are adjacent to each other on the Johnstone Campus in Bordentown. Therefore, D.O.V.E.S. shares space with the Valentine Residential Community Home and is located next door to the Commission's secure institution for juvenile female offenders, the Juvenile Female Secure Care and Intake Facility.

Edison Prep Residential Community Home

Edison Prep Residential Community Home, located in Trenton, New Jersey, serves a maximum of 24 male adjudicated youths between 16 and 19 years of age. Special emphasis is placed on education, vocational skills, individual and group counseling, physical training, work experience and community service. Under supervision, Edison Prep youth participate in various programming aimed at strengthening families and educating youth about anti-violence. Programs are also organized with local community groups.

Essex Residential Community Home

Essex Residential Community Home serves up to 30 male juveniles of ages 16 to 18. In addition to receiving academic instruction, the students receive vocational instruction in areas such as carpentry, food preparation, plumbing, building maintenance, masonry and landscaping. The Essex Residential Community Home also operates community service programming.

Fresh Start Residential Community Home

The Fresh Start Residential Community Home is located in Allaire State Park and is a specialized program serving 28 juveniles with special needs who range in age from 13 to 18. Prospective candidates are screened and referred through the JJC's classification committee. Priority is given to those youth identified as seriously emotionally disturbed, impaired or otherwise vulnerable. The mission of this program is to provide treatment for youth with special needs. Academic and vocational classes are held on-site and community service opportunities are also available.

Green Residential Community Home

Green Residential Community Home is located in rural Passaic County and is a residential facility for younger male juvenile offenders between the ages of 13 and 16. The center serves a maximum of 32 residents. The program's goal is to provide a safe, secure, and structured environment where program participants can learn to modify their behaviors and reactions. Residents are involved in daily community service work and are also instructed in playwriting.

Manor Woods Residential Community Home

Manor Woods Residential Community Home is a community-based program for younger males who are between 13 and 15 ½ years of age. Manor Woods serves a maximum of 24 juveniles with an average length of stay of six to eight months. The program seeks to provide comprehensive services, including community service work at various local organizations. The program has a unique relationship with a local sorority, whose members regularly tutor juveniles at the program.

Ocean Residential Community Home

In order to meet the needs of the growing number of youth with serious substance abuse issues committed to the Juvenile Justice Commission, the Ocean Residential Community Home focuses on this special population. Ocean RCH has the capacity to serve a maximum of 30 males between 16 and 18 years of age. In addition to treatment services, residents participate in construction trades programs, horticulture, and landscaping.

Pinelands Residential Community Home

Pinelands Residential Community Home provides residential treatment for 18 adolescent male sex offenders between the ages of 14 and 17 1/2. Juveniles placed in the Pinelands Program are on a 3-year term of probation – a minimum of 18 months for the residential phase of their treatment followed by 18 months of court-ordered aftercare supervision. The program provides treatment for this population as well as vocational education programming.

Southern Residential Community Home

Southern Residential Community Home serves a maximum of 34 male juveniles who are between the ages of 15 and 19. The program provides academic programming as well as vocational instruction in building maintenance through the Atlantic County Vocational School and community service projects in horticulture.

Valentine Residential Community Home

The Valentine Residential Community Home provides community-based treatment for female juvenile offenders between the ages of 14 and 18. The program serves a maximum of twelve females. After renovations to the building are complete, the Valentine Residential Community Home will serve up to 18 residents. Valentine is located adjacent to all of the Commission's facilities that serve female juveniles on the Johnstone Campus in Bordentown. The program provides female juveniles with services, including assessment, counseling, academic programming, vocational training, and recreational opportunities.

Voorhees Residential Community Home

Voorhees Residential Community Home is located in Hunterdon County and serves a maximum of 27 residents 15 to 18 years old. The center provides classroom studies as well as vocational opportunities, including carpentry, greenhouse management, landscaping, plumbing, and masonry. The students at Voorhees Residential also participate in community activities. The program includes a Pre-Apprentice Program that allows 12 selected students to learn carpentry skills through a cooperative effort between the JJC, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Education.

Warren Residential Community Home

Warren Residential Community Home is located in Warren County and has a maximum capacity of 34 spots for juveniles of ages 16 to 18. In addition to the regular academic program, residents may take courses offered at Warren County Community College, including culinary/food service, auto mechanics and carpentry. Residents also participate in various service projects throughout the local community.

Secure Facilities

The JJC operates six secure juvenile centers for young offenders sentenced by the court. These centers range in size from the New Jersey Training School in Monroe Township, housing 300 males, to the Juvenile Female Secure Care and Intake Facility in Bordentown, housing 48 females. The newest facility, the Juvenile Reception and Assessment Center in Bordentown, which is designed to hold male juvenile offenders until appropriate placement at a secure facility or residential community home is identified, opened in 2001 and holds 144 juveniles in six separate areas, each accommodating 24 juveniles.

Juvenile Medium Security Facility (JMSF)

The Juvenile Medium Security Facility (JMSF) is the most secure facility operated by the Juvenile Justice Commission. It has the capacity to serve 118 male offenders and seeks to provide a structured environment for male juveniles between 14 and 20 years old, with a majority of residents 16 or 17 years of age. Residents are assigned to this facility based on both the seriousness of their crime and the ability to adjust to a less-secure facility. In addition to control and rehabilitation efforts, juveniles in this facility are provided academic programming and vocational training in drafting, carpentry, computer skills, graphic arts, and upholstery.

Juvenile Reception and Assessment

In 2001, the JJC opened a new 144-bed facility in Bordentown designed to house offenders until an appropriate placement at a secure facility or a community program is identified. The facility seeks to provide intake, assessment and classification for young male offenders sentenced to the Commission. The facility offers educational, recreational, medical and religious services for the juveniles while they are waiting to be assigned to another facility or program. This facility is separated into six sections for housing the juveniles, including the Parole Readjustment Unit, for juveniles who violate the conditions of their parole (see the following description). It also includes a separate area where juveniles are processed into the Commission's custody.

Parole Readjustment Unit

Within the Juvenile Reception and Assessment unit, the JJC established the Juvenile Parole Readjustment Unit for juvenile parolees in violation of the conditions of their parole. A reassessment of the juvenile's needs is conducted and a modified release plan is developed. Sometimes, juveniles return home to continue on parole and at other times the juvenile is placed at an appropriate secure facility. Due to a lack of placement options in the past, all juveniles who violated parole were placed at the New Jersey Training School regardless of the seriousness of their infractions. The Parole Readjustment Unit was developed to attempt to provide a more individualized parole plan.

Juvenile Female Secure Care and Intake Facility

The Juvenile Female Secure Care and Intake Facility serves as the state's only intake and secure care unit for committed juvenile females. It provides education, treatment, and custody for committed juvenile females. It is designed to hold 48 females, with 8 single rooms that serve as detention cells. Programming components include academic instruction, physical fitness and health classes, and vocational training, including cosmetology and graphic arts.

New Jersey Training School for Boys

The New Jersey Training School (NJTS) is the Juvenile Justice Commission's largest facility, currently housing approximately 300 male juveniles. NJTS is a secure facility with a perimeter fence and 24-hour armed roving patrol. Residents range in age from 12 to 23 years old, with the vast majority 16 to 18 years old. The NJTS campus includes seven cottages that serve as housing units, a full-service school, a vocational building, recreation facilities, a medical facility and administrative offices. NJTS offers a number of vocational programs, including training in a number of specific building and mechanical trades, and operates an optical lab program. The lab provides vocational training to the youth and supplies eyeglasses for juvenile and adult offenders throughout the state.

Life Skills and Leadership Academy

The Life Skills and Leadership Academy, which replaced the Stabilization and Reintegration Program, is located in Wharton State Park in Tabernacle for male youth between 13 and 19 years of age. The program combines uniforms, military drill exercises, and graduation ceremonies with academic, vocational, and community service opportunities. Residents progress through three phases—the Orientation Phase, which consists of trainings and introduction to the regimen of the program; the Academy Phase, with educational and vocational goals as well as community service projects; and Aftercare Phase, during which residents leave the facility under supervision. Juveniles who have committed a first-degree offense, those with medical illnesses and those psychologically unable to adhere to a rigorous schedule are not eligible for placement in the Life Skills and Leadership Academy.

Atlantic Youth Center

No information about the population served at the Atlantic Youth Center or the structure of the program is currently available from published JJC materials.

Prevention and Early Intervention Services¹⁸

¹⁸ http://www.njjc.com/info_prevention.htm

The Juvenile Justice Commission awards approximately \$24 million each year to county and local governments to fund programs that are aimed at youth prevention and intervention services before at-risk youth enter a Commission facility. The Commission attempts to build a continuum of care to serve youth with varying needs. In 2000, the Commission created an office specifically devoted to coordinating, funding and supporting local programs and sentencing alternatives. The Office of Local Programs and Services uses several funding sources, including federal, state and grant funds, to assist counties and cities to develop programs aimed at reaching at-risk juveniles as soon as their delinquent behavior begins. These funds are used by counties and local governments to create sentencing options for Family Court judges.

Office of Juvenile Parole and Transition Services¹⁹

The Office of Juvenile Parole and Transitional Services is designed to reintegrate juvenile parolees into their communities after the completion of their sentences. Supervision is provided in order to maintain public safety and assist the development of the juvenile. Juveniles in JJC care will eventually return to their community at the end of their sentence and this office is responsible for planning for parole. Each juvenile is assessed according to the level of need, risk, supervision and services required. Four levels of supervision are applied to the monitoring of youths: intensive, maximum, medium and minimum. As youth demonstrate progress, they advance to a lower level of supervision and greater independence. Each level of supervision contains standards for monthly contacts, curfew, drug and alcohol screens and community service.

Special offenders whose behavioral histories are dominated by violence, sex offending, or drug trafficking are intensely monitored. Supervision teams collect court-ordered financial obligations from the youth. Payments toward restitution, fines and penalties are collected and disbursed to the proper recipients. In the event that a youth absconds from supervision, he or she is pursued by supervision staff and are entered into the National Crime Information Center database.

¹⁹ http://www.njjc.com/offices_after.htm

Budget and Performance Trends:

The JJC's public information states that counties are responsible for operating and funding the detention facilities. Standard-setting, technical support and oversight are the state's functions and are provided through the JJC's Compliance Monitoring Unit.²⁰ State budget materials do not make clear how much money is being spent by New Jersey counties to house juvenile offenders, but they do identify state and federal funding for Juvenile Community Programs, which include day and residential programs as well as its secure facilities.²¹

Funding appropriated for the JJC includes funding that is coordinated, administered, and distributed as a part of the State/Community Partnership developed by the County Youth Services Commissions.²² The funds use the JJC as a pass-through entity to distribute the combined state and federal dollars to all counties for programming in the areas of prevention, family crisis intervention, detention alternatives, increasing disposition options, aftercare, special needs, expedition of juveniles held in detention, administration and other needs. While current data is not available, in 2002 funding under this area totaled around \$18 million and grant amounts have remained nearly the same since then.²³

²⁰ www.state.nj.us/lps/jjc/info_system.htm.

²¹ State FY07 Budget Book, p. D-286.

²² State FY07 Budget Book, p. D-286.

²³ Based on a conversation with JJC Community Programs staff, November 27, 2006.

**Juvenile Community Programs
(Residential Centers and Day Programs)
Evaluation Data**

	Actual FY04	Actual FY05	Revised FY06	Estimated FY07
Design capacity	562	562	562	562
Residential centers	449	449	449	449
Day programs	113	113	113	113
Average daily population	486	458	471	473
Residential centers	391	372	405	405
Day programs	95	86	66	68
Ratio: Population/position	.7/1	.7/1	.6/1	.6/1
Annual per capita	\$69,502	\$82,024	\$82,414	\$82,594
Daily per capita	\$190.42	\$224.72	\$225.79	\$226.29
Juvenile Parole and Transitional Services	923	724	726	726

Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-287)

**Juvenile Community Programs
Appropriations Data**

	Orig. & --Supple. FY05	Total FY05 Available	Expended FY05	FY06 Adjusted Appropriation	Request/ Recommend FY07	Actual Approp. FY07
Direct State Services	\$22,981,000	\$23,450,000	\$23,450,000	\$24,160,000	\$24,410,000	\$24,410,000
Grant-in-Aid	\$18,743,000	\$18,824,000	\$18,824,000	\$19,012,000	\$18,664,000	\$18,854,000
Federal funds	\$7,895,000	\$12,787,000	\$5,383,000	\$3,266,000	\$3,394,000	\$3,338,000
Other funds	---	\$23,289,000	\$22,886,000	\$25,671,000	\$27,889,000	---

Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-288–290) & FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p.146,147 & 258)

Note: Juvenile Community Programs includes all facilities operated by JJC and described above, including their day programs, residential community homes, and secure facilities.

Additional Analysis:

In October 2003, the Office of the Child Advocate undertook an investigation into the conditions of care – including overcrowding, access to mental health services and the overall quality of services – for juveniles in the 17 county detention centers. A report issued that following year, in November 2004, reveals some alarming shortcomings in the juvenile detention center system. Several key findings of the report, entitled “Juvenile Detention Center Investigation: An Examination of Conditions of Care for Youth with Mental Health Needs,” are worth mentioning.

- The report found that 21 percent of all youth committed to the JJC have a serious emotional disorder. The report also cites that, with an average daily population of juveniles in detention of 935 persons, an estimated 200 juveniles in detention are suffering from a serious emotional disorder. Most of the administrators interviewed reported between ten and twenty-five percent of those held in detention were on some form of a psychotropic drug. Suicide is prevalent among this population.²⁴
- Despite the prevalence of mental health disorders, the report found that mental health screening dramatically varied throughout the state and that, in most detention facilities, the mental health screening is rudimentary.²⁵ The report revealed that the present risk screening protocol used by the JJC is insufficient to identify the range of emotional and mental health disorders suffered by juveniles committed to JJC’s care.²⁶
- The report also concluded that the detention centers inadequately treat the mental health needs of juveniles committed to JJC²⁷ and that mental health clinical services are highly inconsistent among counties. The report noted that, although some facilities have “social work” positions, the post does not commonly require an employee to be licensed, to have a degree in counseling or social work, or to possess relevant experience or a history of working with troubled youth. Additionally, the types of services offered vary from one-time crisis services to weekly individual counseling.²⁸
- The report concluded that the juvenile detention center facilities are overcrowded and that “overcrowding is a perennial problem for many juvenile detention centers.”²⁹ This practice is contravention of N.J.A.C. 13:92-5.2, which forbids

²⁴ “Juvenile Detention Center Investigation: An Examination of Conditions of Care for Youth with Mental Health Needs,” Office of the Child Advocate (Nov. 22, 2004), p. 4-5.

²⁵ *Id.*, p. 18.

²⁶ *Id.*, p. 18-22.

²⁷ *Id.*, p. 23-27.

²⁸ *Id.*, p. 25-26.

²⁹ *Id.*, p. 10.

the detention of youth in any detention center that has a population exceeding its maximum rated capacity.³⁰

- According to the report, a disquieting twenty-five percent of youth in detention were awaiting a Department of Human Services placement. These youth are confined to secure detention despite being found appropriate for a less restrictive DHS/DYFS setting. The report also indicates that this practice is in clear violation of New Jersey law.³¹

The report issues numerous recommendations, but it is unclear whether the JJC has adopted any or all of those recommendations.

A new study by the Justice Policy Institute, *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*, highlights much of the findings of the Child Advocate. The study indicates that detention can increase recidivism and pull youth deeper into the juvenile and criminal justice system. In contrast, the study indicates that alternatives to detention can curb crime and recidivism better than detention.

³⁰ *Id.*, p. 10, fn. 33.

³¹ *Id.*, p. 11-13.

Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program

Program Purpose and Description:

The Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program (JISP) operates with funding from the Judiciary and is designed to be an intermediate form of community supervision for selected juvenile offenders, serving as an alternative to incarceration. It is administered by a special staff with expertise in probation. The staff provides intensive supervision for a select group of juvenile offenders who have been ordered into the program by the Family Court.³²

Budget and Performance Trends:

Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program Evaluation Data				
	Actual FY04	Actual FY05	Revised FY06	Estimated FY07
Participants	282	284	325	325
Applications	260	275	300	300
Assessment reports	260	275	300	300
Revocations	77	63	81	81

Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-476)

Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program Appropriations Data						
	Orig. &-- Supple. FY05	Total FY05 Available	Expended FY05	Adjusted Approp. FY06	Request/ Recommend FY07	Actual Approp. FY07
Direct State Services	\$2,169,000	\$2,044,000	\$2,041,000	\$2,169,000	\$2,169,000	\$2,169,000

Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-477) & FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p.285)

³² <http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/jobs/j040707j.pdf>.

Recommendations

Adequate Mental Health Services in the Community

- The state must provide for adequate and accessible mental health services for juveniles without requiring an adjudication of delinquency for the child to access necessary services.

According to a report on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice by the U.S. General Accounting Office, almost one thousand juveniles from Middlesex County alone have been placed in New Jersey's juvenile justice system in order to receive mental health services. Their study was conducted from March 2002 to February 2003.³³

- The state must provide counselors for juvenile offenders who will assist them in handling any family issues or other causal factors that may have contributed to the offensive behavior.

Numerous environmental factors, including family dysfunction, contribute to delinquent behavior in juveniles. Mental health professionals generally collect a family history as a first step in treatment because of the significant role past experiences and family systems play in mental health issues and consequent disruptive behavior. There are currently inadequate mental health services available to incarcerated youth. Behavior modification is only offered as an academic program at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. While behavior modification should be offered at all three youth facilities, it is as important to get to the root of the behavior, which often begins with family dysfunction. There needs to be an institutionalized program and not just an academic course.

Case Management for Re-entering Youth

- New Jersey must implement a multi-disciplinary approach to the case management and support of adolescents with psychiatric disorders who are leaving secure and residential facilities and returning to their communities.

Besides the risk factors associated with poverty in the communities to which re-entering juveniles are returning, many youth also have mental health conditions (and/or chemical addiction backgrounds) that put them at special risk of recidivism.³⁴ Programs such as P.A.C.T. (Program of Assertive Community Treatment), which is currently used in New Jersey communities for adults leaving commitment situations, exemplify the multi-disciplinary approach.

³³ *Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: Federal Agencies Could Play a Stronger Role in Helping States Reduce the Number of Children Placed Solely to Obtain Mental Health Services*, United States General Accounting Office, GAO-03-397, p. 17.

³⁴ Stout, Bruce D., *Community Re-Entry of Adolescents from New Jersey's Juvenile Justice System*, New Jersey Institute of Social Justice, June 20, 2003.

- New Jersey should institute Juvenile Drug Courts in all vicinages.

Juvenile Drug Courts are an effective means of managing the issues presented by juvenile offenders with substance abuse issues. In 2005, there were Juvenile Drug Courts in five vicinages. There is no federal funding for New Jersey's Juvenile Drug Courts for FY06.

- There must be a concerted effort to address family dysfunction while the juvenile is in the Juvenile Justice system.

The Juvenile Justice Commission recognizes the need to address issues of children who have left home before the age of majority or emancipation – “runaways.”³⁵ It also recognizes that the first entry into the criminal justice system for juveniles is often after they run away. While we acknowledge that the JJC provides services, it is imperative that the JJC treat the child to discover their reasons for running away. If possible, it should also provide therapy for the family to ensure a better relationship if or when the juvenile returns home.

Effective Education Plan

- The home school districts of individual juvenile offenders must be required to participate on an ongoing basis in the development and implementation of educational plans for juveniles who are under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Justice Commission, in order to facilitate the most favorable re-entry into the community and public school system when they leave a detention or residential facility.

Although the Juvenile Justice Commission reports that “it is common for juveniles to progress several grade levels while in custody,”³⁶ a recent study by the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice reports that re-entering youth face myriad obstacles to returning to school and completing their high school education. These problems run the gamut from delays in transferring records from the Commission's facilities to non-acceptance of credits earned while in the detention facility.³⁷ These barriers can be resolved by coordination between the authorities at the juvenile facilities and the local school officials.

- The Department of Corrections must provide an education to juvenile offenders that will give them marketable skills or a chance at furthering their education at an institution of higher learning once they are released.
- Classes based on cultures should be taught at all Youth Correctional Facilities.

³⁵ *Juvenile Justice Matters*, Spring 2005

³⁶ www.njjc.org/community.htm.

³⁷ Giles, David R, *School Related Problems Confronting New Jersey Youth Returning to Local Communities and Schools from Juvenile Detention Facilities and Juvenile Justice Commission Programs*, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, June 20, 2003.

The Department of Corrections offers classes in African-American and Hispanic History and Culture at its adult correctional institutions, but only one youth facility offers a class in African-American History and Culture, and none offer the Hispanic History and Culture class. In addition to receiving an education to make them employable, youth offenders should have the opportunity to participate in courses that provide them with awareness of and pride in their cultures and history. While clearly not all youth offenders are members of racial and ethnic minorities, the racial composition in YCFs is disproportionately represented by African-Americans and Hispanics. A multi-cultural education is important for all students in a state that is becoming increasingly diverse, and even more so in state institutions.