

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-16 Performance Report

OFFICE OF JUVENILE AFFAIRS

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

The Office of Juvenile Affairs Mission Statement:

The Office of Juvenile Affairs is a state agency entrusted by the people of Oklahoma to provide professional prevention, education, and treatment services as well as secure facilities for juveniles in order to promote public safety and reduce juvenile delinquency.

The Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) was created on July 1, 1995, as a result of legislation enacting the Oklahoma Juvenile Code [House Bill 2640 (2004)]. Jerry Regier, Executive Director, and David Dennis, Deputy Director adopted the mission statement.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Keith Wilson, Executive Director, (405) 530-2806, (405) 530-2857.

GOVERNANCE:

The Board of Juvenile Affairs was created February 1, 1995, which shall consist of seven (7) members who shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. One member shall be appointed from each congressional district and any remaining members shall be appointed from the state at large. All members shall be appointed for terms of four (4) years. Current membership is as follows:

Board Members

Dr. Donnie L. Nero, Chair
Scott Williams, Vice Chair
Dr. Stephen Grissom
W. Mark Hixson
Kristin Jarman
Richard R. Rice
Michael Willis

Term Expires

July 1, 2017
July 1, 2017
March 15, 2017
March 15, 2018
March 15, 2017
July 1, 2017
March 15, 2018

Finance Committee

W. Mark Hixson, Chair
Michael Willis

Education and Programs Committee

Scott Williams, Chair
Dr. Stephen Grissom
Michael Willis

Rates and Standards

Richard R. Rice

Rules

Dr. Donnie L. Nero, Chair
Kristin Jarman
Scott Williams

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GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

The minutes from the Board of Juvenile Affairs meetings are attached for the following dates:

2013 – February 15, May 10, June 14, July 19, August 23, September 20, November 1, and December 13.

2014 – February 21, April 18, May 16, July 18, August 15, September 19, and October 10.

The Board of Juvenile Affairs shall hold meetings as necessary and a majority of members serving on the Board shall constitute a quorum of the Board.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

The decision to establish an all-female medium secure facility has shown positive results. Nationally recognized evidence-based gender specific curricula were implemented into the treatment program. The program is designed to safely manage and treat female youth who often have been unresponsive to less restrictive interventions. Female residents are now working the treatment program at a faster rate allowing them to parole and open bed space for new arrivals. Since the separation of the girls from Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center, the number of altercations has dropped dramatically. During the last 6 months before the separation, the average mechanical restraint involving the female population was 28 per month. In the past twelve months since the separation, the average mechanical restraint rate decreased to 1.4 per month. The number of assaults by youth on each other, and on staff, has also decreased significantly to an all-time low average of 2.25 per month. This facility has been funded through one-time FY-2014 and FY-2015 funds. Without new funding, OJA will close the program July 1.

In FY-2016, OJA will launch the Oklahoma Youth Academy – a charter school specifically designed for OJA’s youth placed within a secure treatment facility. The education program will be “modernized” by customizing it to fit the needs of our institution population. Currently, the Education Program for youth in OJA’s institutions is provided by local school districts. This method contains a certain amount of redundancy. The process can be streamlined by OJA administration working directly with school principals instead of operating through intermediaries (who are charging a portion of their salary to OJA). This will also allow OJA to better coordinate education with treatment and rehabilitation. OJA has the responsibility to insure that each youth is given an opportunity to advance his/her education. This can be done much more efficiently through the operation of the Oklahoma Youth Academy.

OJA has joined together with ten (10) other states and the University of Maryland’s Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings to form a consortium for the purpose of improving the quality and cost efficiency of the education provided to the youth in the OJA institutions. OJA is in the third year of a three-year project commitment.

OJA is authorized and designated to collect and distribute restitution payments to court ordered victims. The OJA Restitution Program was redeveloped and updated to provide better efficiency and effectiveness in the collection, safeguarding and disbursement of restitution monies to the court ordered victims. The restitution process was centralized and fully developed within the computer software programs supporting the OJA Finance Division and the Juvenile Online Tracking System (JOLTS). This has solidified OJA internal controls and provided timely and accurate restitution payments to victims. The program is now time tested and effective.

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OJA is working with OMES and will implement the use of network scanning for all locations statewide, as well as the use of electronic signatures, which allows for faster communication by increasing the flow of information within the agency and reduced paper usage.

OJA has implemented video hearings with Tulsa County youth who are in secure facilities. Benefits include the transportation time saved for both personnel and youth, fuel savings, vehicle mileage and use, and retaining juveniles at the secure facility. Expansion projects will include Oklahoma County and other counties who obtain courtroom video conferencing capabilities. OJA continues to implement increased use of video conferencing equipment.

OJA will update two forms of surveillance systems within the secure facilities:

First, the current security surveillance systems at both OJA secure institutions consist of outdated equipment, which have blind spots and bad coverage areas. The security equipment will enhance the safety of both staff and residents. This update is now complete.

Second, the Digital Video Recording devices (DVR's), which provides storage, enhanced quality, and establishes a hardware standard for OJA Institutions. These systems will also include capabilities for wireless cameras, access control and motion detection, installation of additional cameras across the campus at both secure institutions to provide better coverage, established electronic access controls where appropriate, install motion detection devices in areas where cameras are not allowed to detect movement of residents, replace stationary cameras with PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) where necessary to increase coverage and utilize officer-worn video cameras in conjunction with stationary cameras for additional coverage and documentation when incidents occur. The new DVR's are now installed and in use providing enhanced storage and quality with the above listed capabilities.

OJA's update of the surveillance systems within the secure facilities also satisfies the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards, which mandate a full review of each facility's surveillance equipment. The PREA standard requires a plan of action to address camera coverage area, blind spots, recording equipment, enhanced video quality and increased storage requirements. A review revealed the previous security surveillance systems at both OJA secure institutions consisted of outdated equipment, blind spots, and poor coverage areas which would not have met PREA standards.

OJA will develop an agency specific, computer-based training (CBT) program. All OJA employees have extensive training requirements ranging from 16 to 160 hours per year. OJA's CBT program will reduce employee travel, improve delivery consistency, provide needed flexibility for 24-hour facilities and will match essential curriculum to individual training needs. Budget restraints have limited OJA's ability to obtain a qualified computer based training program developer.

OJA has implemented a Payroll Conversion this year to process payroll from monthly to biweekly, which has reduced the number of payrolls processed, and eliminated overpayments and underpayments. This conversion was implemented to achieve a goal of OMES to convert state agencies to biweekly payroll, and to be more competitive with the private sector in the labor market.

BARRIERS TO MODERNIZATION:

Due to the cuts made in the FY-2015 budget, the Juvenile Services Division found it necessary to make a 10% across the board cut to the juvenile detention centers. Additionally, the seven remaining beds for probation sanction youth located in Canadian County were closed. These actions resulted in a savings of

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\$558,000. These cost saving measures will create a strain for the detention centers to maintain services for delinquent youth. The closing of the sanction program means there are no out-of-home residential sanctions for the system. While community-based sanctions remain in place, they do not always have the same effect as a short term stay in a structured residential program.

OJA's budget reductions have eliminated the Thunderbird Academy, a Level E facility, Sanction programs, and reduced funding for Restitution Program, Multi-Systemic Treatment Program, Specialized community group homes, Level E and D beds, Regional Secure Detention, Local graduated sanctions programs, gang intervention services, intermediate sanctions program (El Reno), and Therapeutic Foster Care. Reductions have been made to all Community-based Youth Services agencies for prevention services across the state. Entering FY-2015, OJA was already badly under staffed. The FY-2015 cuts have significantly aggravated that situation. The only way OJA could meet the new restrictions was to freeze another 35 staff positions along with dramatic cuts in funding for detention facilities, Community-based Youth Services, and elimination of all remaining sanction beds.

Following the last round of personnel voluntary retirement buyouts, there were three one-worker OJA county offices that were closed and the services provided in those counties were consolidated with larger, neighboring counties. This saved the cost of the personnel, office rent and phone/computer services. OJA Staff from Bryan County now provides services for Atoka County and staff from Pittsburg County provides services for Coal and Latimer Counties. The downside to this restructuring is there are no local workers in Atoka, Coal or Latimer Counties, which results in a longer response times and additional mileage expenses.

CORE MISSION:

There are no services that are required for OJA to provide which are outside of our core mission. There are no services OJA provides that are duplicated or replicated by another agency. There are no services which are core to our mission which OJA is unable to perform because of requirements to perform non-core services elsewhere.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

OJA has privatized many functions, some of which were once provided by the agency. The largest of these functions, which consist of approximately 48% of OJA's budget, include: all Level D & E residential group homes, regional detention beds, and emergency shelter beds. In addition to emergency shelter beds, Community-based Youth Services agencies provide prevention, intervention, and counseling services.

The largest of these services are:

- Residential Level D & E Group homes,
- Regional Detention Centers,
- Community-based Youth Services Shelters,
- Community-based Prevention Services,
- Community At-Risk Services, and
- Community Intervention Centers (CICs).