

ISSUE BRIEF

2009



Population management in OYA facilities

'Population management' in corrections describes the systematic placement of the right offender in the right bed at the right time. This goal carries many challenges, particularly when beds are full. OYA has 900 beds in eleven close custody facilities statewide. There is more demand than beds because of budget constraints.

Overview

There are two paths for youth to reach OYA custody: youth adjudicated in juvenile court and committed to OYA; and youth who were convicted as adults in adult court. This includes Measure 11, Measure 11 reduced, waived offenders, and those eligible for Second Look or Alternative Incarceration Programs.

All OYA youth have these characteristics in common: they range from 12- to 25-years old and their crime of commitment occurred prior to their turning 18.

The youth occupy beds that fall into three categories for management purposes:

- **Public Safety Reserve Beds (PSR)**

PSR beds are used for the most serious offenders who committed person-to-person crimes specified in OAR 416-410-0030. OYA has 95 beds budgeted in the PSR.

- **Department of Corrections Beds (DOC)**

Used by youth who were convicted as adults under ORS 137.707 or ORS 419C.340, DOC offenders have consistently been occupying about 341 beds; over the last year that number has topped 390.

- **Discretionary Bed Allocation (DBA)**

The remaining close custody beds are allocated by formula to counties or regions to use at their discretion per OAR 416-410-0050. The current DBA is 430.

OYA is required to serve PSR and DOC youth; if their numbers exceed plan, the DBA is adjusted to reach the 900-bed budgeted capacity.

Close custody demand

The October 2008 Demand Forecast indicates that the demand for close custody beds is expected to decline slightly over the ten-year forecast period. However, it remains that the forecasted number of beds exceeds OYA's capacity in close custody by more than 250.

The forecast is driven by trends in juvenile crime and the size of Oregon's juvenile population. It also cites the effectiveness of youth programs.¹

The forecast assumes that current laws and current juvenile justice practices continue as

¹ Office of Economic Analysis: Oregon Youth Authority Demand Forecast <http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/OEA/docs/oya/oya1008.pdf>

they are now. Changes to these can create significant change in the forecast. For instance, a risk to the forecast is the crime rate, which is anticipated to rise given current economic realities.

Population Ebb and Flow

Because some offenders are committed to OYA facilities notwithstanding whether beds are available, population management decisions are made daily. Depending on what the court orders, options may include close custody programs, transition placements, and community placements

Each facility has an assigned population management specialist to handle bed assignments and liaise with facility staff and field parole/probation staff. Every attempt is made to assign offenders to facilities consistent with their risks, needs, program progress, and sentence limitations.

Additionally, OYA and county juvenile departments collaborate to find safe alternative interventions for county youth, keeping DBA beds for the highest risk youth. By working together, the DBA is flexed so the DOC and PSR youth are accommodated.

The growth in the DOC population does not reflect a growth in commitments; it is the result of an increase in the length of stay. A rough calculation that shows the effect of admissions and length of stay on beds is:

$$\frac{\text{average days of stay}}{365} \times (\# \text{ admissions per year}) = \text{beds needed}$$

OYA has paroling authority of youth placed in its custody by juvenile courts and its customary practice is to release youth when they have met identified case plan goals and reduced their criminogenic needs.

When facilities are over capacity, OYA can reduce certain youths' length of stay to manage its close custody population. While

not ideal, juvenile commitments can be released prior to completion of their prescribed case plan goals. Release decisions are made based on risk and early release plans include community wraparound support and services.

Resolving population challenges

New to OYA is a committee tasked to identify, evaluate and initiate immediate and long-term population management solutions.

Given that DOC and PSR youth must be admitted, immediate interventions focus on managing use of DBA close custody beds. OYA "gatekeepers" liaise with county partners to coordinate the transition of youth into and out of close custody.

Long-term solutions will use a systems approach to establish consistent standards and tracking to monitor and adjust the system within capacity.



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