



Oregon Youth Authority

Issue Brief

December 2011

Education services for youth offenders

10

Number of OYA close-custody correctional and transition facilities

750

Approximate number of youth offenders supervised in OYA close-custody facilities

1,075

Approximate number of youth offenders supervised by OYA in communities

302

Total Funds, in millions of dollars, allocated to OYA in 2011-2013

258

General Fund, in millions of dollars, allocated to OYA in 2011-2013

87

Approximate percent of OYA's budget spent locally in facilities and communities

Overview

- ▲ All youth offenders in close custody are required to enroll in classroom or vocational education programs.
- ▲ The Oregon Department of Education is responsible for overseeing classroom instruction for all youth offenders in close custody ages 21 and under who have not received a high school diploma or GED.
- ▲ The Oregon Youth Authority is responsible for providing vocational education opportunities for youth offenders in close custody.
- ▲ Some youth also are eligible to take college-level courses.

Education as a means to reduce recidivism

Research shows the most effective means of reducing the risk of a youth reoffending is to provide the appropriate combination of treatment and education services. All youth offenders in OYA's close-custody facilities receive classroom and/or vocational education services customized to their ages and educational needs.

OYA supports the benefits of education and encourages all youth offenders to gain high school diplomas or GEDs. Once those goals have been achieved, youth offenders are encouraged to take online college-level classes and vocational education training.

OYA has five goals for educating youth offenders:

- Provide a standards-based individualized education for each student placed in an OYA facility.
- Provide educational services in a safe, secure and healthy environment.
- Encourage education programs that focus on strategies to reduce risk factors that contribute to recidivism.
- Support programs that prepare youth for successful community living.
- Encourage collaboration among all partners involved in serving the youth placed in OYA facilities – youth, their parents and/or guardians, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), education service districts and school districts, community colleges, local employers, and other organizations and agencies as appropriate.

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Mission

The Oregon Youth Authority protects the public and reduces crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.



Vision

Youth who leave OYA go on to lead productive, crime-free lives.



Core Values

Integrity
Professionalism
Accountability
Respect



Director

Colette S. Peters



Deputy Director

Fariborz Pakseresht



Assistant Director
for Business Services

Jean Straight



Assistant Director
for Community Services

Philip Cox



Assistant Director
for Facility Services

Karen Daniels

Classroom education

ODE oversees classroom education for youth offenders in close custody by contracting with local education service districts and/or school districts to provide a classroom education that meets state education requirements.

All schools at OYA's close-custody facilities meet state educational standards for accreditation. In addition, ODE is required by statute to provide an annual school year for youth offenders consisting of a minimum 220 days of actual classroom instruction.

All course work needed to graduate is available to all youth. Not every required course is offered every quarter, but all required courses are offered at some point during the school year. Class schedules are developed based on the credits needed by each youth.

Most youth come to OYA with high school class credits far below the number of credits they would be expected to have based on their age. As a result, the majority of youth work on the basics. Each youth works with a case manager and other staff members to ensure a written plan is in place that describes credits earned and credits needed.

Online and correspondence college courses also are offered, giving youth the opportunity to earn AA degrees. Dual credit classes are available that offer high school and college credit.

Vocational education

Work experience is a valuable tool in helping youth be well prepared to return to their communities and successfully transition to productive, crime-free lives.

OYA provides post-graduation work experience through projects led by staff, contracts with outside consultants, and partnerships with volunteers. These opportunities allow youth offenders to learn job skills and earn certifications that help them be job-ready when they leave OYA.

By providing vocational education, OYA helps youth pursue their interests and develop their skills for career planning. Youth also learn the importance of attendance, punctuality, collaboration, problem-solving, and other aspects of the soft skills employers want in their workforce.

Agency staff, contractors and volunteers strive to individualize career and transition opportunities. Vocational education opportunities include horticulture, landscaping management, plumbing, painting, and welding and electrical work. OYA also promotes skills in emerging fields such as wind and solar power.

Graduation rates

Approximately 19 percent of youth under age 21 in OYA close custody have earned a high school diploma or GED. Among youth age 21 and older in close custody, approximately 74 percent have earned high school diplomas or GEDs.