



Oregon Youth Authority

Issue Brief

December 2011

Food and nutrition 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

- ▲ OYA maintains a centralized system of food services management that improves the quality and cost-effectiveness of foods provided to youth.
- ▲ All meals and snacks provided to youth in close custody meet USDA guidelines.

Ensuring adequate nutrition

OYA serves approximately 3,500 meals and snacks daily to youth offenders in its 10 close custody facilities. Nutritious meals are critical to youth offenders' healthy physical, mental, and intellectual development, and to their ability to participate in treatment and education activities.

The agency's food services operations manager is an experienced registered dietitian with a graduate degree in food systems management and more than 30 years' experience in food service operations. She is responsible for delivering consistent, nutritious menus within budgetary constraints that meet USDA Child Nutrition Programs guidelines.

Supporting youth reformation

Research shows that good nutrition helps children and adolescents focus and learn better. Within OYA's facilities, appropriate nutritional support helps youth offenders focus on required treatment and education. A good breakfast is especially important because it reduces the likelihood of anger, irritability or lethargy, any of which can interfere with learning and treatment.

Meeting varied dietary requirements

OYA's menus reflect the needs of adolescents ages 15-18 who are experiencing a final growth spurt. Menus also reflect the differing dietary and caloric needs of females and males in that age range.

The key to supporting youth in close custody is to serve nutrient-dense foods (such as fresh fruits and vegetables) and to avoid empty-calorie items such as potato chips and sodas. OYA uses portion control to ensure calorie content is appropriate for both genders and all age groups.

Oregon Youth Authority

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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

All close-custody facilities take into consideration youth offenders' food allergies and also make menu adjustments for youth with special dietary needs due to illnesses, dental issues, or conditions such as diabetes. Each facility also meets religious dietary needs and preferences for vegetarian meals.

For example, for Muslim, Jewish and other youth who do not eat pork products, non-pork equivalents such as turkey may be substituted. The Islamic fasting month Ramadan is accommodated by preparing sack lunches that observant youth may eat during the allowed period between dusk and dawn. Dietary restrictions also are accommodated for youth observing other holidays with specific dietary requirements. To celebrate other cultures, special meals that reflect food preferences are incorporated into the menu cycle.

Meeting strict nutritional standards

OYA participates in the National School Breakfast, School Lunch and After-School Snack programs, and therefore is required to meet strict nutritional standards. That means serving USDA-required amounts of protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C; limiting salt, sugar, and fat; and providing a variety of foods that contain sufficient grains, fruits, and vegetables.

The National Child Nutrition Programs provide reimbursements for meals served and makes available USDA-purchased commodities for those enrolled in the program. OYA earns credit for the meals it serves and can use these credits to purchase commodity foods.

Each close-custody facility has a kitchen manager who is charged with food preparation and ensuring food quality and safety, generating food and supply orders, and supervising staff and youth working in the kitchen.

Centralized menus ensure foods meet the nutritional needs of youth, incorporate variety, and meet budgetary requirements. Although OYA uses centralized menus, kitchen managers may customize menus by substituting food items of similar nutritional content.

To further youths' nutritional knowledge, the agency provides nutritional information and diabetes education.

Providing work experience

Youth work in all facility kitchens to learn skills that will help them obtain employment after they leave close custody. The work includes dishwashing, kitchen sanitation, food preparation, and food delivery and service. Some youth prepare complete meals under a cook's supervision and guidance.

Youth also learn warehouse operations by working in the central kitchen warehouse at MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility in Woodburn. Youth receive training in food safety and handling, and may obtain a food handler's card after leaving the facility.

At Oak Creek Youth Correctional Facility in Albany, youth may enroll in a culinary arts class that carries up to five college credits.

Additional formal vocational training opportunities related to food industry jobs for youth are being explored.