



Oregon Youth Authority

Issue Brief

December 2011

Foster care 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

- ▲ Youth in the custody of the Oregon Youth Authority may be placed in secure close-custody facilities, transition programs, residential treatment programs, foster care homes, or under parental supervision.
- ▲ Placement is determined by court order, treatment progress, risk to the public, and other factors.
- ▲ There currently are approximately 40 OYA foster homes in Oregon. At any one time these homes serve 50-60 youth. Homes are located in 14 communities throughout Oregon.
- ▲ OYA currently lacks enough foster homes to meet the needs in Clackamas, Deschutes, Klamath, Multnomah, and Washington counties. And throughout the state, OYA lacks enough foster parents to meet the needs of youth from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Foster care offers a community setting

Foster care offers an effective placement option for youth who need an out-of-home placement, are doing well in treatment, can attend public school, and will benefit from a structured home life. OYA has a network of effective foster parents serving youth of-fenders on parole and probation.

OYA has two types of foster homes: The traditional foster home for younger offenders who are likely to return home, and the transitional foster home for those ages 18 to 24 who will benefit from learning life skills such as establishing a bank account, preparing a household budget, shopping for and preparing food, and managing other responsibilities of independent living.

Foster parent qualifications and expectations

OYA foster parents are required to be emotionally mature and able to help youth build positive relationships and live independently. They must be at least age 21 (or 25 for transitional foster parents), a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, financially stable without foster-care reimbursements, and able to pass a criminal history check.

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

Foster parents provide basic housing and food for youth offenders, as well as clothing, transportation, recreational opportunities, spending money, and reasonable incidentals. The youth offender will have a state medical card that pays for medical, mental health, and other necessary treatment.

Foster parents help youth grow and mature

Foster care provides a stable, secure living environment for youth – such as having his or her own room, attending public school, observing positive behavior and choices, and eating dinner as a family. Foster parents support youth as students, and assume the parenting role of discipline, accountability, and knowing the youth's friends and whereabouts. Foster parents help youth learn to be accountable for their behavior.

Foster parents tell about youth who are doing well in school, playing sports, succeeding in after-school and summer jobs, volunteering in the community, and heading toward productive, crime-free lives. Some OYA foster youth go on to two- and four-year colleges or enroll in Job Corps training.

One foster parent tells about a girl who came into the home in 1980. The former foster youth now works for the county mental health department supporting high-risk youth and families. "Seeing someone change and turn their life around and become the person you know is really in there – it's a reward like no other."

OYA supports foster parents

OYA foster parents receive the support they need to be successful in helping OYA meet its mission to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

An OYA foster care certifier calls foster parents at least weekly, visits the home at least monthly, and is available by phone or e-mail at other times. An OYA probation and parole officer works with foster parents on the youth's case plan and meets regularly with the youth, checking on his or her activities and setting goals.

Foster parents receive training ranging from first aid, CPR, and mandatory reporting of child abuse to skills specific to working with youth offenders. If foster parents have a youth with mental health or drug and alcohol issues, for example, they will receive the specialized training they need. This training also helps foster parents understand and support the youth's formal treatment. A monthly maintenance payment reimburses foster parents for the services they provide to youth.