



Oregon Youth Authority

Issue Brief

December 2011

Meeting youth offenders' mental health needs

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 offenders come to the Oregon Youth Authority from many backgrounds. They bring with them a range of experiences and challenges, some of which help explain their criminal behavior. OYA's role is to develop individualized treatment plans for each youth based on the youth's risks, needs and strengths.

OYA delivers evidence-based cognitive behavioral treatment to help youth overcome their criminogenic thinking and behavior, and provides separate treatment for diagnoses of mental health conditions, and alcohol and other drug addictions.

In order to ensure OYA appropriately identifies and meets the needed services, the agency has taken biennial demographic snapshots of youth offenders since 2000. Data are collected on all youth in close custody, as well as those on probation and parole in the community. OYA uses the data to track trends, identify unmet needs for services, and adjust treatment programs accordingly.

2010 demographic snapshot

The 2010 survey found that nearly two-thirds of youth offenders had diagnosed mental health conditions. Three in five abused or were dependent on alcohol or other drugs. One in five had experienced sexual abuse. And 19 percent had IQs below 80, putting them in the bottom quintile, a substantial increase over the 11 percent of youth offenders with low IQs in 2004.

Females in close-custody facilities appeared to be an especially troubled population. Fifty-two percent had histories of sexual abuse compared with 17 percent for males. Thirty percent of females in close custody had attempted suicide at least once, 42 percent had an IQ below 80, 59 percent were diagnosed with a conduct disorder, 63 percent were taking psychotropic medications, and 85 percent were diagnosed with abuse of or dependence on alcohol or other drugs.

One in four youth offenders had a biological parent with a psychiatric history. A majority of youth had a biological parent with a history of alcohol or other drug abuse. And one in eight youth offenders already was a parent. The highest rates

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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

of parenthood were among youth in the community, where 14 percent of males and 18 percent of females were parents. By contrast, in facilities the rates were 10 percent for males and 12 percent for females.

Work and school

In the community, 19 percent of youth were employed either part- or full-time, while nearly three in 10 were seeking employment. Sixty-seven percent of youth in the community were in school full- or part-time, while approximately 20 percent already had earned high school diplomas or GEDs. The rates of high school completion were highest for youth in facilities, and rates of GED completion were highest for youth in the community.

Treating offenders

Youth offenders receive evidence-based cognitive behavioral treatment aimed at helping them overcome their criminogenic behaviors. These include diagnosis-specific treatments such as those for sex offenders, fire-setters, and youth diagnosed with alcohol or other drug addictions or mental health conditions. Other treatments target such elements as anti-social behaviors, gang affiliation, and understanding emotions and beliefs that drive high-risk behaviors.

Educating offenders

Each of OYA's 11 facilities has a year-round school where youth may work on high school diplomas or GEDs and enroll in online college coursework. Youth also can take advantage of vocational opportunities ranging from plumbing, barbering and culinary skills to electrical, landscaping, wood-working and wastewater treatment.

Volunteers complement the formal program by bringing in special classes and skill-building programs, and adding encouragement to offenders to pursue a path leading to productive, crime-free lives.