



Oregon

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NEWS RELEASE

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OYA study seeking to improve youths' parole and probation outcomes

Oregon's juvenile corrections agency has begun a study aimed at better aligning parole and probation caseloads with the amount of time required to meet the needs of youth.

Oregon Youth Authority juvenile parole and probation officers have long had caseloads of 25 youth. Now, OYA researchers are investigating how factors such as the youth's crime, risk level, gender, age, mental health/cognitive functioning, race and region of the state affect the amount of time parole and probation officers devote.

"Parole or probation are critical times for youth to make decisions about the direction their lives will take," said Colette S. Peters, OYA director. "Results of this analysis should help us ensure juvenile parole and probation professionals have the time they need to support youth in making the best decisions."

Expected by autumn, results will help OYA fulfill its mission of protecting the public and reducing crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

The National Institute of Corrections recommends assigning caseloads based on number and risk level of youth, but is silent on the other factors OYA is researching.

The study will determine how much time is required to perform certain tasks, including whether certain types of cases regularly require more time than others. For example, does one gender require more time than the other? Do juvenile parole

and probation officers in rural Oregon spend significantly more time driving to testify at distant juvenile courts?

Research is being conducted by obtaining information from juvenile parole and probation officers selected by field supervisors; conducting four regional focus groups of randomly selected parole and probation officers; and asking all parole and probation officers to complete job analysis questionnaires and track time spent on diverse types of cases. An oversight committee that includes union-represented parole and probation officers is providing guidance and feedback.

“The goal is to create a data-supported formula to assign youth so the time available for supervision and services will more closely match the requirements of the individual youth,” said Philip Cox, OYA assistant director for community services.

Among the tasks performed by parole and probation officers are developing agreements with youth, determining special needs and services for youth, conducting monthly face-to-face reviews with youth, arranging vocational services, administering urinalyses, preparing for and testifying at hearings, and participating in quarterly meetings of team members who support the youth.

Juvenile court judges use probation for youth who require out-of-home placement but not incarceration; parole involves supervision in the community following a term of incarceration.

OYA supervises approximately 1,100 youth on parole and probation in communities throughout Oregon, and has custody of approximately 900 youth offenders ages 12-24 in correctional and transitional facilities in Albany, Burns, Florence, Grants Pass, La Grande, Salem, Tillamook, Warrenton and Woodburn.

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