



Oregon Youth Authority

Issue Brief

January 2015

Multicultural services for youth in OYA close custody

10

Number of OYA close-custody facilities

650

Approximate number of youth offenders OYA supervises in close custody

550

Approximate number of youth offenders OYA supervises in community residential treatment and foster care settings

450

Approximate number of youth offenders OYA supervises who live independently or at home in communities

323

Total Funds, in millions of dollars, allocated to OYA in 2013-2015

88

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

Overview

The youth in the Oregon Youth Authority's care and custody reflect the diversity of the state's population. Approximately 58 percent of youth offenders are Caucasian, 25 percent are Hispanic, 11 percent are African American, 4 percent are Native American, and 1 percent are Asian American, with the remaining 1 percent not self-identified.

This compares to the state's overall youth population, which is 78 percent Caucasian, 12 percent Hispanic, 2 percent African American, 2 percent Native American, and 4 percent Asian American, with the remaining 2 percent not self-identified.

Research shows that the most effective means of reducing the risk of a youth reoffending is to provide the appropriate combination of treatment and education. Research also shows that both treatment and education are more effective if they are provided in a manner that respects and meets the specific cultural needs of each youth.

Recognizing and supporting diversity

OYA's Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations helps guide and coordinate culturally competent services for all youth in the agency's care and custody.

These services include:

- ▲ Providing translation and interpretation assistance to youth and families,
- ▲ Ensuring treatment and education programs are relevant to all demographic groups,
- ▲ Supporting youth empowerment programs,
- ▲ Assisting with transition support to find culturally relevant community services for youth with specific demographic needs, and
- ▲ Coordinating speakers, presentations, and special events at OYA's 10 close-custody facilities to celebrate diversity and raise cross-cultural awareness.

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 will go on to lead productive, crime-free lives.



Core Values

Integrity
Professionalism
Accountability
Respect



Director

Fariborz Pakseresht



Deputy Director

Joe O'Leary



Key Service Areas

Business Services
Community Services
Facility Services
Health Services
Information Services
Treatment Services

Transition programs and services

Once a youth has completed treatment and is ready for release, staff in the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations assist youth who are transitioning out of close-custody facilities. The goal is to ensure all youth leaving OYA have the specific cultural supports they need to successfully reintegrate back into their communities and lead productive, crime-free lives.

Key to providing these services are the many partnerships OYA maintains with a range of groups and organizations to ensure youth receive the culturally specific supports they need during and after being under OYA's supervision. Partners include the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon, the African American Advisory Committee, Hispanic Advisory Committee, and Native American Advisory Committee.

Reducing disproportionate minority contact

As can be seen from the demographic information in the Overview section, three key demographic groups are over-represented in Oregon's juvenile justice system relative to their numbers in the community. These groups are Hispanic youth (25 percent of OYA's youth population vs. 12 percent of all youth under age 18 in the state), African American youth (11 percent vs. 2 percent), and Native American youth (4 percent vs. 2 percent).

To address the factors that contribute to this disproportionate contact with the juvenile justice system, the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations plans and hosts annual summits to review data and develop action plans to drive down this over-representation. These conferences bring together representatives of state and local governments, nonprofit groups, educators, law enforcement officers, the court system, treatment programs, social service organizations, victims' rights advocates, and others who are working together to reduce the disproportionate minority contact with these systems.

Currently, OYA is leading a multi-year research project to mine data from the education and social service systems to clearly address systemic barriers and other factors that lead to the over-representation of Hispanic, African American, and Native American youth entering OYA's custody.