How Oregon’s Juvenile Justice System Works
Oregon’s Juvenile Justice System

Oregon’s juvenile justice system is composed of a network of local and state partners. Governmental agencies providing primary direct services for youth in the juvenile justice system are county juvenile departments and the Oregon Youth Authority.
At the local level, county juvenile departments provide sanctions and services to youth ages 12-17, who are referred primarily for law violations by law enforcement agencies. Juvenile departments conduct intake services and determine dispositions for cases referred. Whether to proceed informally in lieu of formal court action or in the case of more serious referrals to file petitions before the juvenile court is determined by the juvenile departments in conjunction with local district attorneys and the juvenile court. Juvenile departments provide opportunities for accountability and reformation in the community.
In cases of youth referred for more serious offenses, juvenile departments work with the local district attorneys to file delinquency petitions in the juvenile court moving toward adjudication. Should the juvenile court judge establish jurisdiction (determine guilt for an act which would be a crime if committed by an adult), the judge may place the youth under formal county probation. Youth on county level probation are subject to formal sanctions and requirements that are designed to prevent further penetration into the juvenile justice system and include a range of supervision, accountability, and reformation services.
Youth who are unsuccessful in meeting conditions of county probation and/or who commit very serious offenses and/or are found to be serious risk to community safety may be committed by a juvenile court to the custody of the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA). OYA, the state's juvenile corrections agency, administers state level youth close-custody facilities and community programs and supervision. All services provided by OYA are directed toward preventing further criminal activity and provide for accountability and reformation of youth.

OYA contracts with private providers for residential treatment services and foster care. OYA probation and parole officers supervise and coordinate case plans and services for youth who are placed in the community.
Youth sentenced by the adult court may be placed in OYA close-custody facilities by two judicial processes: adult court on waived offenses and adult court on Ballot Measure 11 offenses.