



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Oregon Youth Authority
Director's Office
530 Center Street NE, Suite 200
Salem, OR 97301-3765
PHONE: (503) 373-7212
FAX: (503) 373-7622

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NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Ann Snyder, Interim Communications Manager, 503-378-6023,
ann.snyder@oya.state.or.us

New interstate compact to strengthen safety for Oregon youth, communities

Oregon's participation in a strengthened Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ), which will introduce new accountability and a national youth data base, will add to the safety of Oregon youth and communities.

The state became a participant last year when the Legislature made Oregon the 40th state to ratify the updated interstate compact.

The interstate compact is an agreement among the states that addresses supervision, transfer and return of delinquent and runaway youth across state lines. At any given time, Oregon is working with 250-500 youth who are either Oregon youth in other states or other states' youth who have been placed in Oregon.

"The original compact offered little recourse if a state didn't follow its terms," said Philip Cox, Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) assistant director for community services and the compact's state commissioner. "The new compact strengthens state accountability and has built-in financial penalties if a state doesn't comply."

Among the issues the ICJ covers are the return of runaways with no criminal record; the return of youth offenders who flee to another state; youth on parole or probation who are placed in another state; and youth who are sent to another state for residential treatment or foster care.

In addition to strengthening state accountability, the updated compact also will support a national data base that will permit states to promote youth and community safety by having the ability to more easily and effectively monitor youth. If a Georgia youth is arrested in Portland, for example, Oregon law enforcement officials will be able to look up that youth's history on the data base.

A similar national data base recently became operational for adults, and OYA already has such a data base for youth involved in Oregon's juvenile justice system.

Cox is serving on a subcommittee writing rules for the new compact. As state commissioner he will be advised by a newly named six-member state advisory council, expected to hold its first meeting in June.

State council members are State Sen. Brian Boquist of Dallas; Kenneth Cowdery, executive director, New Avenues for Youth in Portland; State Rep. Nick Kahl of Portland; Judge Michael Livingston of Marion County Juvenile Court; Janine Robben, director, Oregon Crime Victims Law Center; and Glenn Vest, director, Klamath County Juvenile Department.

The original interstate compact, a 1955 document prompted by a Parade magazine series about runaways called "Nobody's Children," was updated because of shortcomings such as its inability to hold states accountable, concerns about delays in youth placement and 55-year-old rules that were considered inadequate. ICJ is administered by an interstate commission.

The Oregon Youth Authority has custody of approximately 900 offenders in correctional and transitional facilities in Albany, Burns, Florence, Grants Pass, La Grande, Salem, Tillamook, Warrenton and Woodburn. OYA juvenile parole and probation officers supervise an additional 1,100 youth offenders on parole and probation in communities throughout Oregon.

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