



JUVENILE JUSTICE

The organization of state programs addressing juvenile delinquents changed significantly in the mid 1990s. Before 1995, these programs were under the purview of the Department of Human Services. A separate agency, the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA), was created in 1995 to establish independent management of the juvenile justice system, a move designed to improve services and hold juveniles more accountable for their actions.

Office of Juvenile Affairs

The creation of OJA was part of a sweeping juvenile justice reform bill, HB 2640, enacted in 1994. After a one-year transition period, the separate agency became operational on July 1, 1995 (FY'96). The bill expanded prevention, intervention and detention programs across the state. The focus of the bill was to:

- ensure the public's safety by providing more medium-security beds for serious, dangerous adjudicated juveniles;
- provide immediate consequences and rehabilitation programs for early offenders to prevent further juvenile crime; and
- initiate a number of primary prevention programs to prevent juvenile crime altogether.

Changes in Juvenile Justice Laws

In addition to creating prevention and intervention programs for adjudicated youth, HB 2640 also enacted the "Youthful Offender Act" in 1994. Prior to this act, the juvenile justice system was required to release an adjudicated juvenile at the age of 18. Under the act, if a juvenile turns 18 and a judge makes certain findings, the juvenile can be transferred to

the adult correctional system. HB 2640 also provides that youth sentenced as youthful offenders be moved to the adult system at any time if they violate terms of their rehabilitation. During the 2000 Legislative session, the Youthful Offender Act was amended to allow a youth up to the age of 20 to remain in the juvenile system if OJA requests to retain custody of that youth. The purpose of this amendment was to allow OJA enough time to complete rehabilitation plans of youthful offenders in cases where they don't enter the system until the late teen years.

OJA PROGRAMS

In 1998, OJA restructured the way services are delivered. The state is divided into three geographical divisions: the central, eastern and western zones. Three zone administrators are responsible for all OJA services delivered within that zone. The goal of this restructuring is to better coordinate services for youth and families, promote local community partnerships and enhance collaboration.

OJA provides a variety of services to at-risk and adjudicated youth:

Boot and Hat Camps	Institution Treatment
Community At Risk Services	Intake, Probation & Parole Services
Community Based Resources	Intermediate Sanctions
Community Intervention Centers	Interstate Compact
Diagnostic and Evaluation Services	Military Mentoring Programs
Delinquency Prevention	Monitoring and Review
Delinquent Institutions	Parental Responsibility
Detention/Detention Alternatives	Reintegration Programs
Electronic Monitoring	Restitution Opportunities
Faith-Based Resources	State Transition & Reintegration
First Offender Programs	System (STARS)
Foster Homes	Santa Claus Commission
Gang Intervention	Tracking of Adjudicated Juveniles
Graduated Sanctions	Transportation of Adjudicated
Group Homes	Juveniles
Independent Living	Volunteer and Mentoring Program
Individual Services Plans	Wilderness Camps

Residential Services

OJA operates out-of-home residential placements that are designed on a level-of-care system. Residential levels of care start at Level C; program intensity and staffing patterns increase at higher levels.

- **Level C:** The major focus is remediation of behavioral problems, with residential care as a therapeutic approach.

- **Level D:** This level has two basic goals: remediation of behavioral problems through residential and therapeutic needs, and provision of 24-hour awake supervision of youth to protect clients and the public.
- **Level D+:** Level D+ has the same two goals of Level D; however, Level D+ requires more intensive 24-hour awake supervision of youth.
- **Level E:** Level E placements have a highly structured environment and regularly scheduled contact with professional staff. Crisis intervention is available through a formalized process on a 24-hour basis. Youth in this category display extreme antisocial and aggressive behavior, and often suffer emotional disturbances as well. Level E facilities typically have the longest waiting list of youth in need of placement.
- **Secure Institutions:** Secure Institutions are locked and fenced facilities that provide OJA's most intensive level of residential programming. They are reserved for youth whose behavior represents the greatest risk to themselves and the public. OJA operates three institutions (Southwestern Oklahoma Juvenile Center in Manitou, Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center in Tecumseh and L. E. Rader Center in Sand Springs) and contracts for one private institution (Union City Juvenile Center). All four institutions are classified as medium-security facilities, although Rader also serves a maximum-security population.

OJA also provides other types of out-of-home placements that are not part of the levels-of-care system.

- **Diagnostic and Evaluation Programs (D&E Centers):** The primary purpose of a D&E Center is to complete a comprehensive evaluation within 20 days of a youth's intervention. The evaluation is used to determine placement that meets the needs of the youth and protects the public. The centers have 24-hour awake supervision of youth. All youth assumed to be in need of placement in Level E or higher should go through a D&E center.
- **Specialized Community Home:** Implied by the name, these are homes of individuals in the community who provide room and board for up to five youths in the contractors' homes. The contractor is a professional, contracted social service provider who provides intensive, individually focused, therapeutic intervention programs.

- **OJA-operated Group Homes:** Group and individual treatment is provided by professional staff. Group homes have the same two primary goals as a Level D and D+ facility, which includes 24-hour awake supervision of youth.
- **Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC):** TFC is a contracted service where youth are placed in the home of approved TFC parents. The contractors are reimbursed for providing care similarly to TFC in the child welfare system.
- **Boot Camps:** Boot camps are short-term, highly structured residential programs patterned after military discipline. They serve primarily chronic property offenders and promote education, accountability, community service projects and self respect.
- **Wilderness Camps:** Wilderness camps are staff-secure residential programs located in rural, physically-challenging settings that emphasize teamwork, education, job training and self-discipline. These camps are primarily geared towards non-violent offenders.

All OJA placements incorporate education components into their programs.

Follow-up and Aftercare

Research shows that an essential part of successful rehabilitation of delinquent youth includes a program of 6 to 12 months of follow-up/aftercare services. OJA has implemented two programs to provide these essential services, STARS and CARS. STARS provides tracking and accountability services, and CARS provides the therapeutic component.

In FY'99, the State Transition And Reintegration Services (STARS) program was initiated as the follow-up component that had been lacking for youth who had received services from OJA. In FY'01, all youth leaving a placement of Level D or higher, or those youth leaving Boot and Wilderness Camps, are eligible for STARS.

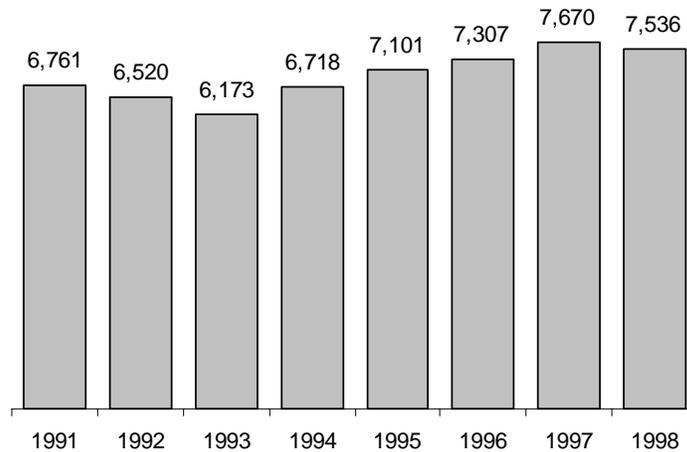
The STARS program is a collaborative effort of OJA and the Oklahoma National Guard. The goal of the STARS team is to ensure that youth are successfully completing their reintegration plan. The program includes components such as mentoring, graduated sanctions and community services. The program has been extremely successful, boasting the lowest recidivism rate of any OJA program.

The Community At Risk Services (CARS) Program was implemented in FY'00. CARS services are provided by local Youth Service Agencies and include services such as individual, group and family counseling as well as school reintegration. Similar to STARS, all youth leaving a Level D or higher placement, as well as those youth leaving Boot and Wilderness Camps, are eligible for the CARS program. Additionally, CARS also serves other at-risk youth with prevention services.

JUVENILE CRIME AND RECIDIVISM

The arrest rate for juveniles aged 10-17 has increased 11.5% from 1991 to 1998.

Juvenile Arrest Rates
1991 through 1998

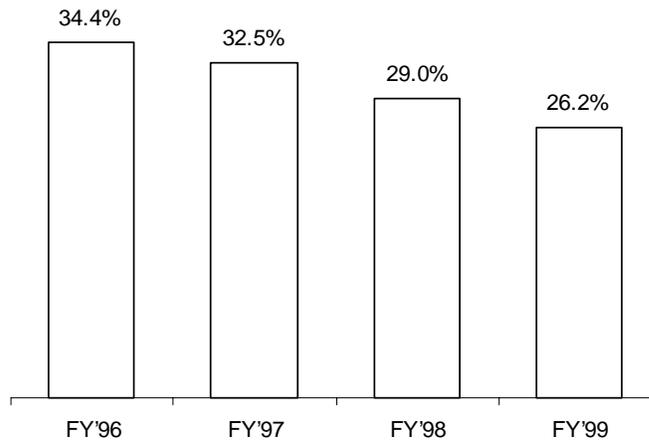


Source: OSBI Uniform Crime Reports.

OJA in FY'01 was finishing an evaluation that examines completion and recidivism rates of children served during FY'96-FY'00. According to a draft report, the rate of juveniles completing residential services has increased from 49.5% in FY'96 (when OJA was created) to 64.8% in FY'00.

Since FY'96, there has been an 8% decline in the recidivism rate of OJA juveniles who completed programs.

OJA Recidivism Rates, FY'96 through FY'99
(Percentage of Youth Who Recidivate)



OJA defines recidivism by the following elements:

- The juvenile has completed services.
- An arrest or referral for a felony or misdemeanor has occurred within 365 days of the date of services completion.
- The new arrest or referral has been followed by an admission of guilt and placement of the juvenile on informal probation; or the arrest or referral has been followed by a new adjudication as a delinquent or conviction as a youthful offender or an adult.

OFFICE OF JUVENILE AFFAIRS BUDGET

Funding for juvenile justice remains primarily a state responsibility. The federal government provides modest funding for juvenile justice under the Title XIX Medicaid program, Title IV-E foster care program, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) grant program, the Juvenile Accountability Program Block Grant, and the federal Truth-In-Sentencing Act.

Since the Office of Juvenile Affairs was created, its appropriations have grown by 28% and its total budget has increased by approximately 50%.

Appropriations and Total Budget FY'96 through FY'01 (in Millions)

