



**Oregon Juvenile Department Directors'
Association**

Representing Oregon's County Juvenile Departments
www.ojdda.org

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- Molly Rogers, President Elect
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OJDDA Supports the Juvenile Justice Information System Modernization Project

The Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association (OJDDA) is highly supportive of the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) Modernization project that will improve JJIS as an effective tool for community safety and assisting in changing the lives of youth served. OJDDA includes all 36 Oregon county juvenile departments. Our association has partnered with OYA since the development and inception of JJIS in the late 1990s. Over 2,500 juvenile justice professionals across the state in counties and the OYA rely on JJIS to manage over 11,000 youth referred to the juvenile justice system each year.

The JJIS Steering Committee, an active state-county partnership for over twenty years, is made up of five county juvenile directors and three OYA members who provide governance and oversight for JJIS. Through this steering committee, the OJDDA has been directly involved in the project since the planning began in 2017. The current JJIS system is among the nation's leaders in juvenile justice data tracking and reporting and Oregon is one of only three states in the nation that has a statewide data system for youth in the justice system. We are appreciative that over two decades ago, Oregon legislators made a decision to create this one data system.

The business of juvenile justice takes place in the moment and, largely, in local communities – and it happens 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The current JJIS can only be accessed by professionals at their desks, impeding their ability to make operational and data-informed decisions while engaging with youth in the communities in which these youth live. JJIS provides critical, useful, and up-to-date information about youth encountering the justice system at both the county and the state levels, informing decision-making and improving public safety. The aggregated data has been crucial for researchers, who have used the data to build tools that improve our ability to manage risk and match youth with interventions and services that are most likely to reduce recidivism. Access to timely data in JJIS allows us to leverage and access funding sources such as grants, federal dollars, diversion dollars, and preparation of annual or biennial budget requests.

The JJIS user interface is not fully functional, cannot support much-needed mobile access, and is written in an obsolete computer language, which significantly impedes the ability to support JJIS. Without modernizing the system, it will become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to find individuals to fix glitches with the software, and JJIS may no longer work for the thousands of juvenile justice professionals who rely on it every day. Another critical issue is that JJIS does not currently have the ability to allow for some important racial and gender demographics to be entered into an individual youth record. An enhanced JJIS would accommodate capturing multi-racial, ethnic, and gender diverse options. Correct representation in the data is critical for accurate reporting, and for providing services to achieve equitable outcomes for underserved populations.

Modernizing JJIS will provide an array of benefits to the Oregon Juvenile Justice community and bring JJIS into the 21st Century. Modernization will also allow JJIS to integrate and interface with modern technologies, allowing for a more productive workforce that can focus on youth and family engagement, reformation, and keeping local communities safe. OJDDA appreciates the opportunity to share this information and support the modernization of JJIS. For further information, please contact Lara Smith at lsmith@smithgr.com or (503) 804-9750.