

2025-27 Budget Review

Oregon Youth Authority

	2021-23 Actual	2023-25 Legislatively Approved *	2025-27 Current Service Level	2025-27 Governor's Budget
General Fund	251,200,913	418,755,516	463,271,308	468,823,677
Other Funds	140,718,655	35,124,430	8,360,503	36,635,503
Federal Funds	27,388,961	46,844,302	45,651,006	45,703,555
Total Funds	419,308,529	500,724,248	517,282,817	551,162,735
Positions	1,003	991	995	1,002
FTE	972.62	956.53	966.01	973.01

* Includes legislative and administrative actions through December 2024.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) serves youth ages 12-24 who have committed crimes prior to their 18th birthday. The agency exercises legal and physical custody of youth committed to OYA by juvenile courts and physical custody of youth committed to the Oregon Department of Corrections by adult courts and placed with OYA due to their young age. As of July 2024, the number of youths under supervision at any given time was 900, with 527 youth in community placements and 373 in close custody. Roughly 11% of youth served by OYA are young women. The agency also provides direct assistance to Oregon counties by providing funding for juvenile crime prevention basic, county diversion, and gang intervention programs.

BUDGET ENVIRONMENT

General Fund supports the majority of OYA's activities and operations. Typically, anywhere from 7-9% of the total budget comes from Federal Title XIX Medicaid reimbursement funding for the cost of community residential treatment programs and case management services for eligible youth. A small percentage of the budget is Other Funds that come from youth trust account fund reimbursements and the U.S. Department of Agriculture School Nutrition Program.

While the overall population had been declining for the past several years, the needs of the youth in custody have significantly increased. More youth than ever need treatment for mental health or developmental disabilities. Additionally, it is increasingly difficult to find appropriate treatment services available in communities for certain populations of youth. Culturally specific services are rare and finding equitable services for females is also a challenge for OYA.

Finally, the agency has been dealing with significant staffing shortages in its close-custody facilities which are 24/7/365, leading to more mandated overtime shifts, resulting in staff burnout, more sick calls, and ultimately increased staff turnover. OYA has utilized various strategies to help mitigate the situation, including managers, administrative staff, and parole and probation staff covering shifts when necessary, and creating limited duration and temporary positions to provide short-term relief. OYA has been actively recruiting and onboarding new staff as quickly as possible, however this often leads to less experienced supervision across shifts and more incidents with youth.

CURRENT SERVICE LEVEL

The current service level (CSL) budget totals \$517.3 million, which is 3.3% above the 2023-25 legislatively approved budget. General Fund is increased by 10.6%, from \$418.8 million to \$463.3 million, largely due to positions approved in the 2023 session that were phased-in mid-biennium and now have the full biennial cost, an increase in the mandated caseload, and inflationary increases for food and supplies provided to the youth in custody.

The Oregon Youth Authority is one of a handful of state agencies whose current service levels are adjusted for mandated caseload programs, those required by the federal government, the state constitution, or court actions. The 2025-27 General Fund CSL increased by \$2 million for mandated caseload changes based on the October 2024 youth corrections population forecast.

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET SUMMARY

The Governor's budget for OYA totals \$551.2 million, an overall 6.5% increase over CSL, while General Fund totals \$468.8 million, which is 1.2% above CSL.

Beyond minor reductions for statewide Attorney General and DAS service charges, the Governor's budget contains one \$180,580 General Fund reduction to OYA's capital improvement budget and nine policy packages totaling \$37 million (\$8.6 million General Fund, \$28.3 million Other Funds, and \$150,642 Federal Funds), and seven positions (7.00 FTE) to support the following increases:

- \$4.9 million total funds (\$3.2 million General Fund, \$1.7 million Other Funds, and \$86,420 Federal Funds) to continue funding for the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) modernization project.
- \$20.2 million total funds (\$2 million General Fund and \$18.2 million Other Funds) for deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs
- \$6.8 million total funds (\$1.2 million General Fund and \$5.6 million Other Funds) for facility closed circuit television (CCTV) and access control improvements.
- \$615,147 total funds (\$562,725 General Fund, \$52,422 Federal Funds, and one position (1.00 FTE) to enhance and improve housing and reentry support for youth, or their families, in an effort to maintain stable housing upon exiting OYA care.
- \$3.2 million total funds (\$502,325 General Fund and \$2.7 million Other Funds) to complete infirmary and pharmacy remodel and expansion efforts at the MacLaren facility.
- \$500,000 General Fund to engage a consultant to create a 10-year strategic plan for facilities.

- \$394,716 total funds (\$382,916 General Fund, \$11,800 Federal Funds, and one position (1.00 FTE) to coordinate Medicaid resources made available by a change to the 1115 waiver that now allows additional coverage for youth in custody.
- \$300,000 General Fund for interpreter translation services to comply with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964).
- A net zero-dollar package to add five positions (5.00 FTE) for additional group life coordinators at MacLaren by using services and supplies budget from the Vocational Education Services for Older Youth program.

General obligation bonds are proposed to support Other Funds for the JJIS modernization project, deferred maintenance and capital improvements, CCTV and access control improvements, and the MacLaren infirmary and pharmacy remodel.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) is the foundational data management system for juvenile justice in Oregon, used by all county juvenile departments and the Oregon Youth Authority for case management, contract management, and reporting. Created in 1995, JJIS has allowed the state to maintain a single record for each youth in the juvenile justice system, over time creating the database that supports the agency's data-driven approach to juvenile justice. While the database itself is fully up to date and supported by its vendor, the user interface is obsolete and is not fully functional. The JJIS interface cannot be used via the internet and therefore is not available on mobile devices, is written in a little-used computer language, and is no longer meaningfully supported by its vendor.

The JJIS Modernization project began in 2017 and is currently in the development stage. Previously the project had an anticipated completion date of October 2025, however recent quality assurance reports indicate that the project has issues with development, meaning timeline and/or budget modifications are likely necessary from what was proposed as part of the agency's budget development. \$7.7 million of Article XI-Q bond funding was provided in 2023-25, in addition to \$3.4 million General Fund for non-bondable expenditures and \$4.3 million in bond debt service. OYA will need to provide an updated timeline and budget request to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means during the 2025 session.

Due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, the population of youth detained in OYA close custody facilities is declining. The current biennium's average population in OYA's close custody facilities is 379, down from 397 in 2021-23, and about 7% below total capacity. The Youth Authority's director may set living unit size by rule, and the 2023-25 budget provided OYA with the ability to utilize smaller living units of 15-20 rather than previous biennia were closer to 25 youth per living unit. This increases safety and security and staff engagement with youth, while decreasing victimization and moves OYA closer to the national best practices on youth-to-staff ratios, and PREA compliance, which is 12-14 youth per living unit.

Some youth adjudicated to OYA undergo court-ordered sex offense treatment. This treatment, though not a Medicaid-reimbursable service, has been provided by OYA's Behavior Rehabilitation Service (BRS) providers during their care of OYA youth. HB 2472 (2019) changed some requirements for providers of sex offense treatment, including registration, supervision, and training requirements, effective January 1, 2020, and BRS providers assert they are incurring new expenses resulting from the legislation. The

agency received one-time funding in 2021-23 and a work group consisting of staff from OYA, Department of Human Services, and Oregon Health Authority have been meeting to work on ways to configure the service so that it is Medicaid eligible. Those agencies are still awaiting a response from Medicaid on eligibility.

OYA owns 87 buildings with a replacement value of \$409 million which provide secure residential spaces, youth education, vocational training, recreation, administration, and support services. OYA first developed a 10-year Strategic Plan for Facilities in 2014, which was updated in 2019 to align with best practices and deferred maintenance needs. Given the population, staffing levels, and facility changes, OYA has a budget request to build on that original plan with another 10-year outlook.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A copy of the Oregon Youth Authority Annual Performance Progress Report can be found on the LFO website: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lfo/APPR/APPR_OYA_2024-10-10.pdf

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