

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This year marks the fourth annual publication of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) Comprehensive Accountability Report (CAR), a synthesis of the Quality Assurance, Outcome Evaluation, and Program Accountability Measures data for the Department. This compilation provides legislators, policy-makers, and all members of the public we serve with a comprehensive evaluation of the continuum of juvenile justice services throughout Florida.

FY 2008-09 has been a challenging and yet progressive year for the Department. The overall number of youth entering the DJJ system decreased. The Department worked to reallocate resources in its residential commitment programs to provide specialized services needed by youth who make it into the system. DJJ continued to increase its prevention efforts to help improve the lives of youth throughout the state. In addition, the Department worked closely with its private provider partners to look at ways of improving processes and creating more efficient and effective ways of doing business. The Department also has continued to develop and improve its evidence-based programs and services proven effective in achieving program performance outcomes.

Outlined below are some of the key trend indicators extracted from this year's CAR, highlighting various aspects of the juvenile justice system in the state of Florida during FY 2008-09. More detailed information regarding each of these trends can be obtained throughout the chapters of the report.

## **Growth in the Adolescent Population of Florida**

Florida's population of 10 to 17-year-olds increased 4% between 2004 and 2008. As of August 2008, Florida's population of 10 to 17 year-olds was estimated to be approximately 1.89 million.

## **Most Frequent Juvenile Offenses**

- Misdemeanor theft was the most common reason for referral to the Department. During FY 2008-09, there were 20,195 delinquency referrals where the most serious offense was misdemeanor theft.
- Burglary is the felony offense committed most often by juveniles. During FY 2008-09, there were 13,500 delinquency referrals where the most serious offense was burglary.

## **"Moving in the Right Direction"**

The majority of the Department's key indicators of public safety and delinquency in Florida are trending in the right direction. There are fairly substantial reductions in almost every major offense category, including the most serious juvenile offenses. Results shown here show the positive impact of following the Department's strategic. The following section summarizes these trends.

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### Overall Juvenile Delinquency Rates in Florida

This measure is an indication of the positive impact of prevention on Florida's youth. It directly relates to our Strategic Plan Goal 1 - Strengthen Prevention and Intervention Services and Goal 2 - Promote School-Based Prevention and Intervention Efforts. Today, Floridians are substantially less likely to be the victim of crime involving a juvenile than at any other time since the Department started tracking this statistic in 1990.

- Florida's juvenile crime rate is down from 82 delinquency referrals per 1000 juveniles during 2004-05 to 73 delinquency referrals for every 1000 juveniles during FY 2008-09.



### Referrals and Youth Received

This measure is an indication of the positive impact of prevention on Florida's youth. It directly relates to Strategic Plan Goal 1 - Strengthen Prevention and Intervention Services and Goal 2 - Promote School-Based Prevention and Intervention Efforts. The Department received fewer delinquency referrals last year than at any point since 1990.

- During FY 2008-09, DJJ received 138,372 delinquency referrals representing 85,527 youth.
- Since FY 2004-05, the number of referrals is down 8% from 151,007 to 138,372 and the number of youth referred for delinquency is down 10% from 95,154 to 85,527.



### Serious and Violent Juvenile Delinquency (offenses that declined)

During FY 2008-09, the Department received 41,130 delinquency referrals where a felony was the most serious offense, down 15% from 48,403 felony referrals received during FY 2006-07.

- Murder/Manslaughter referrals reversed an upward trend and declined 19%, from 129 during FY 2007-08 to 104 in FY 2008-09. However, these offenses are still 12% above levels reported during FY 2004-05 (93 murder/manslaughter referrals).
- Auto Theft referrals decreased 37%, from 3,044 during FY 2004-05 to 1,913 in FY 2008-09.
- Aggravated Assault and Battery decreased 24% from 10,302 during FY 2004-05 to 7,851 in FY 2008-09.
- Armed Robbery referrals reversed an upward trend and declined 14%, from 1,431 during FY 2007-08 to 1,225 in FY 2008-09. However, these offenses are still 70% above levels reported during FY 2004-05 (722 armed robbery referrals)
- Sexual Battery referrals decreased 22%, from 794 during FY 2004-05 to 618 in FY 2008-09.



### Juvenile Drug Referrals

- Felony Drug (non-marijuana) referrals declined 28%, from 4,008 during FY 2004-05 to 2,880 in FY 2008-09.
- Felony Marijuana referrals declined 9%, from 1,367 during FY 2004-05 to 1,247 in FY 2008-09.
- Misdemeanor Marijuana referrals declined 6%, from 8,325 during FY 2004-05 to 8,007 in FY 2008-09.
- Possession of Drug Paraphernalia referrals declined 9%, from 887 during FY 2003-04 to 810 during FY 2008-09.



### Secure Detention Utilization

This measure shows the positive impact of Strategic Plan Goal 3 - Provide Alternative Detention Settings and Goal 4 - Divert Youth Who Pose Little Threat or Risk to Public Safety Into Diversion Programs. The overall utilization of the Department's secure detention facilities declined in four of the past five years.

- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, statewide utilization of secure juvenile detention declined 21%.
- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, admissions to secure detention declined 16%.



### Probation Placement Trends

This measure shows a positive impact of Strategic Plan Goal 4 - Divert Youth Who Pose Little Threat or Risk to Public Safety Into Diversion Programs. Fewer youth and cases are being disposed by the court to a probation service.

- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, the number of delinquency cases disposed to a probation service declined by 8%.
- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, the number of individual youth assigned to a probation service declined by 13%.



### Residential Placement Trends

During FY 2008-09, judges committed 6,402 individual juveniles to residential commitment facilities, 7down 28% from 8,897 during FY 2004-05. The number of girls committed to residential facilities has declined faster than boys. Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, the number of boys committed to the Department declined 26% while the number of girls declined 37%.

### Juveniles Transferred to Adult Court



The number of delinquency cases in Florida transferred to adult court reversed an upward trend and declined 13%, from 4,913 during FY 2007-08 to 4,297 in FY 2008-09. However, juvenile transfers to adult court are still 24% above levels reported during FY 2004-05 (3,473 juveniles transferred to adult court).

### Types of Delinquency for Male and Female Youth



Youth in Florida, both males and females, are less violent and are committing less serious offenses than in the past.

- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, the number of male youth charged with a felony offense declined by 11%.
- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, the number of male youth charged with a violent offense declined by 16%.
- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, the number of female youth charged with a felony offense declined by 17%.
- Between FY 2004-05 and FY 2008-09, the number of female youth charged with a violent offense declined by 16%.

### “Areas to Watch”

Although the majority of the Department’s key indicators are trending in the right direction, there are a handful of trends that show an ongoing need to focus on some difficult areas of the strategic plan and specifically target them for improvement.



### Minority Over-Representation

This measure relates to Strategic Plan Goal 7 - End Racial Disparities. The result shows the ongoing difficulties of impacting minority over-representation and the need to do more. Despite the Department’s efforts, the over-representation of African American youth became worse in most areas of the juvenile justice system during FY 2008-09. Please keep in mind that these are statewide statistics. The Department recently began a focused effort to reduce minority overrepresentation and the results of these efforts will most likely be realized during FY 2009-10.

### Female Juvenile Delinquency



This measure relates to Strategic Plan Goal 6 - Ensure Gender-Specific Services Are Provided. The result shows the ongoing need to focus on girls issues. Even though the Department is physically serving fewer girls, they are an increasing proportion of DJJ’s workload because their involvement in

delinquency is not declining as fast as boys. Just more than 32% of the juveniles referred to DJJ are girls, an increase of 2% in as many years. The number of boys referred for delinquency has declined steadily since the mid 1990's.

### **Serious and Violent Juvenile Delinquency (offenses that increased)**



Although the majority of the violent offenses declined, two major categories increased recently.

- Attempted Murder/Attempted Manslaughter referrals increased 72%, from 47 during FY 2004-05 to 81 in FY 2008-09.
- Burglary referrals increased 6%, from 12,722 during FY 2004-05 to 13,500 in FY 2008-09.

Outlined below is a brief description of the sections included in each program chapter of the CAR. Each of the major program areas (Prevention, Detention, Probation, and Residential) include a discussion of the profile of youth served during FY 2008-09 and well as Quality Assurance evaluations, which are described below:

#### **Profile of Youth**

The youth profile section for each program area chapter contains demographic data (race, age, and gender) taken from the Department's Juvenile Justice Information System. Profile data are based on the number of youth, unduplicated, who were served within the various program areas during FY 2008-09.

#### **Program Evaluation**

The Department uses three primary sources to evaluate programs and program components: quality assurance, outcome evaluation, and program accountability measures (residential commitment only).

#### **Quality Assurance (QA)**

The Florida Legislature mandates, in Section 985.632, Florida Statutes that the DJJ evaluate each program operated by the Department or a provider under contract with the Department and establish minimum thresholds of performance for each program component. This process ensures that all providers and programs are meeting at least minimum standards of care for youth in their custody. The review includes a thorough examination of documents (e.g., mental health treatment plans, performance plans, and medication administration records); interviews with staff, youth, parents and others; and on-site observations. The team, through a consensus rating session before the exit conference, determines the rating for each requirement. Private provider employees are trained and utilized in the review process as well.

## Outcome Evaluation (OE)

Delinquency programs are designed to provide supervision and services to reduce a youth's further involvement with the juvenile justice system. Annual evaluation of these programs is critical to the implementation of effective services. A key outcome of interest to all stakeholders is recidivism following program services or program release. For more than a decade, the Department has maintained accountability in services through its comprehensive statewide assessment of recidivism rates. DJJ has received national recognition for these outcome evaluations and continues its strong record of service assessment.

The outcome evaluation analyses contain information and outcome data for the following juvenile justice services: prevention, intake, detention, probation and community intervention, and residential commitment. Data from nearly 1,000 different programs and case management units are collected and analyzed for the outcome evaluation. The Intake and Detention chapters present data for FY 2008-09, and the Intake chapter includes five-year trend data. Alternately, the chapters on Prevention, Probation and Residential Commitment present data on youth completing programs in FY 2007-08, to allow for a follow-up period for recidivism outcomes through FY 2008-09. Supplemental information and summary tables of youth outcomes and outputs, while referenced here, may be found in the CAR appendices available on the web at: <http://www.djj.state.fl.us> under the Research and Planning section.

## Program Accountability Measures (PAM)

The Florida Legislature mandates, in section 985.632 (4)(a)(b), Florida Statutes, that the Department evaluate the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs that provide care, custody, and treatment for committed youth. To meet this requirement, DJJ, in collaboration with the independent Justice Research Center (JRC), developed the annual Program Accountability Measures. By implementing an evaluation tool that assesses the effectiveness of programs in reducing recidivism while including a cost-effectiveness measure, the PAM promotes accountability in the delivery of juvenile residential services. The measures have been highlighted as a best practice in the use of juvenile justice data by the National Center for Juvenile Justice and selected as a national semi-finalist in the Harvard University Innovations in American Government Awards.

## Prevention and Victim Services

Delinquency prevention programs are designed to address specific problems and provide interventions for at-risk to offend youth and their families in order to reduce juvenile crime and protect public safety. Program outputs and outcomes, including total releases, the percentage of youth adjudicated for offenses committed during services, number of completions and completion rates, demographic characteristics, six-month juvenile success rates and one-year success rates, are presented in the prevention chapter for each prevention program that released youth in FY 2007-08.

During FY 2007-08, a total of 24,526 youth were released from 202 delinquency prevention programs. Eighty five percent of those youth completed their program. Among youth completing prevention programs, 50% were male and 54% were white. Statewide, almost one-third (28%) of all youth completing prevention programs had at least one delinquency charge prior to admission.

## **Intake**

The delinquency intake process includes receiving youth charged with a crime, screening (including the Suicide Risk Screening), investigating, assessing, and processing allegations that a youth is delinquent or has violated the law. The intake process continues from the time the youth is charged with a delinquent offense through the disposition of the case.

The Department received 138,372 intake referrals during FY 2008-09. These referrals represented 85,527 individual youth, as some youth were referred multiple times during the year. The 138,372 delinquency referrals received by the Department during FY 2008-09 represents a 5% reduction from the previous fiscal year. The majority of delinquency referrals during FY 2008-09 involved male youth (72%) and youth between the ages of 15 and 17 years (72%). White youth generated 54,941 delinquency referrals (40%) and black youth were responsible for 59,183 (43%).

## **Detention**

During FY 2008-09, the Department operated 26 juvenile detention centers in 25 counties, with a total of 2,057 beds and 2,099 full time employees. Detention is the custody status for youth who are held pursuant to a court order or have been arrested for a violation of the law. In Florida, a youth may be detained only when specific statutory criteria, outlined in Section 985.215, Florida Statutes, are met. Criteria for detention include current offenses, prior history, legal status, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. Two types of detention are available: Secure Detention and Home Detention. A total of 27,677 youth were admitted to secure detention during FY 2008-09. Of these youth, most were male (78%) and the majority (73%) were between 15 and 17 years of age when they were admitted. Forty-eight percent of the youth admitted to secure detention were black, 35% were white, and 13% were Hispanic.

## **Probation and Community Intervention**

Probation and Community Intervention (PCI) programs provide supervision over youth to protect public safety, promote offender accountability through restorative sanctions and treatments, and to support youth in becoming responsible citizens. PCI provides case management for over 85,000 youth referred for delinquency each year and may be considered the most far reaching service area administered by DJJ. Principle programming for this service area includes diversion, probation supervision, day treatment and minimum risk commitment programming, and post-commitment programs for youth on conditional release and / or probation status. The PCI section of the Comprehensive Accountability Report presents a profile of FY 2008-09 youth served and FY 2007-08 probation outputs and outcomes including total releases, the percentage of

youth adjudicated for offenses committed during supervision, number of completions and completion rates, demographic characteristics, average length of stay, and recidivism rates.

### **Residential and Correctional Facilities**

Delinquent youth in Florida can be ordered by a court into a residential treatment facility. Circuit judges determine the level of confinement appropriate for each youth. DJJ is responsible for placement of each youth in an appropriate program based on the youth's identified risk and needs. Youth are committed to residential programs for an indeterminate length of time and must complete individual treatment plan goals based on their rehabilitative needs as one of the requirements for release. Included in each youth's goals are educational and vocational services. Residential Services oversees all residential commitment programs. During FY 2007-08, there were a total of 7,753 releases from residential commitment programs. In FY 2008-09, Residential Commitment programs served more than 10,000 youth.

### **Program Expenditures: State and Federal Funding**

The program expenditure tables in this report provide total state versus federal expenditures for juvenile justice programs and include self-reported federal expenditures from private provider organizations. The source documents from which these amounts were derived are as follows: State of Florida accounting information system and program cost affidavits submitted by private provider organizations.

### **Looking Forward**

The Department traditionally focused the majority of its research resources towards projects aimed at assessing the performance of programs that serve juveniles. Beginning in 2009, the Department began training analysts to use predictive analytics software that will allow the agency to report not only what has happened with juveniles, but what is expected to happen going forward.

Over the next couple years, the Department plans to utilize predictive analytics as a component in many of the performance measurement analyses conducted and distributed to agency staff throughout the year.

One of the first "predictive" projects in FY 2008-09 provided an assessment of future delinquency so that the Department and other key stakeholders can assess what delinquency trends may look like in the immediate future. The table below presents the number of delinquency referrals the Department is expected to receive over the next five calendar years based on actual delinquency referrals received by the Department since 1997 through 2008.

