

**State of Alaska**  
**FY2023 Governor's Operating Budget**

**Department of Family and Community Services**  
**Juvenile Justice**  
**Results Delivery Unit Budget Summary**

## Juvenile Justice Results Delivery Unit

### Contribution to Department's Mission

To hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior, promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities, and assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime.

### Core Services

- Probation
- Detention
- Treatment

### Major RDU Accomplishments in 2021

The Division of Juvenile Justice continued its efforts to increase efficiencies while improving services and strengthening juvenile justice in Alaska through system improvements. Some of these improvements were done utilizing a federal mental health and substance abuse grant to review, realign and strengthen services statewide for both facility and probation services. Senior managers have identified effective and efficient evidence-based programming that supports the significant safety and security needs within Division of Juvenile Justice. System improvement programs that are under development include:

- Intensive substance abuse treatment at McLaughlin Youth Center Boys Treatment Unit,
- Mental Health Clinicians providing neurofeedback to statewide secure facility youth, and
- Girls Treatment relocation to Johnson Youth Center in Juneau on 7/1/2020.

Key division staff spent much of the legislative session supporting House Bill 105, a bill ensuring minors whose crimes are eligible for waiver into the adult criminal justice system are held in Division of Juvenile Justice facilities until age 18. This was a requirement of the Juvenile Justice Reauthorization Act of 2018. Division of Juvenile Justice leadership worked collaboratively with Department of Corrections leadership to create the Memorandum of Agreement required by statute to develop the logistical practices of co-managing these waived youth who remain in the custody of the Department of Corrections. Division of Juvenile Justice and Department of Corrections will continue to review and modify the Memorandum of Agreement to ensure community safety with smooth and efficient communication and collaboration between the agencies.

Continuing operations in Division of Juvenile Justice facilities and community supervision during the COVID-19 pandemic were a success. Mitigation strategies were continued such as screening, testing and weekly meetings and communication with all staff to support them in providing safe and quality care for youth during the continued outbreaks. The division has been ahead of many other states in providing in-person services to youth and continuing to ensure community safety.

Division secure facilities developed new visitation protocols based on community transmission levels that expanded in-person visitation options for families, attorneys, and volunteers. Mitigation protocols were reviewed and assessed to ensure these opportunities were offered in a safe and healthy environment.

All Division of Juvenile Justice secure facilities participate in the Performance Based Standards (PbS) system improvement program to identify, monitor and improve conditions and rehabilitation services provided to youths using national standards and outcome measures. Despite COVID-19 limitations, all division facilities devised a plan to safely participate in the PbS annual review to ensure that Division of Juvenile Justice facilities continue to monitor and improve conditions and rehabilitation services provided to youth using national standards and outcome measures. Facilities report PbS information twice annually, receive ratings and implement improvement plans to address specific deficiencies.

Statewide probation offices have made significant efforts to maintain a high level of supervision and services to the youth despite the barriers the pandemic presented. Juvenile probation officers maintained contact with youth, families, and victims through varied means of communication. Juvenile probation officers provided trauma informed care, coordinated support services for youth and continued to work with community partners. They also visited rural communities to complete compliance monitoring site audits and to meet with tribal court administrators to help in the development of tribal diversion programs in rural Alaska.

The division continued Verbal Judo training which is a verbal de-escalation curriculum providing staff with tools and graduated responses to help manage a variety of challenges in working with at-risk youth. The division updated policies for Response to Resistance, utilizing Verbal Judo language for consistent and appropriate response to escalated situations.

The division continued to work with the department's, Financial Management Services staff and other state departments on the divestment of the Nome Youth Facility building that was closed in FY2020. The division was successful during FY2021 in identifying a community lease space to relocate the Nome Juvenile Probation Office from the Nome Youth Facility to expedite the divestment process. Although the Nome Youth Facility was closed, the Nome juvenile probation staff continue to receive and respond to allegations of delinquency throughout the Norton Sound Region.

Division leadership began discussions with the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center regarding the potential of completing a validation study of the division's risk assessment tool, the Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory. Considering validation of risk assessments is a cyclical process, the first goal of this project will be to determine whether the Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory is predictive of recidivism. Future projects could examine other aspects of the validation system such as quality assurance, training, and supervision of staff to ensure fidelity of the instrument design, all of which often have substantive impacts on the predictive validity of an assessment tool. It is anticipated that the validation study will occur in FY2022.

During ongoing review of its Electronic Health Record module, the division identified that the system was not meeting expectations for direct care and nursing staff. The division began exploring the addition of the TechCare Electronic Health Record system in collaboration with the Department of Corrections implementation process with the same system. This new system will improve reporting abilities (including those related to COVID-19) and improve continuity of care for youth exiting juvenile justice facilities.

Expansion of training needs within the division led to reorganization and work towards a training unit. With only one training specialist for division-wide training and one additional training specialist to provide specific trainings to staff at McLaughlin Youth Center, this organization was not an efficient or sustainable staffing structure given the size and requirements of the division. The statewide training specialist worked to reclassify two existing division positions as training specialists in both Juneau and Fairbanks. This new team will work to continue the existing trainings for division employees across the state, expand training supports to all staff, and ensure all division staff have the skills and tools needed to appropriately address youth delinquency either in a community-based setting or secure division facility.

The division created and filled positions for its new centralized background check unit with centralized positions to conduct new and renewal criminal background checks and relative placement checks to provide for better management and control of this protected and confidential information.

## **Key RDU Challenges**

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create many challenges on both a leadership and direct-care level. The division has striven to follow all Center for Disease Control recommended guidelines in the necessary modification of its practices, regarding communication, working conditions, and policies and directives that have been implemented. Division leadership has worked hard to improve communication with these entities including participation in requested meetings and Labor Management Committees.

Regional probation offices continue to manage acutely mentally ill juveniles and those impacted by severe trauma who struggle to find appropriate placement due to the juvenile's history of aggression. This has created issues maintaining the youth safely on secure units as well as locating appropriate treatment in community, residential, or

out-of-state settings. Many of these youth exhaust all in-state and many of the out-of-state options, resulting in long stays in detention or secure treatment orders in a Division of Juvenile Justice facility due to their accompanying delinquent behavior and extreme risk and needs.

Regional probation offices are reporting a significant shortage of juvenile sex offender assessors and treatment providers. Historically there have been limited providers throughout the state who are trained to work with juvenile sex offenders. Recently, several providers have either retired or closed their practices which increases the difficulty in providing risk-assessments and subsequent community-based treatment.

Recruiting qualified applicants for facilities, probation, and support positions throughout division is becoming a greater challenge. Initially presented in rural facilities and probation offices, recruitment and retention challenges have extended to larger communities as well as leadership positions throughout the division. In an effort to address this challenge, the division has increased the number of ongoing recruitment postings on Workplace Alaska, worked to recruit strong candidate pools, and coordinated efforts with the department's human resources personnel to expedite the approval and job offer process for the selected candidates. The division is working to develop leadership training for staff interested in moving into leadership positions within the division. Lastly, the division started an internal workgroup focused on creative recruitment and retention strategies.

### **Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2023**

The division continues to engage in a system improvement project to develop new specialized programming for youth with dual diagnoses of substance abuse and mental health issues, youth with violent offenses and youth with acute mental and behavioral health diagnoses. Specialized programs will provide targeted, evidence-based programming to focused groups of youth paired with more specialized training for staff to better meet the needs of these populations. There has been a delay in the development of the violent offender and substance abuse units because of the pandemic. The plan is to increase efforts to ensure these program changes continue to move forward.

The division is working with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to support an occupational therapist position at the Bethel Youth Facility. An occupational therapist would be a new addition to the treatment team available to residents providing individual and group occupational rehabilitative therapy to youth with mental health disorders or disabilities. As a member of the interdisciplinary team along with medical, clinical, and juvenile justice staff, the occupational therapist will evaluate skills, adaptive behaviors, and patterns of behavior related to daily function in order to promote occupational programs to promote, maintain, or restore physical or mental health, and functional independence in the daily lives of the youth in care.

The division continues to address the high recidivism rate for the Alaska Native youth population and the issues related to successful transition home after treatment. The division's relationship with tribes and tribal communities is considered an important factor in making improvements in these areas and Division of Juvenile Justice continues to work with tribal communities to develop diversion programs as an early intervention to keep youth who commit lower-level offenses in their communities. The division will continue to develop and strengthen the rural diversion system, including in-person meetings in the fall of 2021 with several tribal community partners. The division will continue a long-term partnership with RurAL Cap who provides targeted cultural services focused on delinquency prevention.

Probation leadership will focus on developing and implementing a victim services training statewide to improve its work with victims and prioritize focusing on identifying sex offender treatment providers who have experience working with youth. This will include the development of standards of care in place for the providers in urban and rural Alaska. Juvenile probation officers will expand their work with providers to ensure provider experience, training, and education to work with juveniles displaying sexual offending behaviors.

Further or ongoing review from the Risk Assessment Validation study to incorporate additional validation study review recommendations and how those will fit within the division's strategic planning.

**Contact Information**

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**Juvenile Justice  
RDU Financial Summary by Component**

*All dollars shown in thousands*

	FY2021 Actuals				FY2022 Management Plan				FY2023 Governor			
	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
<b>Formula Expenditures</b> None.												
<b>Non-Formula Expenditures</b>												
McLaughlin Youth Center	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18,107.4	585.8	20.0	18,713.2
Mat-Su Youth Facility	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,621.7	60.0	10.0	2,691.7
Kenai Peninsula Youth Facility	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,148.9	30.0	10.0	2,188.9
Fairbanks Youth Facility	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4,861.1	74.8	10.0	4,945.9
Bethel Youth Facility	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,593.3	0.0	10.0	5,603.3
Johnson Youth Center	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4,661.2	80.2	10.0	4,751.4
Probation Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17,160.0	154.8	321.9	17,636.7
Delinquency Prevention	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	226.7	1,155.0	1,381.7
Youth Courts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	446.5	0.0	0.0	446.5
Juvenile Justice Health Care	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,488.6	0.0	0.0	1,488.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>57,088.7</b>	<b>1,212.3</b>	<b>1,546.9</b>	<b>59,847.9</b>

**Juvenile Justice  
Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component  
From FY2022 Management Plan to FY2023 Governor**

*All dollars shown in thousands*

	<u>Unrestricted Gen (UGF)</u>	<u>Designated Gen (DGF)</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
<b>FY2022 Management Plan</b>	<b>58,269.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1,259.5</b>	<b>1,551.4</b>	<b>61,080.3</b>
<b>Adjustments which continue current level of service:</b>					
-McLaughlin Youth Center	18,107.4	0.0	585.8	20.0	18,713.2
-Mat-Su Youth Facility	2,621.7	0.0	60.0	10.0	2,691.7
-Kenai Peninsula Youth Facility	2,148.9	0.0	30.0	10.0	2,188.9
-Fairbanks Youth Facility	4,861.1	0.0	74.8	10.0	4,945.9
-Bethel Youth Facility	5,593.3	0.0	0.0	10.0	5,603.3
-Johnson Youth Center	4,661.2	0.0	80.2	10.0	4,751.4
-Probation Services	17,160.0	0.0	154.8	321.9	17,636.7
-Delinquency Prevention	0.0	0.0	226.7	1,155.0	1,381.7
-Youth Courts	446.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	446.5
-Juvenile Justice Health Care	1,488.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,488.6
<b>FY2023 Governor</b>	<b>57,088.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1,212.3</b>	<b>1,546.9</b>	<b>59,847.9</b>