

State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services

Division of Juvenile Justice

System

Improvements

Report *Fiscal Years*
2004 and 2005



Frank H. Murkowski

Governor
State of Alaska

Joel Gilbertson

Commissioner
Department of Health & Social Services

Patty Ware

Director
Division of Juvenile Justice

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Division of Juvenile Justice is to:

- Hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior.
- Promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities.
- Assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime.

<http://health.hss.state.ak.us/djj/>

State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Juvenile Justice
240 Main Street, Suite 701
P.O. Box 110635
Juneau, AK 99811-0635

Tel: 907-465-2212
Fax: 907-465-2333
E-mail: DJJ@health.state.ak.us

Message from the Director

I am both pleased and proud to submit this report to you highlighting the hard work and accomplishments of the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). This report focuses primarily on DJJ's system improvement work of the past two years, during which we have implemented a number of changes to the state's juvenile justice system. Our goal during this period has been to emphasize data-driven approaches and the use of objective information to ensure positive outcomes for juveniles, families, victims and communities.

I believe strongly that our decisions must be defensible and that we should increasingly be moving toward adoption of "research-based practices"—that is, implementation of strategies that juvenile justice research indicates have been proven to be effective. Alaska has been fortunate to have consultation from two well-known entities as we have moved forward in our process, both the National Juvenile Detention Association (NJDA) and the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA).

Many of you know that one of the challenges faced by DJJ for the past decade has been severe overcrowding in our locked juvenile facilities. With funding support from the Alaska Legislature over the past several years and expansion of Alaska's facility bed capacity, the Division has largely succeeded in addressing facility overcrowding. The expansion of the Nome Youth Facility from six to fourteen detention beds is due to be completed in late spring of 2005 as the final step of a long-range plan begun in 1997.

This success in reducing overcrowding has allowed our agency to pursue an equally critical component of system improvement. The Division has continued its efforts to "front load" the system and re-invest savings into other facets of the juvenile justice service continuum. The Division has added juvenile probation officers, electronic monitoring services and non-secure shelters to enhance our ability to supervise and monitor juvenile offenders in Alaskan communities. We are using our facility staff in innovative ways to enhance supervision in the community, to perform "checks" on juvenile offenders at home, at school and in the community when facility counts are low.

From a statewide perspective, these investments include implementation of an objective detention assessment instrument, a new risk-need assessment process and acceptance into the national Performance-Based Standards (PbS) project for all of our eight juvenile facilities. These local and statewide system enhancements significantly improve Alaska's ability to work with juvenile offenders early and in a manner supported by objective data.

DJJ has traditionally used this report as a forum to summarize our agency operations in our facilities and probation offices. This year, however, what we are most eager to share with you are the positive changes we are making to our system. Please turn the pages to learn the specifics of our system improvements.

Patty Ware, Director
Division of Juvenile Justice

Executive Summary:

Quality Improvement and a Balanced System

The mission of the Division of Juvenile Justice is to:

- Hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior.
- Promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities.
- Assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime.

For the past few years, the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has been implementing a plan to ensure that Alaska has a juvenile justice service system that uses resources effectively and efficiently to ensure desirable outcomes. To do this DJJ is building a balanced, information-based juvenile justice agency. Decisions are increasingly based on data which, over time, will result in a more effective and responsive system. Ongoing data collection and the feedback from this process is becoming a critical part of how DJJ functions as an agency. The goal is to achieve improved outcomes benefiting Alaska’s communities, youths, families and victims.

Why Improve an Already Good System?

- Lack of a balanced continuum of services;
- Inability to “front-load” services;
- Over-reliance on locked institutional care;
- Improve data-driven decision-making; and
- Adopt evidence and research-based practices.

The Ultimate Goal:

Implementing a balanced statewide juvenile justice continuum requires standardizing practice across the state to assure efficiency, and improve the quality of service to Alaska’s communities. In September of 2003, DJJ invited Alaska stakeholders in the juvenile justice system and representatives of the National Juvenile Detention Association (NJDA) to discuss the state’s juvenile justice continuum and explore the benefits and challenges of system improvement. NJDA is a national organization of juvenile justice professionals with a mission to advance effective

juvenile justice practices. Based on this review, and input from the juvenile justice partners involved:

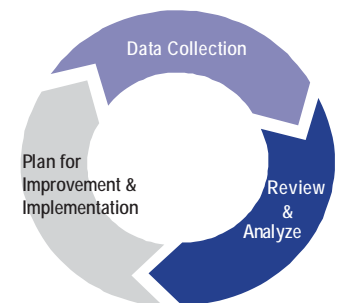
The division made a commitment to revise practices based on:

- Nationally researched practices;
- Data (information) driven decision-making;
- Fiscal responsibility.

Implementation of research-based practices requires rigorous attention to details in order to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved. The success of the improvements and initiatives throughout this report relies on attention to ongoing quality assurance throughout the system.

Improvement processes typically involve a three-step process to produce verifiable results and continue the cycle of improvement:

- Measure
- Review
- Improve (and repeat)



DJJ is incorporating this process into all facets of the changes it is making to the juvenile justice system. The agency is committed to sustainability of all the initiatives and improvements discussed in this report.

An Overview of the Division of Juvenile Justice

The Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) provides services to juveniles who commit a delinquent offense. The division responds to the needs of juvenile offenders in a manner that supports community safety; prevents repeated criminal behavior; works to restore the community and victims; and develops youth into productive citizens. Services are provided in the least restrictive setting that will both ensure community protection and promote the highest likelihood of success for the juvenile offender.

The division addresses juvenile crime through:

- Short-term secure detention
- Court-ordered institutional treatment for juvenile offenders
- Intake investigation and outcome
- Probation supervision and monitoring
- Juvenile offender skill development

Probation Services

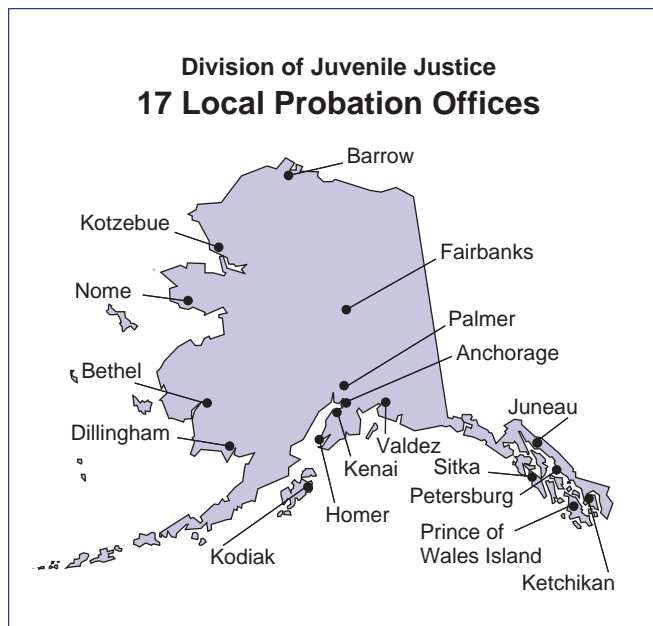
A balanced and restorative justice approach to services and programming ensures that juvenile offenders take personal responsibility for repairing the harm caused to victims and communities by their delinquent behavior.

Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) are responsible for:

- Receiving and reviewing police reports involving an offense by a juvenile;
- Determining an appropriate course of action for a youth, which could include counseling with parents, referral to a youth court or other diversion program, or pursuing formal court proceedings. Probation officers base decisions on a variety of factors, such as the seriousness of the offense, age at time of offense, the youth's offense history, and the ability to address the delinquent behavior without formal court processing.

- Assisting the youth and family in working with the public safety and legal system;
- Contacting victims, involving them in the justice process and determining restitution;
- Monitoring juvenile offenders to ensure they are held accountable, including payment of restitution and performance of community work service
- Pursuing formal court-ordered prosecution if this is necessary to protect the community;
- Partnering with families, local agencies, and organizations to involve juvenile offenders in developing skills and reducing the likelihood of re-offense.

Alaska's JPOs have important responsibilities and are required to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to make critical public safety decisions about youth who have committed crimes. They are expected to respond in a timely manner to juvenile crime, and to provide appropriate levels of supervision and support to offenders, their families, and those who have been impacted by their crimes.



These JPOs play a vital roll within the agency supporting community safety and ensuring that young people are held responsible when they break the law. JPOs monitor youth offenders when they are at home, in school and the community—this includes while at work, or in a residential placement. Juvenile offenders are held responsible for payment of restitution to victims and for performing community work service—these are just two small examples of the work done by probation staff. Alaska has 68 direct service (non-supervisory) JPOs located in 17 different communities in the state. These committed justice workers are a critical community-based, proactive resource in the goal of reducing the likelihood that a young person re-offends.

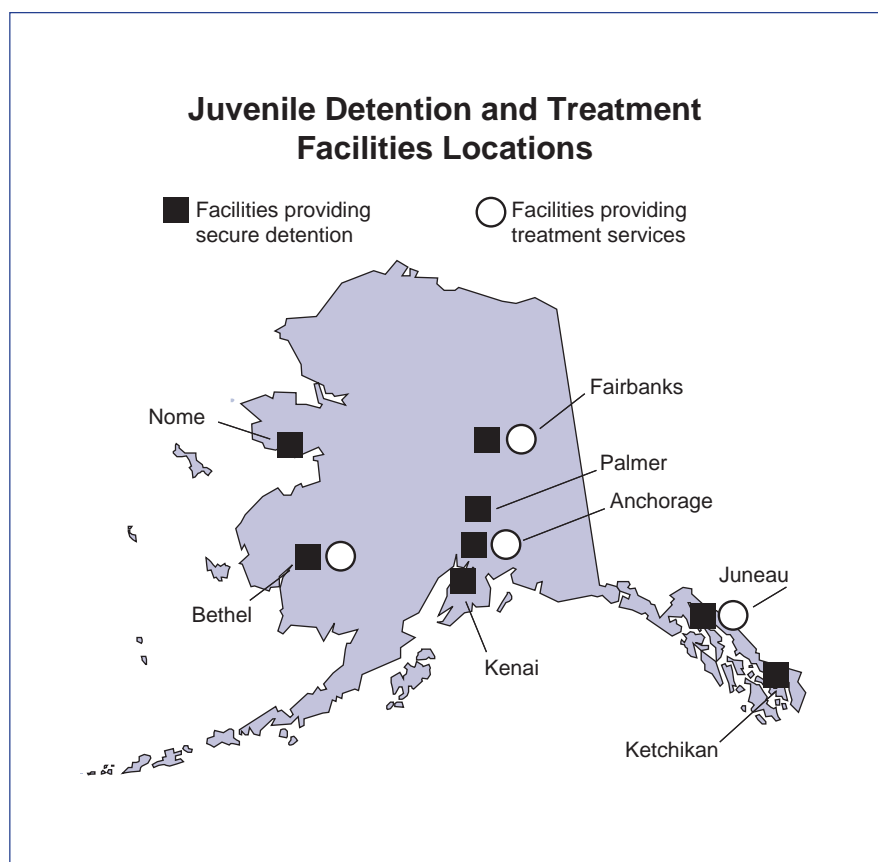
The Division of Juvenile Justice is continuing its efforts to enhance supervision, safety and accountability capabilities in the community to ensure a **comprehensive and more cost-effective approach to juvenile crime**. The division is in the process of implementing a research-based approach to managing juvenile cases through the adoption of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) risk-need assessment process. This significant system change supports DJJ’s performance targets of reduction of juvenile crime and improvement in re-offense rates by using a risk-focused intervention to assist in the juvenile justice decision-making process. The use of the YLS/CMI will enable the agency to move toward public safety decision-making based on the use of a well-researched and validated approach to determining which youth are likely to pose a higher risk to re-offend. Such information will also enable DJJ to more effectively intervene with juveniles and to more appropriately determine the use of resources based on data.

Research supports the need for a strong community-based service continuum in order to ensure that youth are served in the most appropriate environment based on their level of risk and need rather than defaulting to the most secure and costly resource of locked institutional care.

Juvenile Detention and Treatment Facilities

Youth facilities in Alaska perform two primary functions.

- **Detention Units** are designed as short-term secure units for youth who are awaiting court hearings. Detention units in DJJ facilities serve an important function by providing secure confinement and basic services to alleged juvenile offenders while they are awaiting a decision on their case by the courts. Services provided include education, basic skill groups on topic areas such as daily life skills, substance abuse education, victim empathy, lifestyle choices, decision-making and anger management, recreational and daily life activities. There are 8 detention units in Alaska;
- **Treatment Units** are designed for youth who have been ordered by the courts into long-term secure treatment due to the serious and/or chronic nature of their juvenile offenses. Youths in these units spend a significantly longer amount of time in a locked facility and receive a more comprehensive array of services targeted at reducing the likelihood of re-offense. Services are based on an



individualized treatment plan targeting identified risk factors and include specialized areas such as sex offender treatment, substance abuse education and treatment, anger management and decision-making, vocational or independent living skill development, mental health services as necessary. All youths attend school on a full time basis while in the facility. There are four treatment units around the State.

Youth Facilities and Existing Bed Capacity

	Total Beds
McLaughlin Youth Center	160
Fairbanks Youth Facility	40
Johnson Youth Center	28
Bethel Youth Facility	19
Nome Youth Facility*	6
Mat-Su Youth Facility	15
Ketchikan Youth Facility	10
Kenai Youth Facility	10
Total	288

*In FY06, Nome capacity will increase to 14 beds.

The division is continuing the process begun last fiscal year to have stand-alone detention facilities develop a continuum of detention services that will include some facility staff providing non-secure detention and transitional, re-integration services in the community. This is an **innovative and fiscally prudent use of facility staff resources** to ensure additional capacity to supervise juvenile offenders in the community. DJJ facilities this year have also undertaken a significant effort to improve their ability to deliver services to alleged or adjudicated juveniles in Alaska’s detention and treatment facilities through the implementation of a national quality assurance process known as Performance-Based Standards (PbS). Both of these initiatives are discussed in more detail later on in this report.

System Improvements

Statewide Resources in a Statewide System

In September of 2003, DJJ met with Alaska stakeholders in the juvenile justice system and representatives of the National Juvenile Detention Association to discuss the state’s juvenile justice continuum and explore the benefits and challenges of system improvement.

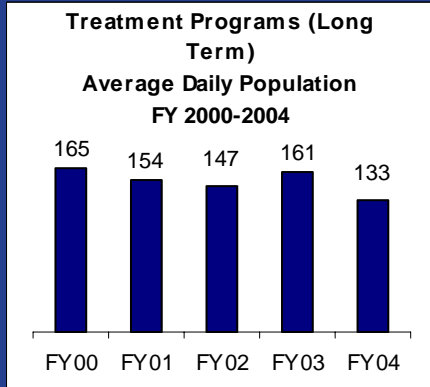
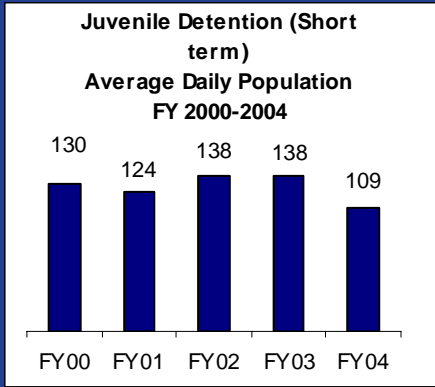
After meeting with juvenile justice stakeholders and working with staff the division has **embarked on a number of system improvement efforts:**

- Adoption of an objective, data-driven gate-keeping method to guide the use of costly, secure detention resources to ensure that these are reserved for juveniles posing a risk to the community.
- Enhancement of non-secure alternatives to detention options, for juveniles not posing a risk to the community, which may include non-secure shelter care, emergency shelters, foster care, electronic monitoring, increased community-based checks and contacts at home, school and work or in-home detention and supervision.
- Ongoing reprogramming of agency savings to the front-end of the continuum to ensure a balanced and cost-effective approach to juvenile justice issues.
- Improved use of long-term treatment beds (reducing the waiting list) by managing beds as a statewide rather than regional resource.
- Adoption of an updated risk/need assessment and re-assessment tool to ensure the most appropriate use of probation and institutional resources as well as partner agency resources (i.e., Department of Law, Court System, Public Defender Agency, etc.)
- Implementation of a performance-based approach to best practice for all eight juvenile justice facilities in the state.

In July of 2003 action was taken to use locked institutional treatment (long-term) beds as a statewide rather than local resource.

Previously, uneven need for long-term institutional treatment beds in parts of the state resulted in juveniles

Average Daily Populations FY00 - FY03



wait-listed for a bed in some facilities while there were vacant treatment beds in others. Taking steps to manage bed capacity as a statewide rather than regional resource made it possible to improve the overall efficiency, and reduce the overall number of long-term treatment beds needed statewide.

This change allowed for the consolidation of two 20-bed treatment cottages at Anchorage's McLaughlin Youth Center, a process that was completed August 1, 2003. Cost savings from the reduction of round-the-clock staffing enabled the division to provide new transition treatment and re-entry services at McLaughlin through a program known as the Transitional Services Unit (TSU). **This was accomplished through staff reassignment, within the DJJ's existing agency budget.** Transitional services for youths leaving long-term treatment beds is being replicated in small detention facilities across the state and is discussed in more detail under the section on the "Continuum of Services" found on page 14.

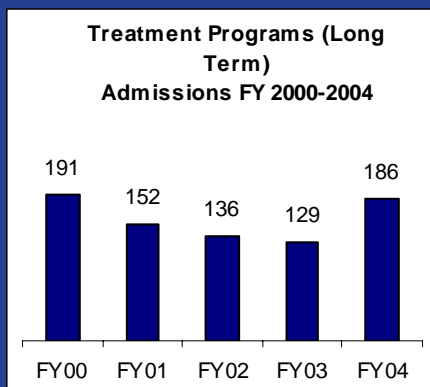
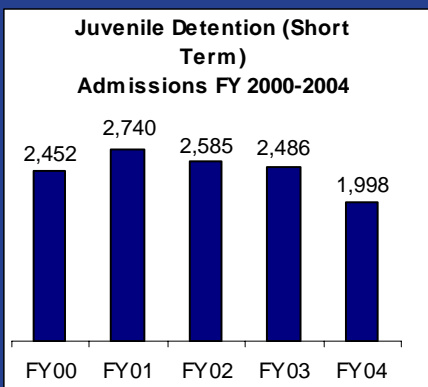
From May of 2003, through January of 2004, DJJ

also consistent with DJJ's continuing effort to ensure that services provided are based on what the juvenile justice research indicates is effective with youths, such that they are returned to the community more successfully. This process was time-consuming and fruitful. Training curricula were developed using best practice approaches and existing agency staff. Training was completed in FY04 and 05, with enhancements planned in FY06. In keeping with DJJ's commitment to use existing resources wisely, this was accomplished with no new fiscal resources. A similar statewide and research-based approach to reviewing and determining core services for field probation is currently underway with DJJ's JPO's and is anticipated to be completed sometime during early FY06.

Implementing a statewide system has called for further standardizing practice across the state to assure efficiency and improve the quality of services offered by the division to communities. Concurrently, the division made a commitment to revise its practices based on nationally researched practices and "data" driven

decision-making. These efforts are described in greater detail in this report under the sections entitled the Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI), page 10, the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), page 11, Performance-based Standards (PbS), page 12, and Continuum of Services, page 13.

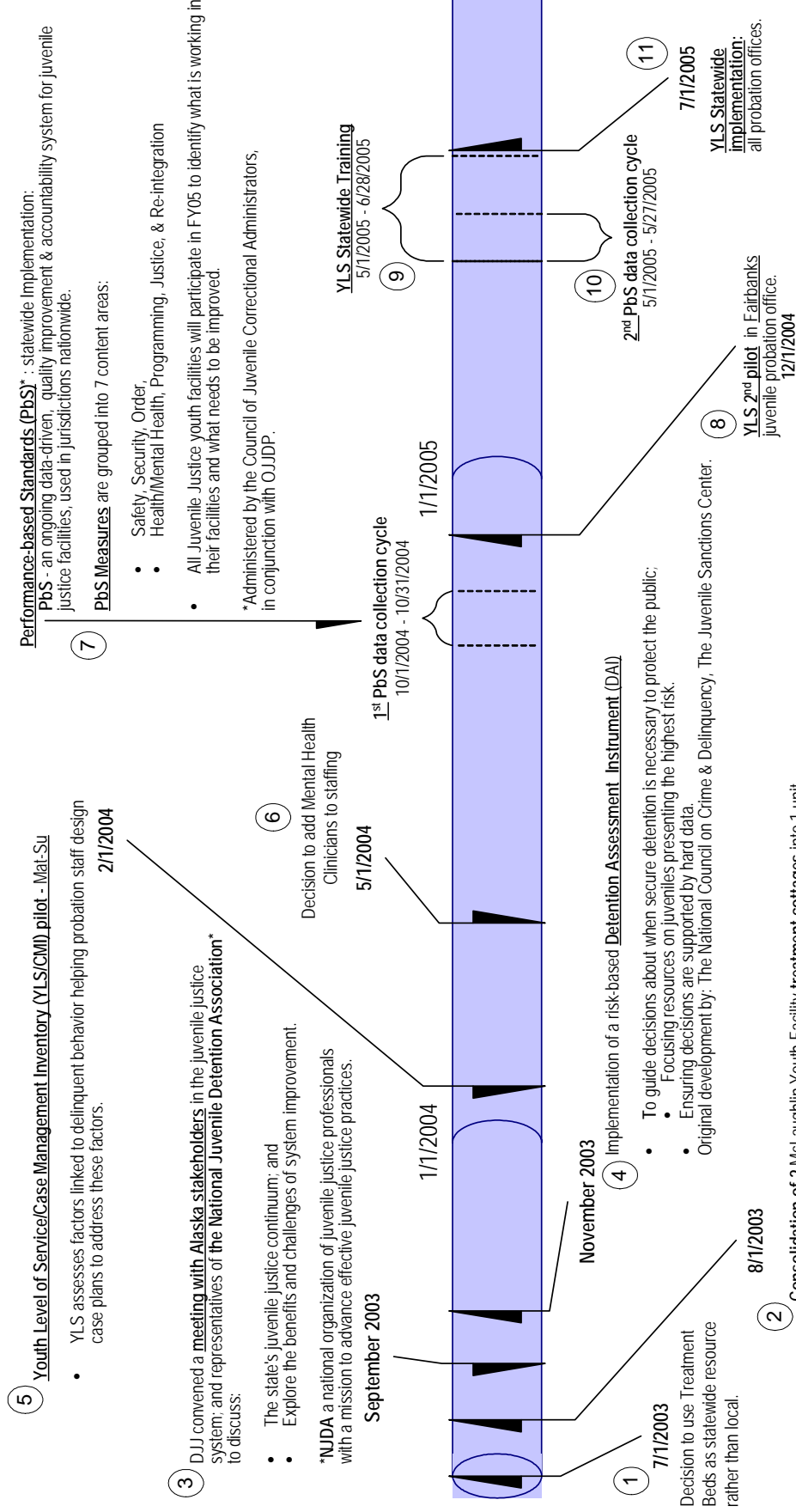
Admissions FY00 - FY03



A Timeline of Improvement Activities

Division of Juvenile Justice - System Improvements FY 04 - 05

Building a balanced, information based juvenile justice system, to achieve desired outcomes, improve public safety and reduce re-offending. Decisions are based on ongoing data collection, to build an effective and responsive system.



TSU has been **nominated a national "promising practice"** by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

- OJJDP is funding research of TSU by the University of Alaska Anchorage, Justice Center.

Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI)

Question: What is the DAI?

Answer: The DAI is a risk-based structured decision making assessment, used to assist professional staff in making the decision to place youth in secure detention beds statewide.

Question: What is the purpose of the DAI?

Answer: The purpose of the DAI is to:

- Focus limited detention resources on those juveniles who present the highest risk to the community;
- Ensure lower-risk offenders are identified and have access to a broad range of appropriate, community-based alternatives to detention.
- Assure statewide standards when making the decision to place youth in secure detention.

Question: Who Uses the DAI?

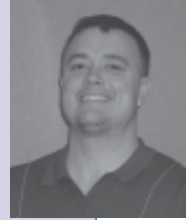
Answer: The DAI is an assessment instrument used by JPOs to determine if:

- Secure detention is necessary to protect the public or to ensure the juvenile's appearance at subsequent juvenile justice court hearings;
- The juvenile can be released to a parent, guardian, other responsible adult, emergency shelter or non-secure shelter pending further intake proceedings.

Question: What is the DAI used for?

Answer: The DAI is used to help determine when secure detention is necessary to protect the public, allowing the division to focus resources on juveniles presenting the highest risk, while ensuring decisions are supported by hard data. Alaska's implementation occurred in November of 2003

Joe Adelmeyer is the Southeast Regional Supervisor for probation services and a pleased user of the DAI. When the DAI was introduced, Joe was the JPO III for Juneau. Joe believes that the DAI helps JPOs to "think about the whole process"... and provides [an objective] way to ask if a youth should be detained or released to the community.



and DJJ is refining the instrument based on the first year's data.

Question: Where did the DAI come from?

Answer: The DAI is based on Alaska Juvenile Justice information and the structured decision-making (SDM) model developed by the Juvenile Sanctions Center, the National Council on Crime & Delinquency (supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)) and the State of Virginia.

Question: How does the DAI improve the juvenile justice system?

Answer: The DAI improves the juvenile justice system by:

- Focusing secure detention resources on those juveniles who present the highest risk to the community;
 - DAI ensures the appropriate use of costly detention services and allows money to be reinvested to less costly community based service
 - DAI promotes community safety.
- Ensuring lower-risk offenders are identified and have access to a broad range of community-based alternatives to detention.

- Youth needs are identified and addressed in the most effective, least costly environment, while ensuring community safety.

- Alaska's use of detention as one component of a broad service continuum through the DAI is supported by national best-practice research on use of secure detention

- ✱ Assuring statewide standards when making the decision to place youth in secure detention, ensuring fairness in decisions across the state.

Question: When did implementation of the DAI begin?

Answer: Use of the DAI began in November of 2003.

The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

Question: What is the YLS/CMI?

Answer: The YLS/CMI is a research validated, risk and need assessment tool that will assist the division in making juvenile case decisions based on data.

Question: What is the purpose of the YLS/CMI?

Answer: It assesses the factors in a youth that research has indicated are linked to delinquent behavior and helps juvenile probation staff design a case plan to address these factors.

- ✱ Use of the YLS/CMI will allow for improved, data-driven decision making.
- ✱ The YLS/CMI has six sections:
 - Assessment of Risks and Needs
 - Summary of Risks and Needs
 - Assessment of Other Needs and Special Considerations
 - Overall Assessment of the Youth's General Risk/Need Level
 - Contact Level
 - Case Management Plan

Question: Who Uses the YLS/CMI?

Answer: The YLS is used by JPOs to help determine DJJ's level of involvement with the youth based on the offender's level of risk as a result of the YLS process. The YLS also helps staff to target their interventions with youth based on identified risks and needs associated with criminal behavior.

Question: What is the YLS/CMI used for?

Answer: The YLS enables JPOs to focus efforts on juveniles at higher risk to re-offend (recidivism) using a targeted and comprehensive approach to case planning and management. It will provide the division with data to assist in making decisions regarding resource needs for youths, families, and communities and provide for more targeted intervention with youth.

Question: Where did the YLS/CMI come from?

Answer: The YLS/CMI is a research-based instrument to assess risk and need that was first developed in Canada in 1984. It has undergone intensive study nationally.



Sean Owens is the supervisor of the Mat-Su Probation Office. He first learned of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) in the 90's and thought it would be a good tool as a probation services risk/needs assessment. Sean believes that the YLS does a good job of "identifying the problems that need to be worked on... did a crime occur and [objectively identifying] what does it take for this kid to get out of the system and not come back". Sean has led the piloting of the YLS in Mat-Su, DJJ's first pilot site and has worked with his staff to identify problems and develop procedure to ease the division adoption of the tool statewide in FY2006.

Question: How does the YLS/CMI improve the juvenile justice system?

Answer: DJJ plans to implement the YLS/CMI to improve the decision-making early in the juvenile justice process. The YLS will provide probation officers and facility staff with information about the youth that can be directly applied to determining appropriate interventions with youths. This information will help improve outcomes, with the long-range goal of reducing re-offense rates by Alaska's juveniles.

Question: When will implementation of the YLS/CMI begin?

Answer: A pilot implementation of the YLS/CMI began on February 2004 in the Mat-Su juvenile probation office. Fairbanks was added as the second pilot site on January 1, 2005. Statewide probation staff training in YLS administration will occur at the end of FY05, with statewide implementation planned for the start of FY06.

Performance-based Standards (PbS)

Question: What are Performance-based Standards (PbS)?

Answer: PbS is a data-driven and ongoing quality improvement and accountability system for locked juvenile facilities used by a growing number of jurisdictions nationwide. It is sponsored by the national Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) in conjunction with the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Question: When will implementation of the PbS begin?

Answer: DJJ applied to and has been admitted for participation in PbS. Alaska's DJJ facilities received initial PbS training and conducted its first data collection cycle in October 2004.

Question: What is the purpose of PbS?

Answer: To provide an ongoing quality assurance process to ensure the delivery of safe and effective services in juvenile facilities and to use ongoing data on a variety of critical outcome indicators to measure and, as necessary improve performance.

Question: Who Uses the PbS process?

Answer: Staff at all eight Juvenile Justice youth facilities in Alaska are participating in this program beginning in FY05. Data, improvement plans and ongoing process steps are also reviewed by senior DJJ managers, including facility superintendents, Deputy Directors and Division Director as an ongoing information and management process for quality improvement.

Question: How does PbS work?

Answer: PbS requires DJJ facility staff to collect and monitor data on a wide variety of outcome measures for both detention and treatment services, requires exit interviews of youths



Pat Leeman is the superintendent of the Bethel Youth Facility; for PbS implementation, Pat took on the role of Alaska's statewide PbS coordinator. Pat's experience with PbS is "[PbS] gives a comprehensive look at the entire group of kids we serve... and clearly points out where we need to focus our attention". Pat has assisted the facilities in implementing and conducting Alaska's first data collection cycle. In this role she has been a liaison between CJCA, (PbS's national agency) and DJJ's 8 treatment and 4 detention units. PbS reports on 7 major areas of facility operations. In total there are 161 measures: 32 are critical measures, 102 are related to treatment units and 59 are related to detention.

and random youth and staff “climate surveys”. All data is entered into the system’s web-based portal via computer. DJJ receives initialized graphs and data on every outcome measure for all facilities, comparing information to the individual Alaska facility baseline and national field averages.

Question: Where did the PbS come from?

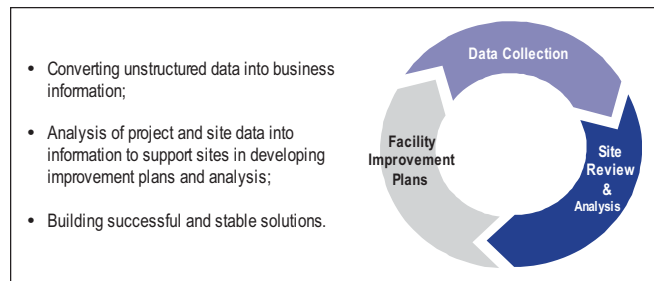
Answer: PbS was developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) within the U.S. Department of Justice and is administered by the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA). PbS received national recognition as a 2004 recipient of the prestigious “Innovations in American Government Award” from the Council for Excellence and Government and Harvard University’s Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation.

Question: How does the PbS improve the juvenile justice system?

Answer: PbS is a data-driven, ongoing quality improvement program for juvenile facilities, to identify what is working in the facilities and what needs to be improved.

- PbS standards address all facets of facility operations including:
 - Initial intake and screening;
 - Facility programming;
 - Safety, security, order;
 - Health, mental health;
 - Justice;
 - Aftercare and reintegration.
- After the data is analyzed, individualized facility improvement plans are created to respond to the information that was gathered. This cycle and process is repeated each data collection cycle as part of the ongoing way in which we do business in our facilities.

PbS uses a quality cycle to measure and improve facilities by:



Continuum of Services (Community Based and Transitional Services)

Question: What is a Community Based Service or Transitional Service?

Answer: These are a range of different services provided to youth at the “front end” (before a youth is placed in a facility) or “back-end” (after their release from a long-term treatment bed) of the juvenile justice system. Community based services may be comprised of a broad range of interventions or services and are generally intended to enable juvenile offenders to receive the skills and interventions they need while also maintaining the safety of the community. Transitional services are an effort to better prepare institutionalized youths for successful release (re-entry) into the community. Transitional services occur in DJJ facilities before discharge to get the youth ready to return to the community and continue as part of ongoing services once a youth is released home.

Question: What is a Community Based Service?

Answer: Community based services are for youth that are supervised in the community by juvenile probation officers and are living at home or in another non-secure living arrangement.

- ✱ Some examples of elements that comprise a continuum of community based services are:
 - Non-secure shelters
 - Electronic monitoring
 - Youth courts
 - Supervision and in-person (JPOs and/or facility staff) monitoring of juveniles
 - Community-based accountability contacts at school, work, home and other venues

Question: What is a Transitional Service (TSU)?

Answer: McLaughlin Youth Center’s (MYC) Transitional Services Unit is a specialized unit within the institution that houses a team of facility staff, probation officers and on-site community partners tasked solely with providing reintegration and aftercare services to youth released into the greater Anchorage area. The TSU model promotes communication, collaboration, and continuity throughout the continuum of intervention and services provided by DJJ. As has been mentioned in this system improvement report, this TSU program is serving as the agency model for replication in other facilities in Alaska, albeit on a smaller scale.

- ✱ The Transition Services Unit (TSU):
 - Was created when two of MYC’s treatment cottages were consolidated into one unit;
 - With the cost savings, staff was reassigned to create a TSU to work with released youth, to better prepare institutionalized youth for successful release to the community.
- ✱ Services provided to youth outside the facility setting include: Assessment, Case Management, Boys & Girls Club, a Job Ready program, School Transitional Services, Support Groups and Services, Functional Family Therapy, Big Brother Big Sister Mentor Program, and Intensive Community Supervision.

- TSU has been **nominated a national “promising practice”** by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP);

- OJJDP is funding research of this project by the UAA Justice Center. If positive outcomes are found based on the data, then the next step in the process is for this program to be designated as a research-based practice that will then be supported as a program that should be duplicated in other jurisdictions across the country.

Question: What is the purpose of Community Based Services or Transitional Services?

Answer: To serve as a locally relevant continuum of graduated sanctions to reduce recidivism, in a cost effective manner while maintaining community safety. The purpose of these “front-end” and “back-end” services is to overcome the challenges listed below that were identified by DJJ and core stakeholders as part of our ongoing agency review.

- ✱ Lack of balanced continuum of services;
- ✱ A need to “front-load” services;
- ✱ Over-Reliance on costly locked institutional care;
- ✱ Desire to adopt research and evidence-based approaches.

Question: Who Uses Community Based Services or Transitional Services?

Answer: Youth in the juvenile justice system who do not require locked facility resources but require some level of intervention and/or support from the Division and youth who are transitioning from a juvenile facility into the community.

Question: How do Community Based Services or Transitional Services improve the juvenile justice system?

Answer: Research supports that transitional services are more effective than releasing youth to

the community without follow-up. DJJ is monitoring the effectiveness of these step-down/re-entry programs; the federal OJJDP is funding research of TSU by the UAA Justice Center to verify its effectiveness. Additionally, research done by the Annie E. Casey Foundation clearly supports the need for a balanced juvenile justice service continuum (i.e. community-based resources) to reduce inappropriate use of secure detention when a youth poses no risk to the community.

The Director's Summary

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice and our work of the past few years. We rely on you, as community members, families, partners and stakeholders, to provide feedback and support to DJJ so that we can continue to improve Alaska's statewide juvenile justice system. Ultimately, we all want the same outcomes— the ability to hold juveniles accountable for their offenses, community safety and victim restoration and enhanced ability to impart skills to young people so that they do not re-offend.

Before I close this letter, I must say thank you to all of the staff of DJJ who work diligently each and every day with juveniles, families, victims and a variety of partners. The past few years have been very demanding and have required a tremendous amount of effort to change the way we do business. DJJ employees have jumped in with energy and commitment even during those periods when they were uncertain that these changes were possible. They are the true heroes behind those young people who don't come back to us, but instead go on to lead productive lives as Alaskans. I urge each of you as a reader to reach out to local DJJ probation and facility staff so that we can continue to work together to improve our state system. I thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to continuing to work together to improve our system.

Sincerely,

Patty Ware, Director
Division of Juvenile Justice



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Division of Juvenile Justice Nome Youth Facility



Approximately 70 percent of the existing youth facility has been demolished in this picture, leaving only the area that will become juvenile probation offices. The expansion above gives an idea of the size of the new facility that will contain 9,700 square feet of space and more than double the juvenile capacity to 14.



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