



# Oregon Youth Authority

Issue Brief

April 2015

## Intervening to prevent criminal justice involvement

**10**  
Number of OYA close-custody facilities

**650**  
Approximate number of youth offenders OYA supervises in close custody

**550**  
Approximate number of youth offenders OYA supervises in community residential treatment and foster care settings

**550**  
Approximate number of youth offenders OYA supervises who live independently or at home in communities

**330**  
Total Funds, in millions of dollars, allocated to OYA in 2013-2015

**90**  
Approximate percent of OYA's budget spent locally in facilities and communities

### The Oregon Criminal Justice Feeder System Project

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) and the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) promote public safety by providing services to reduce the likelihood of subsequent criminal activity among youth and adult offenders. Unfortunately, many of these services are provided following a crime and subsequent victimization. A proactive approach that prevents criminal activity obviously is preferable to a reactive response that occurs after victimization. Identifying the individual and family characteristics and service utilization patterns that impact the risk of involvement with OYA and/or ODOC is the first step toward preventing and deterring criminal activity. Many of those who become involved with the criminal justice system are identified as higher risk at an earlier stage by school teachers, social workers, local law enforcement, and others providing services in our communities. In a similar way, OYA researchers are using historical data from state and local agencies to identify higher-risk individuals long before they become involved with OYA and/or ODOC. This "feeder" system analysis will be duplicated with other agencies, including Oregon State Hospital.

### Current status

Despite the complex and time-consuming nature of analyzing data, OYA researchers benefit from data sharing agreements with various agencies, including the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Department of Education, Employment Department, Oregon State Police, all 36 county juvenile departments, and ODOC. Data from many of these agencies have been matched and analyses are underway. OYA researchers are working with education and juvenile department data for incorporation into subsequent analyses.

The respective feeder systems for OYA and ODOC are currently analyzed on two separate but parallel tracks. One OYA senior research analyst is dedicated to each track and works with the OYA/ODOC research manager. Researchers work with systems analysts from OYA and ODOC on data review and organization. Staff from the DHS Integrated Client System Data Warehouse perform all behind-the-scenes matching across the different datasets.

DATA SHARING PARTNERS	
Agency	Data
Department of Human Services	Child Welfare Self-Sufficiency
Oregon Health Authority	Medical Assistance Alcohol & Drug Treatment Mental Health Treatment
Department of Education	Attendance Discipline Test scores Special education
Employment Department	Wages earned Hours worked Industry
Oregon State Police	Arrests
County juvenile departments	Arrests/referrals Dispositions Risk assessments
Oregon Youth Authority	Residential commitment Close-custody commitment Risk assessments Recidivism
Department of Corrections	Community supervision Incarceration

**Oregon  
Youth Authority**

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**Mission**

The Oregon Youth Authority protects the public and reduces crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.



**Vision**

Youth who leave OYA will go on to lead productive, crime-free lives.



**Core Values**

Integrity  
Professionalism  
Accountability  
Respect



**Director**

**Fariborz Pakseresht**



**Deputy Director**

**Joe O'Leary**



**Key Service Areas**

Business Services  
Community Services  
Facility Services  
Health Services  
Information Services  
Treatment Services

## Recent findings

The current analytical approach to the OYA and ODOC feeder systems is guided by three questions:

- 1) Are there **opportunities to intervene** during an individual's life and prevent him or her from becoming involved with the juvenile and/or adult criminal justice system?
- 2) If prevention services are provided, **which agencies and/or client populations are the best targets for interventions?**
- 3) What are the individual and family characteristics and service utilization patterns **associated with increased risk** of criminal justice system involvement?

Recent findings suggest that the answer to the first two of these three research questions is an overwhelming "yes" for both the OYA and ODOC feeder systems. Results indicate that the majority of youth committed to OYA and adults committed to community supervision and/or ODOC have contact with at least one DHS or OHA program area prior to their involvement in the criminal justice system. Contacts with each agency represent opportunities for potential intervention. Furthermore, analyses suggest that specific program areas and client populations may be stronger "feeders" for the criminal justice system. Specifically:

### OYA

- Ninety percent of OYA youth have contact with at least one DHS or OHA program area prior to commitment.
- Statistical models comparing youth committed to OYA and a similar group of youth with no OYA record suggest that contact with Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services, Mental Health Treatment Services, and Foster Care are the strongest predictors of OYA involvement. This indicates that substance abuse, mental illness, and removal from home may impact the probability of OYA commitment.

### ODOC

- Up to 80 percent of adult offenders had contact with DHS, OHA, and/or OYA before entering community supervision or ODOC incarceration for the first time.
- Similar to findings for OYA youth, most adult offenders with histories of DHS, OHA, and/or OYA involvement had contact with more than one service area.
- Statistical models comparing ODOC adults to a similar group of non-ODOC adults show that the strongest predictors of ODOC involvement are contacts with OYA, Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services, and Self-Sufficiency; indicating that experiences with state-level juvenile justice, substance abuse, and poverty may influence the probability of future ODOC involvement.

## Next steps

The next set of analyses will focus on our final question and identify the individual and family characteristics and service utilization patterns associated with increased risk of criminal justice system involvement. These analyses will use more sophisticated statistical modeling and incorporate demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, and race/ethnicity) and service characteristics (e.g., duration of services, types of services, timing of agency contacts). Additional data sources (i.e., arrest records, juvenile department records, education, and employment) will be incorporated as they become available. Future reports also will examine what occurs **after** an individual transitions out of the criminal justice system, including recidivism, employment, and continuing education. Service agency involvement after transition also will be considered, such as participation in treatment for mental health or substance abuse and contact with DHS as a parent or guardian.

*For comments, questions, or copies of recent reports, please contact Margaret Braun, OYA senior researcher, 503-569-8318 or [Margaret.Braun2@oya.state.or.us](mailto:Margaret.Braun2@oya.state.or.us); or Kristina Racer, OYA senior researcher, 503-779-3926, [Kristi.Racer@oya.state.or.us](mailto:Kristi.Racer@oya.state.or.us).*