



Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

News Release

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Budget Increase Strengthens Juvenile Justice Programs

TALLAHSSEE -Governor Jeb Bush today reaffirmed his commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice's proven, balanced approach to reducing juvenile crime by signing a budget that includes increased funding to enhance existing programs, creating a partnership with counties for detention, and an innovative step to help some delinquents through in-home counseling and therapy.

"Florida's improving economy has allowed the Governor and legislature to provide the Department with a budget increase that ensures the continuation of a full continuum of services," said Interim Secretary C. George Denman. "This budget also replaces lost Federal funding to allow the Department to continue providing critical treatment and prevention services. Additionally the budget funds a promising pilot project for reducing juvenile crime and delinquency, called re-direction."

Juvenile Justice Budget highlights for fiscal year 2004-2005 include:

Re-Direction Pilot Project - Governor Bush supported this innovative concept that reduces the need for residential services. Some youth who have committed minor or technical probation violations will be eligible for participation in the project. Normally, these youth would be referred to residential facilities for treatment. Participants in the pilot project will instead be diverted from traditional residential commitment and returned to their homes. Once there, community-based organizations will deliver intensive personal and family therapeutic services.

Four re-direction pilot test sites are slated to begin operation in the fall of 2004, and contracts will be determined by competitive bid. Part of the pilot sites will have a residential component and the other sites will not. The legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability is assisting with project performance analyses.

Partnering With Local Government - Beginning this October, counties will be responsible for the cost of pre-disposition detention services. Counties will be supporting the costs associated with detainment of youth prior to adjudication, just as they have traditionally done with adults. Some small counties are exempt from this requirement.

Continuation of Vital Prevention Programs and Services - Vital, proven prevention programs including the PACE Center for Girls, National Guard Youth Challenge Program, runaway shelters and services to ungovernable youth and their families are fully funded. Grant funding for community-based delinquency prevention programs is also funded in this budget. The budget also increases the Department's spending authority for Federal community-based prevention grants by \$2 million to serve an additional 2000 youth and their families.

Department Budget Increase of \$11 Million - This represents a strong commitment to protecting the public by reducing juvenile crime in Florida. The Department of Juvenile Justice's operating budget, starting July 1, is \$631 million, compared to the current fiscal year budget of \$620 million.

"The commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice's successful balanced approach to preventing and reducing juvenile crime is evident. A budget increase; provision for Federal losses; and support of our research-based re-direction program, reflect confidence from the legislature and the Governor. This state has seen a steady decline in juvenile crime, especially serious, violent crimes. Governor Bush's signing of this budget will help the Department continue this trend," said Secretary Denman.

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