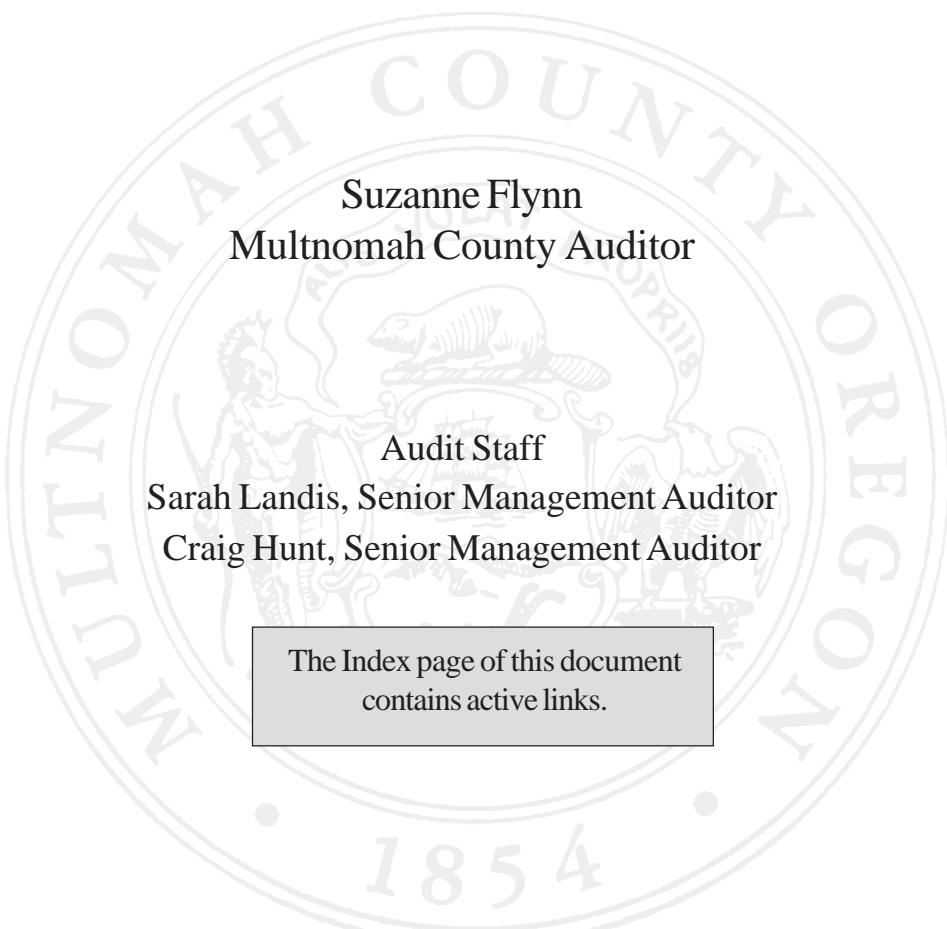


Juvenile Community Justice

**Strengthen Management Practices
and Clarify Priorities**

August 2003



Suzanne Flynn
Multnomah County Auditor

Audit Staff
Sarah Landis, Senior Management Auditor
Craig Hunt, Senior Management Auditor

The Index page of this document
contains active links.



Suzanne Flynn, Auditor

Multnomah County

501 SE Hawthorne, Room 601

Portland, Oregon 97214

Telephone (503) 988-3320

Telefax 988-3019

www.co.multnomah.or.us/aud

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 6, 2003

To: Diane Linn, Multnomah County Chair
Maria Rojo de Steffey, Commissioner, District 1
Serena Cruz, Commissioner, District 2
Lisa Naito, Commissioner, District 3
Lonnie Roberts, Commissioner, District 4

From: Suzanne Flynn, Multnomah County Auditor

Subject: Juvenile Community Justice Audit

The attached report covers our audit of the Department of Community Justice, Juvenile Community Justice Division. This audit was included in our FY02-03 Audit Schedule.

The Juvenile Community Justice Division has changed significantly in the last nine years. The trends we reviewed seem positive. The use of detention has been reduced, recidivism has decreased, and the workload generally is declining. We chose in this audit to make recommendations that could further strengthen this already strong organization.

After conducting a survey of Division employees, we found that morale could be improved in some areas. A review of probation workload management revealed that the Division is not using existing management tools to prioritize and assign work. Recent budget reductions have resulted in lower staff levels at the detention facility, a move that our analysis indicates does not affect the quality of service or safety. Finally, we found that using on-call staff to fill absences reduces personnel costs.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance extended to us by the management and staff in the Division of Juvenile Community Justice.

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- Click once to activate link

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Summary

The Department of Community Justice, Juvenile Community Justice (JCJ) Division, provides delinquency prevention, detention, probation, and court services for youth in Multnomah County who are involved in the criminal justice system. JCJ's goals are to prevent and intervene early in juvenile delinquency, hold youth accountable, reduce recidivism, and protect public safety. In FY02, JCJ handled a total of 3,776 youth felony and misdemeanor referrals.

JCJ instituted significant changes over the last nine years. The most significant change has been the Detention Reform Initiative which sets up barriers to detention for all but the highest risk youth. The Detention Reform Initiative as well as other changes in the Division have decreased detention populations and created new expectations and processes for employees. The purpose of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of management in this new environment.

Overall, we found JCJ to be a strong and effectively managed organization. The findings and recommendations presented in the audit are an opportunity to improve upon an organization that already has a strong record of results.

The Auditor's Office conducted a survey of JCJ employees to assess the effectiveness of management practices in this new organizational climate. The survey was conducted in the midst of budget cuts and layoffs and the results should be interpreted cautiously. Survey information shows that there are strengths to build on as well as areas for improvement that management should address. Specifically, management should study and address poor morale and negative perceptions throughout the organization.

We found that JCJ lacks a uniform system to equitably assign probation cases, assess staff workload, and prioritize high risk cases. As a result, some counselors' workload was high while others' was much lower. These inequities put at risk the ability of counselors to take the time to form a relationship with youth and to find the services that will help them modify their behavior and stay out of the justice system.

Further, the quality of probation services is not sufficiently monitored through case audits and reviews as directed by policy. Effective monitoring helps managers assess the quality of the counselor-youth relationship, better understand workload demands, help staff prioritize their workload, and encourage best practices to support the Division's mission.

We analyzed detention staffing practices and also found room for improvement. Staffing levels have been driven more by budget pressures than by workload demands. This resulted in overstaffing in FY03. As a result of budget constraints, staffing will be reduced in FY04. We estimate these staff reductions will save approximately \$650,000 per year and that they are more consistent with the workload needs.

Finally, we found that Custody Services reduces costs by using on-call staff. In FY02, Custody Services saved approximately \$450,000-500,000 by using on-call staff to fill absences or vacancies of full-time staff. The benefits of on-call staff justify more efforts to improve practices regarding scheduling, pool sizing, unemployment claim coordination, equitable distribution of work, and performance tracking.

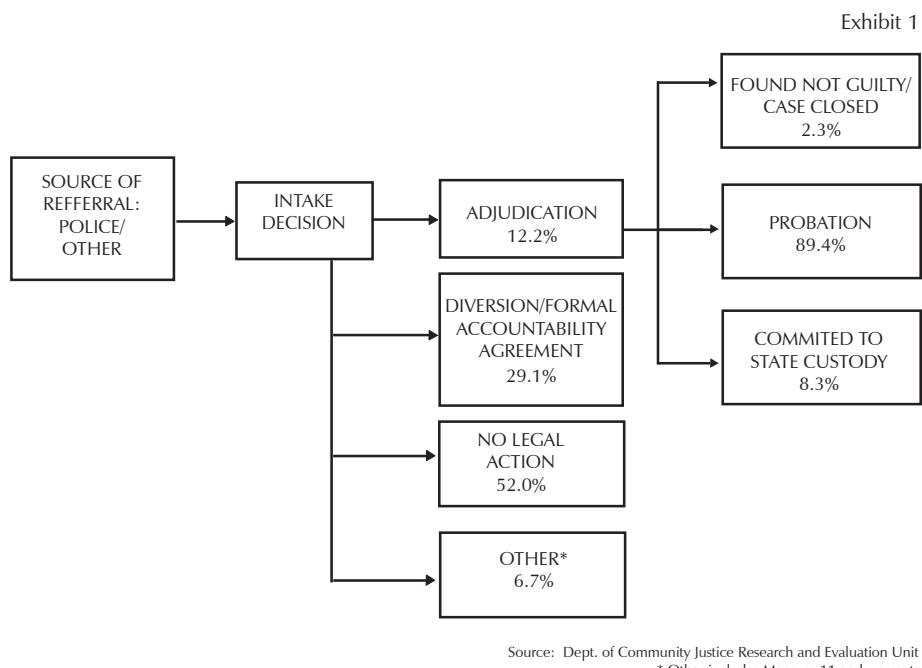
Background

Overview of the juvenile justice system

When a youth is accused of a criminal law violation in Multnomah County, the case is handled within the juvenile justice system. Several different agencies and governments are involved in responding to youth criminal behavior including local police, state courts, the County's Juvenile Community Justice Division (JCJ), the County District Attorney's Office, the Oregon Youth Authority, and defense attorneys.

Youth can enter the juvenile justice system in one of two ways: a paper referral (accusation of a crime) can be entered, or a youth can be brought to the detention facility in police custody. Police may directly transport non-detainable youth, such as those with minor charges or who are runaways, to a community program designed to intervene and help youth access services or return to their families. If police bring a youth to the County's juvenile detention facility for admission, there are several key decision points before the case is decided (adjudicated). State statutes restrict the circumstances under which a youth can be held in detention. If a youth is detained or conditionally released, a preliminary hearing is held the following day and a trial date is set. At each of the decision points outlined in the figure below, release is reconsidered in an attempt to find a detention alternative if a youth remains in detention.

Key decision points in the juvenile justice system and percent of youth at each point (2002)



Once a referral is received, the District Attorney's Office reviews police reports and decides whether action should be taken in each case. In some cases, no action is taken or the case may be forwarded to a diversion program in which

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the youth voluntarily agrees to fulfill conditions without the case being formally processed through the courts.

If the District Attorney decides to try a case, a petition is filed and a trial date is set. The youth also obtains legal counsel to assist in the proceedings. Between the preliminary hearing and the trial or plea date, a County Juvenile Court Counselor prepares a report for the judge assessing the youth's needs and risks to the community. At the hearing, the judge determines whether the crime was committed by the youth and decides whether the youth will be committed to a state juvenile corrections institution, be detained locally, receive probation, or have the charges dismissed.

In 2002, there were a total of 3,776 youth felony and misdemeanor referrals received by the JCJ. Among those cases for which disposition data are available (98.6%), only 12% were adjudicated. Most of the remainder of cases are either closed without action (52%) or are referred to the Diversion Program (29%). See Exhibit 1. Most adjudicated cases (89%) resulted in probation for the youth involved. In 33 cases, the youth was committed to a state youth correctional facility and in nine cases the court dismissed the charges.

JCJ, which is a division within the larger Department of Community Justice, provides services during the initial criminal referral, in the Diversion Program, in detention, at adjudication, and during probation supervision. JCJ's goals are to prevent and intervene early in juvenile delinquency, hold youth accountable, reduce recidivism, and protect public safety. It manages a regional detention center; probation and diversion supervision; secure treatment for juvenile sex offenders and those with alcohol and drug problems; and community alternatives to detention such as electronic monitoring, contracts for various types of shelter, and monitoring in the community. JCJ runs other programs that support community safety, accountability, and reformation such as a victim restitution program, community service, Forest Project, a day reporting center, and numerous skill development classes. In addition, it operates a number of programs to prevent delinquent behavior before youth become involved in the justice system.

Recent reform efforts at JCJ

JCJ has been engaged in various reform efforts for a number of years. Detention reform has been the most significant change in the way the Division conducts its work. This work was sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which has provided funding and technical support for the reform since 1994. The objectives of detention reform are to:

- Eliminate the inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention, thereby reducing detention rates and facility crowding
- Maintain or improve court appearance rates and minimize the incidence of delinquent behavior through the implementation of effective community-based alternatives
- Redirect public finances from expensive, often counterproductive secure facilities to community-based programming
- Improve conditions in secure facilities

Starting with the premise that the juvenile justice system needed to differentiate between youth with high needs, such as mental health or family problems, and youth who were at high risk of endangering public safety, County officials and

others involved in the juvenile justice system set up barriers to detention for all but the highest risk youth. Objective classification instruments were also implemented to guide decision making at various points in the system. Internal evaluations show that this effort has been successful at reducing the number of youth admitted to detention and in reducing the over-representation of minority youth detained.

Decreasing the use of detention also meant changes for probation. Because detention is less available as a sanction for non-compliance with the terms of probation, Juvenile Court Counselors (youth probation officers) had to change how they supervised youth. More community-based alternatives were developed and skill building programs were put in place. Programs to hold youth accountable, such as community service and restitution, were strengthened and a youth Forest Camp was created. The expectation of counselors was no longer simply to hold youth accountable and protect the community, but also to help them locate and engage in services and treatment.

A number of other changes came with detention reform. Restorative justice practices are now in place to address the damage caused by a youth's criminal behavior, including restitution payment to victims, offender-victim mediation, and community service. Individual risk and needs assessments of youth occur regularly so that services and sanctions can be appropriately targeted. The Division has also recently adopted a strength-based approach to probation in which counselors focus on the successes, interests, and healthy aspects of youth and families to help them find positive solutions to their behavior. For most counselors, these changes have meant an increased amount of time and effort expended with each youth on their caseloads.

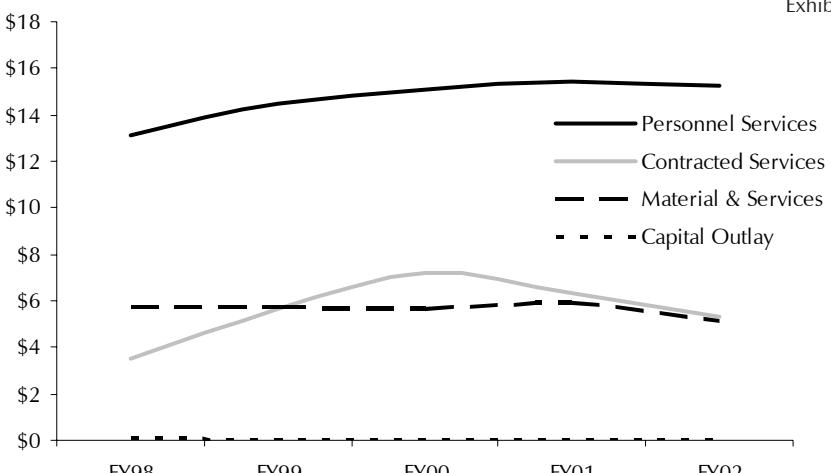
The effects of these reforms have been many: detention populations have decreased, new processes and expectations are in place, alternatives to detention were developed and utilized, and Juvenile Court Counselors became the primary enforcers of accountability while simultaneously helping youth find the services and develop the skills they need.

JCJ operations

Spending for JCJ was \$25.8 million in FY02, an increase of 15% over five years, but a drop of 7% from the year before. Budget restraints in FY03 and in FY04 will likely keep the budget at approximately \$26.8 million. In FY02, 29% of funding for Juvenile Justice programs came from state and federal sources, with the County general fund accounting for 67% and other sources accounting for 4%. See Exhibit 2.

Juvenile Community Justice
Expenditures
(in millions in constant \$)

Exhibit 2



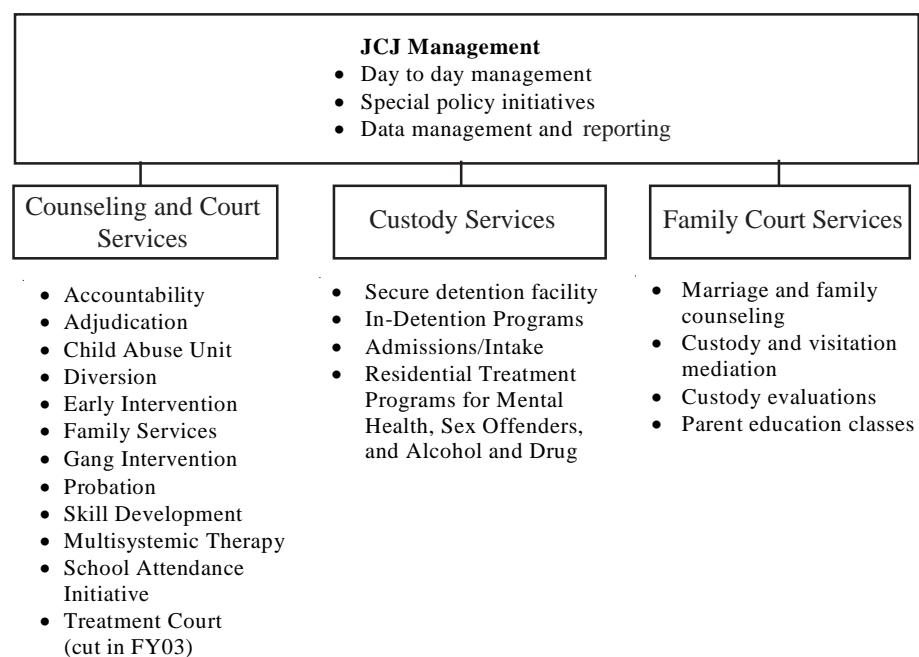
Source: Auditor's Office Analysis

JCJ had approximately 225 full-time equivalent employees in FY02. The current proposed budget for FY04 puts the staffing level at 198, a drop of 14%.

Staff work in one of four functional units: Custody Services (42%), Counseling and Court Services (53%), Juvenile Justice Management (1%), and Family Court Services (3%). See Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3

Organization of Juvenile
Community Justice Division



The number of youth referred on law violations has been declining, as has the number of youth served by JCJ. The Division handled 33% fewer cases in 2002 than it did in 1998. The monthly average number of youth on probation and in detention has also declined over the past five years. See Exhibit 4.

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JCJ
workload

Exhibit 4

	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	% Change
Felony and Misdemeanor Referrals (calendar year)	5,602	4,833	4,858	3,989	3,776	-32.6%
Probation (avg. per month)	946	850	735	704	660	-30.2%
Detention (avg. per month)	343	328	243	233	218	-36.4%

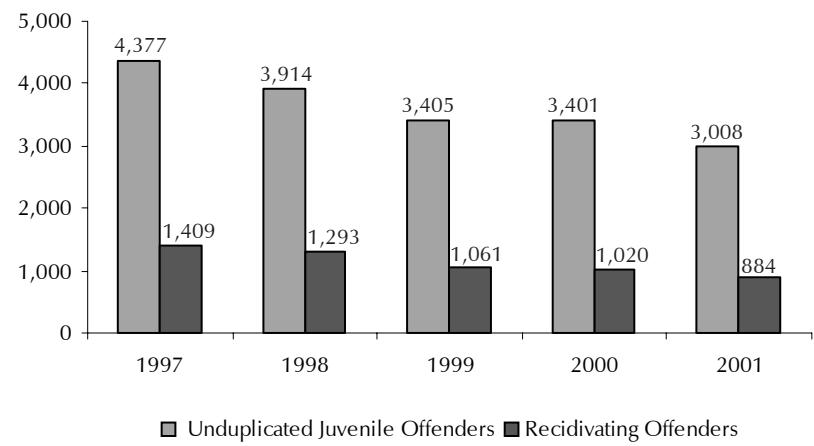
Source: DCJ Juvenile Crime Trends 2002 Report, DCJ Research and Evaluation Unit

JCJ outcomes

JCJ has seen some positive results for its efforts. Internal research shows that juvenile recidivism, or the percent of youth who reoffend within one year of their initial referral to JCJ, has declined slightly over the past five years. However, the total number of recidivators dropped 37% during the same time period. This trend is an indicator that JCJ services may be working to prevent new referrals to the juvenile justice system.

Juvenile offenders and recidivists
(felony and misdemeanor,
Multnomah County referrals only)

Exhibit 5



Source: DCJ Research and Evaluation Unit

JCJ has also had success in addressing minority over-representation after youth are brought to JCJ. For example, the gap between the rate at which minority youth and Anglo youth are detained has nearly closed in recent years. Reducing the disproportionate use of detention for minorities is a primary goal of detention reform.

Scope and methodology

Given the magnitude of the changes that have occurred at Juvenile Justice during the past nine years and the concentration of leadership on implementing these changes, the objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of management in this new environment. Specifically, we wanted to determine whether probation services were as strong as they needed to be to support detention reform and whether staffing resources were effectively assigned. Because the audit focused primarily on custody and probation operations, we did not review other Division functions such as prevention activities, diversion, treatment programs, or court services.

We reviewed budgets, policies and procedures, program information, a 1988 audit, relevant State laws, detention reform training information, evaluation reports, classification instruments, client files, monthly statistical reports, best practices research, facility inspection reports, collective bargaining agreements,

and staffing data. The audit team conducted extensive interviews with both management and staff at JCJ, as well as with external stakeholders such as the Chief Family Court Judge, Judicial Referees, a Deputy District Attorney, public defenders, state juvenile workers, and a victim's advocacy group.

We reviewed a sample of case files closed during 2002 for quality. Detention intakes, admissions, releases; caseload data from the Division's Juvenile Information Network (JIN); and monthly statistical reports were utilized to determine workload. We also used JIN to review counselors' records of contacts with youth and to look at detention population data.

Finally, we conducted a survey of JCJ employees to assess overall organizational climate, morale, job satisfaction, and management practices. To design the survey, we reviewed research on organizational climate surveys and developed questions to parallel a well-established survey from the literature. We included a few items from previous Division and County-wide surveys to provide a basis for comparison over time. The survey also contained a section for Juvenile Court Counselors that measured their belief in the effectiveness of specific probation practices, as well as their use of these practices.

The overall response rate to the survey was 51%, with the highest response rate among regular Custody staff (61%) and support/management (66%). Counseling staff had a somewhat lower response rate (44%), while on-call Custody staff had the lowest response rate (22%). Based on statistical analysis, climate survey measures were grouped into three areas: Mission Alignment, Climate, and Job Performance Standards.

This audit was included in our FY03 audit schedule and was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Because the organization audited in 1988 had changed significantly we did not perform audit follow-up.

Audit Results

Overall, we found a substantially strong organization in JCJ. The Division is on the leading edge of juvenile justice programs nationally and has won recognition for its implementation of detention reform. With strong leadership, the culture of the organization has changed dramatically to one that relies less on detention as a sanction, works to eliminate bias at critical decision points, and addresses the causes of delinquent behavior.

JCJ management has led the Division through these significant changes over the past nine years. To sustain these efforts, we believe JCJ should shift its focus from leadership through change to more careful management of the organization to preserve and enhance its reform efforts. By management, we refer to the handling of the day-to-day complexity of the organization, as opposed to leading the organization in a new direction. Management focuses on establishing formal systems and structures, integrates plans and activities, clearly defines roles and responsibilities, and pays attention to the internal processes and dynamics necessary to create a high functioning organization.

There are already many strong management practices in place in JCJ, including extensive collection, analysis, and use of data for decision making; examination of internal and external processes to make improvements; involvement of management and staff in committee and policy work; and strong, positive relationships with external stakeholders, such as the courts, the District Attorney, state-level agencies, public defenders, and others. Leadership has committed to evaluation of its programs to provide information on the success of services. It has also dedicated significant resources to establishing high quality information systems and making data readily available to supervisors for their day-to-day decision-making and management. Overall, staff members are committed to the goals of the organization, employ best practices, and enjoy working at JCJ. The findings presented here give management the chance to build on these strengths and fine tune operations in an organization that has proven itself to be on the right track to effectively serving youth and meeting the public safety needs of the community.

We analyzed a number of areas within JCJ, including Division-wide organizational climate and supervisor practices, probation workload and practices, and detention staffing. The results are shown starting at the organization level with the survey we conducted, followed by detailed analysis of the other audit areas later in the report.

Survey results indicate
a shift in focus is
needed

As JCJ emerges from a period of rapid and extensive change, it is important to ensure that it can sustain a strong and effective organization. The survey conducted by the Auditor's Office was designed to help assess strengths and to identify existing impediments to organizational health in the areas of climate and supervisory practices. Because these elements are linked to job satisfaction and performance, the survey results should provide a tool for JCJ in strengthening its management and effectiveness. As with any major change process, it is important to regularly review whether or not the work climate is conducive to the best possible performance by staff.

	<p>It should be noted that the survey was administered in the midst of substantial budget cuts for the Division, which may have heightened staff's sense of frustration with management and dissatisfaction with the workplace. The results of this survey should be read with this caution in mind. However, because we were able to analyze differences between work units and by other factors, we found a number of areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the Division.</p>
Climate survey results	<p>Following are highlights from the organizational climate portion of survey. This section included questions on trust, communication, decision-making, personnel issues, promotion and rewards, leadership, goals, and performance standards. The results should be viewed with the poor budget and layoff situation in mind. A full report of results was presented separately to JCJ management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff generally have strong alignment with the mission of the Division and understand the relationship of their work to the Division's goals. However, the latter shows a downward trend when compared to two previous County-wide employee surveys. • Overall perceptions of climate were low across all employee groups. • Responses were mixed to questions about clarity of job definition and whether high performance standards were set, with management more often in agreement than other groups. • Staff feel overwhelmed by change, especially Counseling and Support staff. Most disagreed that people in the organization welcome change and view it as healthy and non-threatening. • Most staff responded negatively when asked about the personnel policy, including whether the policy is interpreted fairly, whether there is a promotion system that allows the best person to rise to the top, and whether supervisors related compensation, recognition, and promotion to excellence of job performance. It is significant to note that even management had low levels of agreement with the question about the promotion systems.
Supervision survey results	<p>The second part of the survey asked staff about the practices and characteristics of their supervisors. Because the supervisor is closest to line staff and is responsible for ensuring that the Division's objectives are met, it is important to check on staff perceptions of their supervisors. We found a marked difference between the Custody and Counseling staff in their responses to questions about supervision. This may be the result of the recent instability in the organization due to budget cuts, but should be researched and addressed by JCJ.</p> <p>Following are highlights from this portion of the survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents generally felt that their supervisors did not hold negative stereotypes of minorities, but agreement on this question has dropped since the 1999 County-wide employee survey. • Custody Specialists are the most dissatisfied on communication with supervisors, while other staff groups vary in their level of satisfaction. In the Division as a whole, being able to speak openly to supervisors fell 18 percentage points between 1999 and 2003.

Employee suggestions for improvement

- Most staff members agree that they are recognized by supervisors for good performance, except for Custody Specialists.
- Staff members were divided on whether supervisors set clear performance standards. Counseling staff were more positive than Custody staff.

The employee survey provided room for staff to respond to two open-ended questions: What is the single most important thing that makes your job difficult? and What two things would you do to improve the organization? We categorized responses based on common themes and summarized the findings. The results reflect the number of comments, not the number of respondents. The most frequently cited factor that made staff members' jobs difficult was management practices, including lack of skills, being unavailable, and poor communication. This was followed in frequency by problems with co-workers, such as infighting, lack of skills, and poor communication. Budget cuts, services cuts, and lack of resources were cited next most often.

The majority of ideas for improving the organization were also related to staff and management issues. Improving the personnel process regarding hiring, promotion, pay scales, and retention of poorly performing staff was mentioned in the highest number of comments. The second most frequent comment related to improving communication and increasing the involvement of staff and management, followed by creating more consistency, both in accountability and positive leadership.

Probation counselor's relationship with youth is crucial to success

Juvenile Court Counselors who oversee youth on probation are the front line of the juvenile justice system after youth have been adjudicated. Probation supervision is defined as “a process built upon the central idea that to change a young person’s behavior and hold him accountable requires both a structure to limit potential wrongdoing and a response to life experiences that enables prosocial behavior and reparation. Juvenile probation is in the hopeful position of influencing that development and thereby reducing criminal behavior.”

Whether or not youth succeed on probation depends both on the relationships they establish with their Juvenile Court Counselor and the work those counselors do. Counselors ensure that sanctions are fulfilled, treatment is provided, and skills are built to deter the youth from future criminal activity. Building these relationships and creating opportunities for youth to learn and receive treatment takes time and cannot be effectively accomplished by counselors who are overworked or whose caseloads are too high.

Counselor workload is not prioritized

In interviews, some counselors indicated that although their caseloads were not growing, expectations for working with youth were increasing. Assessments, locating and arranging for services, finding housing placements, and working with parents, families, and treatment providers all put demands on counselors’ time. Because keeping caseloads at a manageable number is essential to being able to provide this range of services to youth, we tested whether JCJ had an adequate workload management system. We found that probation units lack a uniform system for equitably assigning cases, assessing staff workload, and prioritizing high risk youth, resulting in large differences in workload between staff. An effective workload management system would allow the Division to best utilize employees’ time by distributing cases fairly and providing a way to prioritize cases to relieve workload when necessary.

JCJ implemented a case classification system in 1996 in part to “direct Department resources and sanctions to youth who present the greatest risk to public safety while linking low risk offenders to community resources” and to “assist in the equitable distribution of probation cases among Juvenile Court Counselors.” There are three primary assessments that occur prior to the youth being assigned to a probation officer. A risk assessment instrument assigns youth a score based on risk factors that predict the likelihood that a youth will reoffend. The score a youth receives in these areas determines his or her probation contact level: high risk youth have a minimum of four contacts per month, medium risk have at least two contacts, and low risk youth have at least one contact per month. A needs assessment is also conducted during initial case classification to identify youth needs in the areas of peer relationships, substance abuse, structured activities, school, employment, socialization, mental health, family, and victimization. Assessments based on youth strengths are also employed. These assessments, along with other information, are intended to be used as the basis for preparing a case plan for youth to follow during their time on probation.

Our analysis indicates that the Division has not fully used the classification system as it intended. JCJ has stated that resources should go to high risk youth first. However, a number of counselors we interviewed indicated that they often spent as much time working with families, treatment providers, and youth whose risk score was low as they do with higher risk. They said that low risk did not necessarily mean low need.

We analyzed all contacts counselors had with youth for a sample of 42 cases closed during 2002 to test what difference there was in number of contacts between high and low risk youth. Contacts with family, school staff, outside service providers, and all others besides the youth were not included. The analysis revealed an average number of counselor contacts with youth per month of approximately 3.3 for both medium and high risk youth and approximately 2.2 contacts for low risk youth. This is higher than contact standards require for medium and low risk youth, but lower than standards for high risk youth.

As resources decrease for early intervention and diversion programs and cutbacks force reductions in the number of Juvenile Court Counselors, it will be more important than ever for JCJ to establish and follow policies for prioritizing cases that pose the greatest risk to public safety. The tension between serving high risk and high need youth must be resolved and Division priorities must be clarified. This may mean decreasing case management-type or intensive services to low risk but high need youth. Additionally, recent research seems to indicate that, dollar for dollar, some interventions and treatment services can produce better results than probation alone. Investment in such programs could reduce the number of youth on probation and most appropriately address the needs of delinquent youth. Whatever policy directions the Board of County Commissioners and JCJ decide to take regarding service priorities and modalities, the Division needs to provide more guidance and set priorities for staff so that they can increase their attention to high risk youth, particularly in these tight budget times.

Workload is not equitably distributed

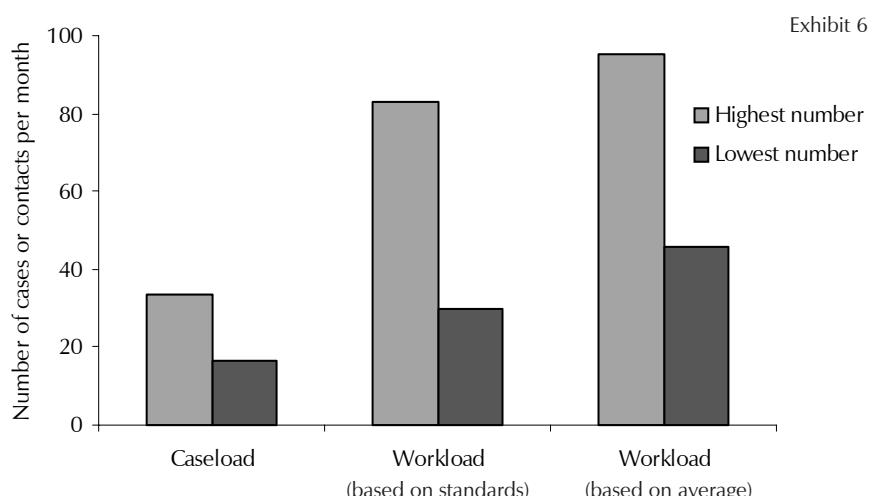
Because the new approaches to probation require more intensive work by counselors than in the past, we wanted to ensure that workload was equitably distributed among staff. We analyzed workload three ways and found in each case that work was not equitably distributed across all counselors or among counselors in each unit in some cases.

Supervisors at probation field offices receive cases after they have been reviewed by court and the youth's criminal referral has been found to be true by a judge (the juvenile equivalent of a guilty finding). Field offices are geographically located throughout the county. There are also specialized units: the Sex Offender Treatment Team, the Family Services Unit, the Gang Resistance and Intervention Team, and, until recently, Treatment Court for youth with chronic substance abuse problems. At present, managers have different methods for distributing cases once they have been assigned to a field unit. Some assign cases to counselors based solely on who got the last case, others try to assign a counselor they believe will do a good job on a particular case, and others assign based on current caseload. According to management, the Division will begin using its automated information system (JIN) to distribute workload once they have resolved data discrepancies, but there is currently no uniform policy.

Counselors have differing opinions about their workload, according to the survey. Almost half disagreed that their workload was higher than others within their unit, while 43% neither agreed nor disagreed. When asked whether their unit's workload was higher than other units, only nearly half agreed and 37% neither agreed nor disagreed. Less than half of respondents agreed that the way cases are assigned is equitable, with 33% disagreeing.

Caseload	We first looked at average caseload per counselor and caseload per unit for each month of 2002. The average caseload per month was 22.6. Removing questionably high caseloads, the range was 16.5 to 33.8. Some counselors, such as those on the Sex Offender Treatment Team and in the Family Services Unit, have protected caseloads, meaning that they are supposed to have fewer cases than their peers with general caseloads because of the high risk and high need nature of the youth they work with. The monthly average for the Family Services Unit was 18.8. It was interesting to note that the Sex Offender Treatment Team, which is supposed to have lower caseloads, averaged 22.1 cases per month. This was slightly higher than two other units without protected caseload size.
Workload by contact standards	We also looked at whether workload, as distinct from caseload, was equitably distributed among staff. For this analysis, we defined workload by number of contacts per month required per youth, so that a high risk youth would indicate a workload four times higher than low risk youth and twice as high as medium risk youth. The Sex Offender Treatment Team unit had a higher workload than other units because all of its cases are high or medium risk by definition. There were smaller but substantial differences between other units. There were also large differences between counselors: the average number of expected contacts per month was 50.7, but the range of expected contacts was between 30 and 83.
Workload by average contacts	Because counselors indicated that there was not always a direct relationship between risk level and the amount of work each case required, we used average actual contacts from our sample of 42 cases as a basis for the third analysis of workload. We weighted each case using averages developed from the case sample. The number of actual contacts used for the weights differed from what standards indicate should be the minimum number of contacts: the weights are higher than standards for low (2.23) and medium (3.27) risk youth and lower than standards for high risk (3.26) youth. The results showed a range of contacts between 46 and 95 contacts per month, excluding outliers. There are also differences in workload between units, ranging from 55 average per counselor in one unit to 78 in another.

Juvenile court counselors caseload and workload comparison 2002



Source: Auditor's Office Analysis

Whatever method one uses to look at workload for counselors, our analyses indicate that there are real differences between the amount of work assigned, expected, and actually performed per client. The possible effect of these differences is that some counselors have lighter workloads than others, perhaps allowing less effective counselors to stay on with smaller workloads, while others have heavier workloads than their peers, perhaps because they can handle more cases or are more effective. Some counselors also indicated on the survey that workload is not equitably distributed or that poor performers were kept on staff; these perceived unfairnesses could have an impact on morale, climate, and performance. It is important for JCJ to create a system of workload management in order to equitably assign cases, make most effective use of counselors' time, and meet the priorities of the Division.

Strengthen methods to ensure the quality of probation

While a systematic way to measure workload is essential to managing it, merely counting cases or contacts to ensure that these standards are met does not guarantee the quality of probation. Best practices in the field indicate that the relationship between youth and counselors is one of the crucial factors in determining whether youth will succeed on probation. Directly assessing the quality of these relationships may not be feasible, but managers should be able to use indicators of quality to determine whether counselors are creating and sustaining positive relationships with the youth on their caseloads.

The Division's case audit and case review system is the best opportunity managers have to review counselors' work for quality. Case audits and reviews are intended to "help ensure appropriate oversight and accountability for casework and provide an opportunity for supervisors to help staff maximize their effectiveness." They also serve the purpose of ensuring "that case management and supervision standards are being met and that each case is being supervised in accordance with the Multnomah County Juvenile Community Justice mission and values, for the benefit of assisting staff in managing the workload and to provide for training needs."

Case audits involve the physical review of files for five cases on a counselor's caseload and occur every six months (12 months for Diversion). Case reviews are an overview and discussion of all cases on a counselor's caseload and occur every six months (three months for Diversion). During both review processes, probation managers:

- review case management practices
- ensure that assessments, case plans, files, crime records, and chronological notes documenting each contact with youth and others on a case are updated and complete
- review progress made toward fulfilling sanctions
- ensure that classification of each youth is accurate and appropriate

Counselors receive feedback from managers in the form of a completed checklist and, for audits, written feedback on strengths and areas for improvement. The policy was enacted in November 2001.

We found that case reviews and audits are not occurring as regularly as dictated by policy. The employee survey showed that, among counselors, 54% disagreed that audits/reviews were occurring quarterly, while only 24% strongly agreed. During interviews, some managers also mentioned that they were behind in

getting these done. In addition, we requested copies of the review sheets for 2002 and received some from only 3 out of 8 managers. Those we received were not complete for the year.

By failing to conduct these reviews and audits in a timely fashion, managers are missing a valuable opportunity to understand the workload of each counselor on their staff, ensure that quality supervision is occurring, help staff prioritize their workload, and encourage and support their staff to use best practices in support of the Division's mission. Because managers cannot observe every counselor interaction with youth and cannot otherwise readily gauge the quality of the all-important relationship between them, case audits and reviews are an effective way to assess indicators of quality probation. Given the current environment of budget cutbacks, it is also an opportunity for managers to help counselors direct their attention to priority cases.

Most counselors aligned with the division's mission

As part of the survey, we also asked counselors to rate 23 probation practices for how effective they thought each was and how often they used them. Practices ranged from developing positive relationships with youth to use of detention as a sanction.

The purpose of this portion of the survey was to test the relationship between what staff know about best practices and what they use in their day-to-day activities. Overall, we found positive trends in the survey results. Staff tends to use relationship-building practices frequently and to believe strongly in their effectiveness.

The survey results show that counselors ranked detention (6.5 out of 10) and creating opportunities for youth to develop new peer relationships (6.3) as the least successful of the practices listed. The most successful practices were believed to be giving youth a chance to tell their stories (8.6) and serving as mature, positive, adult role models (8.7). The lower ranking of detention and higher ranking of relationship-based practices indicate that staff beliefs are generally aligned to the philosophical direction JCJ has taken.

The results are slightly different for use of probation practices (as opposed to beliefs about the effectiveness of practices). The lowest ranked practice for use is meeting with youth and families in their homes (4.5), followed by detention (5.1) and talking to youth in their schools (5.2). The most often used practices are giving youth a chance to tell their stories (8.8) and serving as mature, positive, adult role models (9.1).

There are also differences between which practices counselors believe to be effective and how often they use them. Telling youth there will be consequences if expectations are not met was found to be used very frequently (8.1) but was not as likely to be perceived as effective (6.9). Also, there were large gaps between how successful counselors felt strategies for reaching youth outside of their offices were and how often they actually did meet with youth away from the office. These practices were working with teachers, family, peers, and siblings to improve the youth's positive relationships; talking to youth at their schools; and meeting with youth and families in their homes.

Interestingly, counselors believe in the effectiveness of non-detention sanctions generally only slightly higher (6.9) than detention (6.5). However, Forest Camp (8.2) and Project Payback (8.2), both non-detention sanctions, are ranked among the most successful practices.

We grouped practices into four areas: accountability, relationship-building, strength-based practices, and family-oriented practices. Average scores for each group were between 7.3 and 7.7 for belief in the effectiveness of practices, and 6.1 and 7.6 for use of practices. Of the groupings, relationship-building practices were ranked highest for both belief in effectiveness and for use. Family oriented practices were the lowest in use.

We also tested whether there was a statistically significant relationship between climate and practice groupings: in other words, were more satisfied staff more likely to believe in the effectiveness of probation practices? We found a statistically significant relationship between the degree to which staff have strong mission alignment and their belief in the effectiveness of accountability practices, family-oriented practices, and relationship-building practices. We also found a significant relationship between supervisors recognizing good performance and all of the practice domains. These results show that the more positive staff feel about their work and how it fits in, the more likely they are to view various probation practices positively.

The survey results show that beliefs about the effectiveness of probation practices are generally aligned with the Division's focus on strength-based supervision, skill building, and holding youth accountable for their actions. They also highlight opportunities for management to focus on increasing the use of best practices among their staff. If, as recommended above, the Division turns its attention to assessing the quality of probation work, rather than just quantity of contacts, it will be important to ensure that staff are well-trained, agree with new approaches, and are monitored to ensure application of these practices.

JCJ should analyze and learn from differences

Our analysis of the probation practices portion of the survey uncovered a number of differences between subcategories of Counseling staff. While the survey does not explain these anomalies, it does provide a starting point to ask questions about why such differences exist. These incongruities can provide clues into what is working in the Division and what areas need to be addressed so that all staff have a positive outlook on their work.

Specialized caseloads

Counselors who carry a specialized caseload had overall more positive responses to both the climate and the practices portions of the survey. In each category, staff with specialized caseload were more likely to believe in the effectiveness of practices and more likely to use those practices than were their peers who had generalized caseloads. The largest difference between the groups was in belief in and use of family-oriented practices. This could be due to the specialized nature of their cases, where counselors work closer with families in order to engage youth in probation. There were also notable differences between specialized and non-specialized counselors in their use of strength-based practices and their use of relationship-building practices.

Staff members with specialized caseloads were much more likely to agree that their supervisors used good management practices. They were also more likely to agree that they were a part of a well-functioning team, with the direction the Division was taking, and with feeling accountable for the outcomes of their work. Interestingly, they were also much more likely to agree that they felt overwhelmed by changes. Again, this could be a function of budget cuts and reshuffling of staff at the time this survey was conducted.

	<p>By asking what distinguishes the work environment for counselors with specialized caseloads, JCJ may be able to build some of those characteristics into other units or to reconsider the way units are set up. For example, we theorize that because of the focused nature of their work, specialized staff may enjoy more peer support in their units, may receive more training and have a sense of expertise about the population they are working with, and may have a clearer sense of mission than other staff. Clearly, more research would need to be done in this area, but it could warrant some investigation into what creates better job satisfaction among these staff and whether creating more specialized units could recreate these positive findings.</p>
Adjudication unit	<p>We also compared survey results from the Adjudication Unit to other Juvenile Court Counselors and found differences. Generally, Adjudication Unit staff were less positive than other counselors in the Division, especially on questions having to do with mission alignment, job performance standards, and, to a lesser degree, how the Division treats employees. However, they were slightly more likely to enjoy working for JCJ. Again, analyzing anomalies on the employee survey can offer clues into the health of the organization.</p> <p>By looking at the characteristics of the Adjudication Unit's work and environment, JCJ can address some of the issues contributing to less positive responses. We theorize that adjudicators may feel removed from the outcomes of their work because they provide services only at the front end of the probation process. Their schedules and location keep them relatively isolated from their peers outside the unit. They have also been strongly affected by reform and have seen much of their discretion removed with the introduction of sanctions grids and risk assessments. Adjudicators play a critical and powerful role in the justice process, making recommendations to the court about what sanctions and services a youth should receive. And, because the court accepts the recommendations of adjudicators most of the time, it is that much more important that staff are aligned to the mission of the JCJ and that they have a supportive and healthy work environment.</p> <p>One way to address this issue might be to consider assigning adjudicators to work with specific probation units. This could create ties between the unit and the adjudicator, provide better opportunity for adjudicators to be connected to youth throughout their probation, and give them the opportunity to develop expertise in the issues particular to their field unit. The Sex Offender Treatment Team employs such a model, with its own assigned adjudicator, and staff report being very satisfied with this arrangement.</p>
Length of employment	<p>We also examined survey results based on how long staff members have been employed in the Division. Staff who had been at the Division fewer than four years and those who have been there more than 20 were the most positive on all climate groupings.</p> <p>The length of time employees have worked for the Division also appears to be linked to both their belief in the effectiveness of probation practices and their use. Staff employed four years or fewer were more likely to believe in the effectiveness of all probation practices, but were less likely to use them. This difference was greatest among family-oriented probation practices, where newest staff averaged 8.8 out of 10 on the effectiveness scale, but just 4.3 on the use scale. These differences could mean that newer staff members are more optimistic or more aligned with the Division's philosophy, but need more training and experience to feel confident in using these practices.</p>

Detention staffing practices could improve

The Donald E. Long home is a 189 bed detention facility that houses Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas County youth referred by law enforcement agencies or the courts. There is a special unit for Measure 11 offenders being held for serious crime. The facility is also used for three residential treatment programs: Assessment, Intervention, and Transition Program (AITP); Secure Residential Alcohol and Drug Program (RAD); and Secure Residential Sex Offender Treatment Program (SRTP). There are 45 residential program beds and 80 beds for the remainder of the juvenile population. Of the 80 regular beds, 28 are reserved for Washington and Clackamas County youth. There are 64 other beds in the facility that are closed.

Custody Services uses a combination of full-time and on-call staff to supervise all youth in the facility. The facility must be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. At the beginning of FY03, full-time staff consisted of 69 full-time Custody Specialists, six staff supervisors, two program administrators who oversee the treatment programs, and two managers. Staffing levels for full-time employees have generally remained at these levels over the last four years.

A pool of on-call Custody Specialists covers absences or vacancies of full-time staff, or can help with workload fluctuations. On-call workers always staff family visiting hours each week or may fill small gaps in the schedule. In October 2002, there were approximately 74 on-call staff members. The size of the on-call staff pool fluctuates and has a fairly high turnover rate.

Analyze workload and optimally configure staff

According to the National Institute of Corrections "Staffing Analysis Workbook for Jails," there should be a staffing analysis process based on a thorough understanding of population and activities of the facility. Much of these data are available for analysis. Other factors to consider include operational philosophies, facility design characteristics, capacity, and relevant professional standards. After the number of positions needed has been determined based on population and activity levels, staff must be optimally configured to best match this workload. Overstaffing is an inefficient use of resources while understaffing puts youth or staff at risk.

Custody Services has not gathered the necessary data and performed such an analysis to define workload requirements. However, to achieve budget reductions, the planned schedule for FY04 was more efficiently configured than the FY03 schedule.

Population and activity levels vary

The juvenile detention facility is divided into housing sections and admissions. Staffing levels for housing sections are primarily based on the youth population. To maintain safety for staff and youth, Custody Services tries to achieve a staffing ratio between 1 staff per 8 youth to 1 staff per 10 youth during the day and swing shifts, which is generally in line with National Juvenile Detention Association standards. Full-time staffing levels for housing sections have been determined based on full capacity.

The population levels for the housing pods and units are variable. Each housing pod consists of two adjoined units. This is important for staffing because staff in each unit of a pod can support one another. The chart below shows average population for housing units throughout FY02. Housing units must take into consideration the gender, age, and treatment needs of the detainee. Although it could be deduced from average populations that one of the eight units could be closed, from a program standpoint this would be inappropriate. The current

number of units is the minimum needed to meet population and program needs. Overall, population levels for housing (excluding RAD) decreased 9.5% from 31,706 bed days in FY01 to 28,686 bed days in FY02.

Exhibit 7

Average population of housing units FY02

	B Pod		C Pod (boys)		E Pod		F Pod	
	Orientation	AITP	Unit 1	Unit 2	Girls	RAD	Measure 11	SRTP
Capacity	16	16	16	16	16	15	16	14
Average Population	12.22	9.73	12.29	11.42	8.35	11.15	12.28	12.28

Source: JIN intake and RAD population data

The admissions unit is divided into three areas: the admissions desk, which receives, admits, and releases youth; the control booth, which monitors and controls all movement within the facility; and visiting, which manages all professional and family visits to youth. The admissions unit also transports Multnomah County youth to court and will also be responsible for responding to emergencies starting in FY04. Staffing levels for admissions should be driven by these activities.

Activities in the admissions unit are also variable. For example, the table below shows that intake and release activity has substantially decreased between FY01 and FY02, while admits showed a 7% decrease. Intake and release activity decreased because of an agreement between police, juvenile justice agencies, and New Avenues for Youth during FY02 to take youth charged with non-detainable crimes to a reception center where they receive services or are picked up by family instead of taking them to the detention facility. Data on other admissions activities, such as transports or professional visits, were not available.

Exhibit 8

Admissions unit activity
FY01 and FY02

	FY01	FY02	Percent Change
Intakes	5,575.00	4,011.00	-28%
Admits	2,815.00	2,616.00	-7%
Releases	5,570.00	4,008.00	-28%

Source: JIN intake, admit, and release activity

Full-time staffing levels
not based on workload

Custody Services was overstaffed in FY03 because full-time staffing practices have been driven more by available budget resources than by population levels and activities in the facility. As a result of budget constraints, Custody Services made plans during our audit to reduce full-time staff from FY03 levels. As of May 2003, Custody Services was reducing full-time line staff from 69 FTE in the FY03 schedule to 60 FTE beginning in FY04. Custody Services also plans to eliminate one supervisor position. We estimate these full-time staff reductions will save approximately \$650,000 in FY04.

We compared actual FY03 and planned FY04 staffing levels to daily population data for FY02. In FY02, the maximum daily population for housing units was 110 youth and the minimum was 72. Overall capacity was 128 youth. As shown in Exhibit 9, FY03 staffing levels would have achieved a ratio of at or

below 1 staff per 8 youth every day of FY02 and averaged 1 staff to 6.4 youth, which exceeds standards.

Staff to population ratios

Exhibit 9

	Average staff to youth ratio	Days achieved 1-8 ratio	Days achieved 1-10 ratio
FY03 actual staffing*	1 to 6.4	365 days	365 days
FY04 planned staffing*	1 to 7.5	295 days	365 days

*Based on FY02 populations, does not include admissions staff

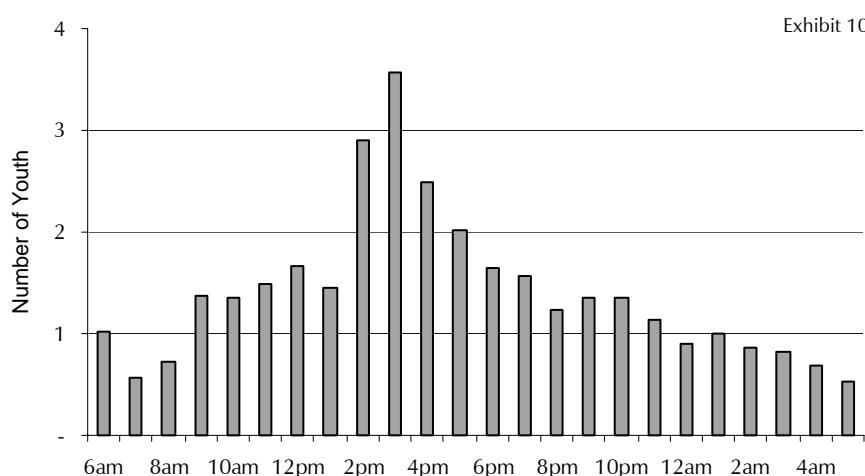
Source: Auditor's Office Analysis

Exhibit 9 also shows that projected staffing ratio standards would be achieved for FY04 after staff reductions. Seven line staff can be cut from FY03 levels without impacting service levels. Two additional recreation positions were also cut and may reduce service levels, although remaining staff were still going to perform these activities. All nine full-time line positions can be reduced without putting youth or staff at risk. We are concerned that without annually justifying staffing levels based on workload, management could overstaff if more resources become available.

For the admissions unit, we examined the number of intakes, releases and admits. Exhibit 10 below combines data from FY01 and FY02 to average the total number of intakes, releases, and admits by time of day. These activity levels appear low: below two youth per hour for most hours of the day.

Average intakes, admits and releases per hour

Exhibit 10



Source: JIN data and Auditor's Office Analysis

Intakes and releases for the admissions unit have been significantly lower since mid-FY02, after the agreement with New Avenues for Youth went into effect. While activity is decreasing, the number of staff in the admissions unit will increase in FY04. The planned schedule combines 3.5 FTE for emergency response with the admissions unit. Although emergency response personnel have other duties, they will also be available to help the admission unit staff. Two emergency response personnel are available during the unit's busiest hours.

	Although these data do not provide a complete picture of activity, they raise questions about staffing levels in the admissions unit.
Staff is more efficiently configured for FY04	Custody Services has also been overstaffed because full-time staff have not been optimally configured. Although the number of positions in the planned schedule for FY04 was driven by budget constraints instead of by workload demands, staff and management worked together to achieve a more efficient staffing configuration than in the FY03 schedule. Custody Services employed strategies to more efficiently configure staff, such as using single coverage in pods during sleeping hours with available backup, single staffing the girl's unit with available backup, arranging shifts to minimize premium pay and having on-call staff available to cover temporary population fluctuations. Custody Services took full advantage of staff interchangeability between units in pods and the facility as a whole.
On-call staffing reduces costs	<p>Full-time staff are absent for a number of reasons, including vacation, sick leave, holidays, meetings, and trainings. Because the facility is a 24/7 operation, these absences are most often filled with on-call staff. In FY02, the use of on-call staff to fill absences or vacancies of full-time staff reduced personnel costs by approximately \$450,000 to \$500,000.</p> <p>On-call staff reduce personnel costs for several reasons. On-call staff cost less than full-time staff because they are not paid for time off work such as vacation or sick leave, and they do not receive retirement (PERS) or health benefits. The alternative to using on-call staff is to increase the full-time staff or incur significantly more overtime. In FY02, all on-call staff combined performed the work of approximately 18.5 FTE. The chart below compares the costs of one FTE on-call employee to both full-time and overtime costs on the day shift for FY02.</p>
Cost comparison between staffing options FY02	

Exhibit 11

	On-call	Full-time	Overtime
Annual Pay for 1 FTE	\$32,364	\$38,231	\$38,231
Overtime Premium	0	0	19,116
Health Benefits	0	7,560	0
Absences	0	5,390	0
FICA/Taxes/Liability/ Unemployment	5,590	6,603	9,904
PERS	0	5,085	7,627
Training	1,017**	*	0
Total	\$38,971	\$62,869	\$74,878

*Since training is conducted in-house, the cost is included in absences for full-time employees

**Training costs are spread out over the pool of on-call employees

Source: Auditor's Office Analysis

Overtime costs have been significantly reduced by maintaining a pool of on-call staff. In FY02, there were only 113 shifts of overtime for coverage. About 67% of this overtime occurred in the first four months of the fiscal year when the on-call pool size became too low. Custody Services has since begun maintaining a list of on-call staff ready to hire.

The cost of training for on-call employees is often lost due to a fairly high turnover rate, but this cost is far offset by other savings. There are additional benefits of on-call staff not quantified in Exhibit 11 above. Full-time staff are frequently hired from the on-call pool. This provides management with the opportunity to observe employees on the job, reduces hiring costs and increases the chances the full-time employee hired will be retained. Also, based on our interviews, full-time employees like having on-call staff because it offers them more flexibility to schedule time off work.

On-call practices need to be established and monitored

As shown, on-call staff are a very valuable resource to Custody Services. Accordingly, we believe that these benefits justify more efforts to establish and monitor on-call staffing practices. Some procedures have already been put into place. As part of their training, on-call employees sign a list that communicates supervision, work availability, accepting work, and required hours per month, among other work rules.

Other important practices have not been formally articulated. Specifically, on-call staffing procedures are needed regarding on-call pool sizing, unemployment, fairly distributing work among on-call staff, expected treatment of on-call staff, performance tracking, training, and qualifications. Systems need to be in place to ensure objectives are met.

- Sizing. It is important to achieve a balance between too many and too few on-call staff. With too few on-call staff, overtime costs increase. Too many on-call staff may increase unemployment claims and workers may become dissatisfied because they are not getting sufficient hours to work. Right sizing the pool depends on the number of on-call workers, rules regarding their availability for work and how many hours they are required to work. The size and characteristics of the on-call pool is a constantly changing target and needs to be closely monitored.
- Unemployment. Because the County is self-insured, the State Employment Department reports all unemployment claims to the Human Resources Operations Division in the Department of Business and Community Services (DBCS). The Division ensures that the claim is for a valid employee of the County and then authorizes payment. Custody Services is not informed of the claim. In a 24/7 operation, on-call workers are only eligible for unemployment if they are available to work all hours of the week. We examined on-call availability in October 2002 and found that only five out of 74 workers were available to work all hours of the week and most were available significantly fewer hours. Many on-call workers have other jobs or wish to limit their working hours. We also found that those available to work more were assigned more work thereby reducing the chance of an unemployment claim by these workers. Since Custody Services is unaware of unemployment claims, they cannot check the availability or work history of any claimant to ensure the claim's validity or further investigate the cause of the problem. During the audit, the size of the on-call pool grew because many staff laid off in JCJ were added to the pool. This increases the risk of invalid unemployment claims.

- Fairly distributing work among on-call staff.

Although we did not test the fairness of assignments, there was not a strong system in place to ensure offers to work were fairly distributed among on-call workers.

- Expected treatment of on-call staff. The tone at the top should be firm regarding the expected treatment of on-call staff. We heard from two employees that on-call staff are not treated well by some full-time employees. A possible effect of this is to lower morale and increase the turnover of on-call staff.

- Performance tracking. Supervisors currently conduct performance evaluations and monitor hours worked by on-call staff. Performance information would be enhanced by tracking offers to work and the corresponding acceptances or declines.

- Training and qualifications. Based on our interviews with management and staff, training for on-call staff is extensive and staff members appear well-qualified to do the work. Written procedures should be put into place to help ensure that current practices are continued.

On-call scheduling could be improved

We believe a partially automated scheduling system for on-call staff would help ensure an equitable distribution of work and improve performance tracking and efficiency. Currently, the work schedule is completed each week using a manual, paper-based system. The schedule is divided between full-time and on-call staff. When a full-time employee is absent from his or her position, an on-call employee is selected as a replacement. Five clerical staff spend approximately 74 hours per week preparing, making changes to, and finalizing the schedule before it is used for payroll entry.

For full-time staff, the schedule is highly subject to change. For one schedule in October 2002, only 12 out of 68 scheduled full-time line staff worked their assigned time/position for the entire week without any modifications. Full-time employees may exchange timeslots with themselves or other full-time employees, otherwise, on-call staff are used to ensure coverage of the position. In contrast, on-call assignments generally do not change. The challenge with on-call scheduling is ensuring an equitable manner of scheduling work and tracking performance.

Unlike scheduling for full-time staff, we believe that the on-call section of the schedule is simple enough to be automated without incurring too much expense. A phone-based system, where on-call workers call in their availability and accept or reject offers, may be able to be used to increase scheduling efficiency.

Recommendations

Juvenile Community Justice is a strong and innovative organization, but it faces challenges to its continued stability. We recommend that JCJ shift its focus to more careful management and address the following issues:

Overall Division

1. Address concerns identified in the employee survey:
 - a. Clarify and communicate personnel policies and contracts, and ensure that these are interpreted fairly and accurately.
 - b. Concentrate on organizational climate, so that problems that affect climate are addressed and staff work in an environment that promotes their best work.
 - c. Make the management responsibilities of supervisory staff a priority and ensure that they monitor the performance of their own staff, provide mentorship and assistance, solve problems, and ensure that best practices are used.
 - d. Study anomalies and differences in survey results across employee groups, including specialized caseloads, Adjudication Unit, and Custody Specialists, to assist in organizational improvement.

Counseling

2. Given diminishing resources and the tension between serving high need and high risk youth, JCJ should fully implement its policy to prioritize cases and ensure that counselors focus their efforts on high priority youth.
3. JCJ should establish a workload management system for Juvenile Court Counselors to ensure that workload is equitably distributed, with lower caseloads for staff working with high priority youth.

Custody

4. JCJ should fully implement case audit and case review procedures for Counseling Services to help ensure the quality of probation services. Records of each audit and review should be maintained.
5. Full-time staffing levels in detention need to be formally justified annually based on activity and population levels and be optimally configured to match workload needs. To accomplish this, Custody Services should take steps to measure all critical facility activity.
6. Continue the current practice of using of on-call staff to backfill for full-time employees and to cover temporary workload fluctuations, but formalize on-call staffing practices. This includes articulating objectives, communicating these objectives with all staff through written procedures, and monitoring to ensure objectives are met.
7. Automate the on-call portion of scheduling to ensure equity of hiring and to better track performance. Custody Services should further investigate a phone automated system to improve efficiency.
8. Detention management should arrange to be formally notified of all unemployment claims by DCBS, verify eligibility, and further investigate each situation.

Responses to the Audit



Diane M. Linn, Multnomah County Chair

August 4, 2003

Ms. Suzanne Flynn, Auditor
Multnomah County
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., #601
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Ms. Flynn,

Thank you for your sending me your audit of the performance of the Department of Community Justice's Juvenile Justice Division. I am pleased that you have found that the Division is a strong, well-run organization that is a national leader in implementing innovative, best practices in juvenile justice.

I appreciate your recommendations on how we can make further improvements to enhance the quality of the county's juvenile justice system. Now that we have succeeded in reorienting the vision and mission of the Juvenile Justice Division, our task is to ensure that we succeed in implementing this vision and the Division's best practices approach. I am confident that Joanne Fuller and the Juvenile Division management team are equal to this challenge.

I also appreciate the results of the staff climate survey you conducted. The climate survey was done at an extremely difficult time for all County employees. I am not surprised that the results of this survey reflected the profound stress and uncertainty that resource constraints imposed on all departments. Through Joanne's leadership and an improving budget picture, I look forward to improvements in morale in the near future.

Thank you for your thorough analysis of the strengths of the Juvenile Justice Division and the areas for further improvements. I accept the recommendations contained in your audit and I will work with the Department of Community Justice to address them.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Linn, Chair
Multnomah County



Department of Community Justice
MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

Office of the Director

**501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard, Suite 250
Portland, Oregon 97214
(503) 988-3701 phone
(503) 988-3990 fax**

August 4, 2003

Suzanne Flynn, Auditor
Multnomah County
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., #601
Portland, Oregon 97214

Dear Ms. Flynn,

The Department of Community Justice welcomes the Multnomah County Auditor's report on organizational climate, counseling and custody services in our juvenile community justice division. I appreciate the audit's acknowledgement that the juvenile justice services division is well run and only needs some refinement. At the same time we appreciate your recommendations for ways to improve on the outcomes we have already achieved. The audit's recommendations fit nicely with our continuous improvement efforts.

The Department of Community Justice, Juvenile Justice Services Division has been through a time of significant and rapid change during the last eight years. These changes include: opening a new facility, leading a national detention reform effort, improving our probation supervision practices, expanding treatment services for delinquent youth and merging two Departments (Community Corrections and Juvenile Justice). These changes have aligned the services of our Department with the best research available on what practices will result in decreased delinquency among our youth. These efforts appear to be working—the Department improved outcomes in two key areas: decreased recidivism of delinquent youth and decreased minority over-representation in detention. Our juvenile justice division is now a national leader in juvenile justice innovation.

Organizational change naturally progresses from vision and direction setting to implementation and day-to-day management and back to vision in a continuous process. I agree with the Auditor's conclusion that the challenge before us today is to institutionalize our processes through management practices. I want to sustain a strong organization able to build on our improvements. This is the logical next step in that process. The release of this audit coincides with new leadership within the division. By October 2003, we will have four new managers in this division; this new team will actively work with me to implement the audit's recommendations.

Overall Division Recommendations

Improving the organizational climate has been a part of our change process. We value our staff highly and seek their ideas and participation in setting the course for the Department. Staff has been involved in decision making for redesign of services, staffing changes and budget development. Every other year since 1995, the Department hosted either an all-staff work session or department wide training conference aimed at helping staff understand the mission, vision, and values of the organization and training them in the skills required to implement that mission. We are currently working on succession planning and the development of our next group of leaders. These are all areas where the department has developed a climate that is supportive of our employees' needs and their empowerment.

As the audit points out, the organizational climate survey was administered during January 2003 when \$1.7 million was cut from the juvenile budget, resulting in program cuts and staff layoffs. For many staff at juvenile, it was the first time in their adult work life that they experienced this type of downsizing. I believe the timing negatively influenced the staff responses to the survey, resulting in satisfaction ratings that were unrepresentative of the overall morale within the division as a general rule. However, the audit recommends very logical steps in response to the survey and we will incorporate them into our continued climate improvement. We also want to look more closely at our staff's improvement suggestions contained in their survey responses and use these to inform our changes.

Counseling Recommendations

One of the natural tensions in the field of probation is caseload/workload management. It is often difficult to balance probation caseloads/workload without unfairly burdening staff who are very efficient at managing their cases. The Department's management team has strived to maintain manageable caseloads for staff in the face of budget reductions. Our probation caseloads are generally lower than caseloads in Washington, Clackamas and Lane County, and lower than most metropolitan area juvenile departments in the U.S. We will create clearer procedures for the equitable assignment of probation cases.

Fortunately, the Department has a clear system of case management standards, risk/needs assessment and probation practices in place for our counseling services staff (juvenile probation staff). We will take the next steps to fully implement existing case audit and case review procedures, as recommended by the audit.

Custody Services Recommendations

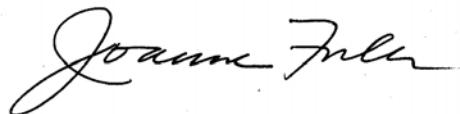
The audit recommends that the division formally justify full-time staffing levels and continue the practice of using on-call staff. From December 2002 to July 2003, we decreased 11 full-time line staff positions and 2 supervisory positions in Custody Services. These changes have resulted in staffing levels very close to those discussed in the audit. We will continue to evaluate our staffing needs on an annual basis and continue to utilize on-call staff as recommended.

The audit recommends automating the scheduling of on-call staff. The Department currently staffs this function with 1.5 full-time equivalent support staff. The Department has investigated possible computer aided or phone automated staff scheduling programs for detention. The systems we have reviewed so far have proven expensive when compared to our current cost for staff to perform manual scheduling. We had hoped that the audit would make a recommendation about a particular phone automated system that we could purchase. Since the audit does not include such a recommendation, we will continue to look for a system that is both cost effective and fits our needs.

The audit recommends that management arrange for formal notification of all unemployment claims. I will request that the Department of Business Services establish a procedure to notify our Department of any unemployment claim made by persons who were employed in our Department.

The Department of Community Justice, Juvenile Justice Services Division is committed to supervising, detaining, intervening with and providing treatment for delinquent youth in a manner that decreases delinquency, promotes positive youth behavior, decreases minority over-representation in our system and uses scarce public resources wisely. This division has been very effective in achieving these goals over the last several years. We will utilize the recommendations in this audit to guide the next steps to meet our goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Fuller".

Joanne Fuller M.S.W.
Director