MISSION

To protect and serve the citizens of Georgia by holding young offenders accountable for their actions through the delivery of services and sanctions in appropriate settings and by supporting youth in their communities to become productive and law abiding citizens.

VISION

OFFER HOPE AND YOUTH CHANGE. The Department of Juvenile Justice will lead the nation in preparing young people in its care to develop and sustain productive lives.

VALUES

We strive to create and sustain an agency culture that values accountability, integrity, security, superior performance, ongoing personal growth, intellectual curiosity, innovation, teamwork, and leadership not only in our staff, but also in the young people in our facilities and programs.
MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

More than four-thousand Juvenile Justice Team members at 27 Secure Facilities, 92 Court Service Offices, and Central Office-Decatur conscientiously provide a safe and secure environment for Georgia’s juvenile offenders every day. This is in keeping with the challenging Mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice, “To protect and serve the citizens of Georgia by holding youthful offenders accountable for their actions through the delivery of services and appropriate sanctions that support youth in becoming productive and law abiding citizens in their communities.”

The continuous implementation of Juvenile Justice Reform will be our catalyst for several years to come. The completion of intake and placement assessment tools and renewed emphasis from the Governor’s Office on Reentry Services throughout every working sector of DJJ are projected to help reduce the level of recidivism, which in turn is expected to produce a meaningful reduction in the number of victims of crime. As we build on those enhancements, we will continue to focus on the best available education and services for our youth; providing professional development for our staff, and improving the physical plant and equipment necessary to complete our mission. The 2015-2018 Department of Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan builds on the foundation of Governor Deal’s Strategic Goals for Georgia by citing my Top Five Priorities for DJJ:
• Operate Safe, Secure Facilities and Communities, while providing educational opportunities (for all youth)
• Implementing Juvenile Justice Reform
• Recruitment, retention and succession planning
• Classification and Placement of Youth
• Offender/Youth Re-entry

The development of the 2015-2018 DJJ Strategic Plan aligns this administration’s top five priorities with the Governor’s vision to reform the State’s juvenile justice system. This plan emphasizes the implementation of Juvenile Justice Reform with fidelity through research-based programs, sound education practices, and the computation of supportive data driven outcomes.

It is through this Strategic Plan that we hope to achieve the Vision of DJJ to “Offer Hope and Youth Change.” Our Vision is that the Department of Juvenile Justice will lead the nation in preparing youth in its care to develop and sustain productive lives.”

Sincerely,

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner
Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
INTRODUCTION

The 2015-2018 Department of Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan was developed to specifically support four of Governor Deal’s Strategic Goals for Georgia. The four Goals include:

Education – Developing life, college, and work-ready students;
Health – Accessible care and active lifestyles;
Safety – Protecting the public’s safety and security;
Responsible and Efficient Government - Fiscally sound, principled, conservative.

Commissioner Avery D. Niles has provided guidance to DJJ staff through agency Mission and Vision statements and through the development and distribution of his “Top Five Priorities” which include:

• Operate Safe, Secure Facilities and Communities, while providing Educational opportunities (for all youth)
• Implementing Juvenile Justice Reform
• Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning
• Classification and Placement of Youth
• Offender/Youth Re-entry

GOVERNOR’S STRATEGIC GOALS FOR GEORGIA

Educated: Developing life, college, and work-ready students
• Increase percentage of students reading at or above grade level by the completion of 3rd Grade – a strategic benchmark for lifelong learning
• Increase percentage of Georgians who hold a post secondary credential
• Improve and expand science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education
• Increase teacher and school leader effectiveness
• Increase the percentage of high school graduates who are college and career ready
• Empower citizens with public school options and local flexibility for the purpose of improving student achievement

Mobile: Transporting people and products in a 21st century Georgia
• Improve the movement of people and goods across and within the state
• Expand Georgia’s role as a major logistics hub for global commerce
• Leverage public-private partnerships and improve inter governmental cooperation for successful infrastructure development
Growing: Creating jobs and growing businesses
- Implement strategic tax and regulatory reforms that make Georgia more competitive
- Promote small business growth and entrepreneurship
- Maximize access to capital for startups and growing businesses
- Conserve and enhance natural resources, with an emphasis on increasing state water supplies and security

Healthy: Accessible care and active lifestyles
- Reduce childhood obesity in Georgia
- Increase access to health services throughout the state
- Increase consumer choice and personal responsibility in health care
- Improve access to treatment and community options for those with disabilities

Safe: Protecting the public's safety and security
- Implement alternative sentencing options to improve offender rehabilitation
- Promote successful offender re-entry and compliance
- Reduce injury and loss of life on Georgia's roads
- Promote safe communities and stable families where children thrive

Responsible and Efficient Government: Fiscally sound, principled, conservative
- Maintain Georgia's AAA bond rating
- Increase availability of state services through innovative technology solutions
- Build and maintain a quality state government workforce
- Focus state resources on essential services and employ enterprise solutions
- Enlist community support and public-private partnerships to leverage available resources
In order to accomplish the “Top Five Priorities”, DJJ must meet the following objectives:

**Operate Safe and Secure Facilities and Communities while providing Educational Opportunities** – This priority is the core task of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. The operation of secure facilities ranks among the principal duties for ensuring both public safety and the safety of youth in our care. It is also the most visible correctional component provided by DJJ to the citizens of Georgia. The services available within secure facilities include education, medical and dental care, food services, and mental and behavioral health counseling. As this agency continues to move forward in progress and reforms, DJJ is placing strong emphasis on Re-entry Services to better prepare juvenile offenders for successful transition back into the community. DJJ has created a continuum of essential services, including mental health resources and quality education, to ensure committed youth experience a successful reintegration into the community.
Educational requirements are one of the most significant differences between adult incarceration and juvenile secure confinement. DJJ operates the State of Georgia’s 181st School District, distinguished by its dual accreditations. The newly named Georgia Preparatory Academy employs innovative teachers to educate Georgia’s committed youth and implements the latest classroom technology to bring quality education components into the school system. DJJ has revived vocational programs to promote job readiness upon release from custody. The Department of Juvenile Justice embraces state-of-the-art educational opportunities to prepare youth for re-entry to their neighborhoods and communities.

The Department of Juvenile Justice uses planning and improvement forecasting to keep the agency positioned and prepared to meet future construction needs for facilities and youth. Concrete examples of these preparations include capital improvements to existing facilities, and design and construction of replacement facilities to position DJJ to meet current and future educational, programming and security standards for juvenile justice agencies.

Implementation of DJJ’s responsibilities under the Juvenile Justice Reform Act – The Juvenile Justice Reform Act is projected to increase the number of Georgia youth participating in community-based services and is expected to create additional need for evidence-based services. Providing added supervision for growing numbers of youth outside non-secure facilities becomes a Departmental priority requiring additional Juvenile Probation and Parole Specialists. The number of youth served in community programs will be determined by accurately tracking the actions of juvenile offenders and by use of updated assessment instruments by the judiciary.

In order to support these updated measures, which include DJJ’s new Detention Assessment Instrument, Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment Instrument, and the Juvenile Needs Assessment Instrument, the Department of Juvenile Justice has new requirements to gather, process, and distribute additional tracking information. Management of data harvested by these updated tools will require information technology capable of gauging the success of newly employed programs. These assessment files must be accessible to all statewide Juvenile Courts to ensure appropriate sentencing decisions are being made in accordance with new legislation. In support of these efforts, DJJ is providing Independent Court Staff as well as Prosecuting Attorneys and Public Defenders, access to background information in the Juvenile Tracking System (JTS). The associated requirements for the Juvenile Tracking System are leading DJJ to pursue the next generational advance in a Juvenile Information Management System.
Recruitment, Retention, and Succession Planning – DJJ strives to provide the best juvenile care, service, and supervision in the country, knowing this can only be achieved by employing and retaining the best quality juvenile corrections staff. Professional Juvenile Correction Officers (JCO’s) are the cornerstone of successful Secure Facilities operations. To succeed in retaining appropriate staff levels achieved through accelerated recruiting efforts, DJJ continues to examine options to provide additional incentives to Juvenile Correction Officers based on training levels and job tenure. DJJ has now implemented an education competency exam and a job compatibility exam into the hiring selection process. These candidate assessment exams will place agency recruiters into positions where they can select higher caliber recruits who are better qualified to complete their initial training and in the final analysis, will make strong, well-adapted officers. Once hired, retaining a workforce of DJJ’s best officers is critical both to the Department’s current success and to its coming abilities to grow future leaders from within.

One of DJJ’s newest organizational features is the Division of Training and Personnel Services, created to develop a natural synergy between the agency’s enhanced recruiting efforts and the subsequent training of new employees. This Division is also responsible for the design of a professional development program for security officers, community service officers, and administrative and leadership personnel. The work of this Division is expected to bring both an increase in professional development and the retention of staff. The Commissioner has provided guidance for Deputy Commissioners to search within current ranks of the organization for qualified candidates to cycle up into positions of greater responsibility. This growing of the DJJ Team from the inside is providing additional motivation for all employees looking for advancement opportunities.
Classification and Placement of Youth – DJJ supports the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act through updated assessment tools designed to determine the appropriate level of care and services for each DJJ youth. Through a collaborative effort between the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Council of Juvenile Court Judges, and several other stakeholders, Georgia developed three new juvenile assessment tools in keeping with the Juvenile Justice Reform Act. These assessment instruments are designed to provide data on the appropriate levels of security, education, and mental and behavioral health services needed by juvenile offenders for advancement opportunities.

The common adoption of these instruments in both the dependent and independent courts across the state will provide for a consistent and uniform way of dealing with youth in DJJ care and for recording their information more accurately. This process is expected to provide a standardized set of information available for use as the Department of Juvenile Justice continues to progress with the implementation of new evidence-based programs to provide improved services for Georgia's young offender.

DJJ has expanded the individual assessments and counseling available to youth. The most significant change is the initial work now happening with youth in the Regional Youth Detention Centers (RYDCs). The expansion of counseling staff has provided an earlier start to services for youth in DJJ care. Counselors anticipate the results of this early programming start will initially show up as improved program completion and eventually as a reduction in recidivism rates.
Offender/Youth Re-entry – DJJ has created an Office of Re-entry Services aligned with the Department’s Education Office. The newly formed Office of Education and Re-entry Services is responsible for DJJ’s adoption of the principal that juvenile justice systems should be planning for a juvenile offender’s exit of custody as early as intake. This concept has a direct correlation with the addition of counseling staff at the RYDC’s. The Office of Re-entry Services is designed to ensure the synchronization of all services provided to DJJ youth from the time they enter intake, through their confinement, and as they transition into their communities under DJJ supervision. The Department of Juvenile Justice expects to expand capabilities in this area through increased internal coordination and by bringing on additional partners in community-based educational, programming, and work opportunities for transitioning youth.

DJJ is implementing the Infinite Campus student information system which will provide DJJ with the capability to transfer school records between the Georgia Preparatory Academy and other school districts. Electronic transfer of a student’s academic records decreases the transition period between a youth leaving DJJ’s Georgia Preparatory Academy and their re-enrollment into their home school. Finally, the Department has emphasized an increase in the involvement of volunteer organizations with DJJ youth during confinement, as well as during participation in community-based programs.

Providing links to groups or organizations involved with youth while preparing to assist them during their transition back into the community is a key to successful reintegration and crucial to the reduction of recidivism.

In conclusion – Commissioner Niles’ “Top Five Priorities” are aligned to ensure improvements with daily operational activities are provided with optimal service as the goal. DJJ will continue to work diligently to incorporate all reform updates associated with the Juvenile Justice Reform Act. The Department will continue to improve the quality of the workforce through appropriate, relevant and on-going training for agency staff and leaders. DJJ will incorporate new evidence-based programs to ensure the best services are provided to youth to adequately prepare them for a successful return.
Djj Goals

Goal 1: Operate Safe and Secure Facilities and Communities while providing educational opportunities

Measureable Objective 1: Increase the percentage of youth who do not reoffend while in our care from 83.9% for the FY 2012 Served cohort to 88.0% for the FY 2016 Served cohort

Measureable Objective 2: Decrease the 1-year juvenile delinquent recidivism rate from 33.2% for the FY2011 release cohort to 29.5% for the FY 2014 release cohort.

Measureable Objective 3: Decrease the 3-year juvenile delinquent recidivism rate from 48.8% for the FY 2009 release cohort to 47% for the FY 2014 cohort.
Goal 1 related projects are:

- PREA Implementation
- Sex Offender Treatment Program
- Infinite Campus for Education
- Terrell & Wilkes Facilities Construction

**Measurable Objective 4:** Increase the percent of facilities meeting fidelity of the Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) model, a behavior management program, from 25.9% as of April 2014 to 75% by June 2016.

**Measurable Objective 5:** Increase the percentage of facilities compliant with PREA standards from 0% as of FY 2013 to 100% by August 2016.

**Measurable Objective 6:** Increase the percentage of eligible students in the High School track from 83.8% as of the 2012/2013 school-year to 84.9% for the 2016/2017 school-year.

**Measurable Objective 7:** Increase the number of vocational programs in the facilities from 7 in FY 2013 to 9 statewide by June 2016.

G1: Strategy 1: Enhance Safety and Security in Secure Facilities and Communities:

DJJ will enhance the current environment by promoting safety and security of youth in its care through the delivery of Core Treatment Programs, Specialty Programs, and an effective evidence based behavior management program for all secure facilities. The Behavior Management Units (BMU) will be enhanced to address the needs of targeted youth. DJJ will finalize implementation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA) recommendations by adopting 1:8 staff-youth wake hour and 1:16 sleep hour ratios by October 2017, installing kiosk-based self-reporting systems, and upgrading facilities phone and video monitoring systems and communications to increase sexual assault prevention efforts in DJJ secure facilities. Except for the staffing ratio standard, by August 2016, all DJJ Facilities will be audited by a Department of Justice Certified Juvenile Auditor and be PREA compliant.
G1: Strategy 2: Provide Quality Education and Expand Vocational Program Offerings Statewide:

DJJ will support the rehabilitation of youth in its care by equipping them with tools to succeed through the delivery of quality education, job and employment-readiness training, structured Reentry programming, and provide community and facility evidence based programming. DJJ will focus efforts on increasing the number of students enrolled in post-secondary education (technical schools, colleges and Virtual technical college classrooms) through existing partnerships.

G1: Strategy 3: Modify Long Term Facility Plan

Establish a long-term facility plan that addresses aging facility problems and aligns with juvenile justice reform, increased safety and security needs, and new education requirements from the Department of Education. DJJ will utilize population trends and data for planning and service delivery. A statewide facilities assessment yielded prioritized renovation requirements for DJJ’s first generation facilities. DJJ is planning the reconstruction of Dalton RYDC, the former Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) Terrell probation/detention center (PDC) to replace Albany RYDC; the former GDC Wilkes PDC to replace Sandersville RYDC; the former GDC Central PDC to replace Eastman RYDC, and to replace the Waycross RYDC on the existing site. Additionally, facilities will be equipped with safety and system upgrades which support current security, educational and programming standards, including but not limited to Electronic Key Control systems, Kiosks systems, Panic Buttons, and Energy Efficient Options.
Goal 2: Implement the Juvenile Justice Reform

Measureable Objective 1: Increase the percentage of regular committed youth placed in non-secure residential programming within 90 days as indicated by the youth’s placement screening from 56.64% as of FY 2013 to 73% by FY 2016.

Measureable Objective 2: Decrease the percentage of DAI low-risk offenders detained from 29.46% for FY 2013 to 27.9% by June 30, 2016.

Measureable Objective 3: Increase the percentage of DJJ-only committed youth placed or awaiting placement in community residential care eligible for Title IV-E placement reimbursement.

G2: Strategy 1: Enhance Community-Based Options for Placements and Services by Increasing Evidence-based and Best Practice Interventions in the Community

DJJ will increase evidence-based programming in its service delivery continuum. Appropriate non-secure placement solutions for lower risk offenders and those with the highest needs will be utilized and expanded in areas of the state where currently limited or unavailable.

DJJ will establish and enforce performance-based contracting with community service providers with greater emphasis on monitoring outcomes of youth. These services will be evaluated based on their adherence to national best practice models and evidenced based practice interventions, quality, and types of services offered which are relevant to the needs of the current offender population.

DJJ will also collaborate with educators to expand school-based supervision sites to provide alternative consequences to suspension and expulsion and to expedite response to juvenile offenders who exhibit in-school behavioral problems.
G2: Strategy 2: Collaborate with Key Stakeholders Using Validated Assessment Instruments to inform detention, commitment, and placement decisions

Statewide use of enhanced assessment and decision-making tools is expected to promote public safety while positioning youth in appropriate settings for supervision, care & rehabilitation. The secure confined juvenile offender population is projected to decrease as lower risk offenders are diverted to evidence-based programs in the community. In collaboration with partners and stakeholders, DJJ will collect and track data to facilitate performance measurement and oversight of the implementation of juvenile justice reform.

Standardized reporting requirements will be implemented for DJJ, all juvenile courts, and local probation agencies in order to monitor and track progress towards the desired outcomes. The collection and tracking of key outcome measures will allow for data-driven decision making and performance assessment for the agency and its stakeholders.

Goal 3: Promote Strategized Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning

**Measureable Objective 1:** Increase employee satisfaction from 61% as of FY 2013 to 68% by June 30, 2016 by implementation of Employee Satisfaction Enhancement Plan and enhanced training initiatives

**Measureable Objective 2:** Decrease job turnover rate for the JCO 1 position from 54.5% in FY 2013 to 48.8% by June 30, 2017

**Measureable Objective 3:** Decrease job turnover rate for the Food Service Workers from 24.5% as of FY 2013 to 24.0% by June 30, 2017

**Measureable Objective 4:** Increase the percentage of HITS Officers in DJJ employment by June 2014 that are POST Certified
G3: Strategy 1: Enhance Employee Growth and Satisfaction by Implementing an Employee Satisfaction Enhancement Plan to Improve the Agency Work Environment

The DJJ work environment will be enhanced by investigating and implementing feasible division-centered measures to improve employee morale and create a positive learning environment conducive to maximizing staff productivity. Analysis of the FY 2013 employee satisfaction survey results will be used as a launch platform for strategies to improve satisfaction ratings across agency divisions. The Agency’s Employee Recognition Program will be expanded and enhanced. In addition, the Employee Accountability and Discipline Program will be standardized to foster uniform application agency wide.

Some Goal 3 related projects are:

- Employee Accountability and Discipline
- Employee Exit Interview System
- Employee Recognition Program
- Employee Satisfaction Plan
- Management Development Program
- Advanced Leadership Program

G3: Strategy 2: Adopt and Improve Retention, Recruitment and Succession Planning Initiatives

DJJ will focus efforts on tracking current retention rates for high turnover positions and developing a directed retention strategy plan. Following the FY 2014 implementation of a pre-employment examination for identifying desirable traits for targeted recruitment of Juvenile Correctional Officers, focus will now be centered on analyzing the impact of the test on retention. An exit interview system will be implemented for departing employees in order to benchmark retention challenges currently faced. An evaluation of previous veteran job fair recruitment efforts will also be conducted. The agency will concurrently concentrate on improving and expediting personnel hiring practices. A feasible range of hiring and retaining options for challenged job categories, such as Food Service workers and Nurses will be explored. Finally, a Succession Planning Model and Program will be developed using a division-oriented approach for applicable job categories.
G3: Strategy 3: Provide Relevant Training to Equip Employees with the Tools and Resources Required for Success in the Workplace.

DJJ will implement a tiered training system for the Security, Community and Non-Security disciplines providing new managers with general management training specific to their responsibilities and advanced supervisory training for seasoned managers. An advanced leadership program will also be available for agency managers and selected employees who display potential and desire to grow within the department. To enhance the decision making process among upper management and to foster a premier work environment, DJJ will utilize external expertise and resources to support an agency culture of innovation by investing in Career Development courses and certifications. Finally, to create a workplace landscape amenable to retention and succession planning efforts, a cross-training orientation will be implemented to increase business-function awareness and efficiency across the agency.

Goal 4: Establish systematic Classification and Placement of Youth

Measureable Objective 1: Decrease the percentage of YDC appropriate committed youth spending more than half of their restrictive custody time post-adjudication in an RYDC from 33.3% in FY 2013 to 21.8%

Some Goal 4 related projects are:
- Housing & Custody Assessment
Goal 5: Promote Youth Re-entry focused programming and service delivery

Measureable Objective 1: Increase the implementation of the New Freedom Curriculum, an evidence based practice, with youth re-entering community supervision from 0 community site as of April 2014 to 15 sites by June 30, 2015

Measureable Objective 2: Increase the implementation of Thinking for a Change, an evidence based practice, with youth re-entering community supervision from 1 community site as of April 2014 to 12 sites by June 30, 2015

Measureable Objective 3: Increase the implementation of Aggression Replacement Training (ART), an evidence based practice, with youth re-entering community supervision from 0 community site as of April 2014 to 8 sites by June 30, 2015

Measureable Objective 4: Increase the implementation of Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS), an evidence based model that increases positive outcomes from offender supervision, from 0 community site as of April 2014 to 10 sites by June 30, 2015
Some Goal 5 related projects are:

- Reentry Services Framework
- Service Plan Database
- Enhanced Service Plan
- Youth Service Report Integration

G5: Strategy 1: Begin Release Preparation Early in the Youth’s Commitment by Engaging All Components of the Service Plan in the Case Management Process

By thinking ‘exit upon entry’, DJJ Divisions will collaboratively develop an effective offender re-entry program that fosters and strengthens youth-centered case management practices throughout a youth’s commitment. To facilitate family engagement, the job competencies and expectations for key case management positions will be standardized. To maximize productivity of youth-centered meetings, existing technology will be utilized and innovative solutions will be adopted where other resolution may be lacking. Fidelity monitoring checks will be incorporated into case management processes. Appropriate assessments and procedures will be utilized to assess youth’s strengths, risks, and needs, and an individualized plan informed by assessments used to prepare those youth for successful reentry.

G5: Strategy 2: Enhance Transition Processes to Facilitate Successful Reintegration into the Community by Linking the Youth with Relevant Services, Resources, and Supports and Implementing System and Process Improvements to Ensure Continuity of Care

To leverage youth success upon release, the case management process will be enhanced to focus on providing and linking each pre-release youth to the services and amenities necessary for sustainable community living, including, but not limited to, safe housing, health services, mental health & substance abuse services, educational options, and employment assistance.

Prior to the release, systems will be put in place to ensure uninterrupted service delivery to the youth. Need-appropriate services will be provided to families and victims of the transitioning youth. Additionally, relevant training on evidence based and best practices will be administered to line staff.
G5: Strategy 3: Establish & Expand Community Partnerships and Connections to Strengthen the Network of Supports Available to the Youth Upon Re-entry

This initiative will focus on developing and maintaining relationships with state, local and community based organizations to expand youth access to the continuum of supports needed in the community. Among other efforts, DJJ will collaborate with home schools, the Georgia Department of Education and Department of Labor to ensure that youth have sound reentry connections and will develop and sustain partnerships with local civic organizations interested in supporting the education of adjudicated youth. Finally, programs that span phases in the transition process will be implemented to strengthen the support network available to transitioning youth.
Visit the Department of Juvenile Justice on the web at www.djj.state.ga.us or djjnewsandviews.org

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Georgia-Department-of-Juvenile-Justice/137120609640510

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