



# Juvenile Justice Report Card: 2007

I am pleased to present to the Alaska Legislature and other citizens this Report Card on the performance and concerns of the state's Division of Juvenile Justice.

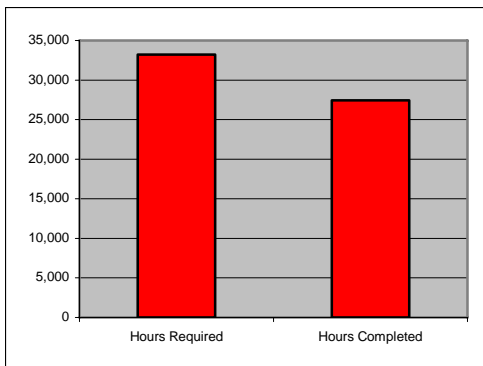
Our mission is to hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior, promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities, and assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime. For more details on how the Division of Juvenile Justice works to meet this mission, visit our web site at [www.hss.state.ak/djj](http://www.hss.state.ak/djj).

In this report we describe areas on which we're currently focusing our efforts. Attention to these issues is critical if we are to improve outcomes for delinquent youth, their victims, and communities in the years to come. We look forward to hearing your comments and ideas.

—Steve McComb, Acting Director

## HOLDING OFFENDERS ACCOUNTABLE

### Community Work Service

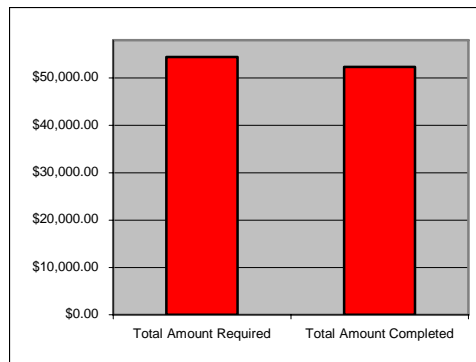


Community Work Service (CWS) is a way to hold juveniles accountable to the communities and neighborhoods that they have harmed through their delinquent acts. This measure includes CWS completed by juveniles on probation supervision or in custody. In FY 06, 82% of the CWS ordered either through formal, court processes or informal processes directed by a juvenile probation officer, was completed.

In FY 06, CWS hours were tracked through the Division's Juvenile Offender Management Information System (JOMIS). Tracking through JOMIS is expected to result in accurate reporting and better comparisons of this performance measure from year to year.

## PROMOTING RESTORATION OF VICTIMS

### Restitution

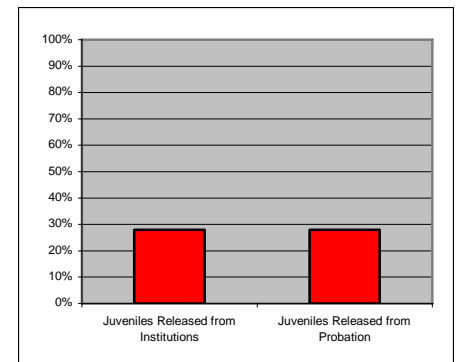


This measure provides a gauge of the Division's effectiveness in assisting youths in making reparations to those impacted by their behavior. In FY 06, 96.2% of restitution dollars ordered through non-court-ordered (or "informal") processes was collected from juveniles by time of case closure. This measure also includes assignments of Permanent Fund Dividends made to victims through informal processes. Restitution ordered through the formal court system is not included, as these payments are tracked by the Alaska Department of Law.

Tracking of restitution has recently been moved into the Division's management information system, which is expected to enhance the accuracy of this data.

## PREVENTING REPEAT CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

### Recidivism



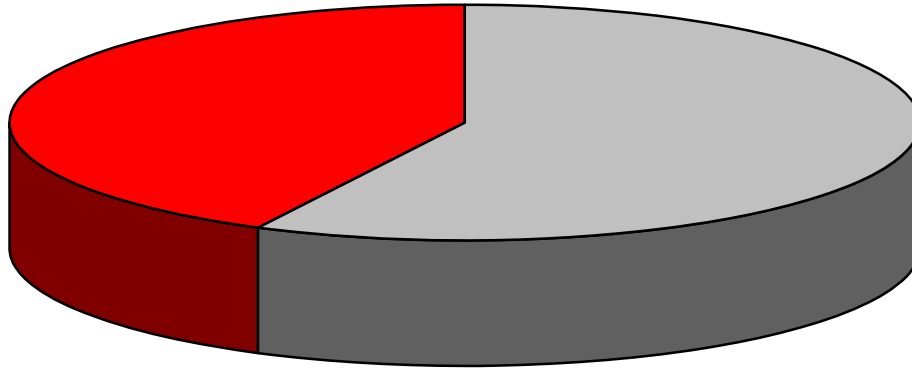
The Division of Juvenile Justice measures recidivism for youth that are released from a term of treatment in one of Alaska's secure juvenile facilities, and for youth who complete a period of probation supervision. For the 144 youth released from institutional treatment and the 309 youth released from formal probation in FY 04, the recidivism rate was the same: 28%. This rate compares favorably with those states that define and track recidivism similarly.

Recidivism is defined as new offenses that occur within 12 months of release that result in a new juvenile adjudication or adult conviction.

## *Mental Health Issues Among Youth in the Alaska Juvenile Justice System*

42.5% of youth surveyed had a diagnosed mental health disorder

57.5% of youth surveyed did not have a diagnosed mental health disorder



To get a sense of the number of youth in the Alaska juvenile justice system with mental health issues, the Division examined the records of all of the 1,463 youth under the Division's supervision or custody on January 12, 2001. Youth were considered to have a mental health disorder if they had received a formal clinical diagnosis, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition. Of the 42.5% of youth having a mental health disorder, 40.2% of these had co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. The results point to the need for adequate mental health care and substance abuse treatment services for youth who commit crimes.

## *Juvenile Justice to Focus Efforts on Quality Assurance, Mental Health, Infrastructure*

In 2007, the Division of Juvenile Justice will continue its efforts to ensure that Alaska has a juvenile justice system that uses resources effectively and efficiently to achieve desirable outcomes. The intended result is a balanced, information-based juvenile justice agency where decisions are based on data collection and review. Current needs identified:

- ⇒ **Development of a Quality Assurance System.** The Division needs a Quality Assurance system to ensure that practice standards and practice improvements are sound and that the data they generate are accurate and properly inform our decisions.
- ⇒ **Meeting Behavioral Health Needs.** The Division needs more mental health clinicians and other facility staff to better manage juveniles with behavioral health disorders and concerns.
- ⇒ **Meeting Infrastructure Needs.** The Division needs to ensure that its facilities, field offices, and management information system are adequate and appropriate. Examples of the most critical infrastructure needs:
  - ◇ **McLaughlin Youth Center** currently has inadequate space for juvenile probation services and medical facilities, and major deterioration in some treatment buildings.
  - ◇ **JOMIS (Juvenile Offender Management Information System)** needs to be upgraded to a web-based interface to improve connectivity and efficient use by field staff, and to meet state and industry standards.
  - ◇ **Bethel Youth Facility** endures extreme overcrowding in its detention unit and inadequate space for intake and assessment of juveniles.