

what's up doc?

by Dr. Mary Livers, PH.D, MSW, Deputy Secretary

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Hello, Everyone:

This is not a week that I really want to write WUD. I did not want to ruin your weekend so I wanted to wait until Monday to send this information to you, but it is possible the information we will be sharing will become public soon, and as always, I really didn't want staff to hear about this from a newspaper article. That said, let me get right into it.

Of course you already know that the state has a \$750 million dollar deficit for the fiscal year that begins July 1. So, we can't spend more than what we have. OJJ, along with most other agencies, will take a 30% cut. The really shocking news is that we have to begin the actions to get to cut \$38 million from next year's budget almost immediately. That means we have to reduce the number of youth we can serve in all three levels of care, resulting in many changes to how we do business. We will have to increase caseload sizes. It is not in the best interest of meeting our mission. We will have many challenges. It is not pretty. It is downright painful to implement these drastic measures. But, we have no choice at this point.

All state agencies do not have any chance of getting relief during the regular session. This is a non-fiscal session, so no changes can be made to increase revenues. This session ends on June 6, 2015. There is a possibility of another special session to increase revenues after June 6, but by the time that could happen, we have little or no time to reduce our expenses to be able to sustain our operations for the whole FY. So, we have no way out. We must begin planning for layoffs as of July 1, 2016. This will affect all of the agency, from central office, to secure care, and in the field offices. It will no doubt affect how well we can fulfill our mission.

We have projected what we will have to do to cover the \$38 million shortfall. You will find more of the details and the impact on the attached document. You are seeing this before the legislature, before any of our juvenile justice partners. I intend to send this information to judges, district attorneys, providers, local departments and other interested groups next week. In addition, we will be making phone calls to follow up to make sure everyone who will be impacted is aware of our actions. We know this is horrible. Nobody I know wants this to happen, especially Governor Edwards, but the revenue projections leave us no choice. We can't spend more than we have in the bank. If the legislature goes into special session again and we have better revenue projections, there is a chance we can suspend whatever actions we are being forced to take.

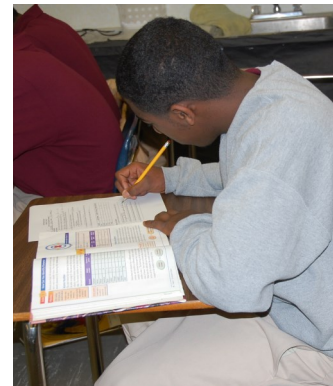
Once again, I would ask that cool heads prevail. I know this is awful news and the first thing that you may think is to get off of this sinking ship. But our ship is not sinking. We still have work to do with these young people. The tools we have are getting more limited, and we will have to change how we do a lot of things. But it won't always be this drastic. We have a lot of work to do and we need you. This may or may not directly affect you, so don't make decisions on the little information you have right now. As soon as we have more information, we will share it.

The executive team is working hard to make the best decisions for the agency. These are difficult choices that none of us want to make. Please know that we are focused on the mission. And we appreciate each and everyone of you for the work you do. We need you to keep doing what you do. We will adjust and do what we have to do. We always have.

I'll close with my sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, wherever you serve, for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely,
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

"We Are Planting
Good Seeds"



Comments?
Send them to
Whatsupdoc?
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Impact of a 30% Reduction in State General Funds for the Office of Juvenile Justice



The State of Louisiana is facing a projected \$750,000 million shortfall for FY2017. As a result, OJJ has been asked to project a 30% state general fund (SGF) budget reduction beginning July 1, 2016. This reduction is on top of the 38% reduction OJJ has sustained over the past seven years. In early April, OJJ will begin actions to realize the proposed reduction by July 1, 2016. The reduction will impact all aspects of the juvenile justice continuum of care.

What does this mean to the young people we serve, the public, our partners and our community stakeholders?

- **Increase in risk of youth entering the adult corrections system**
- **Increase in threat to public safety**
- **Increase in risk of recidivism**
- **Increase in financial and managerial burden on local jurisdictions**
- **Loss of partnerships with community providers making positive changes with youth**
- **Loss of progress made in juvenile justice reform efforts**
- **Loss of evidence based treatment programs in the community setting**
- **Loss of a complete continuum of care offering varying, graduated levels of services**
- **Loss of Service Coordination model allowing PPO to serve youth in least restrictive setting with integrated service delivery approach**
- **Loss of OJJ system wide ability to be proactive/preventative through community services to avoid youth custody commitments**
- **Layoff of hundreds of dedicated and experienced juvenile justice staff**

Impact of a 30% Reduction in State General Funds for the Office of Juvenile Justice



Secure Care

- Number of secure beds reduced from 325 to 216
- The Acadiana Center for Youth will not open in FY2017
- Existing facilities will see their populations reduced
- Approximately 100 facility employees laid off
- Secure care placement for highest need, most violent offenders only
- Slower movement in placement/violation of 14 day orders/contempt of court
- Youth waiting for secure beds at home in the community due to reductions in funding for detention costs

Group Homes and Community Contracts

- OJJ group home contracts will be reduced by 50% - loss of approximately 167 beds
- Community based contracts lost: approximately 105 reintegration slots, 100 tracker and 63 mentor slots
- Loss of community based treatment and interventions services for OJJ youth
- Greater risk of youth re-offending and escalating delinquent behavior leading to confinement in detention centers

Supervision

- Average Caseload of OJJ Probation and Parole Officers will increase from 1:25 to 1:35
- Closure of 4 regional offices
- Approximately 135 probation and parole staff laid off
- Increased travel time for probation and parole officers
- Decreased time available to have substantive contact with youth

Administration (Central Office)

- OJJ Administration would be reorganized and further downsized
- Approximately 10 central office staff laid off