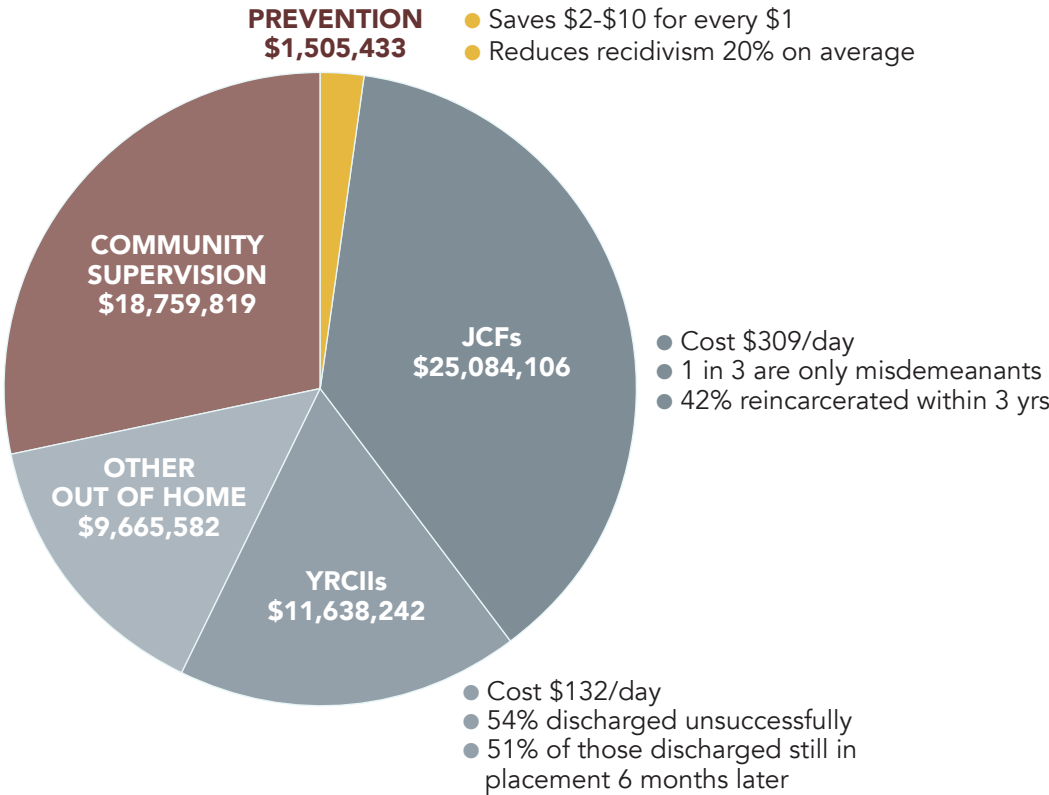


Snapshot: Juvenile Justice in Kansas

Despite considerable declines in its youth prison population, Kansas still incarcerates youth at a much higher rate than other states. According to the most recent data available, the state ranked 5th highest in the nation for committing and placing youth out of home.¹ On June 30th 2016, 953 youth were in the custody of the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC).²

That policy choice is costing the state millions of dollars each year and providing little in return. Kansas spends \$7 out of every \$10 of its juvenile services dollars incarcerating kids, yet more than 40 percent of youth released from youth prisons are reincarcerated within three years³ and less than half of those in other, non-secure facilities are successfully discharged from programming.⁴ In contrast, Kansas spends approximately three percent of its budget on community-based prevention or rehabilitation programs despite the fact that research has shown that proven alternatives to incarceration reduce recidivism by 20 percent on average and save \$2 to \$10 for every \$1 invested.⁵

KDOC Youth Services 2016 Budget and Outcomes



Sources: Kansas Department of Corrections Annual Report FY2016; Kansas Department of Corrections (January 2015). "Cost Study of Youth Residential Centers for Juvenile Offenders: Pursuant to Senate Substitute for House Bill 2588".

Community-based alternatives, particularly family-based intervention programs, generally produce better outcomes than incarceration at significantly less cost. Programs like Functional Family Therapy and Life Skills Training help hold kids accountable in their home communities and could save Kansas \$13-\$25 dollars for every \$1 invested.⁶

SB 367 Juvenile Justice Reforms

In 2015, the Kansas Juvenile Justice Workgroup was created and tasked with developing policy recommendations to reduce juvenile justice system costs and improve outcomes for system-involved youth. The resulting legislation, SB 367, enacted in April 2016, encompasses a number of reforms, including: implementing a statewide system of structured, graduated responses for probation violations; expanding targeted services and interventions; focusing out-of-home placement on high risk youth; defining time frames for case lengths; increasing evidence-based programs in the community; and establishing a Juvenile Justice Improvement Fund to ensure that costs averted from out-of-home placement are shifted to community-based services.

Some provisions in the law went into effect in July 2016 while others will be phased in over a period of time through 2019. **If fully enacted, the legislation is expected to reduce the number of youth sent to out-of-home placements by about 60% between 2016 and 2021.**⁷

Though it is still early to measure success, Kansas has expanded evidence-based community alternatives to incarceration for youth.⁸ In 2016, targeted community-based treatment for sex offenses was implemented statewide. As of February 2017, Functional Family Therapy was offered in every county in the state and the DOC is piloting Multi-systemic Therapy and Youth Advocate Programs in specific counties.⁹ In addition, Kansas saw a decline in the youth custody population of more than 40 percent between January 2016 and January 2017.¹⁰



1. Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., and Puzanchera, C. (2015). "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement. Online." Available: <https://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>.
2. Kansas Department of Corrections 2016 Report <https://www.doc.ks.gov/publications/Reports/2016>. This includes 734 youth in the custody population (out of home placements, foster care, home treatment, psychiatric residential treatment center, YRCs) and 219 held in juvenile correctional facilities.
3. Council of State Governments (March, 2015). "Reducing Recidivism for Youth in the Juvenile Services Division of the Kansas Department of Corrections: Analyses and Recommendations."
4. Kansas Department of Corrections "Cost Study of Youth Residential Centers for Juvenile Offenders – Pursuant to Senate Substitute for House Bill 2588" January 2015. The analysis focuses on Youth Residential Center II facilities which are non-secure residential facilities for youth.
5. Colorado Department of Public Safety (2008). "What Works: Effective Recidivism Reduction and Risk-Focused Prevention Programs: A Compendium of Evidence-Based Options for Preventing New and Persistent Criminal Behavior"; Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2004). "Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth"
6. Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2004). "Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth"
7. https://www.doc.ks.gov/newsroom/releases/archive/2016/SB_367
8. Communication from the Kansas Department of Corrections, December 2016.
9. Ibid.
10. Kansas Department of Corrections (January 2017). "Statewide Month End Population: Placements for Youth in the Custody of DOC on the Last Day of Each Month. <http://www.doc.ks.gov/publications/juvenile/population/custody/view>