



Health and Hygiene Costs Higher for Girls' Juvenile Justice Residential Programs

at a glance

While there is limited data available, most juvenile justice providers report that their costs for serving females are higher than their costs for serving males. The Department of Corrections has similarly documented higher per diem and medical costs for female inmates.

A full comparison of costs for serving male and female juvenile offenders is not possible because providers use different accounting methods and systems. However, the limited data that is available from the Department of Juvenile Justice and the private providers that serve both boys and girls indicate that girls' programs have higher expenses for health care and hygiene products. There was no clear difference between girls' and boys' programs in staff overtime and clothing costs.

On average, the per diem rate for juvenile residential programs is \$3 less for girls than boys in low-risk programs, \$9 more for girls in moderate-risk programs, and about the same in high-risk programs.

Scope

As directed by Chapter 2004-333, *Laws of Florida*, this report examines the costs of girls' residential juvenile justice programs.

Background

In Florida and the nation, while most offenders are males, females are the fastest growing segment of the adult correctional and juvenile justice populations. Historically, the juvenile justice system

has been geared toward male offenders. However, girls and boys tend to chart different paths to delinquency and research indicates that delinquency programs are more effective when they are gender-based. The 2004 Florida Legislature directed that juvenile justice programs be gender-specific to address the needs of the targeted gender groups.¹

An issue in gender-specific programs has been the relative costs of serving female and male juvenile offenders. Juvenile justice providers that serve females have asserted that these programs incur higher costs than programs serving males due to the physical and emotional differences between girls and boys and their different histories of abuse and neglect, which research indicates frequently contributes to their delinquency. To examine this issue, we analyzed cost information from juvenile justice programs, conducted site visits, and interviewed Department of Juvenile Justice and private provider staff.

Findings

Both adult and juvenile corrections systems report higher costs for females

There is limited data available to compare the costs of residential programs serving male and female offenders. The Department of Corrections reports higher costs to serve females in the adult correctional system. As shown in Exhibit 1, the department's average overall per diem rate for female offenders (\$62.10) is substantially higher

¹ Chapter 2004-333, *Laws of Florida*.

than the rate for adult males (\$40.92) and male youthful offenders (\$57.97).² This difference is due primarily to health service costs that are almost three times higher for females. Department of Corrections officials attribute higher health services costs to physical, sexual, drug, and alcohol abuse, and a history of medical neglect.

**Exhibit 1
Department of Corrections’ Costs Are Higher for Females Than Males**

Per Diem Costs	Male Adult	Male Youthful Offender	Female Adult and Youthful Offender
Health Services	\$ 5.62	\$ 6.79	\$16.92
Education Services	1.03	4.30	2.28
Operations	34.27	46.88	42.90
Total Per Diem	\$40.92	\$57.97	\$62.10

Source: Department of Corrections’ data for Fiscal Year 2004-05.

While there is limited juvenile justice data available, most girls’ programs reported higher costs in some areas. The Department of Juvenile Justice does not have comparable data for its residential programs serving girls and boys. These programs are highly privatized, and providers use different accounting systems and methods to maintain their cost data.

However, the limited data that is available indicates that costs for most girls’ programs are somewhat higher than those for programs serving males, due in part to higher costs for health care and hygiene products. We obtained cost data from seven programs that administer both male and female residential juvenile justice programs. We focused our analysis on the major cost categories that stakeholders and prior studies indicated differed for girls’ and boys’ programs: health services, hygiene products, overtime, and clothes.

The costs reported by the programs varied substantially, reflecting the differing risk levels of juveniles they served and different types of services. However, the girls’ programs generally reported spending more for health services and hygiene products than did the programs serving male juvenile offenders. There was no clear difference between programs serving girls and boys in terms of staff overtime or clothing.

² Per diems for Fiscal Year 2004-05, the most recent available data.

Health Services. As shown in Exhibit 2, six of the seven programs reported higher medical costs for their girls’ programs than their boys’ programs.³ These differences ranged from \$29 to \$3,392 more per year per youth for medical costs and between \$12 and \$2,709 more per year per youth for pharmaceuticals.

Programs report that health services costs for girls exceed those of boys due to girls’ need for gynecological, medical, and mental health services. Approximately 11% of girls each year in residential programs are pregnant and require prenatal and post-partum care. Also, research shows that females typically enter the juvenile justice system with untreated health conditions and present four times as many health issues as males. Many of these girls are at high risk of disease due to their drug use and sexual victimization, and program nurses indicate that girls are more likely than boys to seek help when they are not feeling well.⁴

**Exhibit 2
Differences in Boys’ and Girls’ Health Services Costs Per Youth Per Year Varied Widely**

Program	Girls’ Costs	Boys’ Costs	Cost Difference	Percentage Difference
Medical Costs				
Program 1	\$ 106	\$77	\$ 29	38%
Program 2	255	225	30	13%
Program 3	354	170	184	108%
Program 4	885	672	213	32%
Program 5	3,506	901	2,605	289%
Program 6	5,948	2,556	3,392	133%
Program 7	1,214	2,369	(1,155)	(49%)
Pharmacy Costs				
Program 1	\$ 38	\$ 26	\$ 12	46%
Program 2	1,468	396	1,072	270%
Program 3	117	33	84	255%
Program 4	94	57	37	65%
Program 5	3,857	1,148	2,709	236%
Program 6	3,161	3,057	104	3%
Program 7	54	95	(41)	(43%)

Source: Program data.

³ Youth Services International’s Florida program for girls, JoAnn Bridges, had lower costs than all its other girls’ and boys’ residential programs. YSI officials said that JoAnn Bridges was a fiscal anomaly and attributed its financial success to an exceptionally strong manager.

⁴ While earlier cost studies indicated that girls’ programs may need more nurses as a result of the greater clinic activity, our site visits did not find this to be the case, as each of the programs we visited had one nurse on duty who said she kept busy but was able to keep up with the workload.

Girls’ mental health issues also lead to increased costs of both mental health professionals and pharmaceuticals, such as psychotropic drugs. Most girls in Florida’s juvenile system have histories of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and suffer from diagnosed mental disorders.⁵ Girls’ greater medical and pharmaceutical needs are particularly costly to providers at the high-risk level residential programs, because these youth are not eligible for Medicaid.⁶

Hygiene Products. Only two of the programs were able to break out per-youth costs of hygiene and toiletry products. One of these programs reported spending \$51 more per youth per year for girls than it did for boys while the other spent \$101 more. This difference reflects girls’ programs’ need to supply monthly sanitary products as well as spend more on hair care; many boys’ programs give crew cuts or shave the heads of their participants.

Overtime. There was no clear trend in overtime costs between the girls’ and boys’ programs that were able to break out these costs. While some providers indicated that girls’ programs required higher overtime costs due to the need to accompany girls to numerous medical appointments, others noted that overtime was an indicator of the local job market and affects male as well as female programs. Also, providers noted that costs to accompany youth to medical visits depend on a program’s location and whether it has a doctor that comes to the facility or whether youth must be transported a considerable distance to visit the physician.

Clothing. There was no clear difference between girls’ and boys’ programs in clothing costs. While girls require some extra clothing, such as bras, many providers reported that boys tend to be harder on their clothes.

⁵ *Gender-Specific Services for Delinquent Girls Vary Across Programs, But Help Reduce Recidivism*, OPPAGA [Report No. 05-13](#), March 2005.

⁶ Under Medicaid regulations, a program must allow youth community access to be Medicaid-eligible. Youth in high- and maximum-risk programs are not Medicaid-eligible because they are not allowed community access. Youth in low- and moderate-programs sometimes participate in community activities under close supervision, so they are Medicaid-eligible.

Training. While we were not able to compare the training costs of programs serving male and female juvenile offenders, programs serving girls may incur additional costs in the future due to the need to train staff of these programs to provide gender-specific services. Our prior review of girls’ programs found that staff typically was not receiving adequate gender-specific training, particularly in developing a climate of positive relationships and communication.⁷ To address this issue, the department is working with experts in the private sector to develop gender-specific curriculum. This curriculum will be used in both initial classes and annual refresher courses. The department has not yet determined the cost of the gender-specific training.

Per diem rates vary slightly for girls’ and boys’ programs

On average, the per diem rate for juvenile residential programs is \$3 less for girls than boys in low-risk programs, \$9 more for girls in moderate-risk programs, and about the same in high-risk programs.^{8,9}

If programs that receive extra funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment are excluded, girls’ moderate-risk programs receive approximately \$3 more per diem as shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3
Per Diem Rates Vary Slightly for Girls and Boys

Program Risk Level	Average Rate		Difference
	Boys	Girls	
Low-Risk	\$ 87.44	\$ 84.37	\$(3.07)
Moderate-Risk			
All	89.57	98.81	9.24
Excluding specialty programs	84.36	87.14	2.78
High-Risk	113.81	114.47	0.66

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Juvenile Justice data.

⁷ *Gender-Specific Services for Delinquent Girls Vary Across Programs, But Help Reduce Recidivism*, OPPAGA [Report No. 05-13](#), March 2005.

⁸ Per diem rates cited in contracts in force as of February 2006.

⁹ There are no maximum-risk girls’ programs currently.

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Project supervised by Kathy McGuire (850/487-9224) — Project conducted by Anna Estes (850/487-0831) — Gary R. VanLandingham, OPPAGA Director

Appendix A



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
Governor Jeb Bush Secretary Anthony J. Schembri

April 25, 2006

Mr. Gary R. VanLandingham, Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
Claude Pepper Building, Room 312
111 West Madison Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475

Dear Mr. VanLandingham:

Pursuant to Section 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, the Department is responding to the Health and Hygiene Cost Higher for Girls' Juvenile Justice Residential Programs report of April 2006. We have reviewed the report and agree with the information provided. Since there are no significant recommendations contained in the report we have no further comments at this time.

If you have any questions or require additional information please feel free to contact Charles Chervanik at 850-921-4188 or email charles.chervanik@djj.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Schembri", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Anthony J. Schembri
Secretary

AJS/RS/ss

cc: Charles Chervanik, Assistant Secretary for Residential Services
Mary Eubanks, Inspector General
Mary Mills, Bureau Chief, Residential Contracts
Derry Harper, Chief Inspector General, Executive Office of the Governor