

2009 Human Services Budget

Juvenile Detention

Juvenile detention, a mandated service in Pennsylvania, provides security, safety to the community, opportunities for competency development in youth, psychosocial evaluation, behavioral observation and assessment, consistent exposure to community volunteers such as the clergy and in many cases, short-term treatment planning. Juvenile detention has evolved into an essential service that simultaneously prioritizes the health of the detained child, respects the experience of the victim and preserves the safety of the community.

During the past decade, juvenile detention has faced many challenges and complexities brought about by some of the most significant changes to the juvenile justice system. This includes implementing the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice as required by the Juvenile Act. These Department of Public Welfare regulations regarding restraint, managed care, rising detention populations and an increase in the number of youth with mental health and substance abuse issues in our care.

The most complex of all issues has been the severe fiscal concerns juvenile detention has experienced. Act 148 sets forth the rate of reimbursements for Pennsylvania's array of dependent and delinquent services, including juvenile detention services. The act certified levels for each county are determined through the complicated needs-based budgeting process. Act 148 established the responsibility for payment for detention services at 50 percent county and 50 percent state, except in cases of shelter care where the reimbursement rate is 10 percent county and 90 percent state.

Act 148 was the only funding mechanism available to counties for detention services prior to the availability of Temporary

Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). TANF reimbursement, since its inception, covered allowable costs for a host of child welfare services, including juvenile detention services across the commonwealth. The only exception to TANF funds occurred for a brief period in the mid 1990's when Title IVA federal monies were available. This brief period set the parameters for the state to grandfather detention services in the state's plan for current TANF funds. According to the FY 2005-2006 commonwealth budget, TANF monies could no longer be used for detention services after December 31, 2005. The impact of the loss of TANF funds was temporarily softened by the infusion of a separate state appropriation (TANF Transition).

The total amount, both county and state shares, proposed for juvenile detention has increased from \$84.5 million for FY 2008-2009 to \$91.8 million in FY 2009-2010. Counties are faced with the loss of TANF and State Transition Grant dollars to fund juvenile detention services. To maintain the same service levels of about 21,000 admissions, counties are now responsible for 50 percent of the costs for this service, which equates to \$45.9 million.

To establish a long-term funding solution for juvenile detention, the Association supports an increase in the Act 148 reimbursement rate for juvenile detention from a 50 percent state and 50 percent county split to a 90 percent state and 10 percent county split with a commensurate increase in Act 148 funding.

For more information on juvenile detention services, contact Nicole Remsburg at (717) 232-7554 x 3147 or nremsburg@pacounties.org.



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