

COSTS RISE AMID FALLING POPULATIONS AT CALIFORNIA'S DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Maureen Washburn, Policy Analyst
Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice



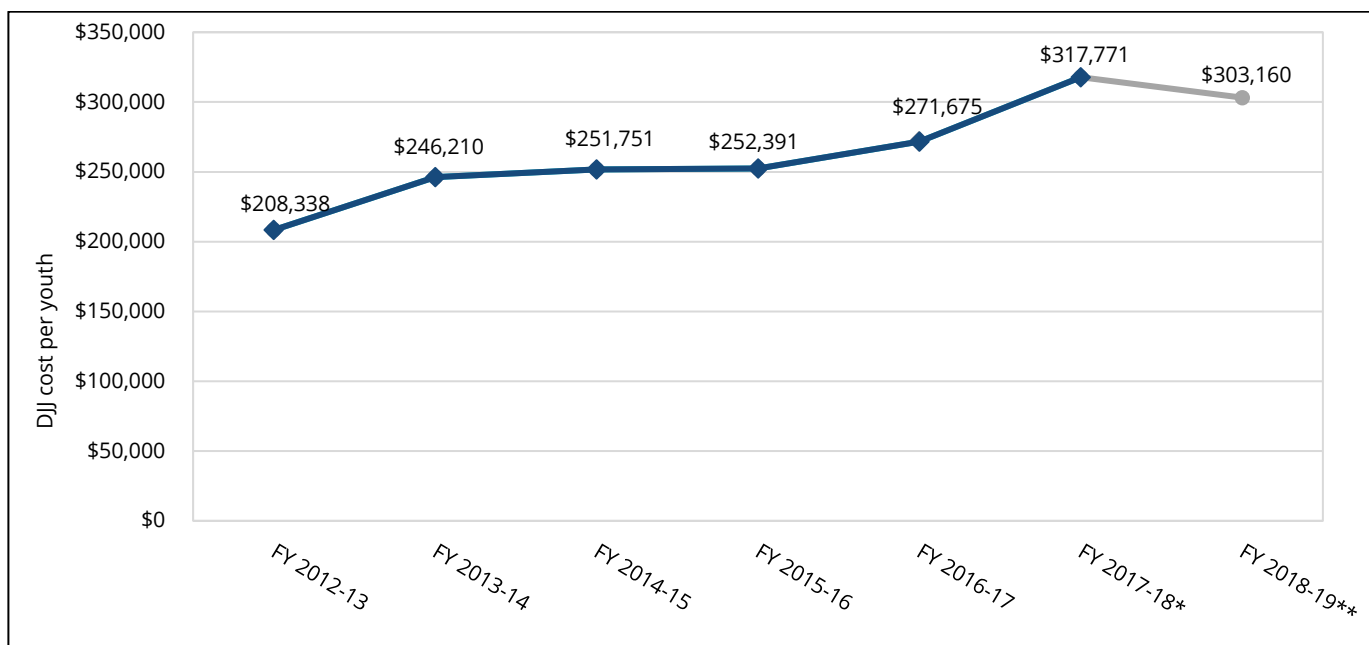
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Fact Sheet

In the current fiscal year, California's state youth correctional system, the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), has seen rising costs and record-high per youth spending despite continued reductions in its youth population (DOF, 2018). Though DJJ facilities are operating at approximately one-third of their design capacity, the division has maintained fairly static staffing levels and high fixed costs, resulting in three consecutive years of budget growth (DOF, 2018). For fiscal year 2018-19, the Governor's Budget proposes expanding DJJ to a larger population of young adults, accompanied by a budget increase of nearly \$4 million (DOF, 2018).

In the midst of budget growth, DJJ remains out of step with best practices. The division confines youth far from their homes, and in large, congregate institutions—an environment shown to be antithetical to rehabilitation (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; CJCJ, 2016). The most recent recidivism statistics reflect these deficits: 74.2 percent of youth are re-arrested, 53.8 percent reconvicted, and 37.3 percent return to state custody within three years of release from DJJ (CDCR, 2017).

Figure 1. DJJ cost per youth, actual (FY 12-13—16-17), projected (FY 17-18), and proposed (FY 18-19)



Sources: DOF, 2014-2018. * The California Department of Finance estimates FY 2017-18 costs using population and cost information from the first half of the fiscal year. ** Costs for FY 2018-19 are based on proposed budget totals and population increases.

- **State youth correctional facilities may cost taxpayers nearly \$320,000 per youth in FY 2017-18.**

In FY 2017-18, California is poised to spend an estimated \$317,771 per youth at DJJ (DOF, 2018). This spending exceeds earlier budget estimates, which predicted costs of \$252,041 per youth for the current fiscal year—a discrepancy that is attributable to lower-than-predicted DJJ youth populations (DOF, 2017).¹ In his FY 2018-19

¹ When initially budgeting for FY 2016-17, the California Department of Finance (DOF) projected an average daily population of 779 youth (DOF, 2017). However, midway through the fiscal year, DOF reduced this estimate to 615 (DOF, 2017; 2018).

budget, Governor Brown proposed an increase in the age of confinement at DJJ and the development of a new program for young adults. Taken together, these proposals are predicted to increase the average daily population of DJJ by 5 percent and boost the division’s total budget by \$3.8 million, resulting in per youth spending of \$303,160 in FY 2018-19 (DOF, 2018).

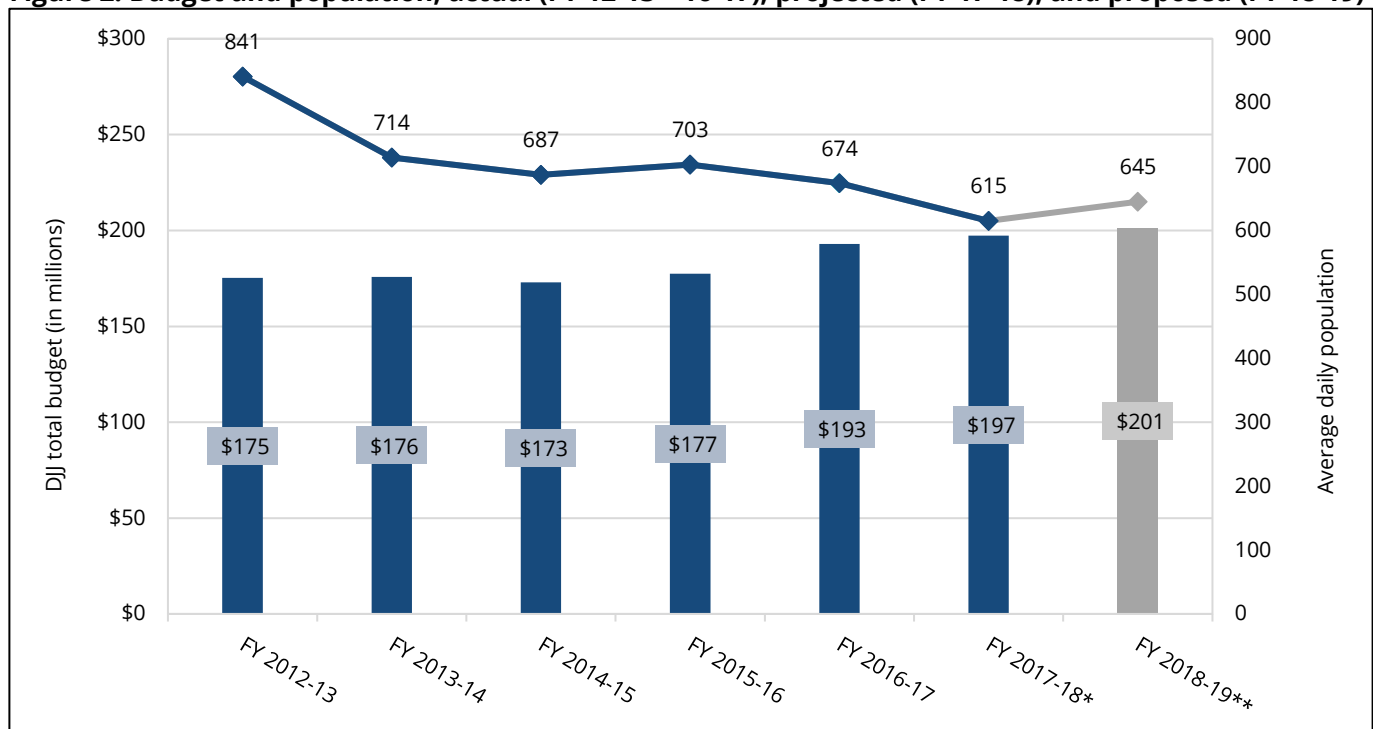
- **DJJ’s cost per youth has increased annually, reaching historically high levels.**

In 2011, in response to rapid declines in the populations at DJJ, the state closed several youth correctional facilities, leaving three large institutions and a fire camp (CDCR, 2018). Since then, DJJ has reported a 39 percent decrease in its population (January 2012 vs. January 2018), resulting in facilities that are operating at just 37 percent of their design capacity (CDCR, 2012; 2017a; 2018a). As a result, per capita costs at DJJ have climbed each year since FY 2012-13 (Figure 1).

- **The DJJ budget has increased for three consecutive years, despite a downward trend in population.**

Though the population at DJJ declined over the six-year period from FY 2012-13 to FY 2017-18, state spending on the institutions rose 13 percent, with annual increases in each of the last three fiscal years (Figure 2). The budget proposal to expand DJJ in FY 2018-19 would offset the division’s years-long population declines and increase its budget to over \$200 million (DOF, 2018).

Figure 2. Budget and population, actual (FY 12-13—16-17), projected (FY 17-18), and proposed (FY 18-19)



Sources: DOF, 2014-2018. Note: The total DJJ budget was determined by totaling expenditures for “Juvenile Operations and Juvenile Offender Programs,” “Juvenile Academic and Vocational Education,” and “Juvenile Health Care Services.” * The California Department of Finance estimates the FY 2017-18 average daily population and total budget using population and cost information from the first half of the fiscal year. ** Average daily population and the budget total for FY 2018-19 are proposed by Governor Brown.

- **Counties reimburse a small share of DJJ costs, leaving the remainder to the state.**

Counties vary widely in their reliance on DJJ. After accounting for differences in juvenile felony arrests, the 19 California counties with the highest DJJ commitment rates—those that are most state-dependent—are 29 times more likely, on average, to place a young person at DJJ compared to the state’s 20 lowest committing counties—those termed self-reliant. Counties are required to compensate the state for each youth committed to the facilities

by a juvenile court at a rate of \$24,000 per year (SB 1021, 2012). This fee, which has remained fixed since 2012, now comprises just 8 percent of the state's per youth cost of confinement in the facilities. Counties are not required to compensate the state for youth who are placed at DJJ after they are convicted in an adult criminal court, despite the well-documented harm of transferring youth to the criminal justice system (WIC 912; Ridolfi et al., 2016). The result is a lopsided fiscal burden: counties with low DJJ commitment rates subsidize the cost of counties with high commitment rates.

California operates a dual system of juvenile justice. While nearly every county receives state funding to operate secure county facilities for youth, California also maintains a state correctional system with dwindling populations and rising costs. The burden of these costs is borne, disproportionately, by counties with limited reliance on the state, including Orange, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Clara counties.

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Appendix

County	Juvenile felony arrests (2016)	Total DJJ commitments (Dec. 2016)	Commitments per 1,000 felony arrests	DJJ commitments (juvenile)	DAI commitments (adult)
Alameda	815	31	38.0	28	3
Alpine	0	0	-	0	0
Amador	3	0	0.0	0	0
Butte	101	4	39.6	4	0
Calaveras	21	1	47.6	1	0
Colusa	2	0	0.0	0	0
Contra Costa	394	42	106.6	39	3
Del Norte	9	0	0.0	0	0
El Dorado	39	1	25.6	1	0
Fresno	657	35	53.3	27	8
Glenn	8	0	0.0	0	0
Humboldt	68	1	14.7	1	0
Imperial	83	0	0.0	0	0
Inyo	0	1	-	1	0
Kern	476	23	48.3	22	1
Kings	174	16	92.0	9	7
Lake	40	1	25.0	1	0
Lassen	17	0	0.0	0	0
Los Angeles	4827	170	35.2	167	3
Madera	75	3	40.0	1	2
Marin	128	1	7.8	1	0
Mariposa	1	0	0.0	0	0
Mendocino	68	0	0.0	0	0
Merced	254	18	70.9	18	0
Modoc	2	0	0.0	0	0
Mono	1	0	0.0	0	0
Monterey	246	17	69.1	17	0

County	Juvenile felony arrests (2016)	Total DJJ commitments (Dec. 2016)	Commitments per 1,000 felony arrests	DJJ commitments (juvenile)	DAI commitments (adult)
Napa	76	0	0.0	0	0
Nevada	54	1	18.5	0	1
Orange	1196	2	1.7	0	2
Placer	130	0	0.0	0	0
Plumas	11	0	0.0	0	0
Riverside	756	66	87.3	48	18
Sacramento	712	41	57.6	30	11
San Benito	34	0	0.0	0	0
San Bernardino	1772	37	20.9	19	18
San Diego	1321	26	19.7	25	1
San Francisco	454	5	11.0	5	0
San Joaquin	565	28	49.6	6	22
San Luis Obispo	81	0	0.0	0	0
San Mateo	262	3	11.5	3	0
Santa Barbara	301	10	33.2	6	4
Santa Clara	920	7	7.6	4	3
Santa Cruz	151	3	19.9	2	1
Shasta	60	1	16.7	1	0
Sierra	0	0	-	0	0
Siskiyou	15	1	66.7	1	0
Solano	332	10	30.1	9	1
Sonoma	221	15	67.9	14	1
Stanislaus	461	13	28.2	12	1
Sutter	66	2	30.3	1	1
Tehama	29	1	34.5	0	1
Trinity	5	0	0.0	0	0
Tulare	447	21	47.0	16	5
Tuolumne	9	3	333.3	1	2
Ventura	473	7	14.8	5	2
Yolo	157	2	12.7	1	1
Yuba	76	4	52.6	0	4

Sources: CDCR, 2016; DOJ, 2018.

Please note: Jurisdictions submit their data to the official statewide or national databases maintained by appointed governmental bodies. While every effort is made to review data for accuracy and to correct information upon revision, CJCJ cannot be responsible for data reporting errors made at the county, state, or national level.

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