



Oregon Youth Authority Demand Forecast

October 2008

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Background

The Office of Economic Analysis produces the semi-annual Juvenile Corrections Population Forecast which provides projections of the demand for close custody beds managed by the Oregon Youth Authority. Since the demand for beds has exceeded capacity, the demand for beds has been a more useful measure. Demand is measured relative to the 1996 to 2002 time period during which time the advisory committee determines that demand was met.

Executive Orders 98-06, 04-02, and 08-15 direct the Department of Administrative Services and the Juvenile Corrections Population Forecasting Advisory Committee to produce the demand forecast. The forecast is mandated to estimate monthly demand populations over a ten year period and is due April 15 and October 15 of each year. The Oregon Youth Authority uses the forecast for planning and budgeting.

The advisory committee is comprised of individuals with knowledge of the juvenile justice system. It meets prior to each forecast to discuss issues related to that system and how they could affect the forecast.

Juvenile Corrections Population Forecasting Advisory Committee

Honorable Thomas Hart
Donna Keddy
Torri Lynn
Jeff Milligan
Bobby Mink

Marion County Circuit Court
Department of Human Services
Linn County Juvenile Department
Central/Eastern Oregon Juvenile Justice Consortium
Oregon Youth Authority

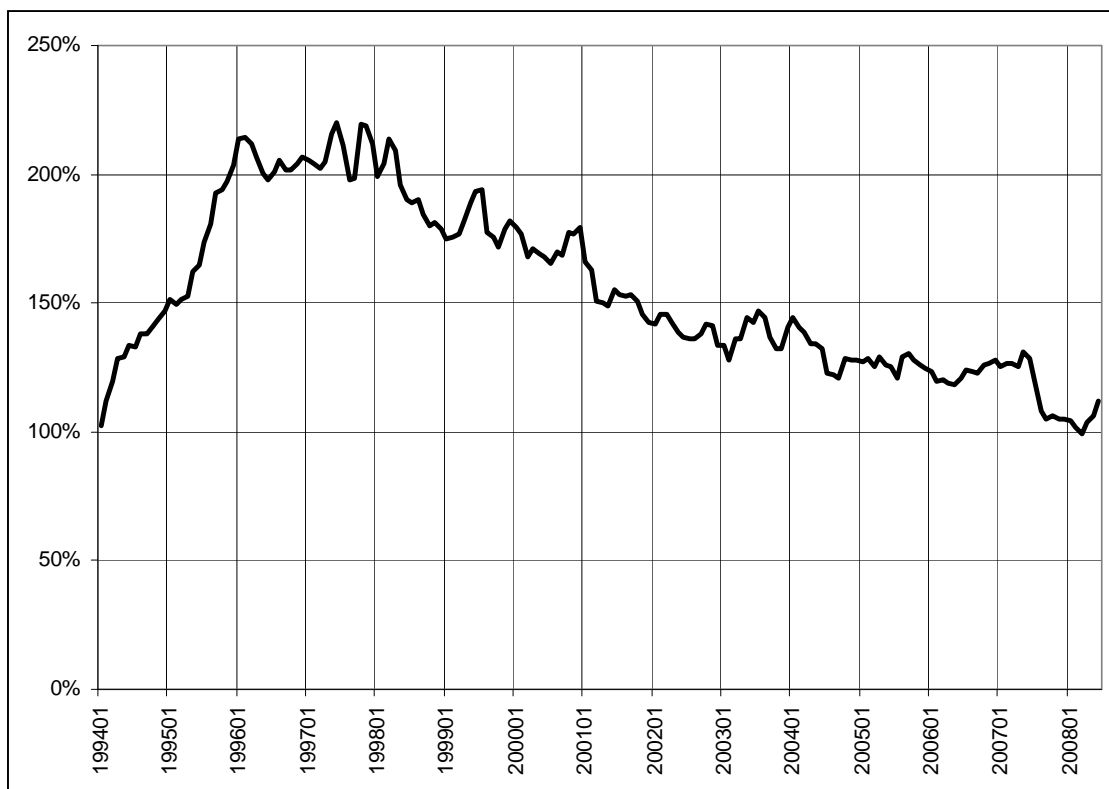
Trends and Forecast Methodology

The forecast uses a detailed modeling approach with forecast updates applied using a top-down approach to make use of the most stable long term trends in juvenile crime. The model measures demand based on characteristics of the youths who are referred to the juvenile justice system. Youth characteristics for referrals from 1996 to 2002 which resulted in close custody intake are used as the reference. For a given set of characteristics, the model estimates the probability of intake from the reference period. This takes the form of an equation. That equation is then applied forward to a forecasted base of referrals. Forecast updates are based on recent trends applied forward to the modeled base.

Demand Trends

Although youths can enter close custody for various offenses, felony offense referrals provides a simple measure of demand. Figure 1 below depicts how that number increased, then decreased relative to levels in 1994. Over this time period, the juvenile population has grown about 5 percent, meaning that per capita crime rates have fallen more significantly than shown on the graph. Other referral measures have followed similar patterns such as number of first time referrals, referrals at a young age, referrals by crime class, etc. Juvenile arrest rates for serious crimes have also fallen by about 20 percent from 1998 to 2006.¹

Figure 1
Number of Felony Referrals
(Indexed to 1994)



¹ Oregon State Police Uniform Crime Reports data.

This general juvenile crime pattern discussed above is based on Oregon specific data. The observed reductions since the late 1990's are also consistent with national trends and trends observed in other regions of the country.² This suggests the trend is driven more by general social trends as opposed to behaviors, youth characteristics, and policies which are specific to Oregon.

Other factors influencing the trend may include successful youth programs as evidenced by a reduction in recidivism,³ reductions in law enforcement or juveniles effectively avoiding enforcement, and a shift away from the most serious person crimes to less serious property crimes. Measure 11 also likely had an impact flowing into the early 2000's as the system restabilized under different sentencing rules and there was less access to re-offend since some individuals were serving longer measure 11 sentences. Regardless of the source, the steady reduction since the late 1990's across most measures of juvenile crime indicates a continuing modest reduction in demand for close custody beds.

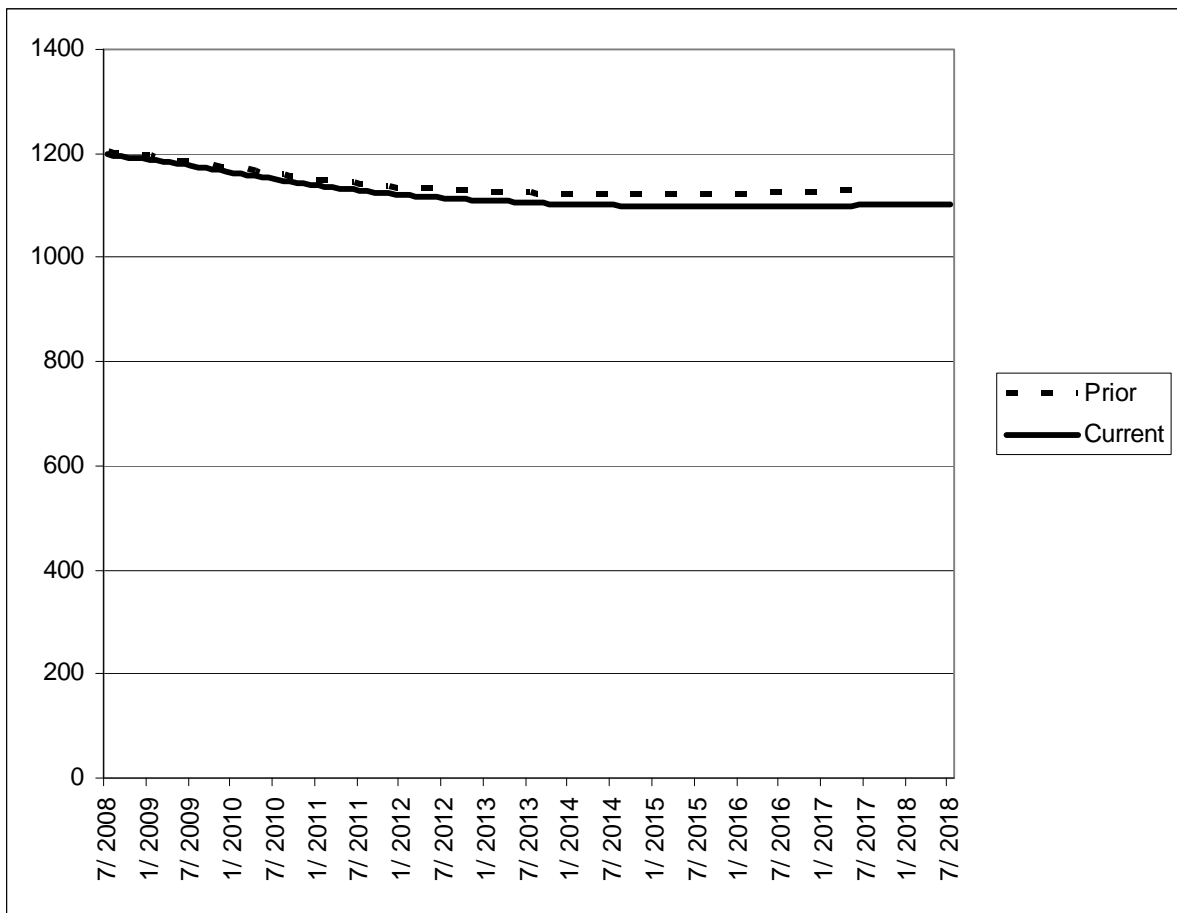
² Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

³ OYA Biennial Report 2005-07

Forecast

The demand for Oregon Youth Authority close custody beds is expected to decline over the ten year forecast period from approximately 1200 to 1100. The forecast is driven by declining trends in juvenile crime and the size of Oregon's juvenile population. Demand is expected to decline more rapidly in the near term as the juvenile population declines until 2012. In the long term, juvenile population growth overcomes the trend toward reduced juvenile crime leading to slight growth in demand beginning in 2016.

Figure 2
Close Custody Bed Demand Forecast
(July 2008 to July 2018)



The close custody population is not expected to change significantly since demand is expected to be consistently higher than capacity.

Detailed monthly tables are available as an appendix to this document and can be downloaded from <http://oregon.gov/DAS/OEA/oya.shtml>.

Forecast Risks

The forecast assumes that current laws and current criminal justice practices continue as they are now. It also assumes trends in juvenile criminal activity continue and that demographics follow expected trends. If those and other assumptions fail, the forecast is at risk.

An additional general risk is associated with the prevalence and success of the juvenile justice system in deterring juvenile crime. The forecast does not assume changes in programs or practices.

Specific risks include:

November 2008 ballot measures 57 and 61. Minimum sentencing requirements under these measures would require incarceration of some juveniles who are not currently incarcerated. While this would not necessarily change demand, the number of available discretionary beds could be impacted if those beds must be used for juveniles serving mandatory sentences.

Cessation of federal timber payments. Some counties have relied heavily on this source for funding for general funds. With the payments scheduled to decline for the next 3 years and then expire, county law enforcement and juvenile department funding could be impacted. The forecast does not include any adjustment for this.