

Juvenile Justice Fact Sheet Series: Community Corrections Facilities

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What Are Community Corrections Facilities (CCFs)?

Community Corrections Facilities (CCFs) are residential facilities where juvenile courts can place youth after they receive a disposition – or sentence – in juvenile court. CCFs are designed to hold youth who are adjudicated delinquent for a felony offense and serve as a more local alternative to sending youth to a correctional facility.

Research on Community Corrections Facilities:

Nationally, many states have been moving away from placing youth in large juvenile correctional facilities for many reasons, including the high costs, high recidivism rates, harsh conditions, and lack of community connections associated with these facilities. CCFs therefore serve as decentralized alternative residential placements for youth. CCFs have several potential benefits, including:

- Keeping youth *closer to home and more connected to their communities*, including the ability to connect youth with community-based providers before their release and to keep family or other positive community supports in place for youth during their stay. This increased connection can make it easier for youth to transition more gradually and successfully into their communities post-incarceration.
- *Tailored programming* within the facility to reflect the strengths of the local community and the youth who come to the juvenile court's attention in that jurisdiction. This targeted programming is delivered in a smaller facility, closer to home in a more targeted fashion.
- Serving youth *less expensively* than in large, centralized facilities.

However, research continues to indicate that secure confinement for youth should only be used for a very small portion of youth who come to the juvenile courts' attention, including youth adjudicated delinquent of serious, violent offenses or who have multiple prior offenses. If a youth does not fit this profile, secure confinement even in a CCF can actually increase the likelihood that the youth will reoffend – or recidivate – in the future. Therefore, it is critical that youth are placed in CCFs only if they meet the characteristics outlined above, not to widen the net and increase the overall number of youth in secure placement.

Community Corrections Facilities in Ohio:

In Ohio, CCFs are required to be an alternative to sending a youth to Department of Youth Services (DYS) correctional facilities, meaning each youth placed in a CCF also must have a suspended DYS sentence. If the youth does not successfully complete the CCF program, his or her DYS sentence must be imposed.

Ohio has 12 CCFs with 367 beds available throughout the state for referrals from all 88 juvenile courts as well as some youth in DYS custody; 10 of the CCFs are locked and two are not locked, but secured by staff. The average CCF length of stay is seven months, but programs range from four to 12 months. In Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14), CCFs admitted 455 youth and served 724 youth during the year. Youth in CCFs are characterized as:

- *Male* – Boys make up a vast majority of the population (91%) and only three CCFs hold girls;
- *White* – White youth make up a majority (52%) of the population, followed by Black youth (39%);
- *Older* – Youth ages 16 and 17 compose 63% of youth in CCFs, but 12% of youth are 14 and under, including three 12 year old youth admitted in FY14;

- *Varied risk levels* – CCFs hold many youth with a moderate risk level of reoffending (44%), followed by high risk (35%), then low (19%).
- *Varied offense levels* – The most common offense for youth in CCFs is a property level offense (44%), followed by person level offenses (26%), and sex offenses (15%).

Programming options at CCFs can include sex offender treatment, education, substance abuse counseling, behavior modification programs, counseling (individual, group, and family), mental health evaluations and counseling, and cognitive behavior therapy. However, each CCF differs in terms of programming offered; for example, several CCFs offer only behavior modification and substance abuse counseling, while others offer a broader range of programs. Only five CCFs offer sex offender treatment. Therefore, counties are permitted to send youth to any CCF across the state. In 2013, all 12 CCFs converted to using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Ohio’s RECLAIM funding formula disincentivizes placing youth in CCFs, with courts having their state RECLAIM funding allocation reduced for each CCF bed. It is important to note that the deduction for a CCF bed (2/3 credit deduction) is smaller than the deduction for placement in DYS facilities (1 credit deduction).

Costs: The average cost to house a youth in a CCF facility is \$204/day for an annual cost of \$74,095/youth, compared to an annual cost of over \$200,000/youth in a DYS facility. CCFs are almost fully funded by DYS, but locally operated; in FY15, DYS spent \$22.1 million on CCFs throughout Ohio.

Outcomes and Recidivism: A 2010 study through the University of Cincinnati reviewed nine of Ohio’s CCF facilities and found that the outcomes for CCFs across the state varied. The authors found that only five of the nine CCFs studied served primarily high risk youth; in these facilities the youths’ overall recidivism rate was lower than that of youth sent to DYS facilities. For youth in the four CCFs that did not serve high risk youth, CCFs either had no impact or had a negative impact on recidivism when compared to youth in DYS facilities. The authors also found that facilities with trained and qualified staff had better outcomes.

Overall, the study’s authors stated that CCFs were “more effective when they (a) targeted high-risk youth, (b) used cognitive or behavioral programming to change dynamic risk factors, and (c) employed trained and qualified staff.” In addition, the study found that CCFs “programs that do not target high-risk youth may actually make things worse...[because they] disrupt prosocial networks and expose youth to antisocial peers.”

Conclusion:

While CCFs can be more effective and less costly than large, centralized correctional facilities, both research and Ohio policymakers have acknowledged that secure confinement should only be used for a very small population of youth who are at high-risk for reoffending. In addition, the benefits of CCFs can only be fully realized when the youth is located close to the community in which they live.

However, youth most commonly placed in Ohio CCFs are at moderate risk for reoffending or adjudicated delinquent of property offenses. To meet the goal of reducing recidivism and in turn improving public safety, it is critical that Ohio CCFs 1) only hold high-risk youth, not moderate- or low-risk youth, 2) deliver quality programming by highly trained and qualified staff, and 3) be close to the youth’s home community.

Resources:

Department of Youth Services, *Community Corrections Facilities*,

<http://www.dys.ohio.gov/dnn/Community/CommunityCorrectionsFacilities/tabid/130/Default.aspx> (last accessed December 15, 2014).

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin: Planning Community-Based Facilities for Violent Juvenile Offenders as Part of a System of Graduated Sanctions* (August 2005), available at: www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/209326.pdf.

Christopher T. Lowenkamp, et. al., *Criminal Justice and Behavior* Vol. 37, No. 6, *Community Corrections Facilities for Juvenile Offenders in Ohio: An Examination of Treatment Integrity and Recidivism* (June 2010), available at:

http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/articles/CCF_Juvenile.pdf.

This fact sheet is one of a fact sheet series about Ohio’s juvenile justice system by the Ohio Juvenile Justice Association.

If you have any questions, please visit [OJJA’s website] or contact Erin Davies with the Juvenile Justice Coalition at edavies@johio.org or 614-400-5548.