



DALLAS COUNTY OFFICE OF BUDGET AND EVALUATION

August 29, 2025

TO: Commissioners Court
Dallas County Juvenile Department Administration

THROUGH: Dr. Ronica Watkins, Budget Officer *rw*

FROM: Bryant Jackson, Senior Budget and Policy Analyst

SUBJECT: FY2026 Proposed Budget for the Dallas County Juvenile Department

BACKGROUND

The Dallas County Juvenile Department (DCJD) plays a vital role in ensuring the welfare and rehabilitation of youth offenders within Dallas County. Its primary mission is to engage with at-risk youth, offering interventions that focus on rehabilitation, education, and reintegration into the community, while also maintaining public safety.

Operating under the Texas Juvenile Justice Department's guidelines, the DCJD serves juveniles aged 10 to 17 who are accused of delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision. The department provides a range of services, including probation supervision, counseling, education programs, mental health services, and placement in residential treatment facilities when needed.

With an emphasis on prevention and diversion, the department collaborates with schools, law enforcement, families, and local communities to address the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency. DCJD aims to reduce recidivism by promoting accountability, competency development, and community safety.

Historically, the Office of Budget and Evaluation, in consultation with the Juvenile Department, has prepared the budget based on the needs of all cost centers and the yearly inflation that may impact the department. The Office of Budget and Evaluation continues to collaborate with the Juvenile Department to analyze the effects of various factors both before and throughout the fiscal year.

BUDGETED POSITIONS

Historically, the Dallas County Budget Office budgeted for both filled and vacant positions within the Juvenile Department. This approach ensured funding was available to cover all potential staffing needs but often resulted in higher budgets, as appropriations included positions that were not actively filled during the fiscal year.

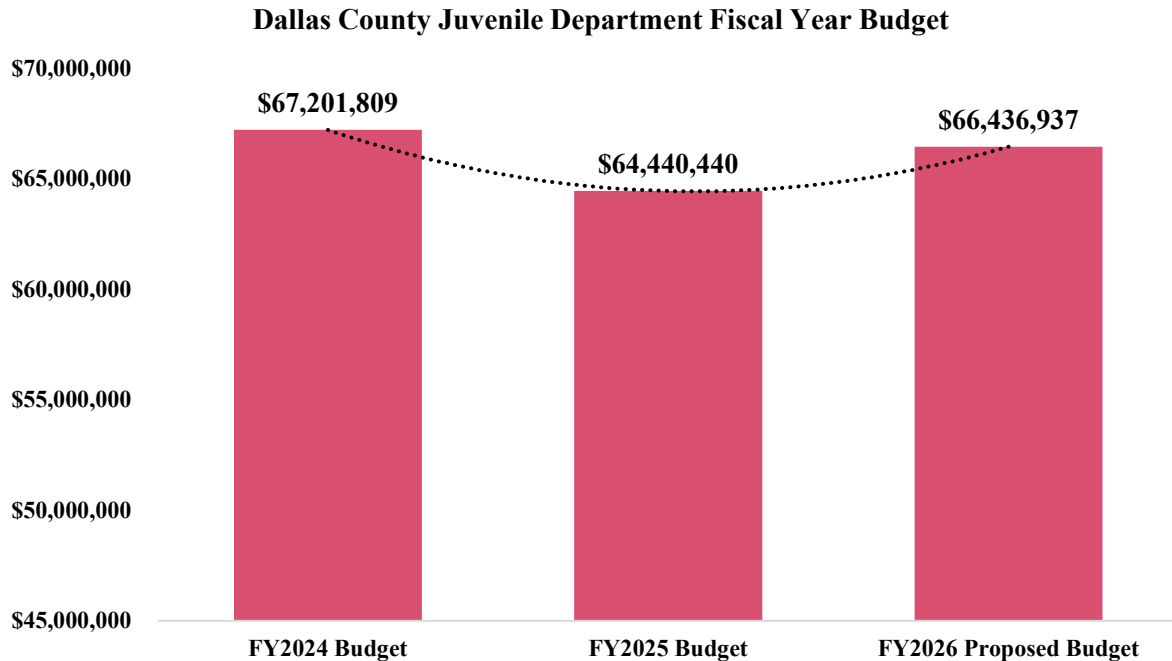
For the FY2025 budget, the Office of Budget and Evaluation (OBE) adopted a more targeted approach by removing vacant positions from the base budget and focusing only on currently filled positions within each cost center. This adjustment significantly reduced the number of budgeted positions from 739 in FY2024 to 623 in FY2025, creating a budget more closely aligned with actual staffing levels. To address vacancies that arose throughout the year, contingency funds were allocated to support approved but initially unfilled positions.

For FY2026, OBE continues this methodology while recognizing growth in active staffing needs. The proposed budget reflects 662 budgeted positions; an increase of 39 positions (6.3%) compared to FY2025. This adjustment provides the Juvenile Department with the resources necessary to support ongoing recruitment efforts, respond to operational demands, and ensure compliance with state standards for detention and probation services.

Department	FY2025 Budgeted Positions	FY2026 Budgeted Positions
Juvenile Child Nutrition Program	0	0
Juvenile Administration	178	193
Juvenile Psychological	31	39
Juvenile- Detention Services	221	194
Juvenile- Emergency Shelter	29	34
Juvenile- Letot Center	40	46
Juvenile- Youth Village	50	65
Juvenile- Medlock Center	51	66
Juvenile- Letot Residential Treatment Center	23	25
Total	623	662

JUVENILE DEPARTMENT YEARLY BUDGET COMPARISON

FY2024 Budget	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Proposed Budget	Variance
\$67,201,809	\$64,440,440	\$66,436,937	\$1,996,497



The Dallas County Juvenile Department has observed a noticeable pattern in its population levels throughout the year. Generally, the juvenile population has been smaller during much of the year, with significant increases observed during peak periods such as spring break and summer. These fluctuations in population have important implications for budget planning and resource allocation.

Seasonal Population Trends

Throughout most of the year, the department's population remains relatively stable and lower than during peak periods. This trend reflects periods of typical juvenile activity and engagement in regular educational and community programs. However, during spring break and summer, the department experiences a marked increase in the number of juveniles. This seasonal surge can be attributed to various factors, including increased leisure time and the absence of school, which may lead to higher incidences of juvenile offenses or the need for additional supervision and services.

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Budget and Evaluation recommends that the Commissioners Court approve the FY2026 Proposed Budget of \$66,436,937 for the Dallas County Juvenile Department. This represents an increase of \$1,996,497 (3.1%) over the FY2025 Adopted Budget of \$64,440,440. The increase reflects the addition of budgeted positions from 623 in FY2025 to 662 in FY2026, aligning resources with actual staffing requirements and supporting operational needs across detention, probation, and rehabilitative services.