DALLAS COUNTY
OFFICE OF BUDGET AND EVALUATION

August 7, 2026

TO: Commissioners Court
Dallas County Juvenile Department Administration

THROUGH: Dr. Ronica Watkins, Budget Officer

FROM: Bryant Jackson & Nathaniel Dears, Budget and Policy Analysts

SUBJECT: FY2027 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

Beginning in FY2025, the Office of Budget and Evaluation adopted a targeted approach to juvenile department staffing by budgeting only for currently filled positions within each cost center, removing vacant positions from the base budget. This adjustment created a budget more closely aligned with actual staffing levels. To address vacancies that arise throughout the year, contingency funds are allocated to support approved but initially unfilled positions.

For FY2027, OBE continues this methodology while recognizing growth in active staffing needs. The proposed budget reflects 637 budgeted positions—a decrease of 25 positions (-4%) compared to FY2026.

In addition, Juvenile has submitted a thirty-five (35) reclassification proposal, which are proposed to be cost neutral for FY2027. This proposal reflects the department's strategies to identify operational efficiencies and realignments. 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.

Cost Center	FY2026 Budgeted Positions	FY2027 Budgeted Positions
Juvenile Administration	193	184
Juvenile Psychological	39	34
Juvenile – Detention Services	194	207
Juvenile – Emergency Shelter	34	31
Juvenile – Letot Center	46	40
Juvenile – Youth Village	65	57
Juvenile – Medlock Center	66	60
Juvenile – Letot Residential Treatment Center	25	24
Total	**662**	**637**

JUVENILE DEPARTMENT YEARLY BUDGET COMPARISON

FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Budget	FY2027 Proposed Budget	Variance
$64,440,440	$66,436,937	$68,413,483	**$1,976,546**

*Increases due to the Commissioners Court approving a 3% COLA and an increase for insurance from $10,000 to $12,000 per position

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 FY2027 Proposed Budget and proposed reclassifications of $68,413,483 for the Dallas County Juvenile Department. This represents an overall increase of $1,976,546 (3%) over the FY2026 Budget of $66,436,937. Increases are due to the Commissioners Court approving a 3% COLA and an increase for insurance from $10,000 to $12,000. Staffing decreased from 662 to 637, aligning resources with actual staffing requirements and supporting operational needs across detention, probation, and rehabilitative services.