



CLARK COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER

We will put our energy and resources into the future.

Our focus will be on what needs to be healed, what needs to be repaid, what needs to be learned.

To: Budget Office, County Manager and County Council

From: Christine Simonsmeier, Juvenile Court Administrator

Date: August 11, 2025

Subject: 2026 Annual Budget Process

Executive Summary of General Fund Needs

Clark County Juvenile Court has jurisdiction over youth ages 12 to under 18 accused of criminal offenses, and under recent law, may retain supervision over individuals over 18 if the offense occurred before their 18th birthday. These youth have been referred to the court from law enforcement and the Prosecutor's Office or via informal court processes. The court provides community-based diversion and probation services, clinical and forensic mental health services, secure and non-secure detention programming and evidenced based interventions. The Juvenile Court has a total of 92.5 FTE's and is a division of the Superior Court and is overseen by the Superior Court Judges.

PROBATION:

After a significant dip in numbers during the pandemic, the probation teams have experienced steady growth in the number of youth ordered to supervision. The average monthly caseload size grew by 51% from 2023 to 2024. During this time, we filled four vacancies in our mental health probation unit to increase capacity for additional youth. Currently, there are approximately 360 youth engaged in community-based services, ranging from Diversion to High-Risk Probation. The court has one vacant probation counselor position that we anticipate filling in late 2025 or early 2026.

DETENTION:

Secure Detention Services has seen a steady increase in the average daily population since the end of the pandemic. In 2021, we experienced our lowest Average Daily Population (ADP) rate on record at 4.2 youth per day. In 2024, the overall average daily population was 12.8 youth per day with 55% felony offenses and 32% misdemeanor. As of June 2025, the average daily population is 10.3 youth with 53% of those felony referrals and 32% misdemeanors. In July of this year, over the course of three days, we exceeded the capacity of 28 youth in the facility by reaching 31 youth in custody. The current upward trend has remained, and we expect that the 2025 average daily population will be higher than it was in 2024.

Secure Detention Average Daily Population

2018	15.0
2019	16.0
2020	10
2021	4.2
2022	7.0
2023	14.8
2024	12.8

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR CLARK COUNTY

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Suzan L. Clark
Derek J. Vanderwood
John P. Fairgrieve
Jennifer K. Snider
Emily H. Sheldrick
Camara L.J. Banfield
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Tsering D. Cornell
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COMMISSIONERS

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The Detention Alternatives program was established to provide an evidenced based response for youth who are pending cases and/or have violated their conditions but are not deemed a risk to the community. These programs offer meaningful accountability while avoiding the adverse effects often caused by secure confinement. The program has increased its capacity over the last several years, exceeding the pre-pandemic numbers. The Community Support Program increased the number of youth served from 11 per day to 15 and the Weekend Reporting Program increased to 3 weekends a month, up from one weekend a month.

To deliver high quality responsive services grounded in best practice and fidelity, the court also provides programs in the form of Restorative Community Service, Victim Impact, Evidenced Based Programming, Clinical and Forensic psychological services, Records and legal secretarial work as well as administration services.

Predicting the increase to juvenile justice services is difficult because juvenile justice as mandated, is primarily focused on maintaining community safety through rehabilitation and support. Forecasting the appropriate levels of service is greatly influenced by environmental factors in the community and individual systemic decisions made from arrest to prosecution and sentencing. Adolescent behavior is greatly impacted by circumstance. Challenges and barriers involving school connectivity, housing and family stability as well as access to the appropriate services increase the chance of a youth engaging in at-risk or delinquent behavior. The health of our community matters for these youth.

Our data shows that since the decline in numbers due to the pandemic, we have experienced steady growth in the number of youth referred to detention and probation services. Overtime, the Juvenile Court will need additional funding to support increases in services, and it will be more likely that the areas of focus will be on community-based programming like Diversion and Probation services and non-secure detention alternatives.

Despite the overall stability of the operational staffing numbers, the court does have two requests related to positions that need to be addressed.

Additional FTE, Program Coordinator II

Background & Justification: In 2024, the department conducted an internal analysis which identified an organizational staffing imbalance impacting managerial oversight and program performance. At present, one Program Manager II supervises 18 staff across six distinct programs and manages two separate grant-funded initiatives. The program, called Community and Court Programming, includes our Court Intake team, Detention Alternatives, Restorative Community Service, Victim Impact, Truancy, the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative and the Becca Grant programs.

This span of oversight significantly exceeds recommended supervision ratios for effective program delivery and staff support. The court is seeking to fund one additional Program Coordinator II position to relieve the overburdened management structure and enhance operational oversight. This position was previously requested in 2025 but not approved.



• JUVENILE COURT •

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Business Case:

- Supports improved supervision, employee engagement, and accountability across multiple programs.
- Allows the current manager to focus on higher-level program evaluation, grant management, and strategic planning.
- Mitigates risk of oversight fatigue, program underperformance, and staff burnout.
- Ensures compliance with best practices for supervisory ratios.

Mandate: RCW 13.04.040 mandates the juvenile court administrator to appoint probation counselors and those in charge of detention facilities, who must be of “good character” and are compensated by the county. These appointees include roles critical to program supervision and day to day management—functions that align with the **Program Coordinator II** role.

Juvenile Detention Officer – Project Position Conversion

Background & Justification: In response to increases in staff turnover, protected leave time, overtime expenditures, and operational strain, the department secured approval for a two-year project position for one Juvenile Detention Officer (JDO) position in 2025. This temporary staffing increase helped stabilize workforce capacity, reduce burnout and improve retention rates.

Securing this position as a full-time employee is necessary to increase staffing capacity. Increased capacity is necessary during population surges as well as to absorb staffing shortages during protected leaves and seasonal surges in PTO usage. An additional impact of the project position status is the challenge it creates in recruiting for a 12-month position. The Juvenile Detention Officer job requires candidates to commit to 24/7 shift work, often working non-traditional hours, weekends and holidays. Adding the prospect of the position ending in 12 months creates an additional burden on prospective candidates.

For 2026, the department had intended to request the conversion of this temporary JDO position into a permanent, full-time role.

Business Case:

- Preserves staffing stability and increases workforce resilience.
- Reduces staff burnout by decreasing mandatory overtime.
- Reinforces staff retention efforts and enhances morale.
- Supports safer staff-to-youth ratios, contributing to both staff and resident safety.

Mandate: RCW 13.16.050 Counties Authorized to acquire facilities and employ adequate staffs.