

Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services Department (JSD)



Wansley Walters, Director
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Our Mission

The Miami-Dade Juvenile Services Department (JSD) commits its resources in partnership with the community to provide a safe and secure environment to assess and process arrested juveniles and those at risk, utilizing state-of-the-art assessment instruments and technology in order to determine the individual issues of juveniles for the purpose of minimizing further delinquent activity and contributing to the development of future productive adult citizens.

Our Vision

To significantly reduce the arrest rate in Miami-Dade County by providing alternative intervention and prevention services for youth at risk of becoming involved with the Juvenile Justice System, and to properly assess and serve arrested youth in order to improve their quality of life and reduce further involvement with the Juvenile Justice System.

Our Values

A genuine concern for the welfare of youth and their families, customer-focused, responsive to the public, a commitment to a high standard of professionalism, innovative, action oriented, ethical, efficient, effective and fair to all.

Our History

The Miami Dade Juvenile Services Department, formerly known as the Juvenile Assessment Center, is the largest and most comprehensive facility of its kind in the United States and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since it first opened in 1997, the facility has served as a centralized processing, referral, and evaluation center for all juveniles arrested in Miami-Dade County. The JSD has served as a benchmark agency for processing arrested youth at a national and international level as well.

Commendations

The White House recently recognized the JSD as an 'exemplary program' in the President's 2004 Drug Strategy Report. The Department was noted as a facility that is leading the charge in developing ways to 'intervene early' with youth at risk. The report also applauded JSD for shortening 'the formerly bureaucratic process of arresting a juvenile'. In October 2006, the JSD Director, known as an advocate for at risk youth and juvenile offenders, was invited as the only speaker representing the United States to participate in the second Juvenile Justice Observatory International Conference (IJJO) held in Brussels, Belgium. Her presentation was "Miami-Dade County, Florida and the reform of the Juvenile Justice System".

Partnerships

The JSD allows representatives from law enforcement, social services, education, and mental health to work in a cohesive partnership in order to provide the complete array of services needed in the initial phases of the child's involvement with the juvenile justice system. These partners include local police departments, the juvenile courts and state attorney's and public defender's offices, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Dade County Public Schools, and local Community Based Organizations. On the national level, JSD is presently partnering with the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Research

Since the year 2000, the JSD has received five congressional earmarks totaling over 4 million dollars. Currently, the Department operates a National Demonstration Project with the U.S. Department of Justice and over thirty national researchers. This project has enabled Miami-Dade County to effectively plan and strategically apply proven research methods and interventions based on the needs of children in the system that have effectively reduced the juvenile crime rate in the community.

Our Services

Intake, Screening and Assessment

Upon admission of a youth to the facility, staff makes immediate notification to family members advising them of the whereabouts of the youth. The JSD utilizes a battery of state-of-the-art comprehensive needs assessment instruments that assess the juvenile's behavior traits, home environment, mental health, and substance abuse history. The screening and assessment tools are designed to identify the youth's detention status, risk to re-offend, and diversion eligibility. Each youth is screened and assessed in an environment that adheres to all the confidentiality guidelines set forth by Florida Law.

The screening process takes between six (6) and eight (8) hours, depending on the severity of the charges, the number of youth in custody, and the 24 hour detention hearing court calendar mandates. Upon completion of the process, the youth is either released to parents, legal guardian, responsible adult and shelter or held in secure detention pending the 24 hour detention court hearing.

Youth identified as Siblings of Serious Habitual Offenders (10 lifetime arrests or 5 arrests within a year) are referred to The Children's Psychiatric Center Serious Habitual Offenders Siblings (SHOSIB) program for family services.

Intervention and Prevention Programs

Juvenile's Intervention and Prevention Programs operated by JSD include:

- **Countywide Civil Citation** which allows police officers to refer a child who has committed a minor offense for assessment and services without making an arrest.
- **Post Arrest Diversion (PAD)** which is an alternative arrest processing program that allows the Department to deter first time misdemeanor offenders from entering the traditional juvenile justice system. Youth eligible for the PAD program will not have their records entered in the Department of Juvenile Justice System, but their arrest record will be expunged only with the completion of the program.
- **Young Offender Process (YOP)** which serves first time misdemeanor youth eleven and under and provides an opportunity to have their records expunged. Children participating in the YOP program are referred to The Children's Psychiatric Center Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) program for appropriate services.
- **Juvenile Alternative Sanctions System (JASS)** provides delinquency prevention services to non-violent misdemeanor offenders and maximizes successful re-offense prevention efforts. Youth that are not eligible for the PAD program are referred to JASS.
- **Juvenile Alternative Services Program (JASP)** provides diversionary sanctions services to non-violent felony and aggressive misdemeanor offenders to reduce judicial processing workloads.
- **Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services (IDDS)** provides intensive family-focused services to divertible juvenile offenders at high risk of becoming serious or chronic offenders.
- **The Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities (TASC)** provides clinical services to processed youth specific to substance abuse and mental health issues.

Contact Us

Main Office

275 N.W. 2nd Street, 2nd Floor
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Phone: (305) 755-6282 – (305) 755-6283
Fax: (305) 755-6301

Intake, Screening, and Assessment

Phone: (305) 755-6130
24 hours, 7 days a week

Outreach Offices

Opa-Locka Neighborhood Services Center North

16405 N.W.25 Avenue, Room 100
Miami, FL 33054
Phone: (305) 622-2572 ext.16
Fax: (305) 622-2576

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#### **South Dade Government Center**

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Miami, FL 33189  
Phone: (305) 234-1433  
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Website

<http://www.miamidade.gov/jac/>