



# MARION COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

## Who are youth referred for juvenile services?

Roughly 1,400 youth are referred to Marion County’s Juvenile Department each year. While most are referred by local police departments throughout the county, younger youth can be referred by nonprofits, schools, and parents to the department’s Family Support Program. Youth referred to the Juvenile Department are mostly boys, although there are a growing number of girls. While most youth are 14-18, the Family Support Program sees youth as young as age 9.

## Why are youth referred for juvenile services?

Youth are referred for crimes or violations through a police report, or physically brought by police to detention for the most serious crimes. Criminal offenses range from criminal mischief to occasionally murder. Violations, however, are for behaviors that would not apply to adults, such as being out after curfew, running away from home, or tobacco, alcohol, or marijuana possession.

## How does the Juvenile Department work with youth?

Marion County’s Juvenile Department works hard to implement what are known as “evidence-based practices” to address youth behaviors. Our goal is to not only hold youth accountable for their actions, but also to help redirect youth towards positive outcomes. This starts with assessing youth for risk factors. At intake, staff uses a validated Oregon tool called the Juvenile Crime Prevention Risk Assessment. This tool gathers information about assets and needs in a youth’s life, in areas such as education, family functioning, peer relationships, substance abuse, and attitudes, values and beliefs.

Assessment findings help department staff, District Attorney’s Office, Circuit Court, youth, and parents identify areas for accountability and investment to positively change youth behavior, while promoting public safety. For accountability, a youth might appear before a judge, undergo informal processing at the department, or enter into a diversion program such as peer courts, mediation, or community service. Once a judge orders probation, youth are supervised in the community by probation officers.

At any given time probation officers work with 750 youth, holding them accountable, supporting victims’ rights, enforcing restitution payments, and facilitating skill development and personal responsibility toward life success. A measure of reduced juvenile criminal activity is the twelve-month re-offense rates. Marion County’s rate has remained between 21% and 32% for four years; and between 12% and 15% for youth completing probation.

2015 REFERRED YOUTH	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White	49%
Hispanic	39%
Native American	5%
Other/Unknown	3%
Black	3%
Asian	1%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	67%
Female	34%
<b>Age At First Referral</b>	
13 and under	16%
14-15	43%
16+	41%



## Why is restitution important?

A strong value of Marion County's Juvenile Department is to hold youth accountable for timely restitution payments owed to crime victims. Over the past four years, between 92% and 95% of youth paid the full amount of ordered restitution after ending probation. The department offers many innovative opportunities for youth to earn restitution funds, as well as contribute community service. Where possible, we link these programs to community organizations, enhancing service to the community.

Youth crews can be found cutting and cleaning fallen trees or donated wood to be seasoned in our wood yard. Youth chop close to 500 cords of wood each year, with a portion delivered to low-income seniors. Other crews work to maintain lawns and landscaping of county facility grounds and schools.

Fresh Start Market generates coveted jobs for youth to both earn restitution and gain valuable job skills in preparing food and drinks, handling cash, and delivering customer service. Youth create art and functional items sold at the market. Youth also plant and harvest a large garden, in partnership with Marion-Polk Food Share which, in turn, distributes fresh food to local families.

Fresh Start Market is also a Styrofoam recycling collection site. The department has one of just a few Styrofoam densifiers in Oregon. Youth help prepare processed Styrofoam for shipping and sale. Youth also collect more than 21,000 gallons of used paint and 150,000 pounds of batteries annually.



## How can youth overcome barriers to succeed in school?

By the time youth arrive at the Juvenile Department, they often have a long history of school failure. About 16% of referred youth are not attending school. Education advocates identify strengths and needs to identify targeted strategies for educational success. This process also begins with assessments. Our education staff uses several research-based assessments, such as the Structure of Intellect assessment that tests learning abilities. A key to remedy learning failure is understanding why the failure occurs and then identifying a systematic treatment to eliminate the cause.

Studies suggest that 46% of people with learning difficulties, dyslexia, or attention deficit disorder also suffer from Irlen Syndrome. Irlen Syndrome is a perceptual processing disorder caused by the brain's inability to process specific wavelengths of light. When looking at written pages, words might be blurry, float, swirl, ripple or halo. Rivers can appear between words, or words seesaw in random patterns. These effects make it extremely difficult for youth to read, making education extremely challenging. Schools usually do not test for this syndrome. Our experience is that identifying this easily-remedied syndrome removes a significant barrier to educational success.

## How can you get involved?

Bring your Styrofoam to recycle and stay to enjoy free Wi-Fi, food and drinks at the Fresh Start Market. We serve breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday. Purchase youth-created jewelry, wooden cutting boards, and other gift items. Your support helps youth to earn and pay restitution to crime victims. Events include a Spring Plant Sale the weekend before Mother's Day. We have flowers and vegetables ready to plant. Then in winter, select your Christmas tree beginning the weekend after Thanksgiving.

Visit us at [www.freshstartmarket.net](http://www.freshstartmarket.net) for monthly specials and other news! For more information, contact Faye Fagel, Juvenile Department Director, at 503.584.4806 or [ffagel@co.marion.or.us](mailto:ffagel@co.marion.or.us).