



## Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts Performance Audit Division

Greg S. Griffin, State Auditor  
Leslie McGuire, Director

### Why we did this review

This follow-up review was conducted to determine the extent to which the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) addressed recommendations presented in our May 2014 performance audit (Report #13-16).

The 2014 performance audit was conducted to determine the extent and effect of turnover at DJJ's facilities. The audit found that high turnover among juvenile corrections officers – 49% in fiscal year 2013 – led to additional state spending on hiring and training, less experienced officers, and challenges in meeting officer-to-youth ratios. The primary causes of turnover were identified as compensation, agency management, work conditions, facility leadership, as well as recruiting and hiring practices.

### About the Department of Juvenile Justice

DJJ was established in 1992 to provide supervision, detention, and rehabilitation to youth offenders in the state's custody. DJJ operates programs in the community and in secure facilities. It provides services to approximately 52,000 youth each year and maintains an average daily population of approximately 1,800 youth in 26 secure facilities.

While DJJ's mission is primarily to hold youth accountable for their actions, it is also charged with providing education and rehabilitative services so that they will become productive, law-abiding citizens.

## Follow-Up Review – Department of Juvenile Justice Security Staffing

### Continued implementation and assessment needed to reduce turnover

#### What we found

The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has taken steps to address all of the findings in our 2014 audit. While some issues have not been fully addressed, DJJ has begun to implement measures to reduce juvenile corrections officer (JCO) turnover. The original audit noted that high JCO turnover led to many undesirable consequences and was driven by factors including compensation, facility leadership, work conditions, and recruiting and hiring practices. As shown in Exhibit 1, the turnover rate for JCOs remains high.

**Exhibit 1**  
**JCO Turnover Rates<sup>1</sup>, Fiscal Years 2011-16**

Position	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 <sup>2</sup>
JCO1 <sup>3</sup>	51%	63%	57%	48%	74%	96%
JCO2	17%	28%	28%	29%	33%	40%
Lieutenant	19%	32%	20%	26%	24%	29%
Captain	-	-	21%	5%	5%	25% <sup>4</sup>
<b>All Positions</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>57%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Turnover = (Terminations + Transfers Out / Avg. # of Employees per Year)

<sup>2</sup> Fiscal year 2016 numbers are annualized.

<sup>3</sup> In fiscal year 2014, DJJ began promoting JCO1s to JCO2s after 12 months of satisfactory performance. As a result, the average number of JCO1s dropped from approximately 1,110 to approximately 460; subsequently, the turnover rate for JCO1s is more sensitive. The officers departing as JCO1s either left employment within 12 months or did not successfully complete initial training.

<sup>4</sup> Turnover rate for this position is sensitive due to the small number of total positions.

Source: PeopleSoft

The original audit found that the pay structure for JCOs, the frequent requirement to stay on duty past the end of a shift (“holdover”), and the lack of overtime pay negatively impacted JCO turnover. The audit recommended DJJ improve the information it collects on the causes of JCO turnover, improve and stabilize the leadership at its facilities, and improve hiring practices to ensure compatibility with the JCO position. To address these issues DJJ has taken the following actions (for more details see the table on page 3):

- DJJ conducted an employee satisfaction survey in late 2014 and implemented a new exit interview system in March 2015 to collect needed information on the causes of turnover. According to staff, DJJ plans to use the data it collects from these instruments to conduct needs assessments.
- DJJ revised its pay structure and plans to use additional funds from the fiscal year 2017 budget to increase the starting salaries for all JCO positions. DJJ implemented education incentives and recognition bonuses. Staff reported plans to analyze these measures after sufficient data can be collected.
- In fiscal year 2015, DJJ implemented the limited use of cash overtime payments to officers who work in select facilities with staff shortages. DJJ now pays out compensatory time balances on a quarterly basis.
- DJJ developed a leadership training program that includes courses for all levels of leadership. DJJ received proposals from consultants to develop a succession planning program.
- Prior to the release of the original audit, DJJ implemented new screening assessment methods to select better matched candidates. DJJ credits these assessments with an initial reduction in turnover that has since slowed.

*DJJ Response:* DJJ expressed agreement with the current status of the findings presented in this follow up report.

The following table summarizes the findings and recommendations in our 2014 report and actions taken to address them. A copy of the 2014 performance audit report (#13-16) may be accessed at <http://www.audits.Ga.gov/rsaAudits>.

## Department of Juvenile Justice Security Staffing Follow-Up Review, May 2016

Original Findings/Recommendations	Current Status
<p><b>DJJ management has taken actions to address officer turnover, but information related to the turnover causes could be improved.</b></p> <p>We recommended that DJJ ensure that employee satisfaction surveys collect all needed information (i.e., type of position, whether the employee is a supervisor, and the facility name) and that they contain a core set of questions that remain consistent year to year so that data can be easily analyzed.</p> <p>We recommended that DJJ conduct exit interviews for all departing employees. Facilities should set up a way for departing employees to fill out the interviews themselves or with assistance from the facility's HR staff. Data from exit interviews should be compiled and analyzed.</p>	<p><b>Partially Addressed</b> – DJJ is collecting improved information related to the causes of JCO turnover.</p> <p>DJJ has developed an employee satisfaction survey that collects the necessary information needed to determine the causes of employee dissatisfaction. The survey also collects information such as job title, employment level, tenure, and other demographic data DJJ can use to analyze the causes of dissatisfaction among different groups of employees. The most recent survey, conducted in late 2014, had an agency participation rate of 34% and identified work environment as what employees like least about their jobs. According to survey results, approximately 56% of participants were employed by DJJ for at least five years, and only 16% of participants were employed by DJJ for one year or less. DJJ indicated that it plans to conduct another employee satisfaction survey using the same set of questions with the hope of showing improvement in deficient areas identified in the previous survey.</p> <p>DJJ has implemented a system for exit interviews to encourage full participation from separating employees; however, during the eleven month period from March 2015 through January 2016, the employee participation rate was 35%. DJJ makes exit interviews available in a variety of ways including face-to-face, electronically, and by mail. The current questionnaire went into effect March 2015 and collects information that includes the employee's work location, job title, length of service, and other demographic data. DJJ staff reported plans to analyze data collected from both the satisfaction survey and exit interviews to identify causes of turnover.</p> <p>DJJ should continue to work on improving the staff participation rate in satisfaction surveys and exit interviews to ensure the data it collects accurately explains the causes of turnover. DJJ should also continue with plans to analyze the information it has collected from these tools.</p>
<p><b>The pay structure for JCOs has been an obstacle in DJJ's recruitment and retention efforts.</b></p> <p>We recommended that DJJ assess the quality of the new pay structure to determine if it is positively impacting both the quality of applicants and the agency's ability to retain officers. To attract quality applicants, DJJ should ensure that the new salary structure – not just the starting pay – is communicated to potential applicants.</p> <p>We recommended that DJJ continually assess the type and level of supplemental payments to ensure they are most effectively targeted.</p>	<p><b>Partially Addressed</b> – DJJ has revised its pay structure and plans to increase the starting salaries for all JCOs. DJJ indicated that it intends to assess the effectiveness of salary increases and other incentives in reducing JCO turnover after a sufficient amount of time has passed to collect accurate metrics.</p> <p>In fiscal year 2014, DJJ revised its pay structure to award a 5% salary increase to JCO1s upon six months of employment and successful completion of the Basic Juvenile Correctional Officer Training, as well as an additional salary increase and promotion to JCO2 after 12 months of satisfactory performance. In fiscal year 2016, DJJ implemented a 10% salary increase to JCO2s upon receiving supervisory duties.</p> <p>The fiscal year 2017 budget provides \$5.5 million for an additional salary increase for security officers to address recruitment and retention issues. DJJ has submitted a plan to use these funds for a salary increase for all JCO positions (JCO1 through Captain). DJJ indicated that it is working with the Office</p>

<b>Department of Juvenile Justice Security Staffing Follow-Up Review, May 2016</b>	
<b>Original Findings/Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
	<p>of Information Technology to update the DJJ careers website to communicate the new pay structure to potential applicants.</p> <p>DJJ plans to assess the effectiveness of salary increases and supplemental payments within two years of full implementation. DJJ indicated this amount of time will yield sufficient data to determine whether their initiatives were successful – which DJJ defines as a two-year sustained reduction in turnover.</p>
<p><b>The frequent use of holdovers, coupled with a lack of overtime pay, has negatively impacted JCO turnover.</b></p> <p>We recommended that DJJ ensure that all facilities have methods in place to notify officers, prior to their shift, that they are potential holdovers at the end of their shift.</p> <p>We recommended that DJJ assess whether the limited use of overtime pay may be cost-effective, given the costs associated with turnover, high leave payouts due to subsequent salary increases, and the difficulty some officers have using FLSA comp time.</p>	<p><b>Fully Addressed</b> – While DJJ pays cash overtime to officers who work in select facilities, the turnover rate at these facilities remains high. Overall, JCOs continue to use a small percentage of the compensatory time they earn; however, payouts are more frequent.</p> <p>DJJ stated that all facilities now indicate on the 28-day work schedule the prospective employee subject to holdover each day. Officers are also notified at the beginning of their shifts which officers are designated for holdover that day. DJJ also indicated that when an officer scheduled for prospective holdover does not report for work that day, he or she is returned to the top of the list for the next work day.</p> <p>In fiscal year 2015, DJJ implemented the limited use of cash overtime payments to officers who work in select facilities with staff shortages. During fiscal year 2015, JCO1s and JCO2s at these facilities received approximately \$958,000 for over 45,400 hours of overtime. Despite the use of cash overtime payments, the turnover rate at these facilities has not decreased.</p> <p>Since fiscal year 2014, DJJ has made compensatory time payouts on a quarterly basis. In both fiscal years 2014 and 2015 DJJ paid more than \$1.2 million in payouts. Less than 20% of the compensatory time earned by JCOs was used in both fiscal years 2014 and 2015.</p>
<p><b>Some DJJ facilities lack strong, stable leadership and supervising officers.</b></p> <p>We recommended that DJJ continue to develop a leadership training program that provides new training for each level of leadership.</p> <p>We recommended that DJJ ensure that all facility supervisors and leadership receive required training as soon as possible after being promoted.</p> <p>We recommended that DJJ develop succession plans that identify and develop leaders within the agency and evaluate whether the identified employees are being retained and are successful in their future roles.</p>	<p><b>Partially Addressed</b> – DJJ indicated that it has developed a comprehensive leadership training program and intends to implement a succession planning program. DJJ also tracks the number of supervisors and facility leadership who attend required trainings, which has increased since implementation began.</p> <p>DJJ's leadership training program includes courses for all supervisors and facility leadership; courses are being rolled out incrementally with full implementation expected at the beginning of 2017. Courses include: Management Orientation Tiers 1-3, Sergeant's Academy, Supervisor Levels 1-3, Manager Levels 1-3, Assistant Director's Academy, and Facility Director's Pre-Command Course. DJJ also sends leadership to the Department of Corrections' Correctional Leadership Institute and Columbus State University's Professional Management Program and Command College.</p> <p>DJJ tracks the number of supervisors and facility leadership who attend each training course. Attendance in the courses that have been offered thus far has increased each year, or is on pace to exceed attendance from the previous year. DJJ should ensure</p>

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	<p>the attendance of all supervisors and facility leadership in required training courses.</p> <p>DJJ indicated that it submitted a Request for Information for human resources consulting on succession planning and has received four proposals. The succession plan will guide DJJ's assessment, training, and development of internal candidates for leadership positions. DJJ also indicated that it uses its Field Training Officer positions to identify candidates for potential leadership positions.</p>
<p><b>DJJ's hiring practices have often resulted in employees incompatible with the officer position.</b></p> <p>We recommended that DJJ conduct the planned evaluation of the effectiveness of the new screening assessment methods (COMPASS and TalentQuest).</p> <p>We recommended that DJJ clarify the interview panel policy to include prioritization of the stated criteria for panel members. The policy should note which criteria are most important to address for those instances in which a facility does not have a group of panelists that can satisfy all listed criteria (i.e., if a panelist's knowledge of position is prioritized over diversity).</p> <p>We recommended that DJJ facilities ensure that background check applications are complete before submitting them to Criminal History Unit.</p>	<p><b>Partially Addressed</b> – According to DJJ, implementation of the TalentQuest and COMPASS assessments during the selection process for JCO positions resulted in a reduction in the failure rate of officers who began Basic Juvenile Correctional Officer Training (the failure rate decreased from 14% in fiscal year 2014 to 13% in fiscal year 2015). DJJ also credits these tools with an initial reduction in JCO turnover during the last three years; however, this reduction has since slowed.</p> <p>DJJ has not implemented written policies or procedures to clarify interview panel membership prioritization. Staff indicated that DJJ has made an effort to include a representative from human resources and a subject matter expert on every interview panel.</p> <p>In October 2015, the Criminal History Unit (CHU) of DJJ hired a part-time employee to help ensure that background check applications are complete. The employee's responsibilities include reviewing background check applications for completeness, responding to inquiries regarding the status of background checks, and following up on requests from CHU staff to local facility human resources staff for missing documentation. DJJ staff indicated that because of the high volume of background check applications received by CHU the part-time employee has been unable to perform all of her duties. The employee has focused on initial processing of applications to determine completeness and has not been able to follow up directly with facilities to obtain the missing information.</p> <p>Further actions are needed to improve DJJ's interview and screening processes. DJJ facilities should ensure that background check applications are complete before submission.</p>
<b>5 Findings</b>	<p><b>1 Fully Addressed</b></p> <p><b>4 Partially Addressed</b></p> <p><b>0 Not Addressed</b></p>

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The Performance Audit Division was established in 1971 to conduct in-depth reviews of state-funded programs. Our reviews determine if programs are meeting goals and objectives; measure program results and effectiveness; identify alternate methods to meet goals; evaluate efficiency of resource allocation; assess compliance with laws and regulations; and provide credible management information to decision-makers. For more information, contact us at (404)656-2180 or visit our website at [www.audits.ga.gov](http://www.audits.ga.gov).