

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 14, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Executive Director, DHHS

Subject: An informational report from the Executive Director, Department of Health and Human Services, providing an update on youth ordered to correctional placements and progress on the implementation of a Secured Residential Care Center for Children and Youth (SRCCCY) under Wisconsin Act 185

File Type: Information

REQUEST

The Milwaukee County Board has requested periodic updates from DHHS on the number of youth from Milwaukee who have been committed to State juvenile correctional facilities as well as the progress on the construction of the Secured Residential Care Center for Children and Youth (SRCCCY) now called the Milwaukee County Center for Youth (MCCY).

The State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) – Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) is responsible for the operation of the Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls as well as the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (MJTC). This report identifies commitments to these facilities via court order and the type of placement for youth as they transition back home from the facilities.

In March 2018, the Wisconsin State Legislature adopted Act 185 paving the way for the development of local alternatives to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. Act 185 directs the closure of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake for use as youth correctional facilities by July 1, 2021, and authorizes County-operated SRCCCYs. Under Act 185, the Wisconsin DOC maintains supervision over youth with adult court sentences and youth in the Serious Juvenile Offender Program (SJOP) within Type 1 facilities, but the supervision of youth under other correctional placements would be transferred to the counties.

POLICY

Wisconsin State Statutes:	Chapter 301; Chapter 938
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BACKGROUND

New commitments to Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake

The chart below shows the number of youth who have been committed to the DJC per month. Please note that commitments can fluctuate daily and a final number of commitments in the most recent month may not be available until the next month's report.

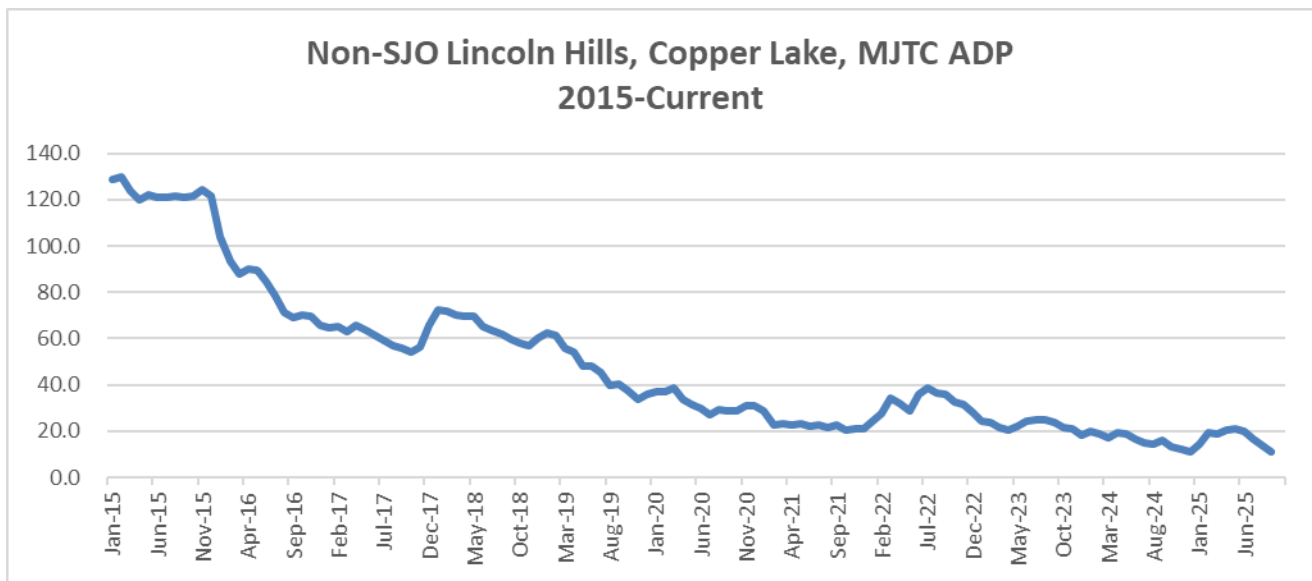
New Commitments	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	11	3	6	3	6	4	1	8	2	1	11
February	12	8	5	5	1	6	5	9	5	3	4
March	9	6	3	3	4	2	3	5	2	5	3
April	14	4	9	3	2	0	3	5	2	5	3
May	11	7	4	3	3	3	2	1	3	1	6
June	8	4	5	1	8	7	2	8	7	3	2
July	7	8	4	3	2	1	4	6	4	1	4
August	8	4	6	5	5	2	3	4	2	5	2
September	6	9	5	6	5	3	2	2	2	8	4
October	8	12	4	8	2	4	2	3	3	5	3
November	11	5	7	6	5	4	2	2	2	1	-
December	4	3	13	6	4	4	3	4	4	2	-
Total	109	73	71	52	47	40	32	57	38	40	42

Type of placement with the Division of Juvenile Corrections

As of October 23, 2025, there were a total of 32 boys at Lincoln Hills School (24 youth who are placed on SJO orders and eight youth who are placed on regular DOC commitments), 15 youth at Mendota (11 youth who are on SJO orders and four youth who are on regular DOC commitment orders) and there are two girls at Copper Lake School (1 youth on regular DOC commitment and 1 youth on SJO order).

Milwaukee County is responsible for the supervision and case management for all youth who are in aftercare status and released from corrections that are not in the Serious Juvenile Offender (SJO) Program. All youth who are released from a correctional setting and placed in the community are assigned to a CYFS Human Service Worker who provides supervision and case management for the youth and their families. The youth are all receiving individualized services in the community including, but not limited to, GPS monitoring for the initial 30 days or more in the community, intensive monitoring and advocacy, restorative programming and clinical services. As of October 24, 2025, there were 18 youth on aftercare status back in the community. Of those youth, there were three placed in a secure setting pending sanctions, adult court or revocation.

Over the last several years, the average daily population (ADP) of Milwaukee County youth in Lincoln Hills, Copper Lake Schools and MJTC has been falling fairly steadily since 2015. Please see the chart below:



SRCCCY Development:

This project reflects a 32-bed SRCCCY which provides for a net increase of eight beds from the current Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP). A total of four beds of the 32-bed facility would be dedicated to girls, if needed.

Implementing the SRCCCY here in Milwaukee County will do the following:

- 1) To fulfill the collective goal of creating a local alternative option for Milwaukee County youth to be placed in a safe environment, closer to home.
- 2) To establish a youth justice model that emphasizes emotional regulation, pro-social decision making, enhanced social competencies, and family engagement and creates a safe and secure environment.
- 3) To better control secure placement costs for Milwaukee County youth.

The project scope includes the following:

- Renovation of the two existing MCAP housing units at Vel R. Phillips Youth and Family Justice Center
- Education – classrooms, teacher support and offices, a computer/learning lab, vocational programming, testing/consultation, and other multi-media activities
- Mental Health, Health, and Dental Care – space in the main building includes space needed to meet all basic physical, mental, and dental health needs, including space if needed for temporary housing of ill youth
- Recreation Space – indoor and outdoor recreation and green space
- Welcome Center, Visitation and Dining - public entry would occur via a welcoming vestibule and include space for family visitation and dining

SRCCCY Progress Update – Milwaukee County Center for Youth (MCCY)

The MCCY continues to progress with CYFS expected to take occupancy in November 2025.

There have been some delays in obtaining items that are backordered, to include locks and handles for the doors and clinical equipment. After occupancy is established, on site trainings will occur for staff working within the facility and final inspections and walk throughs will be completed. The project budget was able to accommodate the cost for a much-needed new master control panel for the entire facility, including the detention center and the SRCCCY and this will be installed upon delivery of all parts after the MCCY opens.

CYFS has obtained occupancy approval from the DOC-Office of Detention Facilities, to utilize the two housing units that have been remodeled. These housing units accommodate youth in MCAP during their stay in the program.

The MCCY programming and transition team also continues to meet on a regular basis to plan for staffing, training, services, and programming transitions and implementation from MCAP to SRCCCY operations. All of the SRCCCY related positions are in process of being filled, to include new positions of Quality Assurance Specialist, Unit Therapists and new Youth Development Officer and Supervisor positions.

CYFS continues to work with the DOC and Racine County to ensure there is alignment and collaboration across all correctional placements in the State of Wisconsin and identify opportunities to work together. There is an operations focused lunch and learn for legal stakeholders scheduled for November 3, 2025. There will also be a programming focused lunch and learn scheduled for later this year for the legal stakeholders and staff.

Milwaukee County and Racine County have collaborated to develop an issue paper requesting legislative clarification and additional funding resources related to Act 185 and the operation of the SRCCCYs. This document has been shared with the Wisconsin Counties Association for advocacy support, as well as the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and DOC-Division of Juvenile Corrections for awareness. The four targeted priorities include the following:

- Racine and Milwaukee are seeking clarification from the State of Wisconsin for a reimbursement process for counties that serve girls in their SRCCCYs which will allow equitable access to secure programming and services and ensures that counties are not operating at a deficit.
- Racine and Milwaukee are requesting additional ongoing operating costs to support counties in their implementation of the SRCCCY. Milwaukee is requesting \$4 million in additional operating costs to support the staffing and implementation of evidence-based programming for the youth in its care.
- Racine and Milwaukee are requesting the DOC to develop and fund a standardized training model for all staff working within a SRCCCY focused on best practices in working with youth and families.
- Racine is requesting a one-time allocation to support the start-up stabilization of their operations.

DHHS will continue to update the County Board on any future changes.

Related File No's:	24-60, 24-61, 23-56, 23-57, 22-34, 22-35, 21-28, 21-29, 20-20, 20-21, 19-22, 19-23, 19-236, 18-17, 18-924, 18-545,
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ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

DHHS continues to work toward transitioning youth out of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools. CYFS has been leveraging its resources, including Opioid and ARPA funds, toward the ongoing development of community-based programming for justice-involved youth and their families through innovative initiatives. CYFS is also committed to building out a continuum of care to include targeted preventive and diversion services and initiatives. All these initiatives are occurring in the Milwaukee community and are focused not only on the youth but also their families and communities across Milwaukee County. This programming meets the youth where they are in unique ways that are individualized to their needs.

FISCAL EFFECT

This report is informational and there is no fiscal effect.

TERMS

N/A

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director
Kelly Pethke, CYFS Administrator
Regina Whiyee, Deputy Administrator

PREPARED BY:

Kelly Pethke, CYFS Administrator

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

ATTACHMENTS:

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Hon. Carl Ashley, Chief Judge