

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 15, 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

County Board File 25-61 provides periodic updates from DHHS on the number of Milwaukee County youth 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).

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 Department of Corrections (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.

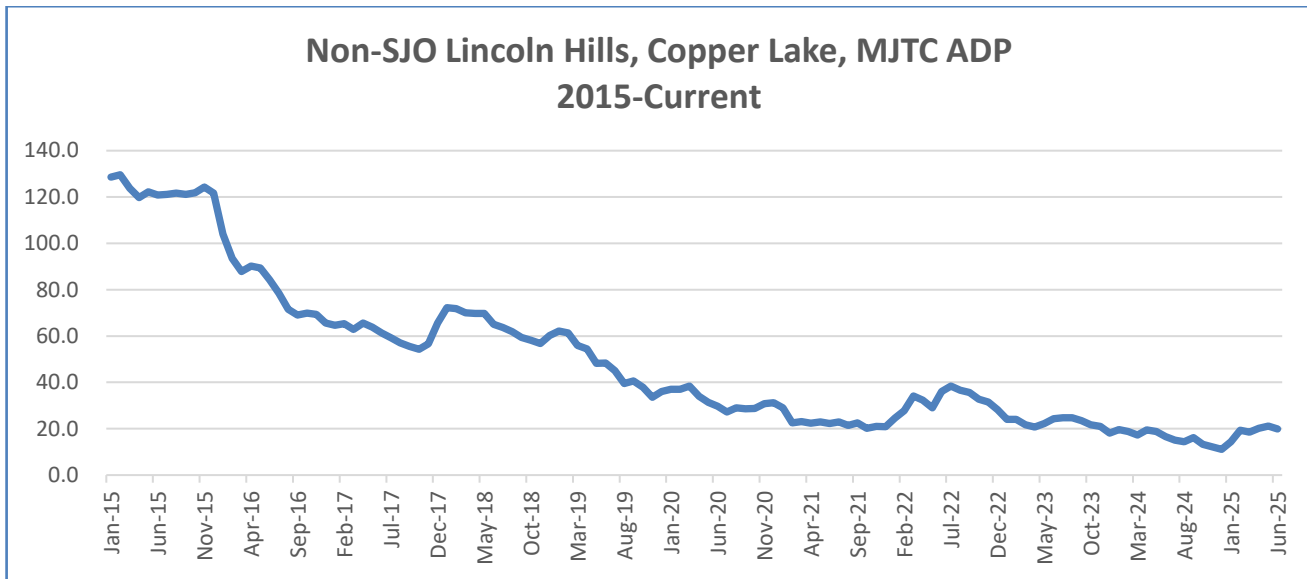
New Commitments	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	11	3	6	3	6	4	1	8	2	1	11
February	12	8	5	5	1	6	5	9	5	3	4
March	9	6	3	3	4	2	3	5	2	5	3
April	14	4	9	3	2	0	3	5	2	5	3
May	11	7	4	3	3	3	2	1	3	1	6
June	8	4	5	1	8	7	2	8	7	3	2
July	7	8	4	3	2	1	4	6	4	1	2
August	8	4	6	5	5	2	3	4	2	5	-
September	6	9	5	6	5	3	2	2	2	8	-
October	8	12	4	8	2	4	2	3	3	5	-
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	31

Type of placement with the Division of Juvenile Corrections

As of July 22, 2025, there are a total of 39 boys at Lincoln Hills School (27 youth who are placed on SJO orders and 12 youth who are placed on regular DOC commitments), 11 youth at Mendota (eight youth who are on SJO orders and three youth who are on regular DOC commitment orders) and there is one girl at Copper Lake School on a regular DOC commitment.

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 July 18, 2025, there were 22 youth on aftercare status back in the community. Of those youth, there were three placed in a secure setting (two in the youth detention and one in the Milwaukee County Jail).

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 Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) housing units at Vel R. Phillips
- 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

The Milwaukee County Center for Youth (MCCY) continues to be on track with CYFS expected

to take occupancy in October 2025. At this point, all furniture will be installed, on site trainings conducted, and final inspections and walk throughs 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.

The SRCCCY 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 starting in July and CYFS met with the legal stakeholders to provide an update on programming and operations in July as well. CYFS has completed site visits with Racine’s SRCCCY and the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center in early July in order to build relationships and identify opportunities to collaborate across the system of care.

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. Karl Ashley, Chief Judge