

**Estado de Nueva York Oficina de Servicios para Niños y Familias**

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English**LA OFICINA DE SERVICIOS PARA NIÑOS Y FAMILIAS DEL ESTADO DE NUEVA YORK ACELERA LA TRANSFORMACIÓN DEL SISTEMA DE JUSTICIA JUVENIL*****Cerrando, reduciendo o consolidando establecimientos residenciales poco utilizados para mejorar los servicios para niños y jóvenes y prevenir el crimen juvenil***

La Comisionada de la Oficina de Servicios para Niños y Familias del Estado de Nueva York Gladys Carrión anunció hoy el cierre de seis establecimientos residenciales poco utilizados como parte de una reestructuración progresiva para mejorar significativamente los servicios para niños y jóvenes que tienen diversos problemas.

La agencia (OCFS por sus siglas en inglés) está cerrando *Adirondack Wilderness Challenge* en el condado de Clinton, *Auburn Residential Center* en el condado de Cayuga, *Brace Residential Center* en el condado de Delaware, *Gloversville Group Home* en el condado de Fulton County, *Great Valley Residential Center* en el condado de Cattaraugus, y Pyramid Reception Center en El Bronx.

OCFS también está reduciendo a la mitad el número de camas disponibles en *Lansing Residential Center* en el condado de Tompkins. El programa de *Adirondack Wilderness* será integrado al de *Adirondack Residential Center*, y las funciones de *Pyramid* serán transferidas a *Ella McQueen Residential Center* en Brooklyn.

Estos cambios entrarán en efecto el 11 de enero de 2009, en conformidad con una ley estatal que requiere un proceso de notificación de 12 meses antes del cierre de establecimientos residenciales en el sistema de OCFS.

Hay aproximadamente 2.000 niños en el sistema de justicia juvenil en el estado de Nueva York, y la mayoría tiene entre los 12 y 18 años de edad. Algunos son menores de diez años de edad. Todos eran menores de 16 años cuando cometieron un acto que hubiera sido considerado un crimen si se hubiera cometido durante su mayoría de edad.

Estos cierres, reducciones y consolidaciones se están llevando a cabo en establecimientos de niveles bajos de seguridad o sin límites de seguridad donde residen niños y jóvenes adjudicados como delinquentes juveniles por los tribunales de relaciones familiares. La mayoría de estos niños y jóvenes fueron colocados en el sistema por cometer delitos menores. Esta reestructuración no permitirá que ningún joven sea dado de alta prematuramente.

Los establecimientos de alto nivel de seguridad donde residen ofensores juveniles, o aquellos jóvenes que han cometido delitos mayores, no serán impactados directamente por los cambios que se están efectuando en los otros tipos de establecimientos residenciales.

Esta reestructuración progresiva está siendo impulsada por el reconocimiento general, tanto de los defensores de niños y jóvenes como de los expertos legales, de que el sistema de justicia juvenil no está prestando atención apropiada a las necesidades de los niños, las familias y las comunidades de Nueva York.

Desde 2002, OCFS ha reducido 379 camas en sus establecimientos residenciales. Con estos cierres, el número total de reducción de camas alcanza a 620.

Muchos de estos niños en estos establecimientos tienen problemas de salud mental, discapacidades de aprendizaje y problemas de abuso de sustancias y alcohol, y provienen de las comunidades más pobres del estado. Además, se estima que el 80 por ciento de los niños que ingresan al sistema de justicia juvenil retornan al mismo o son condenados a la cárcel dentro de tres años de ser dados de alta.

"Lo que estos niños y jóvenes necesitan es intervención y apoyo", dijo la Comisionada Carrión. "Esto incluye educación, entrenamiento laboral, y servicios de salud mental, y de prevención de abuso de sustancias, con la meta de promover su rehabilitación y retorno a la comunidad. Es nuestra responsabilidad prepararlos para una transición exitosa a la edad adulta."

Además del fracaso del sistema en atender las necesidades de esta población, el sistema es antieconómico. Casi una docena de establecimientos para jóvenes en el estado están funcionando por debajo del 40 por ciento de su capacidad. En algunos establecimientos, un cuarto de las camas están ocupadas.

"En vez de continuar vertiendo dinero a este sistema dañado y confinar a niños y jóvenes en establecimientos que están localizados a cientos de millas de sus hogares, OCFS está buscando agresivamente alternativas al encarcelamiento, identificando programas basados en la comunidad, donde estos niños y jóvenes pueden mantener y reforzar sus relaciones con sus familias y otros adultos importantes en sus vidas", dijo la comisionada.

Los programas basados en la comunidad, similares a los de Missouri, han resultado superiores en prevenir el crimen juvenil y reducir las tasas de reincidencia a un nivel inferior de hasta el 30 por ciento—a una fracción del costo que el estado de Nueva York está pagando actualmente por mantener camas vacías.

Este nuevo modelo enfatiza el trabajar con familias desde el primer día que un niño(a) ingresa al sistema de justicia juvenil del estado. Apenas el año pasado, la agencia incrementó su personal con 218 posiciones nuevas, incluyendo 36 profesionales de salud mental, para responder a las necesidades de estos niños y jóvenes.

Estos cierres, reducciones y consolidaciones resultarán en un ahorro anual de \$16 millones de dólares.

La Oficina de Recursos Humanos de OCFS, el Departamento de Servicio Civil del estado y el Departamento de Trabajo del estado han organizado equipos para asistir a los empleados de estos establecimientos impactados para identificar y asegurar puestos en otros establecimientos u otras agencias del estado.

La Comisionada del Departamento de Servicio Civil Nancy G. Groenwegen dijo, "Nuestra misión en el Servicio Civil es encontrar oportunidades de empleo sustitutas dentro del estado, para colaborar a cada uno de los empleados afectados. Tenemos experiencia en esto y trabajaremos estrechamente con OCFS, otras agencias estatales y con los empleados mismos, para que esta transición se lleve a cabo sin interrupciones."

*La misión de la Oficina de Servicios para Niños y Familias del Estado de Nueva York es promover el bienestar, la seguridad y la permanencia de los niños y familias de Nueva York, estableciendo y reforzando políticas, promoviendo asociaciones, y proveyendo fondos y servicios de alta calidad. La agencia es responsable por el cuidado de crianza; la adopción; asistencia para la adopción; servicios protectivos de menores, incluyendo la operación del Registro Central de Abuso y Maltrato Infantil del Estado de Nueva York; servicios preventivos para niños y familias; servicios para adolescentes embarazadas; provisión de fondos y licencias de cuidado infantil; y operación de programas de justicia juvenil en el estado. La agencia también es responsable por programas de protección para adultos vulnerables, incluyendo servicios de protección para adultos, y por la Comisión para los Ciegos e Impedidos de la Vista.*

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## **FACT SHEET ON CLOSINGS, REDUCTIONS & MERGERS OF UNDERUTILIZED RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES**

### *The Problem*

New York State's juvenile justice system needs to be fixed.

The system is predominantly populated by troubled children – mostly African-American and Latino - from the poorest communities in the state. Many of them have mental health issues, learning disabilities, or substance and alcohol abuse problems.

The system was designed around the idea that if the state took these children away from their families and the neighborhoods where they got into difficulty they could be rehabilitated.

It hasn't worked that way for a long time. Instead, it's been estimated, 80 percent of the children who enter New York State's juvenile justice system return or go to prison within three years of their release. The needs of these children, their families, and their communities are clearly not adequately addressed by the current model.

The system is also inefficient. Nearly a dozen of the state's youth facilities are operating under 40 percent of capacity. At some facilities, only a quarter of the beds are filled. Just this past Monday (Jan. 7), 86 percent of the beds in the non-secure facilities that are closing and 33 percent of the beds in limited secure facilities that are closing were empty. An analysis of historic trends and projections of future usage indicate these beds will not be filled in the near future. This is partially due to local municipalities stepping up and creating community-based programs as alternatives to incarceration to keep these children closer to home.

### *The Children*

There are 2,000 children in New York State's juvenile justice system. They were all under the age of 16 when they were confined. Most of them are between 12 and 18-years-old. A few are as young as ten.

Eighty-six (86) percent of the youth in state custody are African-American or Latino. Ninety-five (95) percent of the youth in state custody who are from New York City are African-American or Latino.

Most of these children have mental health problems, learning disabilities, or substance and alcohol addictions.

The vast majority of children in non-secure and limited secure residential facilities were judged by the family courts to be juvenile delinquents for committing misdemeanors.

No child currently in the impacted facilities is a resident of the county in which the facility is located. Over 70 percent of them are from New York City.

### *The Solution*

Based on these facts, OCFS has determined that closing some facilities and placing these children in community-based alternative-to-incarceration programs closer to their homes and families will help them successfully return to their neighborhoods and result in lower recidivism rates.

### *Closings, Reductions, Mergers, Relocations*

Based on underutilization, OCFS has decided to close the following non-secure or limited-secure facilities:

- Auburn Residential Center in Auburn in Cayuga County
- Adirondack Wilderness Program in Schuyler Falls in Clinton County

- Brace Residential Center in Masonville in Delaware County
- Gloversville Group Home in Gloversville in Fulton County
- Great Valley Residential Center in Great Valley in Cattaraugus County
- Pyramid Reception Center in The Bronx

The agency also is reducing by half the number of beds at:

- Lansing Residential Center in Lansing in Tompkins County

There are presently 35 residential facilities in the system. With these closings there will be 28.

#### Effect

These changes take effect 12 months from today's announcement, per state law.

#### Savings

These closings, reductions, and mergers will result in \$16 million in annual savings, making possible investments in community-based programs and services for vulnerable youth.

#### Reductions

Since 2002, OCFS has reduced 379 beds in its residential facilities. With these closings, the total reduction of beds rises to 620.

#### The Parents

OCFS staff will be calling all the parents of the remaining children in these underutilized facilities to inform them of the closings and following up by mail.

#### Facility Details

Adirondack Residential is a non-secure and limited secure residential facility for boys. It has 24 beds. Adirondack Wilderness Challenge is a four-month residential and outdoor experiential education program for boys 13 to 17-years-old, which includes hiking and overnight camping trips. These programs have 25 full-time positions. This property belongs to the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Auburn Residential Center is a non-secure facility for girls aged 13 to 17-years-old. It has 24 beds, but only three children. It has 25 full-time positions.

Brace is a limited secure facility for juvenile delinquents aged 12 to 17-years-old. It has 25 beds, but only six children. It has 25 full-time positions. This property belongs to the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Cass Residential Center is currently used as a training facility. It has 25 full-time positions. It will be transferred to the state Department of Parks & Recreation, which will continue to use it as a training center for its own employees.

Gloversville Group Home has not been in use for over a year. It has seven full-time positions. Its lease, which runs out on June 2008, will be terminated.

Great Valley is a non-secure to limited secure facility for male juvenile delinquents 13 to 18-years-old. It has 25 beds, but only nine children. Great Valley has 25 full-time positions. This property belongs to the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Lansing is a limited secure facility for female juvenile delinquents aged 12 to 18-years-old. It has 100 beds, but only 48 children. Its capacity will be reduced to 50 beds. Lansing has 32 full-time positions.

Pyramid is a 57-bed reception center on East 161st Street in The Bronx where male juvenile delinquents undertake psychological, educational, vocational, and intake assessment tests over a 14-day orientation to determine their most appropriate placement. It has 90 full-time positions. These reception and assessment functions will be transferred to the Ella McQueen Residential Center on Howard Avenue in Brooklyn.

### Criteria

A number of different criteria were considered in deciding which facilities to close. These include the condition of the physical plant and the cost involved in upgrading it. This was an important factor in the decision made around moving the intake function out of Pyramid and relocating it to Ella McQueen. Other criteria used were the location of the programs and their geographic proximity to other programs, as was the case with Lansing and Auburn and the Adirondack Wilderness Challenge and Group Home. The proximity of these programs to each other gave OCFS more options for staff reassignment. We also considered the demographic trends of the youth in the facilities and the distance from New York City.

### Legal Process

OCFS closings, service and staff reductions, and transfer of any operations must comply with state law. This includes formal announcements to employee labor organizations, individual staffers, local governments where the changes occur, community organizations, and consumer and advocacy groups at least twelve months before changes are scheduled to occur.

The law also requires that the agency coordinate with the state Department of Civil Service, the Office of Employee Relations, and any other state agency to develop strategies to minimize the impact on the state workforce, in cooperation with representatives of employee labor organizations and managerial and confidential employees.

In addition, OCFS must consult with the Department of Economic Development and other appropriate state agencies to minimize the impact on local and regional economies.

### Disposition of Property

Per state law, OCFS will be consulting with the Office of General Services on the disposition of these individual properties.

### Staff

OCFS will be doing everything possible to minimize the impact these facility closures will have on employees and their families. After all, OCFS's principal mission is to support all children and families, including our own employees.

Building on the agency's successful management of the closure of Harlem Valley Secure Center several years ago, OCFS is working closely with the state Departments of Civil Service and Labor to assist the staff at these impacted facilities to identify and secure positions at other facilities or other state agencies.

### Agency Mission

The Office of Children and Family Services mission is to promote the well-being, safety, and permanency of New York's children and families by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing high-quality services. The agency is responsible for foster care; adoption; adoption assistance; child protective services, including operating the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment; preventive services for children and families; services for pregnant adolescents; child care licensing and funding; and operating the state juvenile justice programs. The agency also is responsible for protective programs for vulnerable adults, including adult protective services and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

### [Commissioner](#)

New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer named Gladys Carrión, Esq. commissioner of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services in January, 2007. Ms. Carrión previously served as Senior Vice President for Community Investment at United Way of New York City. Prior to that, she was Executive Director of Inwood House from 1999 to 2005. From 1995 to 1999, Ms. Carrión served as Executive Director of Family Dynamics, Inc and in 1994 she was a Program Officer at the Ford Foundation in the Community Development area. Ms. Carrión served as Commissioner of the New York City Community Development Agency from 1990 to 1993. From 1984 to 1988, she worked at the New York State Workers' Compensation Board in a variety of capacities including General Counsel, Supervising Law Judge and Senior Law Judge. Ms. Carrión also served as Acting Executive Director of ASPIRA from 1982 to 1983. She received her B.S. from Fordham University in 1973 and her J.D. from the New York University School of Law in 1976.

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