



Utah Department of
Health & Human
Services

Critical Staffing Crisis: The Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services

Social Services Appropriations Committee

April Graham, LCSW
JJYS Director



Juvenile Justice and Youth Services

Budget request

\$2,800,000

Ongoing General Fund





Continuum of services



Shelters/JRC



Day skills



JJYS secure care



Home



Youth services



Detention



Community placement



Transition services

39.8%

turnover rate in frontline staff in FY25

131%

increase in overtime since 2020

Staff pay increase

JJYS faces a critical staffing crisis impacting all mandatory 24/7 residential operations.

There are severe staff shortages and alarming turnover rates.

Why staffing stability matters for youth JJYS serves

Problem: staffing crisis and turnover



- JJYS faces a critical staffing crisis impacting mandatory 24/7 residential operation.
- Severe shortages and alarming turnover rates.

Experienced staff are more effective at:

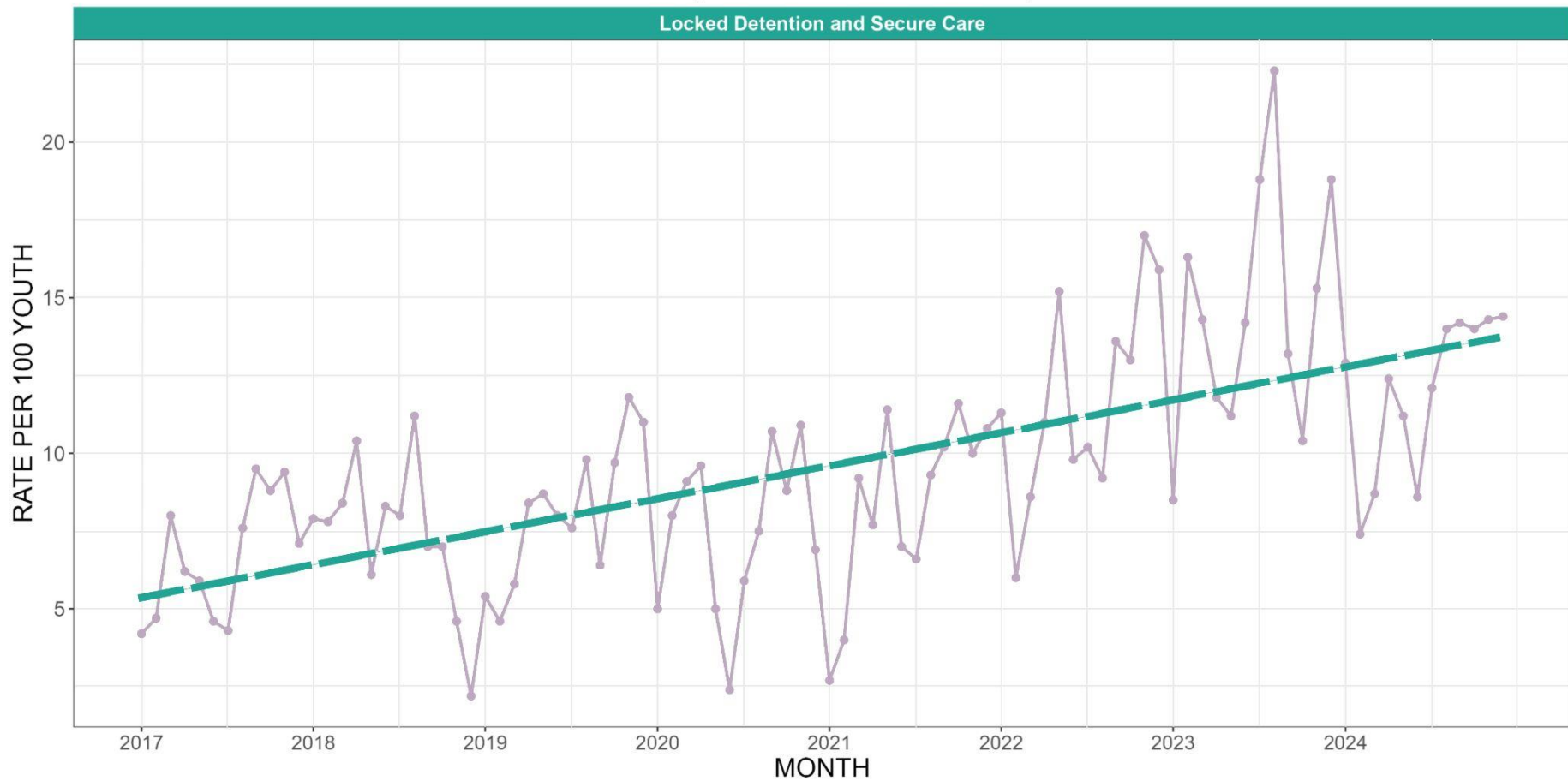


- Anticipating escalation
- De-escalating conflict
- Preventing incidents and restraints
- Delivering treatment to fidelity

Rate of Physical Restraint Incidents Per 100 Youth by Month

Labelled by Start of Fiscal Year.

Dashed line represents an overall trend for the period.



Loss of Stability Undermines Risk Reduction

JJYS high turnover results in:



- Inconsistent expectations
- Reduced youth engagement
- Disruption in skill development
- New Staff are assigned before completing training

Youth Struggle to:



- Practice skills consistently
- Apply coping and decision making strategies
- Internalized risk-reduction behaviors



- The youth we serve today have more complexity than ever before.
- **113% increase** in felony charges entering into secure care since 2016
- **Complex Youth + Unstable Staffing = Unsafe Facilities**

Impact of staffing shortage

- Limited program delivery
- Less effective interventions
- Declining scores for court-mandated measures
- Insufficient supervision disrupts education
- Increasing staff burnout
- Strained community services





Staff stability creates safer facilities, lowers risk, and enables better outcomes for youth.





How will this request help solve the problem?



Investment



Stability



Safety



Outcomes

The Problem and The Solution

- **43%** of the staff leaving, cite pay as the reason.
- Improve retention through differential pay:
 - Day Shifts: **\$1.80**
 - Swing/Weekends: **\$2.50**
 - Graveyard Shifts: **\$1.20**

The Impact and The Wage Gap

- Increase Staff Experience and Training Fidelity
- Strengthen Facility Safety
- Protect Youth Outcomes and Public Safety



