



News Release

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COSTS FOR YOUTH JUSTICE PROGRAM SOAR, AUDITOR GENERAL FINDS

(TORONTO) Due largely to an increase in employee costs, expenditures by the Youth Justice Services program have increased by at least 25% since 2005/06, while the number of youths served have increased by only 4%, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2012 Annual Report*.

“The number of full-time employees in all youth justice program areas except for probation offices has increased substantially,” McCarter said today after the Report was released. “As well, the number of full-time youth services officers working in government-operated secure facilities has increased by 50%, even though the average daily youth population in these facilities has decreased by 37%.”

As has happened in many other jurisdictions, youth justice services in Ontario have undergone a shift in philosophy over the last decade, from an incarceration-based approach to a community-based rehabilitation approach.

In 2011/12, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services spent \$370 million on the program, including \$168 million in transfer payments to about 200 community-based agencies. The average daily population in the youth justice system was about 9,200, with about 8,600 youths under community supervision and 600 in youth custody/detention facilities (200 in open facilities and 400 in secure facilities).

Following are some of the Auditor General’s other significant findings:

- In the 2011/12 fiscal year, on average, about 50% of beds in custody facilities were occupied. The Ministry has tried over the years to improve the utilization rate by reducing the number of beds available (by closing facilities or by funding fewer beds in existing facilities), but it projects that the overall utilization rate will still be just 58% in 2012/13.
- The average daily cost per youth varies significantly among custody/detention facilities yet little analysis of the underlying causes had been done. For example, in 2011, the average daily cost per youth ranged from \$331 to \$3,012 for agency-operated open facilities; from \$475 to \$1,642 for agency-operated secure facilities; and from \$1,001 to \$1,483 for Ministry-operated secure facilities.

-30-

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