



ON THE BALLOT

A Report from the Bureau
of Governmental Research

JEFFERSON JUVENILE SERVICES TAX RENEWAL, NOVEMBER 6, 2018

IN BRIEF

Jefferson Parish voters will decide whether to renew a 3.5-mill, 10-year property tax dedicated to juvenile services. The Parish projects the tax would yield an estimated \$12.1 million annually. If voters renew the tax it would run from 2021 through 2030.

Key Background and Findings

- Renewal of the tax would reset its current rolled-back rate of 3.32 mills to the previously authorized maximum rate of 3.5 mills. This would result in a slight tax increase of 0.18 mills, beginning in 2021. For example, the tax for a homestead-exempt property valued at \$220,000 would increase \$2.65 from \$48.80 to \$51.45 a year.
- Jefferson is one of five parishes with its own department responsible for both pre-trial juvenile detention and juvenile probation services. The Department of Juvenile Services runs the L. Robert Rivarde Memorial Home, a detention center, and operates two other offices. It monitors youths on probation and provides them with various evidence-based therapies.
- In 2017 millage revenue accounted for 93% (\$11.3 million) of Juvenile Services' total revenue of \$12.2 million. The department's total expenditures in 2017 were \$10.9 million, but annual expenditures will increase by an estimated \$850,000 beginning in 2019. The increase will result from implementation of Louisiana's "Raise the Age" law, which will initially route all 17-year-olds through the juvenile justice system, and salary increases mandated by the new Parish pay plan.
- Between 2011 and 2017 Jefferson Parish juvenile detention admissions fell by 30% and the number of youths on probation fell by 60%. The reduction in detention was driven by falling juvenile arrests and implementation of a new detention assessment instrument introduced by Juvenile Services. Decreased arrests and expansion of the District Attorney's diversion program drove the reduction in youths on probation. As the number of youths on probation fell, Juvenile Services began making evidence-based therapies available to youths in the diversion program as well as those on probation.
- Juvenile Services also reduced its probation caseload per officer from 30 in 2008 to 10 in 2017. This aligns with best-practice recommendations of eight to 12 youths per officer.
- The department's recidivism rate fell from 29% in 2010 to 15% in 2017.
- BGR evaluated whether the tax is necessary. Juvenile Services depends on the tax for 93% of its revenue. Jefferson Parish's General Fund could not cover the costs of Juvenile Services without cutting the other services it currently funds. Loss of substantial revenue would force Juvenile Services to discontinue its probation services, and send Jefferson Parish youth into the State's overstressed probation system, where the average caseload per officer is 51 youths. Juvenile Services would also be unable to pay the costs required to operate its detention facility. It would close the facility, leaving the Parish no guaranteed option for pre-trial detention for high-risk youths.
- BGR evaluated whether the tax is appropriately sized. While Juvenile Services ended 2017 with a fund balance of \$8.6 million, new costs from 17-year-olds entering the juvenile justice system and the new Parish pay plan could lead to operating deficits beginning in 2019. The department plans to use any remaining reserves to build a new East Bank office better suited to the needs of the youth and families it serves.
- Finally, BGR evaluated whether the tax revenue will be well spent. Juvenile Services has implemented numerous reforms and made evidence-based therapies available to youths in diversion who otherwise had to pay or re-enter the juvenile justice system to gain access. Recidivism has fallen as the department implemented reforms.

BGR Position

FOR. Jefferson Parish's Juvenile Services Department has used the tax to deliver professional treatment and regular supervision to youth who enter the juvenile justice system. The department has implemented evidence-based practices and reforms recommended by national juvenile justice advocacy organizations to demonstrably reduce incarceration and probation while also lowering rates of recidivism. Without the tax revenue, which provides almost all of its budget, Juvenile Services would have no substantial alternative funding source to operate its detention facility. This would leave Juvenile Court judges no guaranteed option for detention of even the highest-risk youth. In addition, the department would be unable to pay for probation officers, thus forcing the Parish to depend on the State's Office of Juvenile Justice for juvenile probation services. That office's probation caseload per officer already far exceeds recommended standards, and likely could not provide parish youth with the same level of support they receive from Juvenile Services. With implementation of a new State law that processes 17-year-olds in the juvenile justice system, Juvenile Services' costs will grow. Maintaining sufficient funding will be necessary to ensure that the department can continue to provide the same level of service.

INDEPTH: JEFFERSON JUVENILE SERVICES TAX RENEWAL

INTRODUCTION

On November 6, 2018, voters in Jefferson Parish will consider three 10-year property tax renewal propositions. This report analyzes the juvenile services tax renewal. BGR's reports on the other tax renewal propositions for drainage and for the animal shelter and public health are available on BGR's website, www.bgr.org.

The current millage cycle for the three taxes on the ballot runs through 2020. In seeking voter renewal two years in advance of the taxes' expiration, Parish officials say they are following a Louisiana Secretary of State recommendation that local officials put renewal propositions on the ballot 18 to 24 months ahead of the tax expiration.¹

This report is intended to help voters make an informed decision. It explains the juvenile services tax proposition and provides background, current context and an analysis grounded in BGR's mission of promoting the effective use of public resources. The report concludes with BGR's position on the tax.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSITION

Jefferson Parish is asking voters parishwide to approve a 3.5-mill, 10-year property tax renewal dedicated to juvenile services and detention facilities in Jefferson Parish. According to the proposition, the tax would yield an estimated \$12.1 million at the full 3.5-mill rate.² The Parish can use the revenue for planning, developing, expanding, acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining or operating juvenile detention facilities and for funding all other related facilities and services provided by the Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services (Juvenile Services). The current Juvenile Services millage runs through the 2020 tax year, and if voters renew the tax it would run from 2021 through 2030.

Jefferson Parish has levied the Juvenile Services millage since 1964. Voters last reauthorized it in 2011 at a rate of 3.5 mills. It has decreased to the current rate of 3.32 mills as the Parish Council rolled back the rate to offset increases in property values. Renewal of the

THE TAXPAYER'S BOTTOM LINE

If voters approve the renewal proposition, property owners could pay 0.18 mills more in taxes dedicated to Juvenile Services than they currently pay. This is the difference between the current rate of 3.32 mills and the renewal rate of 3.50 mills. However, passage of the renewal proposition does not mandate that the Parish Council levy the full 3.50 mill rate. The council could levy the full 3.50 mills, or it could levy a lower rate.

If the council sets the rate at 3.50 mills, the owner of a homestead-exempt property valued at \$220,000 would pay \$2.65 more per year, an increase from \$48.80 to \$51.45.* BGR estimates that a commercial property owner would pay \$2.52 more annually per \$100,000 of property value.** If voters do not approve the renewal, property owners will not pay any taxes dedicated to Juvenile Services after the current millage expires at the end of 2020.

* BGR calculated the homeowner impact using a value of \$220,000 based on data from the New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors, which show the average sale price for a single family home in Jefferson Parish during the 12 months ending June 2018 was \$221,926. See New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors (NOMAR), "Market Statistics," <http://www.nomar.org/gsrein-mls-public/market-statistics-public.html>.

** BGR assumes that land value accounts for 20% of total value for commercial properties.

millage would restore the previously authorized maximum rate of 3.5 mills, resulting in an increase of 0.18 mills above the current levy. For estimates of the tax renewal's impact on individual taxpayers, see the sidebar "The Taxpayer's Bottom Line."

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Juvenile Services Responsibilities

Juvenile Services' mission is "to provide supervision and rehabilitation to troubled youth and their families residing within the confines of Jefferson Parish who have come to the attention of the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court."³ The department provides services to delinquent youth as well as status offenders – youth cited for truancy, curfew violations or other offenses specific to minors. In 2017, the department supervised approximately 450 youths on probation. It operates the L.

Robert Rivarde Memorial Home (Rivarde), a juvenile detention facility with a maximum daily capacity of 52 that admitted 906 youths in 2017.⁴ It also operates one administrative office on the East Bank and one on the West Bank that house juvenile probation, the District Attorney’s juvenile diversion program and Juvenile Court’s Families in Need of Services (FINS) program.

Jefferson Parish is one of five parishes with its own department for juvenile offenders and at-risk youth.⁵ Parishes without such departments rely on Louisiana’s Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) to handle probation and treatment services for youth who are adjudicated delinquent – the term for juveniles who have been found guilty of a criminal offense by juvenile court judges. In all parishes, including Jefferson, OJJ is responsible for housing adjudicated delinquent youths who have been sentenced to secure care by a juvenile court judge.

However, OJJ does not provide pre-trial detention services. Some parishes, such as Jefferson, Orleans and Terrebonne, run their own detention facilities for youth awaiting trial, while other parishes share a detention facility.⁶ Parishes without any detention facility can sometimes make arrangements with another parish for detention services; however, this is dependent on space availability, which is often limited.

Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court judges decide how youth will be supervised while awaiting trial. They may mandate detention at Rivarde. Rivarde also houses adjudicated delinquent youth who have violated conditions of their probation. Annual admissions to Rivarde fell by 48% from 2007 to 2017, from 1,732 to 906. During the same period the facility’s average daily population fell by 52%, from 54 to 26. The average stay at Rivarde is 10 days, although detention for the most serious crimes is one month.⁷ Juvenile Services officials say that the decrease in detention resulted from falling juvenile arrests and the department’s introduction of a new detention assessment instrument. The assessment instrument allows judges to make informed decisions about the threat each youth poses to the community, and order detention alternatives for low-risk youths awaiting trial.

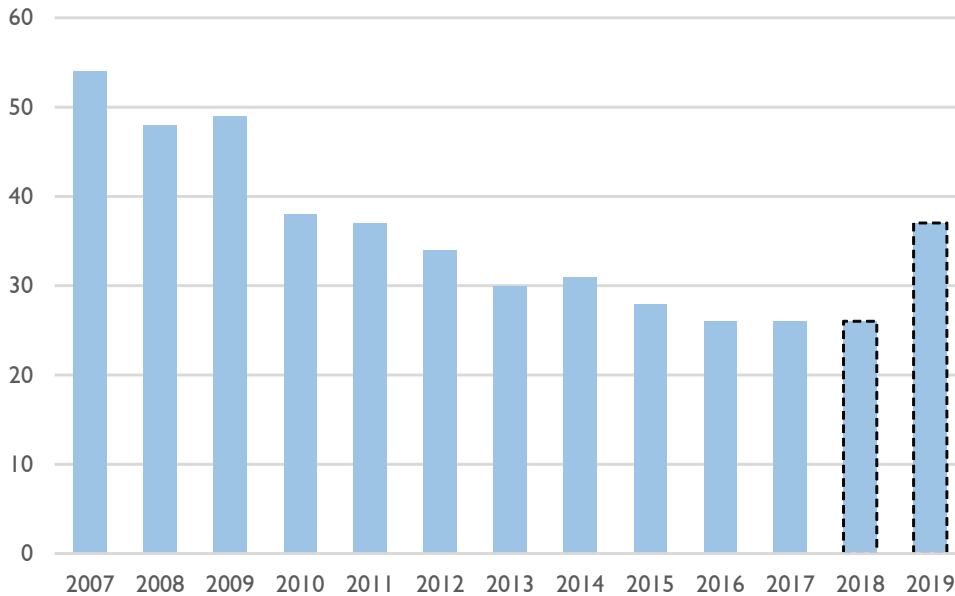
“Louisiana’s new ‘Raise the Age’ law, which ends the automatic routing of 17-year-olds through the adult criminal justice system, is scheduled to take effect in March 2019 and will increase the caseload of juvenile justice systems statewide.”

Detention alternatives, which are also the responsibility of Juvenile Services, include electronic monitoring and daily check-ins with monitors. Less reliance on detention has allowed Juvenile Services to close two, eight-bed units at Rivarde and reduce costs. Total average detention costs are about \$300 a day per youth. Daily per-youth costs for electronic monitoring and check-ins are \$10 and \$25, respectively.⁸

Louisiana’s new “Raise the Age” law, which ends the automatic routing of 17-year-olds through the adult criminal justice system, is scheduled to take effect in March 2019 and will increase the caseload of juvenile justice systems statewide.⁹ During the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, Jefferson Parish averaged 581 arrests of 17-year-olds for delinquent offenses annually.¹⁰ However, not all 17-year-olds who are arrested will ultimately come through the juvenile justice system, nor will all 17-year-olds who are processed through the juvenile system require probation services from Juvenile Services.¹¹

Regardless of where 17-year-olds are ultimately processed, Juvenile Services will be responsible for their initial processing, and detention, if required. Based on data from 2013 to 2015, the department estimates an increase in daily detentions at Rivarde of 10 to 12 youths. Such an increase would require reopening the two units that are currently closed because 17-year-olds would be housed separately from younger detainees. Chart 1 shows the average daily population at Rivarde for the last 10 years, as well as the projected population once “Raise the Age” takes effect in 2019.

CHART I. AVERAGE DAILY DETENTION POPULATION AT RIVARDE



Source: Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services. Projected figures for 2018 and 2019.

also increase Juvenile Services’ probation caseload. Based on the number of 16-year-olds beginning probation in 2017, the department projects the law will add 70 new youths to its probation caseload annually.

Juvenile Services also provides various therapeutic treatments for youth on probation and youth who have committed status offenses. Treatments include cognitive behavioral therapy, aggression replacement therapy and functional family therapy. The department contracts

Juvenile Services is also responsible for supervising youths sentenced to probation by Juvenile Court. Probation officers work with their clients to keep them from falling back into delinquency and on a path towards functional adulthood. Juvenile Services’ probation caseload has also fallen over the last decade, from a high of 1,365 in 2008 to 451 in 2017. While the average caseload per probation officer was 30 in 2008, it had fallen to 10 by 2017.¹² Juvenile Services officials say the decrease in juvenile probation cases resulted from the District Attorney’s expansion of the juvenile diversion program and reforms in school arrest policy made by the Jefferson Parish Public School System and the Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office.¹³

Chart 2 shows trends in Jefferson Parish’s juvenile justice system from 2011 to 2017. During this period, juvenile arrests fell by 33% and Juvenile Services’ probation caseload fell by 60%, while diversion program referrals rose by 24%. Diversion referrals peaked at 715 in 2013, and then began falling as arrests continued to decline.

The implementation of “Raise the Age” in 2019 will

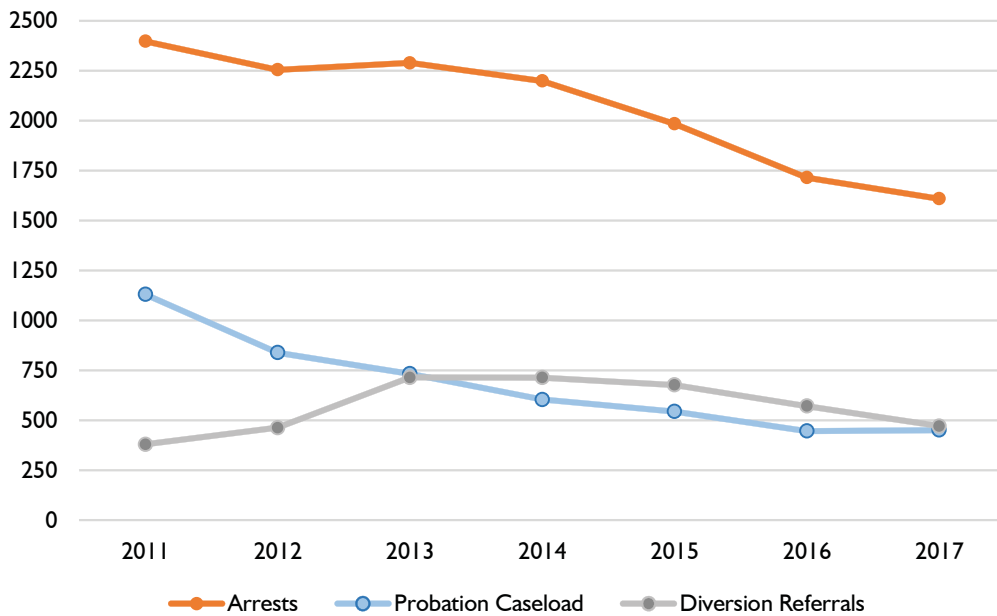
with licensed therapists to provide these treatments.

By 2014, the number of youths in the District Attorney’s diversion program exceeded the number of youths on probation. Juvenile Services began making its therapeutic treatments available to diversion program participants as well. The District Attorney’s Office told BGR that prior to this decision, diversion participants had to pay for such services out of pocket. If they did not have the financial resources to do so, which was often the case, they would have to re-enter the juvenile justice system and be placed on probation where Juvenile Services provided the services at no charge.

Juvenile Services Finances

The dedicated property tax on the ballot provides the vast majority of funding for Juvenile Services. In 2017, the millage provided 93% of the department’s total \$12.2 million revenue.¹⁴ Its other revenue sources include federal funds for foster care and State reimbursements for a portion of juvenile detention costs for youths at Rivarde awaiting transfer to State custody. Juvenile Services uses the tax revenue to pay for staff

CHART 2. JEFFERSON PARISH JUVENILE JUSTICE TRENDS



Source: Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office.

will begin driving operating deficits that will gradually reduce the department's fund balance. Table 1 shows BGR's projections for Juvenile Services' budget deficits and fund balance through 2020.

Projected Needs

Juvenile Services expects \$600,000 in additional annual operating costs to manage the influx of 17-year-olds into its care resulting from implementation of Louisiana's "Raise the Age" law. The State originally planned

salaries and operations of its programs and facilities, as well as any capital projects it undertakes.

In 2017, Juvenile Services had operating expenditures of \$10.9 million, of which 69% were for personnel, 30% for operations and 1% for minor capital.¹⁵ The department currently has a staff of 121, although it has 133 budgeted positions.¹⁶

In 2017, the department transferred \$1 million to its capital projects fund and \$1.6 million to the Parish's General Fund to help cover the costs of the juvenile division of the District Attorney's Office. To make these transfers and cover its own operating costs, Juvenile Services used \$78,000 from other sources and \$1.2 million of its operating fund balance.

Juvenile Services closed 2017 with an operating fund balance of \$8.6 million. Of this amount, Juvenile Services reserved \$1.6 million for emergencies in accordance with Parish financial policies, an amount equivalent to 15% of prior-year operating expenditures. The remaining \$7 million in Juvenile Services' fund balance represents 65% of current-year expenditures, but projected increases in operating costs, described below,

for the law to take effect in July 2018, but pushed implementation back to March 2019. Juvenile Services officials also project personnel expenses will increase by about \$250,000 in 2019 as a result of the Parish's implementation of an updated pay plan for classified Parish government employees. The pay increases are intended to stem turnover and help the department to attract and retain high-quality employees.¹⁷

On the capital side, Juvenile Services is planning a new East Bank administrative office, its primary unfunded capital need. In 2018, Juvenile Services transferred \$1.4 million to its capital budget to purchase land for the new office. It projects construction costs of between \$4 million and \$5 million.

Ongoing facility improvements at Rivarde are fully funded. Juvenile Services is currently implementing the second of four phases of renovations at Rivarde. The department's existing capital projects fund will cover the second phase's approximately \$700,000 cost and the estimated \$1.5 to \$2.0 million needed for the third and fourth phases of renovations. At the end of 2017, Juvenile Services' capital fund balance was \$4.9 million.

TABLE I. PROJECTED OPERATING DEFICITS AND CHANGES IN JUVENILE SERVICES' FUND BALANCE, 2017-2020

| <i>Figures in \$ millions</i> | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Projected Deficits: | | | | |
| Operating surplus (deficit) | \$1.3 | \$1.0 | (\$0.1) | (\$0.3) |
| Net other financing sources (uses) | (2.5) | (1.4) | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Net surplus (deficit) | (1.2) | (0.4) | (0.1) | (0.3) |
| Projected Fund Balance: | | | | |
| Ending fund balance | \$8.6 | \$8.2 | \$8.1 | \$7.9 |
| Less 15% of prior year operating expenditures | (1.6) | (1.6) | (1.7) | (1.8) |
| Available fund balance | 7.0 | 6.6 | 6.5 | 6.0 |

Figures may not add exactly due to rounding. BGR projections based on Parish revenue and other projected financing sources and uses. BGR's projections for operating expenditures are based on 2017 actual expenditures, increased by 2.7% annually, which was the average annual growth in Juvenile Services' operating expenditures during the last five years. Beginning in 2019, BGR's operating expenditure projections also include an additional \$600,000 for cost increases associated with "Raise the Age" implementation, and \$250,000 for personnel cost increases resulting from implementation of the new Parish pay plan.

forced to hand this function over to the State's Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) when the current millage expires at the end of 2020. OJJ's average probation and parole caseload in 2017 was 51 youths per officer.¹⁹ This is well above Juvenile Services' 10 youths per officer and the nationally recognized maximum standard of not more than 25 youths per officer.²⁰ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, a juvenile justice reform advocate that has worked with Jefferson Parish Juvenile

Services, recommends probation caseloads of eight to 12 youths per officer, which allow officers to develop close relationships with the youths in their care and work intensively with their families.²¹

Juvenile Services officials say staffing and operating the Rivarde detention facility costs approximately \$4.5 million annually. If voters do not approve the tax renewal there would not be sufficient funding to keep Rivarde open after the current millage cycle expires at the end of 2020. This would leave Juvenile Court judges with no guaranteed detention options for pre-trial youth because State-run juvenile detention facilities do not house pre-trial youth, and neighboring parish detention facilities often do not have extra capacity.

Without its dedicated millage funding, Juvenile Services would not be able to perform its responsibilities. While probation services would be taken over by the already strained OJJ, no one would be left to provide pre-trial detention services. Regardless of risk, Juvenile Court would be forced to return youth awaiting adjudication to their homes.

ANALYSIS

In this section, BGR analyzes the Juvenile Services tax renewal proposition on the basis of three questions related to efficient and effective use of public resources: Is the tax necessary? Is it appropriately sized to the need? And, will the tax revenue be well spent?

Is the Tax Necessary?

Juvenile Services' \$12.2 million budget depends on the millage for 93% of its funding. If voters do not renew its dedicated millage, the department would have no alternative funding source except for the Parish's General Fund. However, the \$96.4 million General Fund could not cover Juvenile Services' costs without severely cutting the services it currently funds, including the parish courts, inspection and code enforcement, and general services. Expenditures mandated by State law, including funding for the District Attorney's Office and District Courts, account for 42% of the Parish's 2018 General Fund budget.¹⁸

Loss of substantial revenue would leave Juvenile Services unable to pay its probation officers. It would be

Is the Tax Appropriately Sized to the Need?

During the current millage cycle, the tax revenue allowed Juvenile Services to pay its operating expenditures, build its operating fund balance above required levels and initiate capital projects.

Juvenile Services' \$8.6 million operating fund balance at the end of 2017 represented 79% of operating expenditures that year, well above the recommended minimum level of two months' operating costs (16.7%).²² However, BGR projects the department will run operating deficits during the last two years of the current millage cycle, reducing its fund balance to \$7.9 million. Higher operating costs from the new mandate to provide pre-trial detention and probation and treatment services for 17-year-olds, and increases in employee compensation will begin driving the operating deficits in 2019.

If voters renew the tax and the Parish Council levies the full 3.50 mills when the next cycle begins in 2021, Juvenile Services' annual revenue will increase by about \$840,000, an amount very close to the projected \$850,000 cost increases from implementation of "Raise the Age" and the new Parish pay plan.²³ Assuming the projected cost increases are accurate, the additional revenue from the higher millage rate should almost completely offset the cost increases and allow Juvenile Services to use its amassed reserves to pay for a new East Bank office.

Will the Tax Revenue be Well Spent?

Jefferson Parish's Department of Juvenile Services has worked for more than a decade on implementing reforms and evidence-based practices that increase the usage of alternatives to detention, lower probation caseloads and provide both delinquent and at-risk youth with an array of services.²⁴ It was active in developing the detention assessment instrument that allows Juvenile Court judges to make evidence-based decisions on the level of risk pre-trial youth pose to the community and, where appropriate, choose detention alternatives that are less restrictive and less costly. It has imple-

mented comprehensive assessment tools that determine the therapies and programs best tailored to the needs of each delinquent youth.

During the last 10 years, Juvenile Services has lowered its average caseload per probation officer, which allows officers to increase the level of supervision and support for youths in their charge. The two-year recidivism rate for juvenile offenders in the parish has also fallen from 29% in 2010 to 15% in 2017.²⁵ Even though the total number of youths on probation decreased, the large reduction in probation caseload per officer required the department to increase staffing. This increased personnel services costs, which grew at an average 2.8% rate from 2008 to 2017. Other operating costs increased at an average 2.4% rate.²⁶

As fewer arrests and the expansion of the District Attorney's juvenile diversion program reduced the number of youths served by Juvenile Services, the department redirected its funding to expand evidence-based therapeutic treatments to youth in the diversion program. This decision demonstrates Juvenile Services' commitment to juvenile justice reform throughout the system.

Juvenile Services recently implemented a new electronic case management system that allows probation officers to track youths' educational outcomes and changes in their risk of future violence and delinquency. Department officials told BGR that since Louisiana first implemented a licensing requirement for juvenile detention facilities in 2013, Jefferson Parish's Rivarde Detention Center has met all requirements and passed unannounced inspections several times each year.

Juvenile Services plans to use part of its fund balance to build a new East Bank office. Officials say that the current facility is too small, difficult to access via public transportation and not centrally located near the majority of youth served by the department.

The current millage authorization states that the millage is "for the purposes of planning, developing, expanding, acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining or operating present and future detention facilities and all

other related juvenile services department facilities and services.”²⁷ However, the Parish transferred funds from Juvenile Services to its General Fund to cover certain personnel costs for the District Attorney’s Juvenile Division in 2016 and 2017. The transfers from Juvenile Services paid a portion of salaries for Juvenile Division assistant district attorneys, investigators, diversion program counselors and support personnel. The \$1.1 million the Parish appropriated in 2016 and \$1.6 million it appropriated in 2017 largely consisted of millage revenue that had built up in Juvenile Services’ operating fund balance.

Using Juvenile Services’ millage revenue for District Attorney’s Office salaries raised questions about whether such use adhered to what voters had authorized when they approved the tax. In 2016 the Parish Attorney issued an opinion supporting the Parish’s right to transfer the funds on the grounds that the District Attorney’s Juvenile Division worked closely with Juvenile Services and the assistant district attorneys assigned to the Juvenile Division “qualify as officials charged with addressing juvenile offenders.”²⁸

Juvenile Services officials do not believe such appropriations will continue because with rising costs their department will no longer have reserves that can be allocated to other departments or agencies.

Overall, Juvenile Services has used its tax revenue to increase the level and quality of services it provides to Jefferson Parish’s delinquent and at-risk youth and improve public safety through the introduction of evidence-based practices that reduce recidivism. The department also has a clear plan for utilization of its revenue and reserves.

BGR POSITION

FOR. Jefferson Parish’s Juvenile Services Department has used the tax to deliver professional treatment and regular supervision to youth who enter the juvenile justice system. The department has implemented evidence-based practices and reforms recommended by national juvenile justice advocacy organizations to demonstrably reduce incarceration and probation while also lowering rates of recidivism. Without the tax revenue, which provides almost all of its budget, Juvenile Services would have no substantial alternative funding source to operate its detention facility. This would leave Juvenile Court judges no guaranteed option for detention of even the highest-risk youth. In addition, the department would be unable to pay for probation officers, thus forcing the Parish to depend on the State’s Office of Juvenile Justice for juvenile probation services. That office’s probation caseload per officer already far exceeds recommended standards, and likely could not provide parish youth with the same level of support they receive from Juvenile Services. With implementation of a new State law that processes 17-year-olds in the juvenile justice system, Juvenile Services’ costs will grow. Maintaining sufficient funding will be necessary to ensure that the department can continue to provide the same level of service.

ENDNOTES

- 1 In 2017, the Louisiana Secretary of State issued this recommendation in an attempt to limit the number of “emergency elections” called by local governing officials when tax renewal propositions fail. The recommendation stated that placing the renewal propositions on the ballot 18 to 24 months in advance of tax expiration gives voters time to understand the issue and local officials time for one more chance if voters reject the renewal the first time. See letter from Louisiana Secretary of State Tom Schedler to Louisiana State Bond Commission members, February 16, 2017.
- 2 The Parish estimated the millage revenue based on 2017 Jefferson Parish taxable property value and a 95% collection rate.
- 3 Jefferson Parish Government, “Juvenile Services,” <http://www.jeffparish.net/index.aspx?page=418>.
- 4 Numbers provided by the Parish.
- 5 The other parishes are Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge and Rapides.
- 6 For example, the parishes of Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington are part of the Florida Parishes Juvenile Justice District, which was established by State legislation in 1986 and operates the Florida Parishes Juvenile Detention Center.
- 7 Numbers provided by the Parish.
- 8 Detention costs provided in Juvenile Services presentation to Jefferson Parish Tax Rededication Committee, June 19, 2018. Detention alternative costs provided by Juvenile Services officials in meeting with BGR, August 13, 2018.
- 9 La. Child. Code, Art. 804. Louisiana will begin routing 17-year-olds charged with non-violent offenses through the juvenile system beginning in March 2019. The State will begin routing 17-year-olds charged with violent offenses through the juvenile system in July 2020.
- 10 BGR calculation based on arrest data provided by the District Attorney’s Office.
- 11 The District Attorney still will have the discretion to charge 17-year-olds, as well as other juveniles, as adults for certain high-level offenses. Juveniles charged as adults are prosecuted in the adult justice system.
- 12 Numbers provided by the Parish. The number of youths on probation fluctuates throughout the year as some youths complete their probation terms and new youths begin their terms. In reporting the number of youths on probation annually, Juvenile Services includes all youths who spent at least some part of that year on probation.
- 13 The District Attorney uses various screening assessments to decide whether or not a youth should be recommended for diversion. If Juvenile Court accepts the recommendation for diversion, and the youth and his family accept, the youth enters into a program run by the District Attorney’s Office. The program requires each youth to admit culpability for the charge, and provides counseling and therapies related to the particular charge. A master’s level counselor monitors each participant’s grades, behavior, attendance and progress in the program, and makes recommendations to diversion program administrators when participants have performed successfully and are ready to exit the program. Participation in the program is typically from one to six months. Participants who continue to make poor decisions or pose a safety risk are removed from the program and returned to court for adjudication. Diversion works to keep youth out of the “deep” end of the juvenile justice system and away from peers engaging in riskier behaviors. Youth who successfully complete the diversion program do not receive adjudication or conviction records for their offenses, and may get their police records expunged.
- 14 BGR calculations from the 2017 actual budget.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Juvenile Services added seven new detention officers in its 2018 budget in anticipation of Louisiana’s “Raise the Age” law going into effect in July 2018. The State has since pushed back implementation of the law until March 2019.
- 17 Jefferson Parish commissioned the Archer Group to conduct a comprehensive study of pay schedules for Parish employees. Guided by this study, the Jefferson Parish Personnel Board submitted its final proposal for an updated pay plan for classified government employees at the end of 2017. In October 2018, the Parish Council approved the proposed changes to the pay plan. The changes will take effect in January 2019, and will result in pay increases for some classified employees. See Jefferson Parish Council, Ord. No. 25681, adopted October 10, 2018.
- 18 Jefferson Parish, 2018 Adopted Budget, p. 22.
- 19 State of Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice, *ACT 499 OJJ Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report of Youth Served*, 2017, p. 30. OJJ probation and parole officers are assigned to youths in all levels of OJJ care, including secure care, non-secure care, parole, probation and diversion-type programs.
- 20 U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Focus on Accountability: Best Practices for Juvenile Court and Probation*, 1999.
- 21 Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Transforming Juvenile Probation: A Vision for Getting it Right*, 2018.
- 22 Government Finance Officers Association, “Fund Balance Guidelines for the General Fund,” <http://www.gfoa.org/fund-balance-guidelines-general-fund>.

- 23 BGR calculations using millage revenue projection based on 3.5-mill rate included in ballot proposition and revenue growth projections provided by the Parish.
- 24 Juvenile Services' evidence-based programs and practices include Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy and Aggression Replacement Training. See Harris, P.W., B. Lockwood and L. Mengers, *Defining and Measuring Recidivism*, Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators White Paper, November 2009, p. 4.
- 25 Information provided by Jefferson Parish Department of Juvenile Services.
- 26 BGR calculations.
- 27 Jefferson Parish Council, Resolution No. 116072, January 12, 2001.
- 28 Jefferson Parish Attorney's Office Opinion regarding Juvenile Services Millage, April 27, 2016.

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