



## Sheriffs Support Maintaining Juvenile Detention Facilities at the Local Level

The care and custody of pre-adjudicated juvenile offenders is a critical responsibility for our counties and State. Florida Sheriffs take this responsibility seriously and since the passage of legislation that allowed Florida Sheriffs the ability to house pre-adjudicated juveniles offenders, Sheriffs have taken great steps to protect our children in their care.

The Sheriffs developed and implemented The Florida Model Jail Standards Youth Detention Standards by comparing and integrating standards used by the Department of Juvenile Justice and best practices refined by experts with significant input from stakeholders. The primary objective of these standards is to protect the health, safety and security of our youth, the public and our officers. In addition, each sheriff or county choosing to operate a juvenile detention facility must be accredited through the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission or the American Corrections Association. Accreditation is vitally important to the integrity of an organization because these are outside, independent professionals who compare an agency's procedures with those deemed to be the industry's best practices. The facilities undergo rigorous annual inspections from national and state accreditation agencies to ensure best practices and locally operated juvenile facilities submit to annual inspections as required by Florida law.

Sheriffs agree that there are many differences between juveniles and adults, including how youth are processed, supervision standards, and the services offered. Sheriffs' Offices go to great lengths to ensure juveniles receive consistent educational programming, enhanced access to medical services – including mental and dental health services, and community resources. Other federal regulations ensure that juveniles are kept strictly away from adult inmates, by requiring separate transportation, programming and staff for juveniles and adults in detention facilities. Juveniles never have interaction with adult inmates, at all.

Several counties have already begun operating juvenile detention facilities at the local level and have seen major savings in costs. Over the past year, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office has seen a \$1.2 million cost differential over the state run facility. Polk and Marion counties have also seen savings of \$1.7 million and \$1 million respectively. These facilities save our taxpayers dollars by providing a higher level of care at a much lower cost.

Housing juveniles in county jails isn't new in Florida. Sheriffs have successfully been safely and securely housing youths in adult jails for decades. The only difference under the new law is that sheriffs can additionally house youthful offenders who will be proceeding through the juvenile court system.

**Keep Juveniles and the Community Safe**

**Support Sheriffs authority to house preadjudicated juveniles at the local level**

