



MIKE KEHOE  
GOVERNOR

**38<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**  
**CHRISTIAN COUNTY JUVENILE OFFICE**  
**LAURA JOHNSON, PRESIDING JUDGE**  
**PERRY BARNES, CHIEF JUVENILE OFFICER**  
**102 WEST WALNUT STREET**  
**OZARK MO 65721**  
**417-582-4350**



KATHY S. LLOYD  
STATE COURTS  
ADMINISTRATOR

August 7, 2025

Christian County Commission,  
100 West Church St., Room 100  
Ozark, MO 65721

Re: 2026 Juvenile Budget

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your time and consideration reviewing our proposed budget for 2026. I would bring it to the commissions attention that we have received a new grant from the Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA), in the amount of \$10,000.00. We also received an extra \$10,000 from the Division of Youth Services (DYS) which brings the grant total to \$119,000.00. That grant is used to pay for county funded juvenile officers' salaries and benefits.

The juvenile office will be requesting personnel changes. We are not requesting any new positions. In 2022 the juvenile office shifted the legal counsel duties to the prosecutor attorney's office. The juvenile office had contracted those services prior to that and reached a point where that was no longer sustainable. Most of the legal work was being completed by juvenile officers. The prosecutor assigned an assistant prosecutor attorney and legal aide to the juvenile office. Those positions have been working from the juvenile office and review every referral to the juvenile office for legal sufficiency, and determine if court action is necessary.

I would like to inform everyone that we are responsible for all law violations and behavioral issues for juveniles and more importantly the welfare of children who have been abused or neglected. These are our most vulnerable people. They need our best trained, educated, and competent staff to represent them.

The prosecutor and legal aide assigned to the juvenile office are outstanding and valued team members of the juvenile office. They have helped this juvenile office to become one of the best departments in the state. During this partnership with the prosecutor's office we have encountered several conflicts of interest and by agreement the juvenile office can not be represented by the prosecutor's office.

We are requesting that the two positions that were assigned to the prosecutor's office be shifted to the juvenile office where they have worked since 2022. The salary and benefits that were budgeted for those two positions would be shifted to the juvenile budget. These are not new positions for the county, but now will be within the juvenile office budget rather than the prosecutor's budget.

I will be retiring from the state of Missouri in 2026. I will hope to continue my duties as Chief Juvenile Officer by shifting to a county position. The county juvenile officer will take my vacated state position. The state does not use titles regarding juvenile officers. They have allocated five Deputy Juvenile Officer II positions, one Deputy Juvenile Officer III position and one Juvenile Officer IV position. The circuit will not lose any of those

positions. As I mentioned, the \$119,000.00 grant is dedicated to the salaries and benefits of the county funded positions.

The budget for the juvenile office without the two positions from the prosecutor's office will be \$2,000.00 less than last year's budget. We will be able to use our OSCA grant to pay for counseling, treatment, and evaluations. We added another \$10,000.00 from DYS to help with salaries and benefits.

I hope I was able to explain our need and reasons for the budget request. I will be available to meet with you or answer questions.

Sincerely,  
Perry Barnes, Chief Juvenile Officer  
38th Judicial Circuit  
102 West Walnut Street  
Ozark MO 65721

Cc: The Honorable Laura J. Johnson, Employee Services Director Amber Bryant, Auditor Amy Dent