



Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Ends All Contracts with Youth Services International



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### **Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Ends All Contracts with Youth Services International**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – Today, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) announced it will begin immediately transitioning all contracts statewide for residential programs run by private provider Youth Services International (YSI), Inc. YSI holds contracts for the current year for seven programs throughout Florida.

DJJ Secretary Christina K. Daly said, “Our focus and priority is to ensure that youth in our care are safe and that effective treatments are being provided in rehabilitative and nurturing environments. We will work to ensure that each of the seven programs operated by YSI are transitioned to new providers smoothly and that our high standards of transparency and accountability are met every step of the way. We will also ensure there are no interruptions in services. I appreciate the work of the Florida Attorney General’s Office resolving this case in the best interest of Florida and the children and families we serve.”

For several months, DJJ worked in conjunction with the Florida Attorney General’s office in relation to a False Claims Act Complaint filed by former staff of Youth Services International. The lawsuit involved allegations that YSI failed to provide the necessary and appropriate services and falsified documents concerning contract terms. The lawsuit, recently resolved through mediation, requires YSI to relinquish its contracts with DJJ and reimburse the State for the financial losses.

Qui tam actions are brought under the Florida False Claims Act. The Act authorizes a private person, or relator, who claims to have knowledge of fraud involving state funds to bring a sealed case. The Attorney General’s Office then has the opportunity to investigate the allegations, gather additional information, and intervene in and proceed with the case if appropriate. The Legislature updated this important law in 2013 to provide the Attorney General with additional authority to protect taxpayers’ money.

YSI will continue to operate programs under contract until assignment, with DJJ’s approval, to other providers. Newly assigned providers are to be in place no later than August 31, 2016. There will be no reduction in services at any of the seven programs.

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