



# Youth Services System Inc.

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87 Fifteenth St., PO Box 6041, Wheeling, WV 26003

304-233-9628 • Fax: 304-233-0056

[www.YouthServicesSystem.org](http://www.YouthServicesSystem.org)

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Potential closing of the Ronald C. Mulholland Juvenile Center will not serve local families and youth

A legislative response for hypothetical options to a 6.5% state budget cut in an article in the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* on 2/19/16 suggests the closure of Wheeling's Ronald C. Mulholland Juvenile Center. The Ronald C. Mulholland Juvenile Center is the state's only private, non-profit juvenile center, serving the northern panhandle for the past 33 years.

Here are the facts about what this proposal would mean to families and youth:

- Closure would mean that youth in the juvenile justice system in Northern West Virginia will be sent far from their families and their legal defense. The nearest state juvenile centers are in Parkersburg, Martinsburg, or Charleston.
- The Ronald C Mulholland Juvenile Center serves youth in the northern panhandle & northern West Virginia: over the last 13 years, 2847 youth have been served by the center, fully 71% of these came from the northern panhandle and Monongalia and Marion Counties.
- The Center's closure will have an impact on the local economy. The RCMJC employs 52 staff, plus teachers and others. Their wages amount to \$1.3 million annually. The Center spends over \$320,000 on other services and supplies mostly in the upper Ohio Valley.
- Youth Services System offers a range of services in the community that can be used by youth leaving juvenile justice facilities. These include substance abuse treatment, transitional living services to give them skills and connections for the future and emergency youth shelters to ease their return into the community.
- The connection to families is important, for the past 23 years, the Ronald C. Mulholland Juvenile Center has hosted monthly dinners where family members come and spend time with their child. There are additional weekly opportunities for the youth and their family to meet. The family dinners are unique to this center.