TO: Professors Andrea Armstrong and Samantha Pourciau
FROM: Anastashearka Lewis
RE: Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe
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Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe

Introduction

The Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe is a secure juvenile detention facility located in Ouachita Parish, Louisiana. The address is 4701 South Grand Street in Monroe and is operated by the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ). OJJ is a state agency responsible for supervising youth in both secure and non-secure custody.[1]

Unlike parish jails, which are typically overseen by elected sheriffs, the Swanson Center is a state-run institution designed to house and rehabilitate youth offenders between the ages of thirteen and twenty.[2] The facility serves as one of several secure care centers within Louisiana's juvenile justice system, providing structured housing, treatment services, and supervision for youth adjudicated delinquent or awaiting disposition.[3]

Jail Characteristics

The facility has a capacity to accommodate approximately 144 youth; each housed in individual rooms.[4] The facility includes both general population housing units and a transitional treatment unit that provides individualized services.[5] There are currently 141 staff employed who have contact with residents. Demographic information such as race, offense type, or custodial status is not publicly available. Because the facility houses juveniles, there is no publicly accessible inmate locator.

Annual Budget/ Financing

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[1] Office of Juvenile Justice, Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe, https://ojj.la.gov/news/new-swanson-center-for-youth-at-monroe-opens

[2] Id.
[3] Id.
[4] Id.
[5] Id.

The Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe does not have a standalone operating budget.[6] Instead, it is funded through the OJJ, which operates multiple juvenile facilities statewide.[7]

For Fiscal Year 2026, the total recommended budget for OJJ is approximately $197,862,839.[8] The majority of this funding is derived from the state general fund, with additional support from federal funds, fees, and interagency transfers.[9]

Although there is no facility specific operating budget publicly available, approximately $2.6 million has been allocated for bond payments associated with the Swanson Center, which are used for construction, renovation, or financing costs.[10]

Leadership

Calvin Lewis serves as the Youth Facilities Director.[11] Courtney Myers has served as Deputy Secretary of Youth Services since February 2, 2026.[12] In this role, she oversees both secure and non-secure juvenile facilities, as well as probation and parole services, and is responsible for implementing rehabilitation and treatment programs within the system.[13]

Evidence of Oversight

In 2015, the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice issues a findings letter identifying significant concerns regarding conditions in Louisiana's juvenile facilities, including the Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe.[14] The investigation found violations of First, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments, as well as federal disability and

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[6] La. House of Representatives, Office of Juvenile Justice, FY 20, https://house.louisiana.gov/housefiscal/DOCS_APP_BDGT_MEETINGS/DOCS_AppBudgetMeetings2026/FY%2026%20Office%20of%20Juvenile%20Justice.pdf

[7] Id.

[8] Id.

[9] Id.

[10] Id.

[11] https://ojj.la.gov/news/new -swanson -center -for -youth -at -monroe -opens

[12] Office of Juvenile Justice, Governor Landry Appoints Courtney M, https://ojj.la.gov/news/governor-landry-appoints-courtney-myers-as-deputy-secretary-of-youth-services

[13] Id.

[14] U.S. Dep't of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Investigation of, https://www.justice.gov/crt/louisiana-juveniles-findings-letter-1

education laws.[15] The report documented frequent incidents of youth-on-youth violence, staff abuse, and dozens of youth injuries occurring each month.[16]

A Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit was conducted for the facility, with a final report issued on January 22, 2024.[17] The audit found that policies for reporting sexual abuse were in place at the facility.

The facility has also been the subject of litigation and investigations related to conditions of confinement. Reports indicate repeated incidents of violence, including assaults on staff and attempted escapes, raising concerns about security protocols and facility management.[18]

Transparency

Basic information about the Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe is available through the OJJ website, including the facility's location, contact information, and general descriptions of available programs. These descriptions include references to services such as mental health units and substance abuse treatment.

The OJJ website also includes a press release announcing the opening of the facility. However, a more detailed operational data is not publicly available.

Public Records Request and Death Records

Since 2015, there has been one reported death at the Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe, which occurred in 2017.[19] A public records request was submitted seeking additional information regarding deaths at the facility. The response confirmed the absence of any additional deaths via Zero Deaths Letter.

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[15] Id.

[16] Id.

[17] Ouachita Parish Research Notes, Swanson Center for Youth at Mon, https://ojj.la.gov/assets/PREA/2024-Swanson-Center-for-Youth-at-Monroe-Final-PREA-Audit-Report.pdf

[18] Ouachita Parish Research Notes, supra note 4, https://www.lawsuit-information-center.com/louisiana-juvenile-detention-center-lawsuit-settlements.html

[19] Incarceration Transparency, https://www.incarcerationtransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2017-Swanson-Youth-Center-for-Youth-at-Monroe-Ouachita-CJ9s.pdf