



**Capital
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Board**
Building a Better Illinois

State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Capital Development Board
Jim Underwood, Executive Director

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Construction Begins on Illinois Youth Center in Lincoln

Funding supports restorative facility for youth in custody of Illinois

Lincoln – Governor J.B. Pritzker announced construction will begin on a new Illinois Youth Center for youth in secure custody of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ). The project will align with IDJJ’s new residential, community-integrated, restorative justice model. Funding is made possible by the bipartisan Rebuild Illinois Capital program, the largest capital plan in the State’s history.

“My administration’s landmark Rebuild Illinois Capital program isn’t just about roads and bridges—it’s about creating a better future for generations to come,” **said Governor Pritzker**. “The new Illinois Youth Center will serve our state’s most vulnerable youth—and it is exactly the kind of project we are proud to invest in. Youth in custody of the IDJJ deserve access to the spaces and resources they need to thrive in their own communities—and that’s what the Illinois Youth Center will provide.”

Situated in Lincoln, the new Illinois Youth Center will be at the site of the former Lincoln Development Center (LDC). Funding supports renovations of two 4,300 square foot cottages for housing youth, with additional cottages for programming and administrative use. Additionally, a newly constructed 27,000 square foot multipurpose building will include educational, recreational, and dietary services.

“IDJJ is grateful to Governor Pritzker, Lt. Governor Stratton, and Rebuild Illinois for supporting IDJJ’s 21st Century Transformation through the restoration of the Lincoln Campus,” **said Heidi Mueller, Director of Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice**. “This campus will be the first Illinois Youth Center designed in collaboration with IDJJ’s own young people and staff, and the first specifically designed to support trauma recovery, restorative justice and positive youth development. More importantly, the Lincoln Campus will ensure vulnerable young people from

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Central Illinois remain closer to their families and communities as they receive the treatment and support that they need.”

The renovations include upgrading mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems, and providing improvements to sidewalks and roadways. The scope of work includes a new athletic field, outdoor basketball courts, and fencing. New security electronic systems, including closed circuit television cameras, will be installed on site. The upgrades will be a stark improvement to the current condition of the Lincoln Developmental Center property, which has remained vacant since 2002.

The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) will oversee the design and construction of the Illinois Youth Center at Lincoln in accordance with the protocol for state-appropriated projects. Construction is set to be completed by summer 2024.

“Thanks to Rebuild Illinois, the Capital Development Board will transform the LDC site that has been deteriorating for two decades into an innovative and rehabilitative campus for vulnerable youth,” **said the Capital Development Board Executive Director, Jim Underwood.** “

More than 40% of youth committed to IDJJ are from central Illinois but are housed at youth centers in the northern and southern regions of the State. The Illinois Youth Center at Lincoln will establish the first youth center in central Illinois, allowing families and community organizations to participate more effectively in the rehabilitative process.

The Illinois Youth Center at Lincoln will provide secondary and continuing education, mental health services, medical care, therapeutic and vocational support, and substance abuse treatment through licensed providers. The facility will provide highly structured programming designed to build youth skills, strengthen families, and promote community safety and positive outcomes for youth.

“Lincoln's geographic location makes it the perfect place for this facility,” **said Lincoln Mayor, Tracy Welch.** “Not only will the new Illinois Youth Center better serve those committed youth from central Illinois, and their families, by having them located closer to home, but it will also stimulate the local economy by creating new jobs, attracting new community members, and generating additional revenue for the city that can be used towards things such as road repairs and improved public services.”

Governor Pritzker’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan provides essential funding to support the revitalization and improvement of Illinois roadways, state facilities, universities, bridges, and railways over a six-year period. The initiative seeks to address critical infrastructure and economic opportunity.

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