The $189 million complex was supposed to have opened in March, but was delayed while officials of the new county government scrutinized contracts, including millions in information technology costs.

The Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court will open for business in a new justice center Monday, after years of planning and controversy about the location and cost of the complex.

The court has been moving into the Juvenile Justice Center at East 93rd Street and Quincy Avenue for weeks. Court services will continue uninterrupted, but caseloads will be limited the

first week, officials said.

The first full day of business will be Oct. 11.

The $189 million complex was supposed to have opened in March, but was delayed while officials of the new county government scrutinized contracts, including millions in information technology costs. The council and administration inherited the building project in January from outgoing
county commissioners. They have criticized costs, including pricey furnishings and millions of dollars in overruns.

The county also is paying $350,000 to Relocation Specialists Inc., which is serving as the consultant for the move, and $287,850 to Berman Moving and Storage Inc.

The county Sheriff's Department is handling the transfer of about 120 youths in detention. Court officials declined to disclose those details, citing security concerns.

"You don't want to give anyone advance notice about the date of the move," said court spokeswoman Mary Davidson.

The court is vacating several locations: a Depression-era building and detention center at East 22nd Street and Central Avenue; the Whitlatch building on Carnegie Avenue and courtrooms at the Metzenbaum building on Community College Avenue. Other services will remain at Metzenbaum.

The fate of the vacated spaces has not been determined. County Councilwoman Sunny Simon said the properties will likely be part of a countywide facilities study. She said other county agencies have expressed interest in the court buildings.

"A lot of people have their eye on it," Simon said.

The justice center grew from plans in the 1980s for a new juvenile detention center. Years of wrangling between former county commissioners and judges over the project and its location followed. The county in 2000 bought the former site of the Christian Schmidt and Sons Brewing Co. for the center. The estimated cost at the time was $50 million.

Lawyer Dan Margolis, who practices in juvenile court, said the new location is logistically more difficult for lawyers who travel between various courts (The current facility is off a highway exit near downtown). Another concern is the availability of mass transit for youths and their families, he said.

The current location is served by four bus lines, while one bus line and a rapid transit line serve the new facility, said Mary McCahon, Greater Cleveland RTA spokeswoman. She added that the rapid line compensates for fewer available bus lines because of its connections.

The agency in 2002 also updated the rapid station at East 105th Street and Quincy, and moved it across the street in preparation for the justice center, she said.