



NEWS

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

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DJJ TRANSFORMATION UPDATE REPORTS RECORD LWS IN NUMBERS OF YOUTH ENTERING COURT SYSTEM *Evidence-Based Family Therapy Services Now Available In 97 Percent of Localities*

Richmond, VA, Dec. 18 – The number of youth entering Virginia’s juvenile court system in 2019, three years after launching the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice’s (DJJ) transformation effort, continued its steady downward trend according to DJJ’s latest Transformation Plan Update. DJJ’s Transformation which, in part, has provided alternative placements and evidence-based programs and services to court-involved youth throughout Virginia, has helped reduce the one-year rearrest rate for first-time diversions, probation placements, and direct care releases from 25.1 percent in FY 2014 to 21.2 percent in FY 2018, translating to 850 fewer system-involved youth being arrested.

Additional highlights from the new report include the following trends from FY 2010 to FY 2019:

- Juvenile delinquency intake cases decreased 39.8% to historic lows;
- New probation cases decreased 51.7% to historic lows;
- Detainments decreased 43.6% to historic lows; and
- Direct care admissions to state custody decreased 44.5% to near historic lows, stabilizing in recent years during the transformation.

“I am encouraged by the decrease in court-involved youth in the Commonwealth as DJJ continues to implement evidence-based policies,” said Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran. “This initiative has been strongly supported by two administrations, and I will continue to advocate for our justice-involved youth.”

The agency attributes much of its success to diverting more cases at the front of the system, responding to the higher risk youth placed on probation or committed with an expanding continuum of services to match their individualized needs, and making sure that the services are evidence-based and available across the Commonwealth. DJJ also continues to expand and improve the rigorous rehabilitative and educational programming available for youth in state custody and to do all it can to keep those youth connected to their families and other caring adults.

(MORE)

The Transformation Report also lists some of the following service-provision accomplishments:

- DJJ's continuum of services has expanded to over 160 unduplicated direct service providers; 1,984 youth were referred to DJJ's regional service coordinators, who approved/authorized 4,239 services during FY 2019.
- In addition to Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center (JCC), treatment placement options for committed youth now include an all-time high of 10 Community Placement Programs (CPPs), eight detention reentry programs, nine residential treatment facilities, and eight group homes, for a total of 35 non-correctional center treatment placement options for youth.
- Access to evidence-based Functional Family Therapy and Multi-Systemic Therapy programs expanded and now reaches 97 percent of cities and counties throughout the Commonwealth. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and High Fidelity Wraparound also expanded, with availability in more than 70 percent of localities.
- The number of post-secondary college and enrichment opportunities offered at Bon Air JCC increased by 78 percent, resulting in students earning 288 industry credentials/certifications in the 2018-2019 school year.

"I thank all the dedicated DJJ employees and stakeholders for the work they have done to bring us the successes we have achieved so far," said DJJ Director Valerie Boykin. "But we still have much work to do to ensure all court-involved youth in Virginia have equal access to services they need, and that all are treated fairly and equitably. DJJ will continue to pursue the effort to build smaller, treatment-oriented facilities, ideally in the Eastern and Central areas, in order to house youth closer to their home communities."

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