

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice's Historical Timeline

The information below presents a history by CY of the juvenile justice system in Virginia. See the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ's) current Data Resource Guide (DRG) for an abbreviated timeline.

1891: The Prison Association of Virginia opened the first privately operated, state-subsidized juvenile facility as the Laurel Industrial School for White Boys in Laurel, Virginia (Henrico County).

1897: The Virginia Manual Labor School was established by John Henry Smyth in Hanover County.

1908: The General Assembly created the State Board of Charities and Corrections to administer a penitentiary and several adult penal farms and to oversee the industrial schools.

The State Board of Charities and Corrections, in conjunction with Richmond Associated Charities, purchased a farm in Bon Air, Virginia (Chesterfield County) and created the Virginia Home and Industrial School for Girls.

1912: The City of Richmond established the first juvenile court in Virginia by dedicating a section of its police court to juveniles.

1914: The General Assembly enacted legislation allowing courts of record, police, and justice courts to hear cases concerning juveniles and judge them delinquent, neglected, or dependent.

1915: Janie Porter Barrett and the Virginia State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs opened the Industrial Home School for Wayward Colored Girls at Peake in Hanover County.

1920: Due to financial hardship, control, and direction issues, oversight of the three industrial schools transferred to the Commonwealth of Virginia, and facility names changed to the following: the Laurel Industrial School became the Virginia Industrial School for Boys, the Industrial Home School for Wayward Colored Girls at Peake became the Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls, and the Virginia Manual Labor School became the Virginia Manual Labor School for Colored Boys.

1922: The General Assembly required every city and county in Virginia to establish a juvenile court.

The Virginia Industrial School for Boys moved to Beaumont, Virginia (Powhatan County).

The General Assembly merged the State Board of Charities and Corrections with the newly created State Board of Public Welfare. A Children's Bureau was formed to oversee juveniles committed to state care.

1927: The Department of Public Welfare was created to administer the adult prison system and the industrial schools.

1942: The General Assembly created VADOC and the Parole Board as independent agencies, and oversight of the industrial schools was given to the State Board of Public Welfare.

1948: VADOC and the Parole Board were merged into the Department of Welfare and Institutions.

1950: The Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls was renamed the Janie Porter Barrett Industrial School.

1951: The Bureau of Juvenile Probation and Detention was created within the Department of Welfare and Institutions with its core functions dedicated to the juvenile probation system.

1952: The Division of Youth Services was formed within the Department of Welfare and Institutions.

Due to lack of control and protection, the state purchased the private Chesterfield Study Home for White Boys and operated it through the Department of Welfare and Institutions.

1954: The Mobile Psychiatric Clinic was created and originally directed by the Medical College of Virginia and then by the Department of Mental Hygiene and Hospitals. The clinic traveled to facilities holding juveniles committed to state care for the purpose of providing diagnosis, treatment, and staff instruction.

1964: Natural Bridge Youth Learning Center opened in Natural Bridge, Virginia (Rockbridge County).

1965: Natural Bridge Youth Learning Center became the first Virginia juvenile facility to be racially integrated.

The Janie Porter Barrett Industrial School was racially integrated.

1966: Administration of the Mobile Psychiatric Clinic transferred to the Division of Youth Services within the Department of Welfare and Institutions.

1969: RDC opened in Bon Air, Virginia (Chesterfield County), resulting in the closure of the Mobile Psychiatric Clinic.

1972: The General Assembly established 31 Juvenile and Domestic Relations (J&DR) court districts with full-time judges who were appointed by the General Assembly to six-year terms.

The General Assembly enacted legislation creating state-operated probation services to be administered by the Division of Youth Services under the Department of Welfare and Institutions. Localities were given the option to remain locally operated or allow the state to assume control.

1974: The Department of Welfare and Institutions was separated into the Department of Welfare, later to be the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) and VADOC. Three major responsibilities were given to VADOC: youth, adult services, and probation and parole services.

1982: Oak Ridge Youth Learning Center opened in Bon Air, Virginia (Chesterfield County), serving mentally disabled, developmentally delayed, and emotionally disturbed youth.

1990: The Department of Youth and Family Services began operations as a separate agency from VADOC, along with a State Board of Youth and Family Services.

1991: The Rehabilitative School Authority and the Board of the Rehabilitative School Authority were renamed the Department of Correctional Education and the Board of Correctional Education, respectively, providing a broad array of educational programs to Virginia's state-responsible adult and juvenile populations.

1996: The Department of Youth and Family Services and the Board of Youth and Family Services were renamed DJJ and the Board of Juvenile Justice, respectively. DJJ's learning centers were renamed juvenile correctional centers (JCCs).

1999: Culpeper JCC opened in Mitchells, Virginia (Culpeper County), designed for maximum security to house older, higher-risk males.

2000: The criteria for indeterminate commitments were amended from being adjudicated delinquent for two Class 1 misdemeanors to four Class 1 misdemeanors that were not part of a common act, transaction, or scheme.

2003: DJJ implemented the After-Hours Video Intake Program.

2005: Barrett JCC was closed and mothballed.

2010: Natural Bridge JCC was closed.

2012: A portion of the former Department of Correctional Education merged with DJJ.

2013: Hanover JCC was closed and repurposed as VPSTC.

The program serving youth with mental disabilities, developmental delays, and emotional disturbances at Oak Ridge JCC was relocated to an autonomous section of Beaumont JCC, RDC was moved to the former Oak Ridge JCC building, and the former RDC building was repurposed as an administrative building.

2014: Hampton Place and Abraxas House, DJJ's two halfway houses, were closed. (The facilities were closed to youth in December 2013.)

Culpeper JCC was closed and transferred to VADOC.

DJJ partnered with Blue Ridge, Chesapeake, Rappahannock, and Virginia Beach JDCs to establish CPPs as alternative placements for youth in direct care.

2015: RDC closed.

Youth in the Oak Ridge Program were gradually integrated with the general population at Beaumont JCC for educational services and other programming while retaining specialized housing.

The Board of Juvenile Justice revised the LOS Guidelines.

CTM was piloted.

DJJ partnered with Merrimac and Shenandoah Valley JDCs to establish CPPs.

2016: DJJ partnered with Chesterfield and Lynchburg JDCs to establish CPPs.

DJJ contracted with two experienced service coordination agencies, AMI and EBA, to develop a state-wide continuum of evidence-based services and additional alternatives to placement in secure facilities.

2017: Beaumont JCC was closed.

DJJ partnered with Prince William JDC to establish a CPP.

CTM was fully implemented at Bon Air JCC.

RSCs implemented systems for managing centralized referrals, service coordination, billing, and reporting.

2019: DJJ partnered with Northern Virginia JDC to establish a CPP for females.

2020: Governor Northam declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic on March 12, which impacted DJJ operations and juvenile justice trends. For more information, see DRGs from FY 2020 and FY 2021.

2021: Chesapeake CPP closed.

2022: Lynchburg and Northern Virginia CPPs closed.

DJJ began creating and implementing pre-court services.

2023: The Board of Juvenile Justice's revised LOS Guidelines took effect.

DJJ partnered with Newport News JDC to establish a CPP.

Merrimac CPP closed.

Workforce development programs were launched.

2024: Bon Air JCC launched Facility-Wide PBIS.

Rappahannock CPP Closed

DJJ Created the Mid-West administrative region.

DJJ consolidated by contracting with one service coordination agency.

DJJ began implementing pre-placement services for direct care youth.

DJJ fully implemented the G.R.E.A.T. program at CSUs.

2025: Prince William CPP closed.

DJJ implemented the DRT and the FOCUS model at CSUs.

DJJ created the Family Engagement Unit.

DJJ began working directly with service providers to implement the RSC model.

DJJ implemented The Seven Challenges® at Bon Air JCC and began a reentry partnership with Dominion Energy.