

2023

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice



TRANSFORMATION PLAN 2023 UPDATE

In response to Chapter 1 of the 2023 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session I
2023 Appropriation Act, Item 427 (B)(3)

PREFACE

Chapter 732 of the 2016 Appropriation Act of the Virginia Acts of Assembly, Item 406 (D) required the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to develop “a transformation plan to provide more effective and efficient services for juveniles, using data-based decision-making, that improves outcomes, including reducing recidivism, and to reduce the number of juveniles housed in state-operated juvenile correctional centers, consistent with public safety.” DJJ established its Transformation Plan in June 2016.

This report of DJJ’s Transformation Plan progress addresses the language required in Chapter 1 of the 2023 Appropriation Act of the Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session I, Item 427 (B)(3):

“No later than November 1 of each year, the Department of Juvenile Justice shall provide a report to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriation Committees, the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget, assessing the impact and results of the transformation plan and its related actions. The report shall include, but is not limited to, assessing juvenile offender recidivism rates, fiscal and operational impact on detention homes; changes (if any) in commitment orders by the courts; and use of the savings redirected as a result of transformation, including the amount expended for contracted programs and treatment services, including the number of juveniles receiving each specific service. The report should also include the average length of stay for juveniles in each placement option.”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in 2014, the Department of Juvenile Justice embarked on a significant transformation plan. With the input of many stakeholders, we undertook a rigorous self-analysis to ensure we get the outcomes we want for the youth, families, and communities we serve while using taxpayer resources effectively. We thank all those who have dedicated their time and passionate energy to improve our juvenile justice system.

We now have several years of analysis, reporting, and reflection on the outcomes of this transformation plan. The department continues to build upon the strengths and successes we have achieved while developing new initiatives to address where we can improve. We are committed to the continued transformation of the Department of Juvenile Justice through these strategic goals:

- *Expand reentry vocational programs, workforce development and mentoring to provide resources to encourage a positive path of returning to the community*
- *Support successful community programs and create new initiatives that will address the current concerns of the Commonwealth*
- *Build trust with our law enforcement and judicial partners to ensure youth are placed in the best possible, most effective programs*
- *Address the concerns highlighted in the 2021 JLARC report, which focused on recidivism for our most serious offenders*
- *Create new resources to support victims and families – including those with Limited English Proficiency or disabilities – who have been impacted by violent crime*
- *Provide access to appropriate and effective mental health services for all youth under the agency’s care*

As we move forward and face new challenges, we must reaffirm our shared goals for success. We will be transparent. The department must have an objective, critical analysis of our successes and failures. This is vital to the community, the families, and the youth we serve. We will balance the safety of the community with the rehabilitative needs of our youth. Our juvenile justice system must have the trust of all its stakeholders, including elected leaders, judges, law enforcement, the kids and families we serve, victims, and the broader community. We must hold youth accountable for their actions by ensuring they receive the services they need, at the appropriate dosage, to create the greatest likelihood of success when they are no longer in our care. The growing concerns of the people of the Commonwealth must be addressed. Addressing and preventing youth violent crime, especially gun-related crime, must be a focus of all community stakeholders.

Again, we are grateful for the hard work and dedication of the staff, the board, community partners and the entire law enforcement community. Each does their part to serve the people of Virginia. Together we will build a better Commonwealth where all families can thrive, all children can reach their full potential, and we can have safer communities.

Amy Floriano

Director

ACRONYMS

ADP: Average Daily Population

BADGE: Balanced Approach Data Gathering Environment

CAP Unit: Central Admissions and Placement Unit

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (2019 Novel Coronavirus)

CPP: Community Placement Program

CSU: Court Service Unit

CTM: Community Treatment Model

DJJ: Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

FY: Fiscal Year

GIS: Gang Intervention Specialists

JCC: Juvenile Correctional Center

LOS Guidelines: Length of Stay Guidelines for Indeterminately Committed Juveniles

LOS: Length of Stay

PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

RSC: Regional Service Coordination

SEAS: Screening for Experience And Strengths

VJCCCA: Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act

WDC: Workforce Development Center

TRANSFORMATION PLAN 2023 UPDATE

The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) enhances public safety by providing effective accountability measures and interventions that improve the lives of court-involved and committed youth. In FY 2023, DJJ operated 30 court services units (CSUs) and Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center (JCC). As of June 30, 2023, DJJ audits and certifies the CSUs, including two locally operated units; 24 juvenile detention centers; the JCC; seven community placement programs (CPPs); eight detention reentry programs; and 14 group homes, shelter care facilities and independent living programs.

To reach its goals for both youth and staff, DJJ has developed a balanced approach for serving youth and the community. The department has identified guiding values to support the growth and development of youth in its care and in fulfillment of its mission to protect the public by preparing court-involved and committed youth to be successful citizens and members of their communities.

- **Safety:** Safety and security are about keeping us free from harm. When we feel safe, we can focus on other needs, such as learning new skills.
- **Responsibility:** Responsibility has to do with our obligation to care for and help ourselves and others. It means making decisions and being accountable for those decisions in our lives.
- **Communication:** Communication helps us get things in life that we need and want. If we're good at it, we can have our needs met faster, more often, and in the ways we want. Communicating effectively can also keep us safe and is important in all areas of our lives.
- **Respect:** Respect honors the differences, abilities, preferences, and experiences of others. It also means taking care of yourself and your belongings, other people and their belongings, and the environments we share.

DJJ's ongoing transformational work will result in better returns on taxpayer investment through improved public safety and more robust rehabilitative opportunities for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. These changes are based on evidence and research on promoting success and reducing recidivism rates among court-involved youth.

NEW AND ONGOING INITIATIVES

Below are among the initiatives DJJ has embarked upon to achieve its goals and better serve the Commonwealth. For more information on the department's strategic plan, please visit <http://www.djj.virginia.gov/>.

RSC MODEL FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Under the Regional Service Coordination (RSC) model, which is funded by the closure of the agency's correctional facilities during the transformation, DJJ utilizes two lead agencies, AMIkids and Evidence-Based Associates (EBA), to select and award subcontracts to direct service provider companies. This ensures youth and families across the Commonwealth have continuous and consistent access to residential and community-based services and treatments needed to divert youth from further involvement with DJJ, provide appropriate dispositional options for youth under supervision, and enable successful reentry upon a committed youth's return to the community. The RSCs assist with building a more robust statewide continuum of evidence-informed services and alternatives to placement in state-operated secure facilities.

During FY 2023, the RSCs contracted with more than 100 distinct direct service providers; a total of 1,279 youth were referred to the RSCs, 2,740 assessments and services were approved and authorized, and 83.7% of youth began at least one service. Of the approved assessments and services, 1,001 (36.5%) were for clinical services and 577 (21.1%) were for assessments or evaluations. Other types of services included non-clinical services and interventions (15.1%), other: non-interventions/service enhancements (13.2%), monitoring services (8.0%), residential services (2.4%), and case management (1.5%). The majority of youth (82.6% (457)) who completed services during FY 2022 ended with at least some progress.

RSC Category	% Approved FY 2022 Referrals
Assessments/Evaluations	21.1%
Case Management	1.5%
Clinical Services	36.5%
Monitoring Services	8.0%
Non-Clinical Services and Interventions	15.1%
Other: Non-Interventions/Service Enhancements	13.2%
Residential Services	2.4%
Unknown	2.3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,740</i>

For many youth referred for RSC services, CSU staff identify up to three domains from the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (i.e., Aggression and Violence, Alcohol and Drugs, Attitudes, Community and Peers, Employment and Free Time, Family History, Mental Health, School, Skills) as priority areas to target during the service. Of the 337 youth with at least one

identified domain who were referred and discharged from RSC services during FY 2022, 130 (38.6%) had a reduction in at least one targeted domain.

A Pre-Release Problem Solving Team was established in May 2023 with the goal of creating a well-defined process to ensure all youth have access to and receive services prior to their release from a direct care placement. The team was charged with identifying gaps in and barriers to services with correlating solutions. The team has created an implementation plan inclusive of five sub-workgroups focused on enhancing the RSC referral process, the commitment and reentry process, DJJ forms and BADGE documentation, mental health services transition planning (MHSTP), and criteria for step-down programs.

SEAS TRAUMA SCREENING TOOL

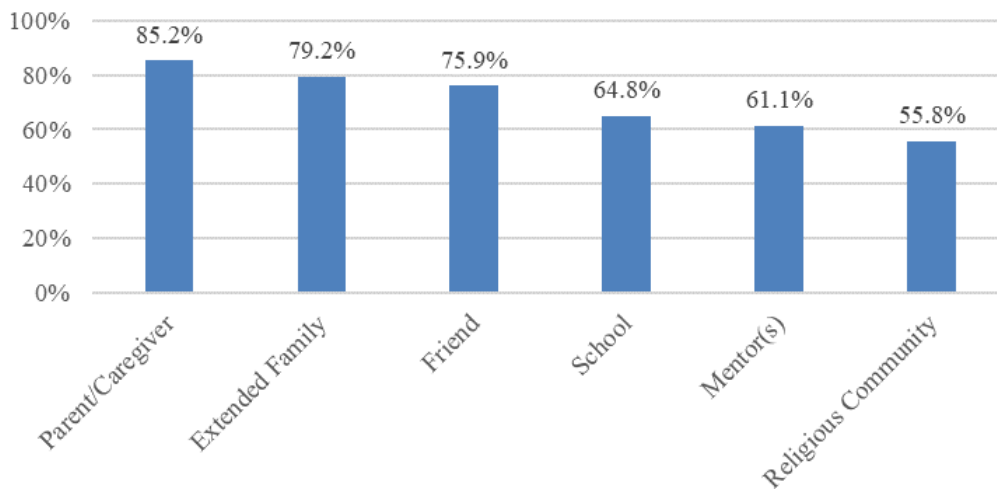
The Screening for Experience And Strengths (SEAS) trauma screening tool, which DJJ implemented in June 2022, is used to identify physical and sexual abuse, exposure to community violence, trafficking, domestic violence, and bullying. It also identifies protective factors and a youth's support systems so responses can be targeted to utilize and build upon a youth's identified strengths and existing supports. The screening tool assists in determining if the juvenile has experienced trauma in these areas and informs workers of the need for a trauma-informed mental health assessment and services.

Of the 2,242 youth administered a SEAS assessment in FY 2023, 1,071 (47.8%) received a score indicating the youth needed interventions. 381 (17.0%) of youth reported having at least one victimizing experience in the 30 days prior to the assessment.

The majority of youth considered their parents and caregivers (85.2%), extended family (79.2%), friend(s) and friend(s)' family (75.9%) to be a strong part of their support system. Additionally, many youth reported their school communities (64.8%), mentor(s) (61.1%), and religious community (55.8%) to be a strong part of their support system as well. (See graph below.¹) However, over a quarter (26.0%) of youth administered the assessment also reported at least one victimizing experience from their caregiver or family.

¹ The "Friend" category includes friend(s) and/or friend(s)' family. The "School" category includes teachers, coaches, or other people at school.

Self-Reported Support System for Youth Administered SEAS, FY 2023



PRE-COURT SERVICES

To promote early engagement with community-based services that provide support to juveniles and families in crisis, probation officers provide information about potentially helpful pre-court services and resources following intake of a petitioned complaint. The probation officer serves as a pre-court services case manager, engaging with the juvenile and family members to determine immediate needs and supports, and providing assistance with accessing services in the community as needed. Participation by youth and families is voluntary. In FY 2023, there was an average of 515 youth receiving pre-court services and resources per day for a total of 4,780 pre-court service statuses.

PBIS AT THE JCC

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a program used in many schools to improve academic, social and behavioral outcomes for students, is being applied to improve the social climate and resident behavior at Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center. It has been in place at Yvonne B. Miller High School, located on Bon Air campus, since February 2018. The following year, there was a 77% decrease in student removals from class due to disruptive behavior.

Research of PBIS programs has shown increases across the social and emotional competence of students, decreases in problem behavior, improved academic performance, improved staff retention, improved organizational health, and a reduction in bullying behaviors.

With an established foundation in the educational setting, it is anticipated that expanding PBIS beyond the classroom and into all areas of residential life, such as at Bon Air JCC, will improve consistency for youth and reduce behavioral problems.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

One goal of the department is to expand reentry vocational programs, workforce development and mentoring to provide resources to facilitate a positive path to successfully returning to the community. The aim of the Workforce Development Center (WDC) is to empower justice-involved youth under DJJ's care with industry-standard skills and credentials to seek, secure, sustain, and succeed in their future career endeavors and in life.

The WDC has two components. The department has created an on-site vocational center at Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center that houses services such as assessment, training and career placement for youth. In addition, the site provides quality workplace readiness skills (WRS) courses and hands-on industry-standard trade programs in electrical, plumbing, HVAC and C-Tech. The WDC has a dedicated building at the Bon Air campus that includes redesigned classrooms for such training.

In collaboration with the Division of Education, youth have the opportunity to engage in vocational skills training while in direct care and transition into community skill programs and job placements. The Division of Education provides youth with courses to meet credentialing requirements, and then the WDC provides a space for students to learn and practice skills that will help them be successful in the workplace. The WDC replicates centers found in the community and provides the same services and resources to promote job readiness.

The second component of the WDC works to establish and maintain relationships with employers and community organizations to develop long-term job opportunities and career training. To increase the likelihood of DJJ youth being matched to employers in their field of interest, the WDC staff build partnerships with community-based employers to create positions, job shadowing, internships and training programs in the communities to which youth are returning. Youth who are committed to DJJ miss critical points in their lives to explore new opportunities as their non-committed peers begin preparing for the future. The WDC fills those gaps by equipping committed youth with the soft and hard skills needed to be marketable in the workforce. Soft skills include such things as communication, time management and how to work as a team. Additionally, the WDC ensures youth also have hard skills such as basic computer skills and effective writing, which can greatly benefit them in their job seeking endeavors.

The goals of the WDC are to:

- Match juveniles with interests and skill-appropriate job and career opportunities
- Increase sustainable job opportunities
- Increase in the recruitment of employers and community organizations for long-term and future placement
- Reduce recidivism

Through its efforts to link youth returning from commitment with DJJ to long-term careers in the community, the WDC helps youth attain skills and resources to become gainfully employed and become resilient, responsible members of the community.

GANG INTERVENTION

DJJ's gang intervention initiative furthers two goals: to support successful community programs and creating new efforts to address the current concerns of the Commonwealth; and to build trust with law enforcement and judicial partners to ensure youth are placed in the best possible, most effective programs.

A newly formed Violence Intervention Team is responsible for the implementation of gang and violence prevention programs within the court service units across the Commonwealth. This includes the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, an evidence-based intervention curriculum used to guide youth away from gang involvement, criminal activity and violence. The 15-week G.R.E.A.T. curriculum includes developing positive relationships with law enforcement and instilling life skills, goal setting, empathy and pride for the community, violence-intervention and conflict-resolution techniques, decision making and problem solving. Successful completion of the program is celebrated with a graduation ceremony, followed by regular group check-in meetings and recreational outings coordinated by G.R.E.A.T. facilitators until each youth is released from supervision.

With the goal of reducing youth gang involvement in the Commonwealth, DJJ's Bureau of Investigative Operations expanded gang prevention and intervention responsibilities. In early 2023, the Bureau of Investigative Operations entered in a contract with the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR) to provide G.R.E.A.T. officer training. It was held at the Virginia Public Safety Training Center and, to date, a total of 92 participants have been trained. The participants consisted of internal and external law enforcement, internal probation and parole staff, and other public safety officials.

Furthermore, Gang Intervention Specialists (GIS), along with supervisory staff and special agents, are assigned to jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth. The GIS includes certified regional gang investigators, probation officers from each of DJJ's court service units, and staff from Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center, the Central Admissions and Placement unit, DJJ's Department of Education, and Community Placement Programs. The Gang Intervention Specialists identify individuals who exhibit gang-like behavior and share that information with law enforcement, local prosecutors and community leaders in order to implement targeted intervention and prevention.

VICTIM NOTIFICATION AND ASSISTANCE

Another important goal of the department is to provide resources to support victims and families – including those with Limited English Proficiency or disabilities – who have been impacted by violent crime.

In furtherance of this goal, DJJ has developed a new focus on victim notification and assistance. The new process helps ensure victims of juvenile offenders are properly notified upon the release of a serious offender. While juvenile records, including disposition, probation and personal data, are kept strictly confidential and can only be released by DJJ in limited circumstances, Section 66-25.2 of the *Code of Virginia* allows for notifications to victims upon release of a serious offender. The department's new victim liaison service can assist the public in navigating the process for notification.

The department updated its website to include contact information for the public. Victims of a juvenile offender who need more information on notifications are encouraged to email the DJJ Victim Liaison at victimliaison@djj.virginia.gov.

The liaison assists the public with notification requests. The department's liaison ensures victims are notified of release of any juvenile serious offender according to § 66-25.2 of the *Code of Virginia*. The liaison also provides victims and witnesses with general information about the court process and provide information on community and statewide resources for victims and witnesses.

STATUTORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

RECIDIVISM RATES

Recidivism rates refer to the rearrest, reconviction or reincarceration for a new delinquent act or criminal offense. DJJ's recidivism analysis is based on data from several collaborating organizations, including Virginia State Police, the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) and the State Compensation Board, in order to track youths' contacts with the adult criminal justice system. Due to the time lag of court processing, rearrest rates provide the most up-to-date information on recidivism and are presented in this report.²

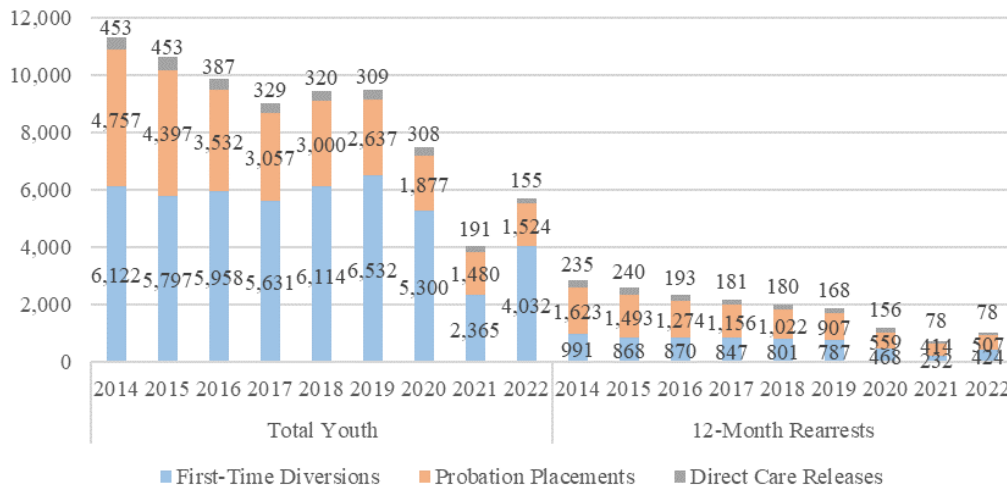
With the drastic decrease in juvenile intake cases due to COVID-19 during FY 2020-2021, rearrest rates tracked during that timeframe (e.g., 12-month rates for FY 2019, FY 2020 and FY 2021 groups) may be lower than previous or future years and are not comparable as an outcome measure. Juvenile intake cases increased slightly during FY 2022 and returned to pre-pandemic levels in FY 2023; therefore, recidivism rates for FY 2022 may be more comparable to pre-pandemic years. While the FY 2021 rearrest rates reported in the FY 2022 Transformation Plan Report were promising, interpretation of these trends remain challenging due to the pandemic's impact on the community and juvenile justice system as a whole, and future trends may continue to fluctuate.

Rearrest rates are presented for three major populations served by DJJ: youth with first-time diversion plans, youth placed on probation, and youth released from direct care. First-time diversions constitute the largest group of youth (4,032 in FY 2022), followed by probation placements (1,524 in FY 2022). Youth released from direct care make up a small and decreasing fraction of the total youth served by DJJ (155 in FY 2022). The graph below displays the number of youth in these three groups that are tracked for 12-month rearrest rates. Importantly, as intake cases decreased, the number of youth in all groups has decreased since FY 2014 (decreases of 2,090 for first-time diversions, 3,233 for probation placements, and 298 for direct care releases). From FY 2020 to FY 2021 alone, there was a decrease of 2,935 first-time diversion plans and 397 probation placements, one of many systemwide impacts from the pandemic. Along with the increase in juvenile intake cases between FY 2021 and FY 2022, there was an increase in first-time diversion plans (increase of 1,667) and probation placements (increase of 44). In total, combining the first-time diversion plans, probation placements, and direct care releases, youth in these statuses decreased by 5,621 between FY 2014 and FY 2022.

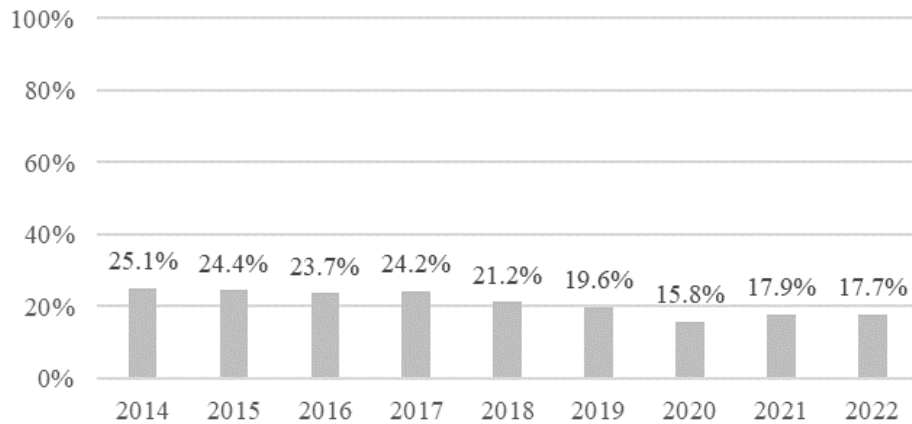
² Rearrest, defined as a petitioned juvenile intake complaint for a new delinquent act or an adult arrest for a new criminal offense, regardless of the court's determination of delinquency or guilt, within a designated period. Violations of probation or parole, contempt of court, non-criminal domestic relation and child welfare complaints, non-criminal traffic violations are excluded as reoffenses. For youth on probation, the tracking period for rearrests begins at the time of placement on supervision. For youth in direct care, the tracking period begins at the time of release from direct care.

When the three groups' rearrest rates are combined for a systemwide perspective, 12-month rearrest rates decreased from 25.1% in FY 2014 to 17.7% in FY 2022. This decrease translates to 1,840 fewer youth rearrested from the FY 2022 groups compared to FY 2014 groups (2,849 to 1,009). (See graphs below.) This rearrest rate had been decreasing somewhat consistently since FY 2014, but the COVID-19 pandemic's impact likely contributed to the steeper declines in FY 2020. Though FY 2021's rate increased from FY 2020, it remained lower than pre-pandemic rates. In FY 2022, the rearrest rate remained steady from the previous year. The rearrest rates by specific populations are described in the following pages, including a breakdown by risk levels.

Status Counts by Total Youth and 12-Month Rearrests, FY 2014-2022

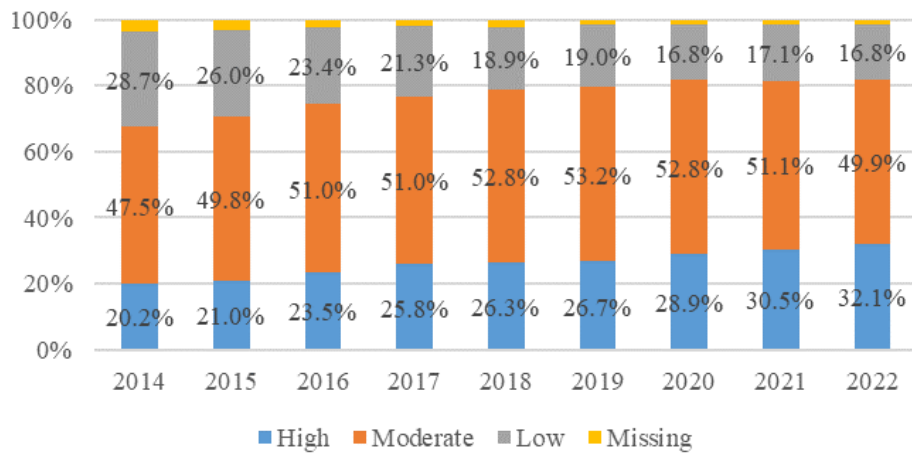


Combined 12-Month Rearrest Rates for First-Time Diversions, Probation Placements, and Direct Care Releases, FY 2014-2022

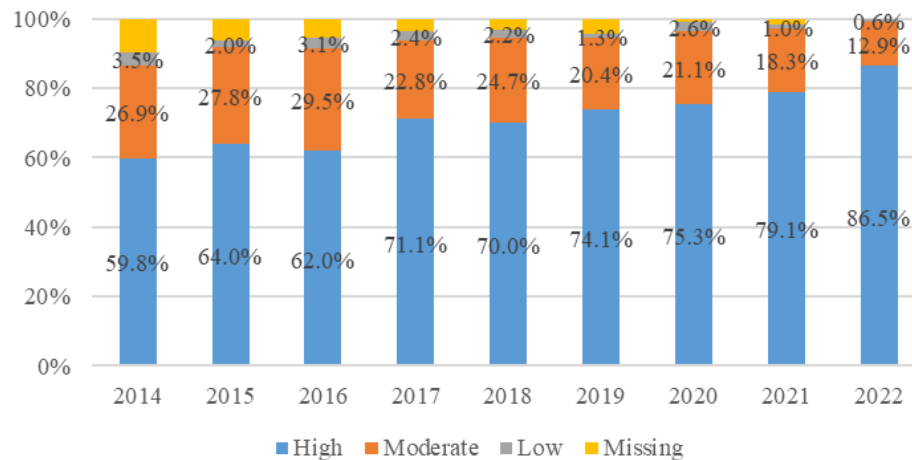


Recidivism rates are examined by risk level in order to identify more specific areas to target. It is important to note that through transformation, mostly moderate- and high-risk youth receive formal handling; therefore, youth placed on probation and youth released from direct care back to their communities are now of substantially higher risk for reoffending than at the beginning of transformation efforts. The percentage of high-risk youth placed on probation increased from 20.2% in FY 2014 to 32.1% in FY 2022, and the percentage of moderate-risk youth increased from 47.5% to 49.9%. Similarly, the percentage of high-risk youth released from direct care increased from 59.8% in FY 2014 to 86.5% in FY 2022. (See graphs below. Risk levels are not assessed for most youth on diversion plans.)

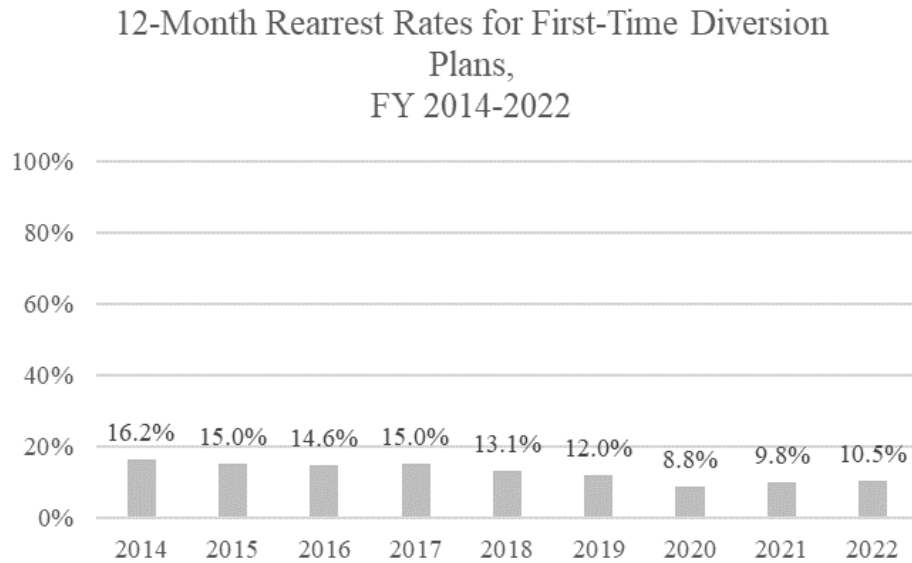
Risk Levels for Probation Placements, FY 2014-2022



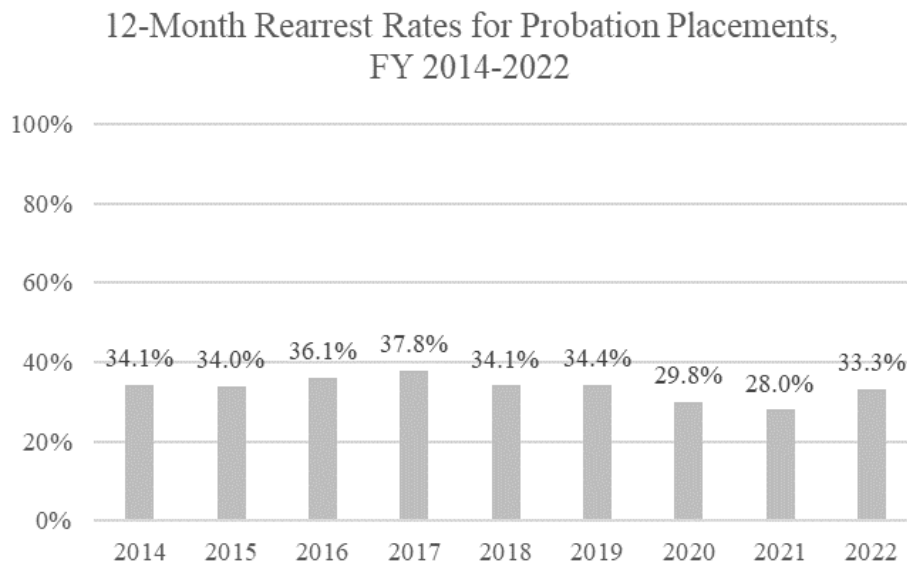
Risk Levels for Direct Care Releases, FY 2014-2022



Rearrest rates for first-time diversions steadily decreased through FY 2020 before increasing slightly in FYs 2021 and 2022. Following FY 2014, the 12-month rearrest rates for first-time diversion plans decreased for five out of eight years, from 16.2% in FY 2014 to 10.5% in FY 2022.³ This decrease translates to 567 fewer youth rearrested from the FY 2022 diversions compared to FY 2014 diversions (991 to 424). (See graph below.)

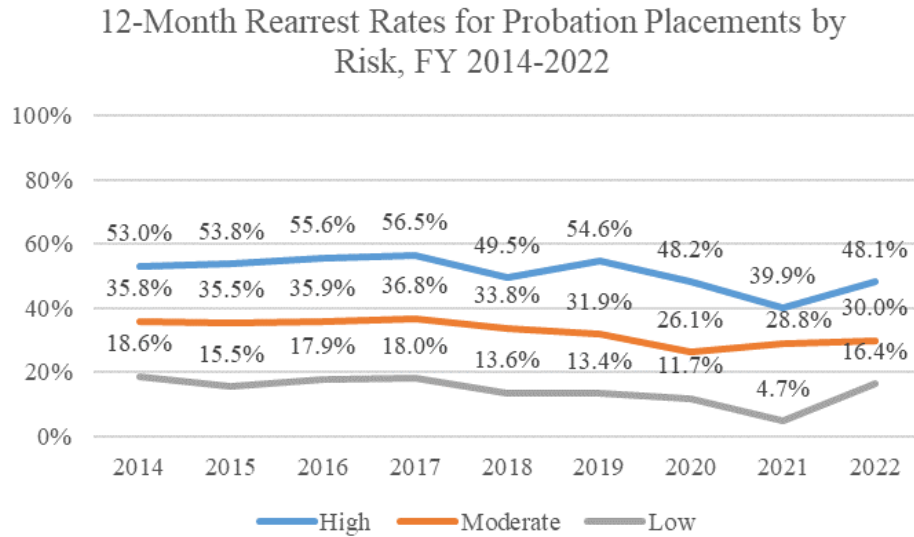


The 12-month rearrest rates for probation placements have fluctuated over the past several years, reaching a high in FY 2017 at 37.8%, followed by a decrease to 28.0% in FY 2021 (impacted by COVID-19) and then an increase to 33.3% in FY 2022. This decrease in rearrest rates translates to 1,116 fewer youth rearrested from the FY 2022 placements compared to FY 2014 placements (1,623 to 507). (See graph below.)



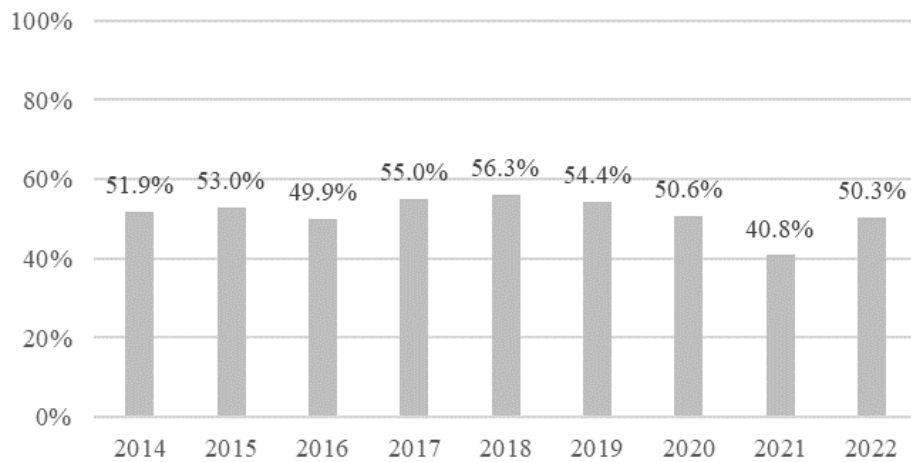
³ The term “rearrest” is used to indicate a subsequent petitioned juvenile intake or adult arrest; however, the diversion does not constitute an initial arrest. Risk levels for diversion plans are not available.

Because of the increase in risk level for probation placements over recent years, the group as a whole is more likely to be rearrested based on their characteristics in FY 2022 compared to FY 2014. Therefore, it is important to consider rearrest trends by risk level. Between FY 2014 and FY 2022 probation placements, the 12-month rearrest rates decreased for low-risk youth (18.6% to 16.4%), moderate-risk youth (35.8% to 30.0%), and high-risk youth (53.0% to 48.1%). (See graph below.)



The 12-month rearrest rates for direct care releases has fluctuated over the past several years, reaching a high of 56.3% in FY 2018 and a low of 40.8% in FY 2021 (impacted by COVID-19) before increasing to 50.3% in FY 2022. Due to the decrease in the number of youth in direct care along with these rates, 157 fewer youth were rearrested from the FY 2022 releases compared to FY 2014 releases (235 to 78). (See graph below.)

12-Month Rearrest Rates for Direct Care Releases, FY 2014-2022

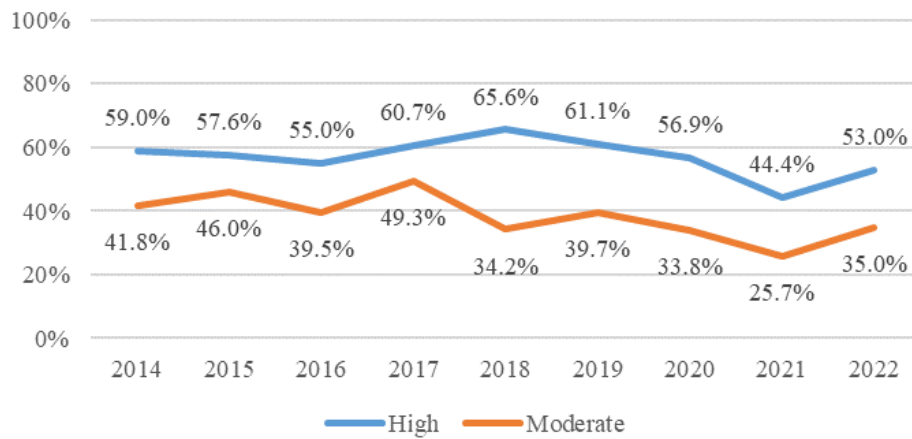


Similar to probation placements, the risk levels of youth in direct care have increased over recent years, meaning the group, as a whole, is more likely to be rearrested based on their characteristics. Investigating rates by risk level is therefore important to understand trends. Between FY 2014 and FY 2022, the 12-month rearrest rates by risk fluctuated, with an overall decrease for both moderate-risk youth (41.8% to 35.0%) and high-risk youth (59.0% to 53.0%). Following substantial declines in FY 2020 and FY 2021 (impacted by COVID-19), direct care release rearrest rates for both groups increased in FY 2022. (See graph below.) Interpretations of these direct care rates can be difficult for three reasons:

- 1) As the size of this population decreases, recidivism rates fluctuate more easily, making trends more difficult to identify. For example, only 35 youth were released from direct care with a moderate risk level in FY 2021.
- 2) Youth released over the timespan presented may have experienced a mixture of programming and initiatives.
- 3) The trends in FY 2020 and FY 2021 are likely related to the pandemic's impacts on the actual behavior of youth, measured behavior of youth, and the justice system as a whole.

Despite these limitations, these rates indicate that youth in direct care face significant challenges upon release and require intensive, therapeutic services to be successful. DJJ will continue focusing on the rehabilitation of these youth in order to improve both their individual outcomes and overall public safety.

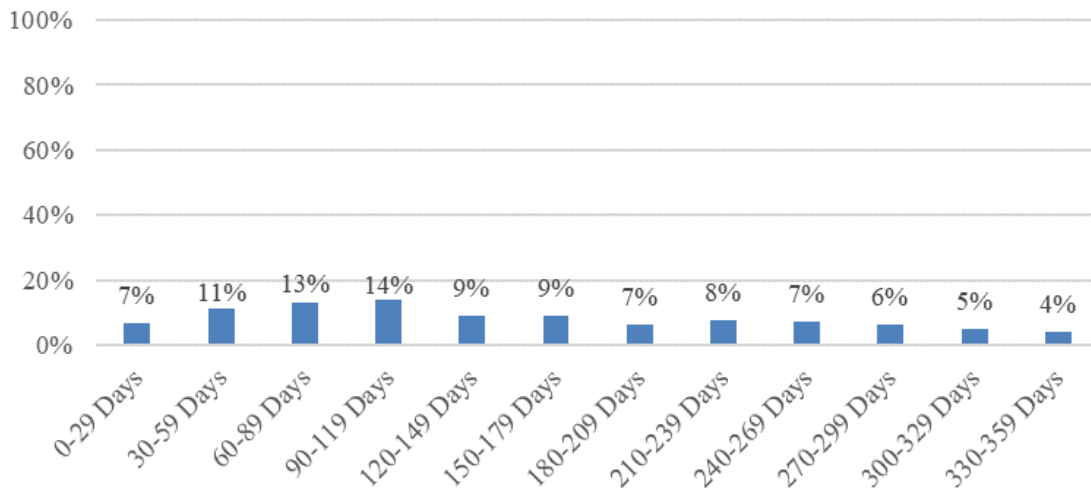
12-Month Rearrest Rates for Direct Care Releases by Risk, FY 2014-2022



Note. Only 1 to 8 youth with low risk were released each year; these youths rearrest rates are not displayed due to the low counts.

For those youth who are rearrested after being released from direct care, their first rearrest is often shortly after release (i.e., between 30 and 120 days). Rearrest rates for the first reoffense generally gradually decline from 150 days onward. By day 150, over half of direct care releases who are rearrested within 36 months had their first rearrest. (See graph below).⁴ Given these findings, DJJ has increased its focus on establishing strong preventative step-down programming for youth as they transition from direct care into their home communities.

Percentage of Rearrested Youth by Time to First Rearrest, FY 2018-2022 Direct Care Releases



⁴ Data include only releases with at least one rearrest within 36 months. Percentages do not add to 100% because only the first 360 days are displayed. Recidivism for this analysis was tracked through FY 2023; therefore, youth released in FY 2021-2022 may not have the full 36 months of follow-up time.

Overall, DJJ’s work is showing positive results, both in the number of youth contacting the system and the percentage of youth rearrested. However, more work is still needed to further improve outcomes across the system. DJJ continues to analyze possible characteristics or explanations for changes in rearrest rates and identify strategies to maximize youths’ likelihood for successful outcomes.

IMPACT ON JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS

Historically, the majority of youth in juvenile detention centers were awaiting their adjudication or dispositional hearing or had received a detention disposition; youth with a commitment disposition were then moved from the detention centers into JCCs. Today, Virginia’s juvenile detention centers serve a more expanded role by providing placement options and services to youth in direct care. DJJ now conducts the majority of initial evaluations in the detention centers for youth who are in a detention center rather than bringing the youth to the JCC. In FY 2023, 135 of 178 (75.8%) of direct care admissions and assessments were conducted in locally based detention centers rather than the JCC. Nineteen juvenile detention centers serve as these assessment sites. As of June 30, 2023, seven detention centers offered CPPs, where youth could be closer to home while in direct care, staying connected to programs in their own communities; and eight detention centers offered detention reentry programs, which allowed youth in direct care to transition back to the community in the months before their release. In FY 2023, an average of 78 youth were in a detention-based direct care placement every day.

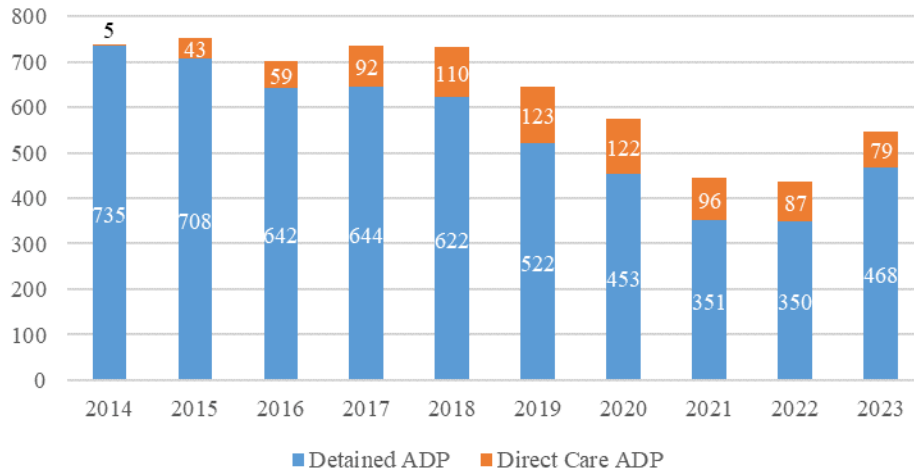
A youth’s residence in a juvenile detention center during their commitment has several benefits: it is typically in or near the community where the youth lives, keeping them close to family and likely in the youth’s original school division, keeping them connected to educational supports, as well as providing individualized evaluation and treatment to meet individual needs.

Overall, as juvenile intake cases have decreased (34.7% between FY 2014 and FY 2023), the number of detainments and the ADP of youth in detention similarly declined (41.6% and 36.3% between FY 2014 and FY 2023, respectively^{5,6}). These decreases were accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although intake cases, detainments, and the ADP of youth in detention increased between FY 2021 and FY 2023, they are now similar to pre-pandemic levels. The detention-based direct care programs help make productive use of the available beds. DJJ paid the detention centers a set rate for CPPs and reimbursed a per-diem amount for youth in the other detention-based programs. The graph below displays the declining ADP of youth in juvenile detention centers (not including those in a detention-based direct care placement) along with the ADP of youth in detention-based direct care placements (i.e., admission and evaluation sites, CPPs, detention reentry programs, or individually purchased detention beds).

⁵ Does not include youth in a detention-based direct care placements.

⁶ The direct care ADP in this report for FY 2014 and FY 2015 does not align with the direct care ADP in the FY 2021 Transformation Plan Update Report due to a different data source.

Detention Utilization, FY 2014-2023



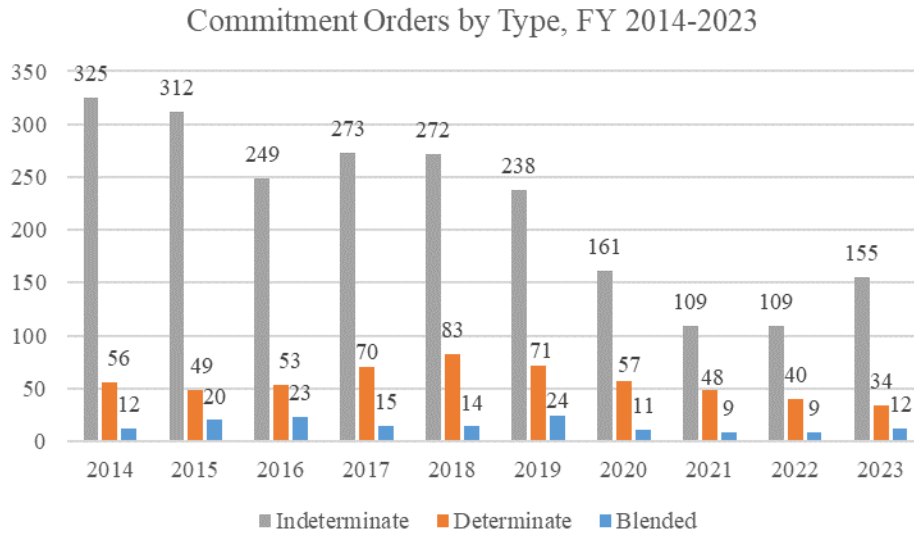
COMMITMENT ORDERS

There are three types of commitments for youth: indeterminate commitments (time served is determined by DJJ staff during the admission and evaluation process and reviewed during treatment), determinate commitments (time served is set and reviewed by the court), and blended sentences (time is served with both DJJ and VADOC). A case involving a youth who meets certain age criteria and is accused of a felony⁷ may be certified or transferred to circuit court where the youth will be tried as an adult; only cases in circuit court may receive a blended sentence, but the circuit court may also impose any other juvenile disposition and/or adult sentence.

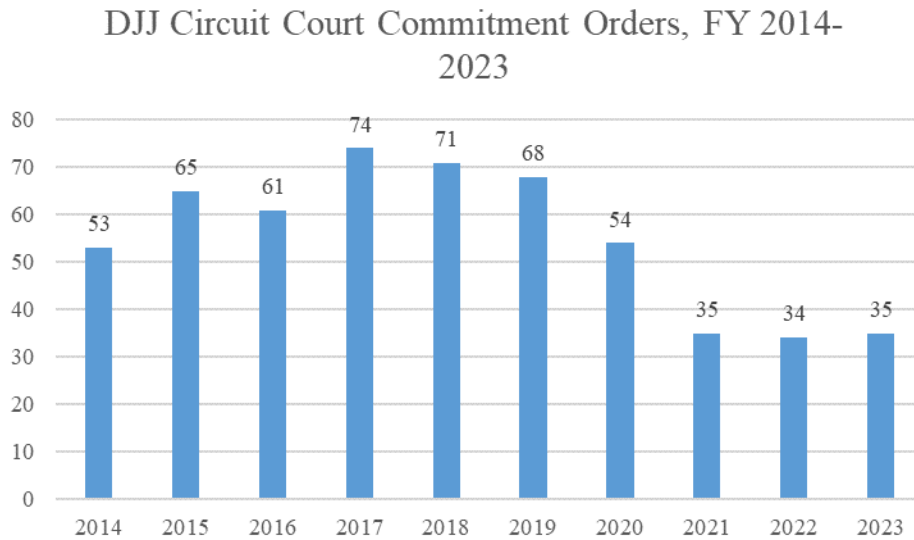
Each year, the majority of commitments are indeterminate. However, the use of indeterminate commitments proportionally decreased (82.7% of commitment orders in FY 2014 compared to 69.0% in FY 2022, with an uptick to 77.1% in FY 2023) while the use of determinate commitments proportionally increased over time (14.2% of commitment orders in FY 2014 compared to 25.3% in FY 2022, then 16.9% in FY 2023). The proportion of blended sentences remained relatively stable, representing only a small portion of the population (6.0% in FY 2023). Importantly, even as the proportion of commitment types shifts, the number of each type of commitment decreased or stayed the same from FY 2014 to FY 2023 (indeterminate: 52.3%; determinate: 39.3%; blended:

⁷ Prior to July 1, 2020, the age criteria for considering a juvenile for trial in circuit court was 14 years of age. Effective July 1, 2020, the age criteria was changed to 16 years of age for mandatory certification and prosecutorial discretionary certification. Transfers to circuit court by a judge and waivers to circuit court by a juvenile maintain the 14 years of age criteria. The types of felonies eligible for trial in circuit court vary for certifications, transfers, and waivers. (See § 16.1-269.1 et seq. of the *Code of Virginia*.)

no change). The number of overall commitment orders declined 38.9%, from 393 in FY 2014 to 201 in FY 2023. (See graph below.)⁸



The number of youth committed to DJJ from circuit court fluctuated across FY 2014 to FY 2017. DJJ circuit court commitments decreased each year from FY 2017 to FY 2021 and remained stable through FY 2023. (See graph below).



⁸ One youth admitted to direct care may have multiple commitment orders; there also may be a lag time between the commitment order and admission dates, so these numbers may vary slightly from other reports. Subsequent, rescinded, canceled, and successfully appealed commitments are excluded.

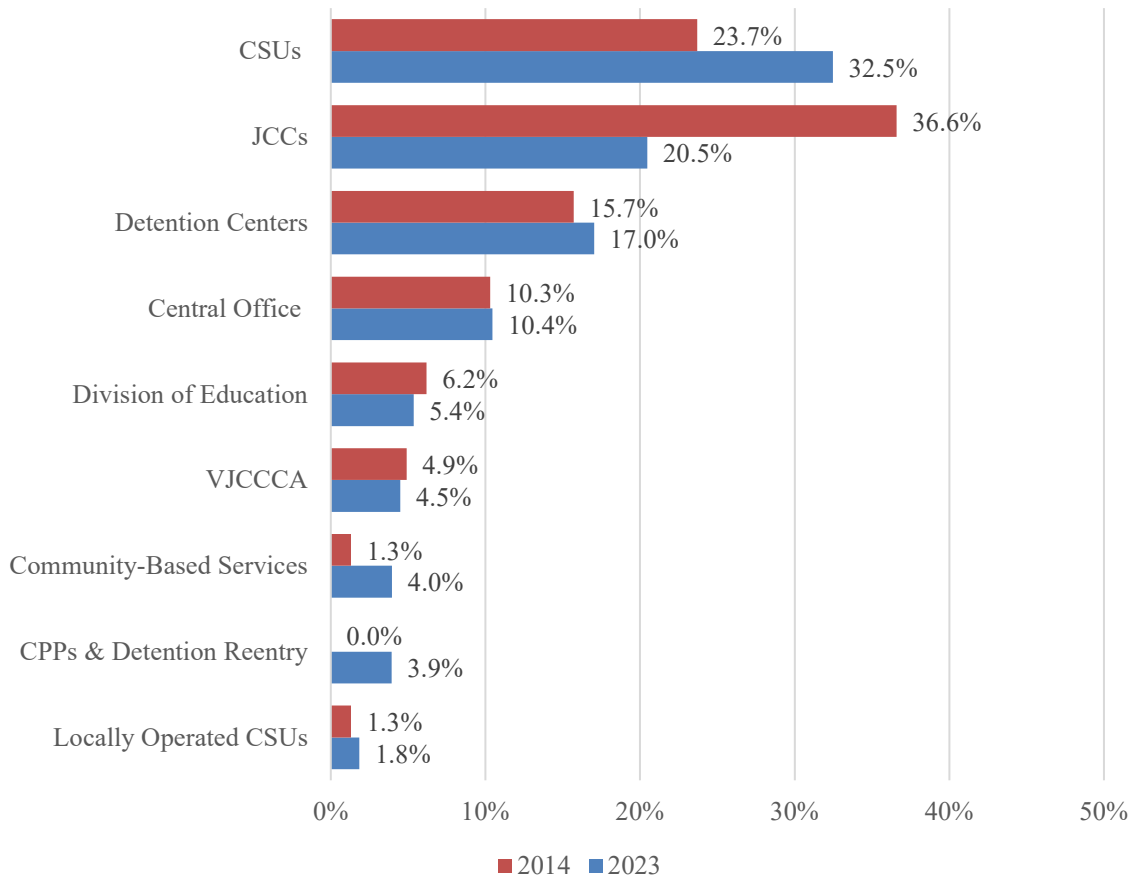
TRANSFORMATION PLAN SAVINGS

This transformation has been supported by the reallocation of funds within the DJJ budget. In FY 2015, DJJ closed the Reception and Diagnostic Center to youth placements, which generated roughly \$3.6 million in savings during the first year and \$4.5 million in subsequent years. In FY 2017, DJJ closed Beaumont JCC to youth. This closure generated approximately \$2.8 million in savings in the first year, and \$23.1 million in the following years. In addition to these savings, the General Assembly allocated \$2.9 million per year since FY 2015 to support the CPPs in local juvenile detention centers.

Savings from past JCC closures were used by DJJ to invest in evidence-informed programs for youth in direct care to better meet the unique needs of youth and their families, such as alternative placements, detention reentry, treatment services for youth across the continuum, and high-quality staff training. Primarily, reducing JCC expenditures allowed DJJ to spend significantly more on programming that keeps lower risk youth in the community and closer to home, where they and their families can work on rehabilitation. Between FY 2014 and FY 2023, the percentage of total DJJ expenditures used for JCCs decreased from 36.6% to 20.5%. During the same time frame, the percentage of expenditures for CSUs, community-based services, CPPs and detention reentry increased from 25.0% to 40.4%. (See graph below.⁹)

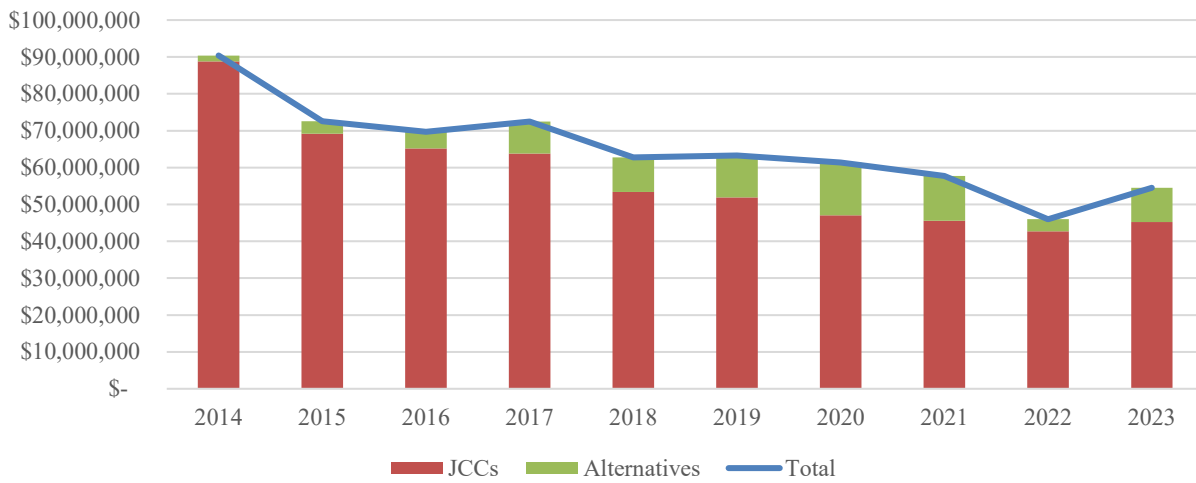
⁹ CSU expenditures refers to all of Community Division expenditures, with the exception of RSC contracts and detention reentry. Additionally, CSU expenditures in FY 2014 included two halfway houses that closed to youth in December 2013. JCC expenditures in FY 2023 included the CAP Unit and direct care admission and evaluations in the detention centers. In both years, JCC expenditures included facilities that no longer house youth, including the operation of the Virginia Public Safety Training Center. VJCCCA stands for Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act.

DJJ Expenditures, FY 2014 and FY 2023



Over a 10-year period, total direct care expenditures decreased. The direct care ADP in JCCs decreased from 555 in FY 2014 to 135 in FY 2023, while the ADP in non-JCC alternative placements increased from eight to 79. Additionally, Culpeper JCC, the Reception and Diagnostic Center, and Beaumont JCC closed to youth in FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2017, respectively. In line with these changes, the expenditures for JCCs decreased while the expenditures for alternative placements increased through FY 2020 due to continuous efforts to reinvest funds toward alternative placements and the continuum of services, resulting in an overall decrease in direct care expenditures. However, currently due to an increasing population, FY 2023 per capita related expenditures increased for both JCCs and alternative placements increased from FY2022. (See graph and table below for direct care expenditures.)

Direct Care Expenditures, FY 2014-2023



Direct Care Expenditures, FY 2014-2023

FY	JCCs	Alternatives	Total
2014	\$ 88,759,088	\$1,632,338	\$ 90,391,426
2015	\$ 69,156,790	\$ 3,388,091	\$ 72,544,881
2016	\$ 65,148,659	\$ 4,577,156	\$ 69,725,815
2017	\$ 63,760,645	\$ 8,740,304	\$ 72,500,949
2018	\$ 53,350,599	\$ 9,420,849	\$ 62,771,448
2019	\$ 51,905,578	\$ 11,376,333	\$ 63,281,911
2020	\$ 47,076,457	\$ 14,322,176	\$ 61,398,633
2021	\$ 45,554,064	\$ 12,141,294	\$ 57,695,359
2022	\$ 42,709,774	\$ 3,264,414	\$ 45,974,188
2023	\$45,197,688	\$9,273,636	\$54,471,324

In order to improve services and outcomes for youth in direct care, the Transformation Plan aims to reduce the use of the state’s large and aging JCC and replace it with smaller, regional, rehabilitative and treatment-oriented facilities supported by a statewide continuum of local alternative placements and evidence-based services. Serving smaller populations in a therapeutic model can be more expensive per youth than serving large populations with a correctional approach. Due to economies of scale, the administrative and other required costs (e.g., utilities) of operating a facility do not decrease when the population decreases. Furthermore, enhancing the quality of services to best meet the needs of these youth results in additional costs. For example, as the utilization of alternative placements increased for appropriate youth, the JCC served an increasingly older population with longer length of stays; therefore, DJJ is investing in the expansion of options for postsecondary students to include college classes and industry certification courses to better equip youth for future job security. DJJ continues to work to ensure that the JCC increasing population includes the youth with the highest public safety risk and highest need of services. While the treatment plan has evolved, a reduction in JCC per capita costs over a larger population is anticipated and is in line with the goals of transformation.

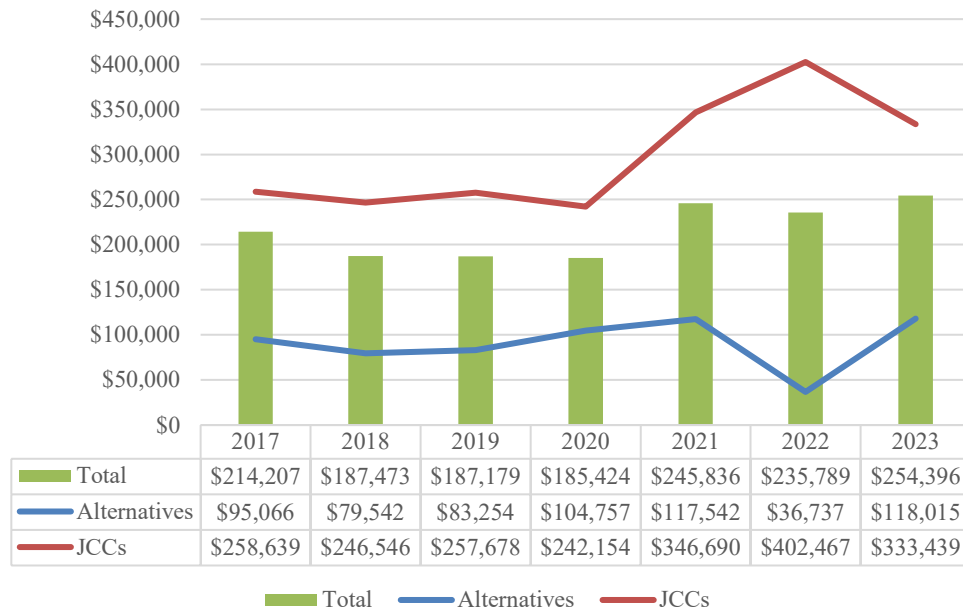
Last year, in FY 2022, the overall direct care per capita cost decreased to \$235,789, from \$245,836 in FY 2021. However, in FY 2023, the overall direct care per capita cost increased to \$254,396 due to an increase in the alternatives per capita cost from the previous year¹⁰. The per capita cost for a youth in a JCC (including Division of Education and Division of Residential Services expenditures) was \$333,439 in FY 2023, reduced from \$402,467 in FY 2022, due to an increasing Bon Air resident population (i.e., the JCC ADP increased 28% from FY 2022 to FY 2023).

While the increasing population is driving the JCC per capita cost down compared to FY 2022, many increasing fixed costs for Bon Air JCC, such as the cost to heat or cool the building, are increasing and increasing per capita cost. The JCC per capita also reflects an investment in meeting the complex and individualized rehabilitative needs (both education and trauma-informed) of the high-risk youth DJJ served in the JCC. The graph below displays the total direct care per capita since the closure of Beaumont JCC in FY 2017, including the per capita for youth in JCCs and per capita for youth in non-JCC alternative placements.¹¹

¹⁰ Per capita costs for alternative placements include admission and evaluation services in the detention centers, CPPs, detention reentry, and contracted alternative placements.

¹¹ Per capita costs for secure youth facilities can vary widely by system based on the methodology (e.g., which costs are included) as well as the services provided; therefore, comparisons between states should be interpreted with extreme caution. For example, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services reported per capita costs for two state-operated “hardware” secure youth facilities at over \$380,000 (capacities of 14 and 48). North Carolina Department of Public Safety reported per capita costs for secure youth facilities at \$128,521 (capacities ranged from 32 to 128). (Retrieved online from the agencies’ annual reports; both included education costs.)

Direct Care Per Capita, FY 2017-2023



Note: The per capita cost for a youth in a JCC includes both Division of Education and Division of Residential Services expenditures.

LENGTH OF STAY

LOS differs greatly by facility and commitment type. The majority of youth released from direct care in FY 2023 received admission and evaluation services at a juvenile detention center; these 111 youth spent an average of 1.3 months in this placement type. After their assessment, youth then spend time in a treatment placement for the remainder of their direct care stay. As youth may have multiple treatment placement types during their direct care stay, the following LOS averages for the 134 released youth in FY 2023 by placement type are not mutually exclusive (i.e., one youth may be included in multiple placement types). All commitment types are included in the overall LOS averages; as a higher proportion of youth with determinate commitments and blended sentences stay in a JCC, the JCC average LOS is longer than other placement types.¹²

- The average LOS for **all youth released from direct care** was 16.6 months (134 youth).
 - Indeterminate: 10.7 months (88 youth)
 - Determinate or Blended: 27.9 months (46 youth)
- The average LOS in a **JCC** was 19.1 months (57 youth).
 - Indeterminate: 15.0 months (29 youth)
 - Determinate or Blended: 23.4 months (28 youth)
- The average LOS in a **CPP** was 10.4 months (81 youth).

¹² For LOS by placement type, a youth’s total days in a placement type during a single commitment were combined, even if separated by a stay in a different placement type. A youth’s total direct care LOS includes time from commitment, including time spent in a detention center for direct care admission and evaluation services, and may involve a sum of multiple treatment placements. Youth are included in the average LOS for a placement type if they spent at least one day in that type of placement.

- Indeterminate: 5.7 months (58 youth)
- Determinate or Blended: 22.2 months (23 youth)
- The average LOS in **other contracted alternative placements** was 2.3 months (1 youth).
 - Indeterminate: 2.3 months (1 youth)
 - Determinate or Blended: N/A (0 youth)
- There were no youth released from **detention reentry**.

Direct Care Releases by Placement Type, FY 2023						
Placement Type	Total Youth Released	Overall LOS (Months)	Indet. Releases	Indet. LOS (Months)	Det./Blend Releases	Det./Blend LOS (Months)
Total Direct Care	134	16.6	88	10.7	46	27.9
JCC	57	19.1	29	15.0	28	23.4
CPPs	81	10.4	58	5.7	23	22.2
Alt. Placements	1	2.3	1	2.3	0	N/A
Det. Reentry	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A

LOS Guidelines

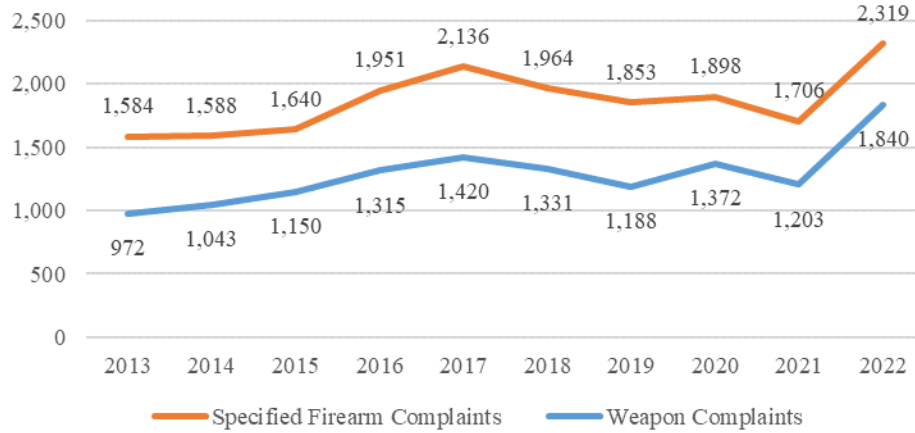
The Guidelines for Determining the Length of Stay for Juveniles Indeterminately Committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice (LOS Guidelines) were updated to achieve a balance of rehabilitation, skill development, and public safety. The revised guidelines, approved by the state Board of Juvenile Justice November 9, 2022, and effective March 1, 2023, have been adjusted to provide adequate time for committed youth to complete vocational programs, comprehensive mental health and behavioral programming, educational requirements, and workforce development. Reentry will focus on preparing youth for successful community behavior by providing in-demand job skills, ongoing support, and tracking. The following data presents three areas that informed the 2023 LOS Guidelines: community violence trends, treatment completion rates, and recidivism rates.

As reported in the FY 2022 Data Resource Guide, specified firearm and weapon intake complaints increased by 35.9% and 53.0% respectively from FY 2021 to FY 2022, reaching 10-year highs.¹³ Similarly, juvenile victims of firearm-related murder and nonnegligent manslaughter (with perpetrators of any age) increased from 20 in 2019 to 40 in 2021, based on data provided by Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).¹⁴ (See graphs below.)

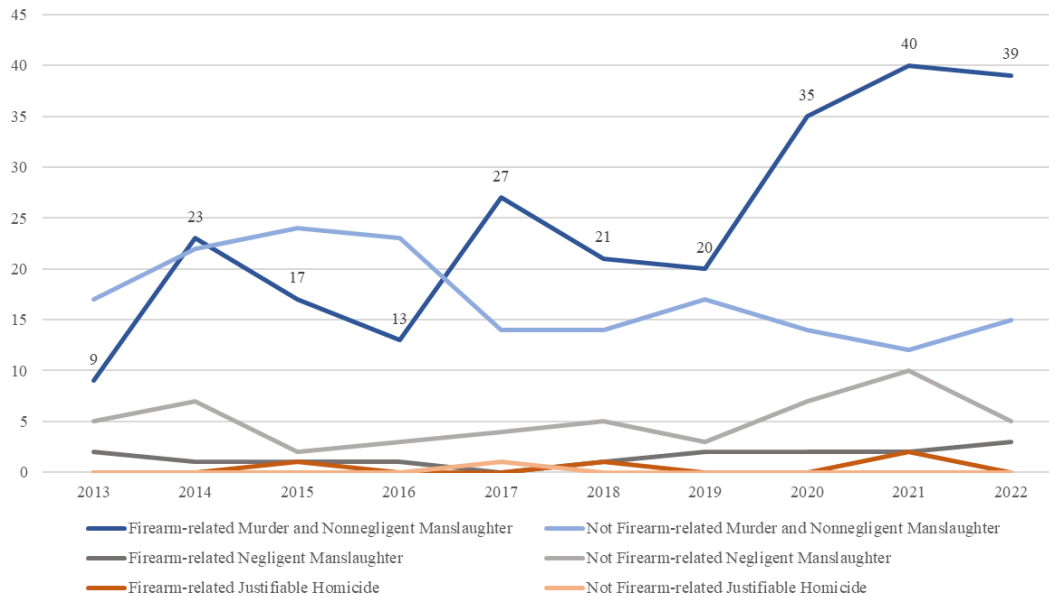
¹³ Specified firearm complaints include Virginia Crime Codes (VCCs) listed in DJJ's Administrative Directive A-2022-005 (Mandatory Overrides for Weapons Offenses on the Detention Assessment Instrument), including WPN-5253-M1. Weapon complaints are offenses with a VCC prefix of WPN. The two groups are not mutually exclusive.

¹⁴ Data Source: Virginia Incident-Based Crime Reporting System (VAIBRS), administered by the Virginia Department of State Police and prepared by DCJS Research Center. Juvenile refers to any person age infant to 17. Firearm presence indicates that a weapon was present in the commission of a crime but does not directly indicate that a shooting occurred. Only localities reporting juvenile homicide victims are included.

Specified Firearm and Weapons Intake Complaints, FY 2013-2022



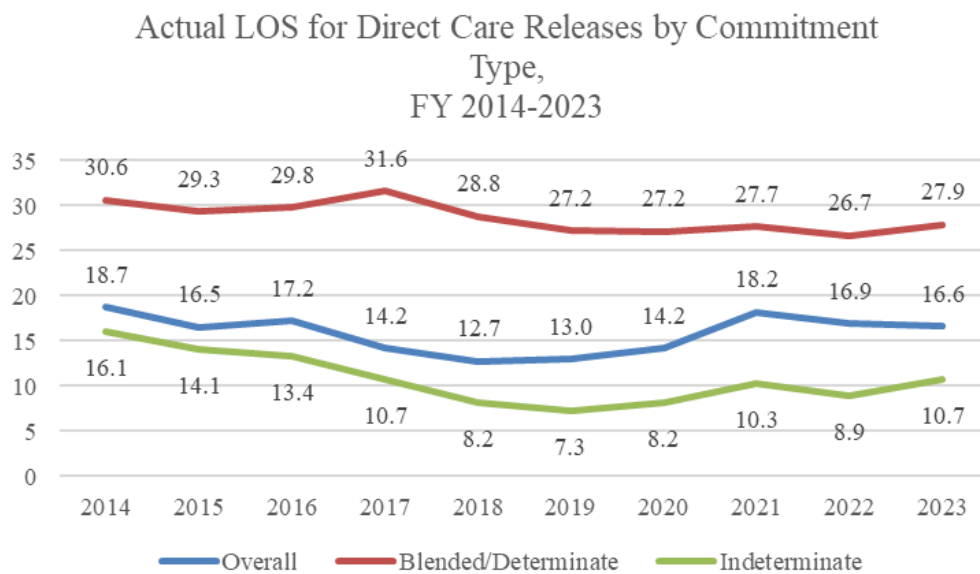
Juvenile Homicide Victims by Homicide Type, CY 2013-2022



The ability to provide adequate treatment to youth while committed was impacted by shorter LOSs. The 2015 Guidelines considerably shortened youths’ lengths of stay and removed requirements, like treatment completion, for release eligibility. These changes resulted in substantially shorter amounts of time for committed youth to receive rehabilitation, treatment, education, and other services, and a lower proportion of youth completing needed treatment.

As a result of the 2015 LOS Guideline modifications, the average LOS for youth with indeterminate commitments who were released from direct care decreased from 16.1 months in FY 2014 to a low of 7.3 months in FY 2019, increased to 10.3 months in FY 2021, and then fluctuated across FYs 2022 and 2023. Similarly, the overall average LOS, regardless of

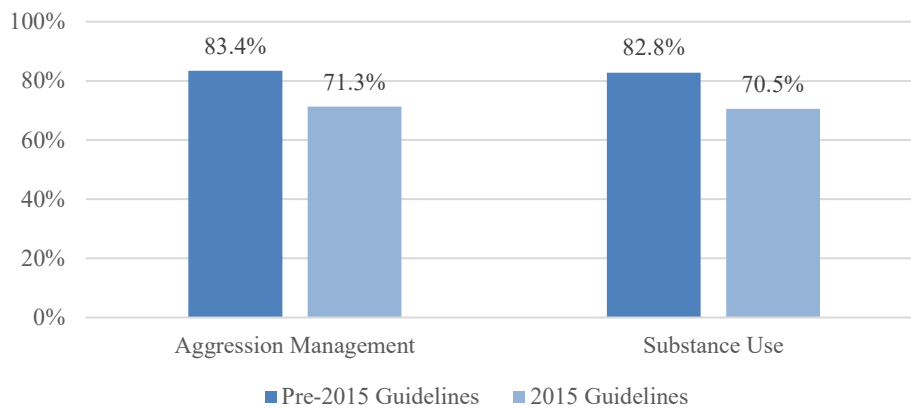
commitment type, decreased from 18.7 months in FY 2014 to a low of 12.7 months in FY 2018, increased to 18.2 months in FY 2021, and then decreased to 16.6 months in FY 2023. (See graph below.)



For youth with indeterminate commitments and identified treatment needs, completion rates for aggression management treatment and substance use treatment prior to the 2015 LOS Guidelines were 83.4% and 82.8%, respectively; however, completion rates dropped to approximately 70% for both types of treatment during the 2015 LOS Guidelines. (See graph below.¹⁵) Completion rates were lowest for the shortest for youth with LOSs shorter than four months. For example, of youth with indeterminate commitments during the 2015 Guidelines and aggression management treatment needs, only 38.1% with LOSs of four months or less completed treatment compared to 71.3% overall.

¹⁵ “Pre-2015 Guidelines” includes released youth with indeterminate commitments and admission dates between July 1, 2012, and October 14, 2015. “2015 Guidelines” includes released youth with indeterminate commitments and admission dates between October 15, 2015, and June 30, 2022. Youth admitted during FY 2023 are not included to allow lag time for releases to occur. Releases were tracked through September 11, 2023. Youth with mandatory or inpatient sex offender treatment needs are exceptions to the anticipated LOS ranges and generally stay longer due to the length of the treatment program; they were excluded from the analyses. Treatment completion was not recorded prior to FY 2014. Since FY 2014, there were inconsistent record practices. Releases prior to FY 2014 were excluded. Treatment completed in the community after release from direct care is not captured. Therefore, caution should be taken interpreting these findings.

Rate of Treatment Completion for Youth with Indeterminate Commitments and Aggression Management Treatment Need or Substance Use Treatment Need



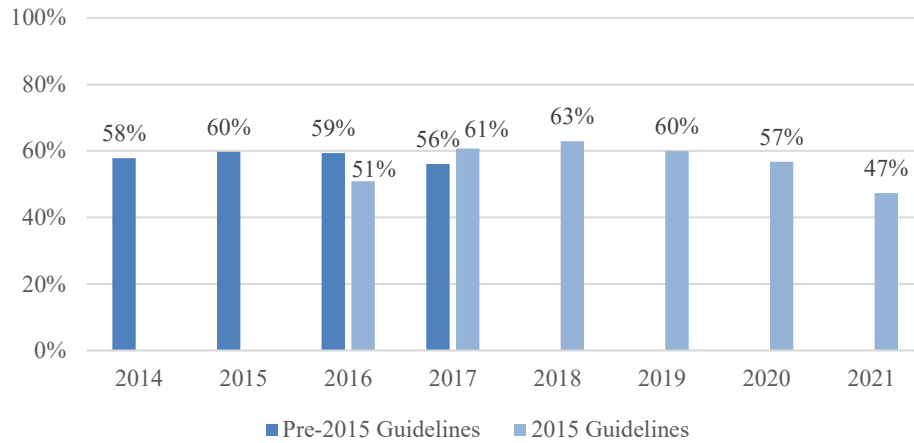
Preliminary data since the agency’s renewed focus on treatment completion suggest positive results. In FY 2023, completion rates for youth with indeterminate commitments and aggression management or substance abuse treatment needs increased to 92.5% and 93.1%, respectively, compared to approximately 70% during the 2015 guidelines overall.¹⁶

Finally, for several years following the implementation of the 2015 LOS guidelines, recidivism rates remained stable rather than decreasing. Rearrest rates for youth released with an indeterminate commitment prior to the 2015 LOS Guidelines fluctuated between 56% and 60%. Following the 2015 guideline revision, rearrest rates ranged from 51% to 63% until FY 2021. (See graph below.¹⁷) In FY 2021, rearrest rates decreased sharply to 47%; however, FY 2021 saw many changes across the juvenile justice system, impacting both actual and tracked criminal and delinquent behaviors due to COVID-19. Trends in juvenile intake cases and other measures within the system decreased dramatically, which would necessarily also result in lower recidivism rates. As a result, the recidivism rates of youth released in FY 2021 should be treated cautiously and should not be interpreted as a representation of policy or program outcomes.

¹⁶ Youth with mandatory or inpatient sex offender treatment needs were excluded from the analysis.

¹⁷ “Pre-2015 Guidelines” includes released youth with indeterminate commitments and admission dates between July 1, 2012, and October 14, 2015. “2015 Guidelines” includes released youth with indeterminate commitments and admission dates between October 15, 2015, and June 30, 2022. Youth with mandatory or inpatient sex offender treatment needs were excluded from the analyses.

12-Month Rearrest Rate for Indeterminate Commitment
Releases by FY, FY 2014-2021



The proportion of youth released from direct care who were rearrested within 12 months for felony or misdemeanor violent offenses (assault, weapons, robbery, murder, kidnapping, and sexual abuse) rose from FY 2015 to FY 2020. In FY 2015, 24.5% of youth released from direct care were rearrested for one of these violent offense and in FY 2020, this percentage increased to 34.7%. As mentioned previously, 12-month rearrest rates decreased sharply to 39.8% in FY 2021, likely related to COVID-19 impacts on the overall system; however, the proportion of youth rearrested for violent offenses did not decrease as sharply (27.7%) and remained similar to FY 2019 levels (27.5%). (See table below.¹⁸)

Youth Rearrested within 12 Months of Release for Select Offenses, FY 2015-2021 Direct Care Releases

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Rearrest Rates (Any Offense)	53.0%	49.9%	55.0%	56.9%	55.3%	50.3%	39.8%
Felony							
Assault	9.9%	11.6%	9.7%	14.4%	12.6%	14.3%	11.5%
Weapons	9.1%	7.8%	7.9%	13.1%	11.0%	15.3%	14.1%
Robbery	6.2%	7.2%	6.1%	9.1%	7.8%	7.1%	6.3%
Murder	1.8%	1.6%	1.2%	2.5%	1.9%	1.9%	0.5%
Kidnapping	1.1%	1.3%	1.8%	1.9%	1.3%	1.3%	1.0%
Sexual Abuse	1.1%	0.8%	0.3%	1.3%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%
Felony Total	17.2%	18.9%	18.8%	25.9%	21.4%	27.6%	24.6%

¹⁸ All commitment types are included. Youth may be rearrested for more than one offense. Between FY 2015 and FY 2021, there were an average of 1.9 complaints per rearrest. Reoffense data is presented on a two-year time lag to allow adequate time for data cleaning. See DJJ's Data Resource Guide for an explanation of recidivism methodology and annual recidivism rates. Rates may not match other reported rates due to different dates of analysis.

Misdemeanor							
Assault	9.9%	9.3%	9.7%	9.4%	6.5%	9.7%	8.4%
Weapons	6.2%	5.4%	7.6%	9.4%	9.1%	11.4%	9.4%
Sexual Abuse	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Misdemeanor Total	15.0%	13.7%	16.4%	16.9%	14.6%	20.1%	16.8%
Total Select Offenses	24.5%	26.6%	27.1%	31.9%	27.5%	35.4%	27.7%
Total Direct Care Releases	453	387	329	320	309	308	191

Under the 2023 LOS Guidelines, a juvenile’s length of stay can be impacted by the successful completion of a vocational program, along with therapeutic treatment and appropriate behavior. Youth committed under the updated guidelines will have the ability to petition for early release upon completion of their designated programming requirements. All such requests will be considered by a central review committee that includes representatives from education, residential services, quality assurance, investigations, reentry, and community programs. A victim advocate has been added to the review process to represent any concerns relayed by the victims.