



House Appropriations Committee

March 6, 2024

HB 1136 - Human Services - Youth Services Bureaus – Funding

Youth Services Bureau Restoration Act

SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus strongly supports House Bill 1136. Maryland's Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) provide effective youth delinquency diversion treatment and family intervention services aimed at developing competent youth who can become responsible and productive members of society.

YSBs have been part of Maryland's strategy for over 40 years, and work with youth and their families in helping to build effective skills to change behaviors. The network of YSBs have built strong, long-standing partnerships with local schools, faith-based organizations, and local government agencies to enhance the health, safety and well-being of Maryland's children, youth and families. The success can be attributed to their prevention, community-based, family-focused approach to the development of a young person and their family's protective factors.

YSBs are partnerships between state and local governments and should exist in every jurisdiction in Maryland, yet the gradual erosion of state funding has led to decline in the number of YSBs across the State. **To rebuild the network of YSBs and meet the demand of services, the Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus (MAYSB) calls on the Maryland General Assembly to support HB 1136, to provide \$4.8 million in funding for YSBs FY 2026.**

Funding History

Maryland's Youth Service Bureaus were historically funded by the Maryland General Assembly at \$2.4 million beginning in 1975 and at that time, there were 22 YSBs operating across the State. YSB funds were administered by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) from 1974 to 1994. In 1994, with the creation of the Governor's Office for Children (GOC) and local management boards (LMBs), YSB funds were moved to the Children's Interagency Fund and were passed through LMBs. DJS continues to certify and audit YSBs.

Under the Hogan Administration, there was a gradual erosion of local control of funding that flowed through LMBs. Governor Hogan announced in 2015 a focus on four specific priority areas, necessitating a shift in how LMBs and YSBs used State funds. Successful programs such as YSBs lost funding because they did not directly address one of the four priority areas. GOC took away the authority from LMBs to make decisions as to what programs and agencies an LMB could fund. **This led to the decline of YSBs from a total of 22 in 10 jurisdictions to seven that exist today in just three jurisdictions.**

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Many of the organizations that had been designated as YSBs that lost state funding still exist, but do not provide all of the services that are mandated in law to be an YSB. Several programs, unfortunately, closed permanently. However, there are many organizations that stand ready and willing to re-establish themselves as YSBs.

Why YSBs are important and needed the most now?

YSBs are in Maryland statute and COMAR under DJS (COMAR 16.17.01) to provide juvenile justice diversion. YSBs provide mental health and substance use assessment, prevention, and treatment services as well as community specific services to achieve this goal.

Since their creation, YSBs have had a deep connection with the DJS, one that could be strengthened at this time when community services are needed to help make sure that the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022 is successful.

A majority of young people coming into YSBs are referred for mental health services and the age of children the YSB serve is getting younger. The pandemic has also added to the complexity of cases, and the demand for mental health services.

HB 1136 would increase the wrap-around and preventative services desperately needed to address spiking incidents of gun violence involving teens, including the increase in the number of juvenile victims of homicide and nonfatal shootings. The services are proven to work in keeping young people out of the criminal justice system.

Youth Service Bureaus Provide Effective Mental Health and Prevention Services

- **95% of youth** served in formal counseling do **NOT** enter the juvenile justice system 2 years after ending counseling.
- YSBs measure effectiveness of their counseling services to youth and their families through the empirically-based Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS). YSB results are well above national standards. In Maryland, **80% of youth** assessed by YSBs showed significant improvement, compared to the 60% national standard.

Cost Effective Solution to Prevention Services

- YSBs are **cost effective**. Every investment of \$1 by the State leverages an additional \$8 in services.

Our Future

Mandating a fiscal commitment from the State of **\$4.8 million in FY 2026** would allow for the re-establishment of bureaus closed under the previous Administration. It would also ensure focused programming within local communities for prevention, diversion and CINS services, and would mandate local fiscal and community investment by continuing the requirement of a local government match to state dollars. The requested \$4.8 million takes into account inflation, the increased demand of services, and the costs associated with the re-establishment of closed YSBs.

We urge a favorable report.

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