



RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT NOTE

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
MARYLAND ▪ GENERAL ▪ ASSEMBLY

2025 Session
HB0814

Department of Juvenile Services - Report on Youth Service Bureaus

Bill Summary

This bill requires the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to report to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee on or before October 1, 2025, and each October 1 thereafter, on (1) efforts by DJS to promote predelinquent programs, including youth service bureaus; (2) efforts by DJS to collaborate with and provide technical assistance to local governments regarding the establishment, use, and funding of youth service bureaus; (3) an assessment of the programs and activities conducted by youth service bureaus; and (4) any other efforts to prevent youth offenses.

Racial Equity Impact Statement

The bill requires annual reporting by DJS regarding predelinquent programs, including those offered by youth service bureaus (YSB). Considering that Black youth are generally overrepresented in the juvenile justice system, any assessment of youth diversionary programs that leads to the expansion of successful programs would be particularly beneficial to these youth. The number of YSBs in the State has declined over the past three decades, and YSBs are only currently available in 4 jurisdictions, down from 11 jurisdictions in 2003. Past limited research suggests that YSBs substantially help juveniles reduce future contacts with the juvenile justice system. The reporting required by the bill will impact youth offenders to the extent that it assists in the successful establishment and promotion of additional diversionary resources such as YSBs.

Analysis

This bill requires DJS to report on (1) efforts by DJS to promote predelinquent programs, including YSBs; (2) efforts by DJS to collaborate with and provide technical assistance to local governments

regarding the establishment, use, and funding of YSBs; (3) an assessment of the programs and activities conducted by YSBs; and (4) any other efforts to prevent youth offenses.

YSBs are community-based entities that are operated to (1) provide community-oriented delinquency prevention, youth suicide prevention, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, and youth development; (2) ameliorate conditions that contribute to delinquency, youth suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and family disruption; and (3) function as an advocate of youth needs.

Juvenile Intake Process

The intake process for juveniles accused of any criminal offense requires a determination as to whether the juvenile court has jurisdiction and whether judicial action is in the best interest of the public and/or the child. DJS intake officers are authorized to (1) disapprove a complaint as legally insufficient; (2) resolve the matter at intake with or without services; (3) propose an informal adjustment period (also called pre-court supervision); or (4) authorize the filing of a petition by the State's Attorney's Office. While DJS can informally handle all complaints, violent felonies and handgun violations must be reviewed by the State's Attorney and approved for informal adjustment/pre-court supervision. Informal adjustments serve to divert youth from formal juvenile court processing.

DJS Diversion Activity and Youth Service Bureaus

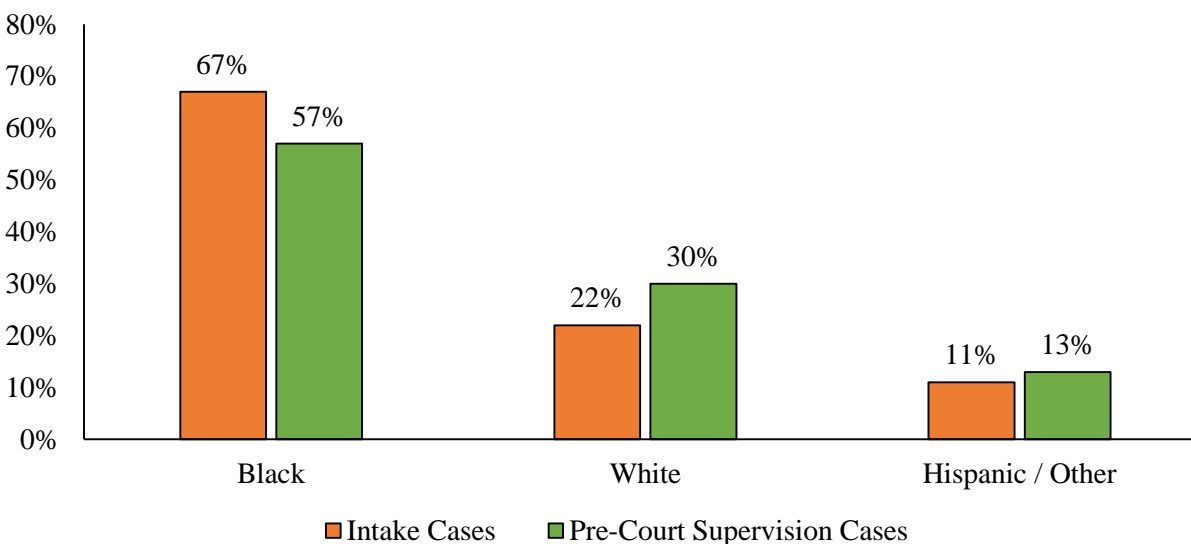
Pre-court supervision, also referred to as "informal adjustment," diverts youth from formal juvenile court processing with the intention of holding youth accountable for their actions while avoiding formal processing in the courts. A DJS intake officer can offer pre-court supervision when they determine that the juvenile court has jurisdiction, but that it would be in the best interests of the public and the youth to handle the complaint without judicial action. Youth referred for less serious offenses and with a lower risk of recidivism are more likely to be handled informally. Youth with nonviolent felony offenses can also be referred for pre-court supervision. Approval is required from the State's Attorney's Office for violent felonies.

According to DJS, a pre-court supervision agreement is a contract unique to the case that outlines the purpose, proposed length, conditions of behavior, and services to be accessed. The parties agree to participate, and intake staff provides support to ensure that youth and families can access services where applicable.

YSBs provide youth delinquency diversion treatment and family intervention services and have been utilized for over 40 years. There are eight YSBs currently operating in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Carroll, and Prince George's counties. YSBs are one component of diversionary services utilized by DJS in place of formal petitions to the juvenile court. Cases that are referred to pre-court supervision or that are resolved at intake may involve the services of a YSB. DJS reports that the proportion of complaints diverted from juvenile court, either by resolving complaints at intake or by entering into informal pre-court agreements, has steadily increased over the past decade, although diversions have declined in the last two years. Youth that have been diverted have a high rate of success, with few having new offenses within a year.

Exhibit 1 shows the percentage of intakes and pre-court supervision referrals by race and ethnicity for fiscal 2024. Black juveniles comprised 67% of the intake population and 57% of the pre-court supervision population in fiscal 2024.

Exhibit 1
DJS Intake Cases and Pre-Court
Supervision Cases by Race and Ethnicity
Fiscal 2024



Source: Department of Juvenile Services

Conclusion

YSBs and other predelinquent diversion programs are the cornerstone of DJS’s strategy for diversion of youth from the school-to-prison pipeline. The annual reporting required by the bill will allow for a more comprehensive assessment of YSB programs and activities, helping to identify best practices, address gaps, and strengthen community-based support systems. As a proactive data-driven strategy to promote youth diversionary opportunities, the annual reporting required by the bill will likely benefit youth to the extent that it ultimately leads to additional YSBs and similar programs that prioritize the well-being and positive development of youth.

Information Sources: Department of Juvenile Services; Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus; Department of Legislative Services

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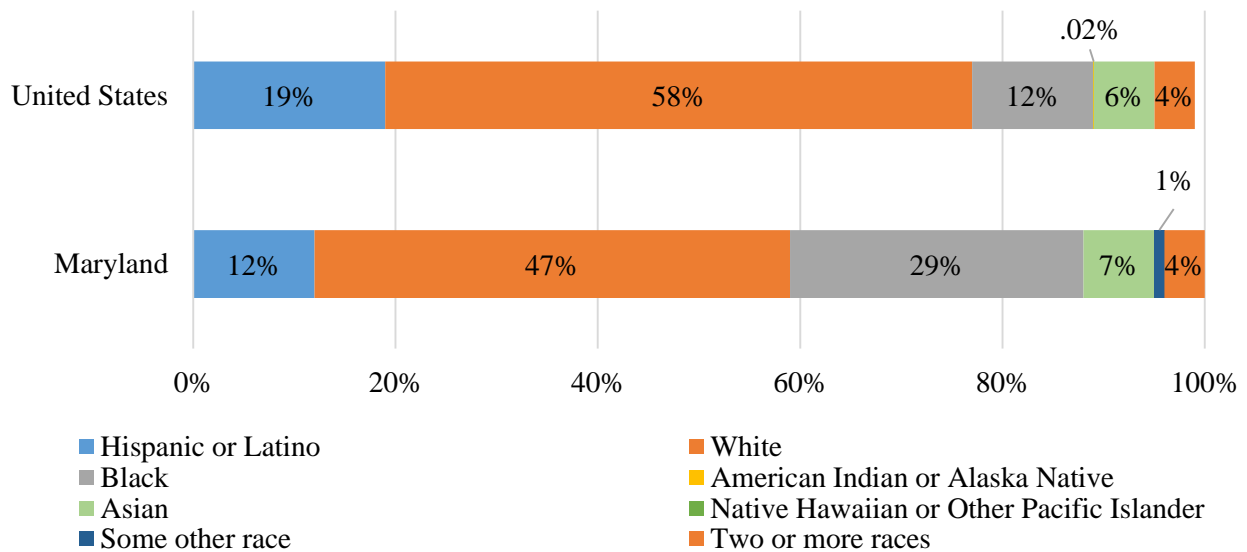
Appendix – Maryland Demographics

Race and Ethnicity of the Maryland Population

Maryland’s 2020 census population is 6,177,244, a 7% increase from the 2010 census count and approximately 2% higher than the 2019 census population estimates. In addition to an increase in population, Maryland’s racial demographics have become more diverse. Maryland is now a state in which racial minorities make up a majority of its total population. Notable changes relevant to this shift are the increase in groups who identify as “other” and “multiracial” (*i.e.*, two or more racial identities), which total 5% of the State’s population. Additionally, the change in demographics is due to the decrease in the number of individuals who only report “white” as their racial group. Despite this decrease, non-Hispanic whites remain the largest race demographic group in the State at 47% of the State’s population.

Compared to the U.S. population overall, Maryland’s population of individuals who identify as a single race is more diverse. Maryland is ranked as the fourth most diverse state by the U.S. Census Bureau’s [Diversity Index](#). As shown in **Exhibit 1**, in Maryland, 47% identify as white alone compared to 58% of the national population. Similarly, 51% of the population identify as non-white or multi-racial compared to 38% of the national population. In both the State and national populations, the largest shares of the non-white population are individuals who are Black, with 29% of the State population identifying only as Black and another 2.5% identifying as Black in combination with some other race. Maryland’s Asian population is 7%, which is slightly higher than the Asian share of the national population of 6%. The State’s overall population by ethnicity, however, is slightly less diverse than the U.S. population; 12% of the State’s population identified as Hispanic or Latino compared to 19% of the U.S. population.

Exhibit 1
U.S. and Maryland Population by Race and Ethnicity
2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171), Table ID P2, HISPANIC OR LATINO, AND NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO BY RACE.