

**Testimony submitted to House Judiciary Committee
Support**

February 26, 2025

HB 814- Department of Juvenile Services - Report on Youth Service Bureaus.

The City of Greenbelt supports HB 814 – Department of Juvenile Services - Report on Youth Service Bureaus. HB 814 asks the Department of Juvenile Services to provide a Report outlining the Department’s efforts to collaborate with a Local Governments in the funding and establishment of YSBs and collaborations between DJS and YSBs to prevent delinquency.

Youth Service Bureaus have been part of Maryland’s strategy for over 40 years, to provide a network of prevention services. The network of YSBs was designed to be community based and to partner 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 of YSBs can be attributed to their prevention, community-based, family-focused approach to the development of a young person and their family’s protective factors.

Greenbelt CARES Youth Services Bureau is a department within the City of Greenbelt. It was established to provide prevention services to children, youth and their families. Greenbelt CARES is a community-oriented, family focused agency offering a variety of mental health, education, and social supports to Greenbelt and surrounding communities in Prince George’s County. CARES provides individual adult and family counseling as well as Parenting Classes and Anger Management groups. CARES offers counseling and groups in Spanish and English. CARES provides educational supports to children, teens and young adults through a GED preparation class, tutoring services, and workforce development programs. CARES goals are to help young people succeed in life, in their educational pursuits, to make families a healthy place for children and adults to grow and prosper, and to connect residents with needed resources.

Some common issues for which families seek help are: ADHD; Aggression/Anger/ Violence; Bullying; Delinquent Behaviors; Depression/ Anxiety; Family Conflict; Grief/ Loss; Parenting Concerns; Poor Decision Making; School Related Problems; Social Skills; Suicide Ideation: and Truancy.

The City, as a local government, would embrace working with the Department of Juvenile Services to identify funding for Greenbelt CARES and other YSBs to further their work of preventing youth from entering the juvenile justice system.

Since their creation, YSBs have had a deep connection with the Department of Juvenile Services, one that could be strengthened at this time when community services are in great need. YSBs are known for providing effective mental health and prevention services. In fact, **95% of youth** served in formal counseling by a YSB do **NOT** enter the juvenile justice system 2 years after ending counseling.

We respectfully ask you to Support this bill.