
**EVALUATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES
DECEMBER 2024**



**OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Evaluation of the Department of Juvenile Services

**Department of Legislative Services
Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Annapolis, Maryland**

December 2024

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DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION AND
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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December 16, 2024

Senator Clarence K. Lam, M.D., Senate Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Delegate Jared Solomon, House Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Members of the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee

Dear Senator Lam, Delegate Chang, and Members:

At the request of the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee, the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability has conducted an evaluation of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). This evaluation was performed consistent with § 2-1234 of the State Government Article.

Chapter 1 discusses long-term trends in juvenile justice, Chapters 2 and 3 concentrate on contractual community services, Chapter 4 examines child in need of supervision referrals, and Chapter 5 analyzes case histories of specific anonymous juveniles. Several recommendations are included in the report. The response from DJS is included as Appendix A.

We wish to express our appreciation for the cooperation and assistance provided by DJS.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Powell
Director

MP/mpd

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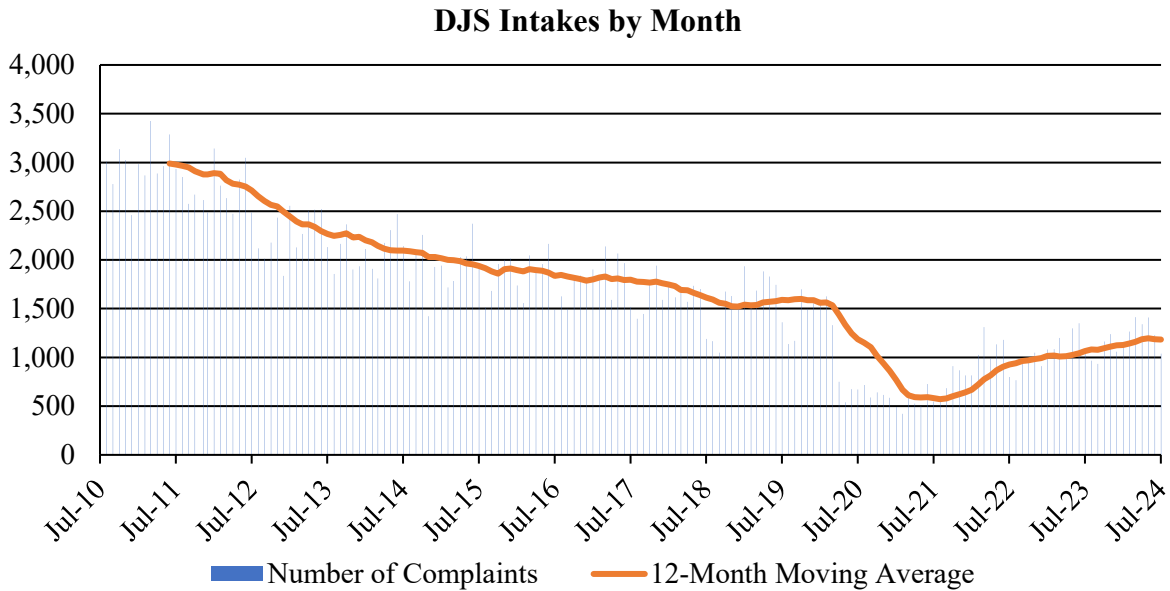
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Evaluation of the Department of Juvenile Services Executive Summary

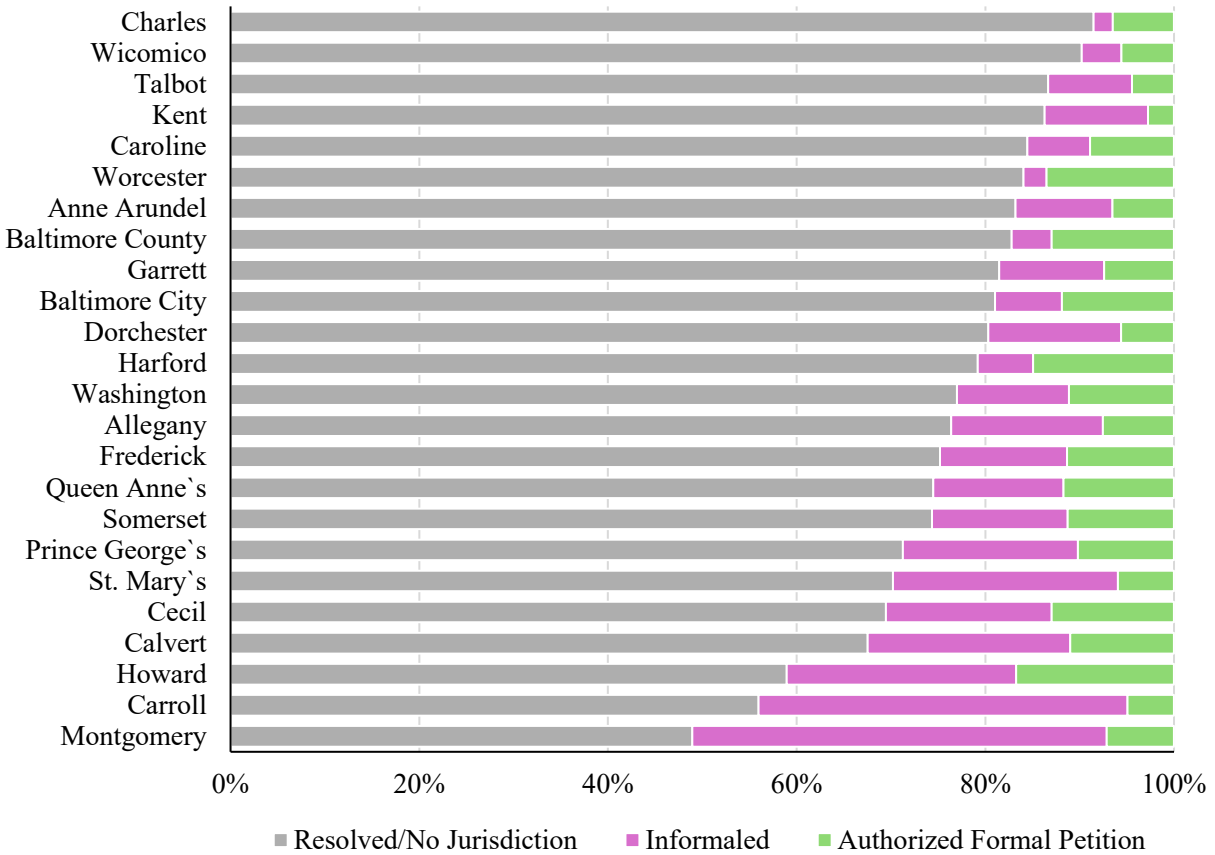
The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) is the State of Maryland’s primary agency responsible for providing care and treatment to youth under the age of 18 who have violated criminal law or are at risk of doing so.

DJS receives over 1,000 complaints per month, down from almost 3,000 per month over a decade ago.



OPEGA examined 20,896 complaints for which the most severe offense was second-degree assault. In 23 out of 24 jurisdictions, DJS resolved the majority of second-degree assault complaints at intake for first-time offenders.

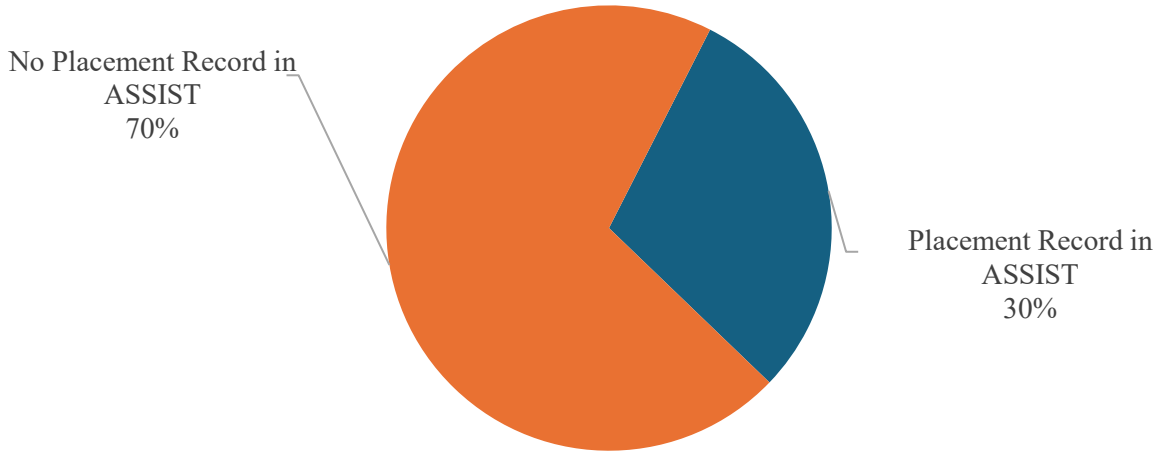
**Case Forwarding Decisions for First-time Offenders by County of Jurisdiction
Sampled Second-degree Assault Cases**



Most youth placed on informal supervision were not placed with a DJS-contracted community-based service provider. DJS-involved youth may receive community-based services that are not funded by DJS, but the agency does not track youth participation with noncontracted vendors.

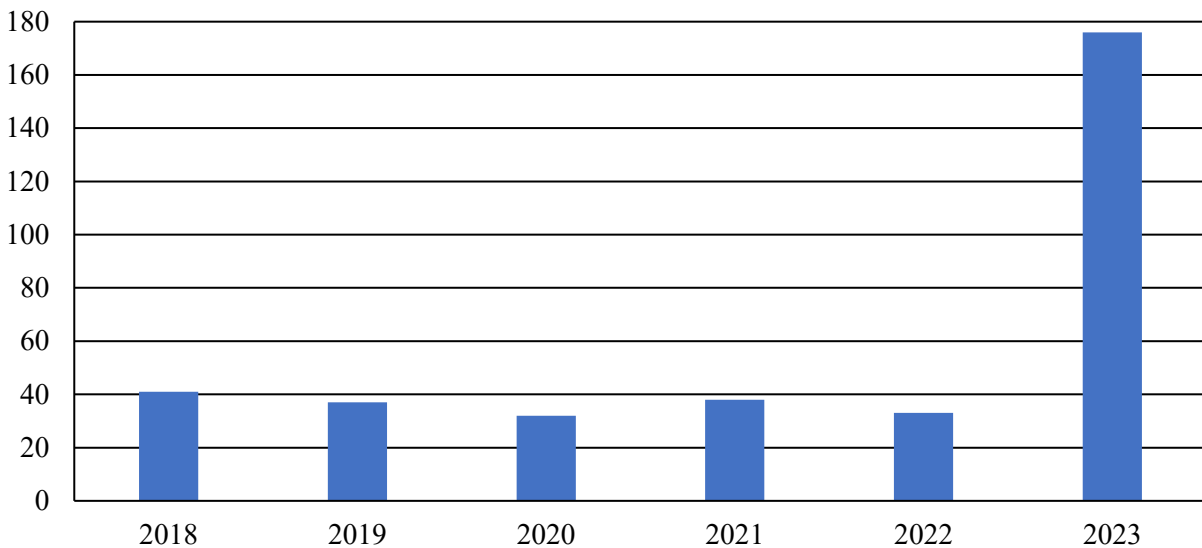
Additionally, DJS oversight of contracted community-based services has historically been focused on fiscal compliance, not performance. Contracted providers submit *Monthly Statistical Performance Reports*, but DJS does not systematically audit or validate, and the reports are not well-suited for provider-level assessments of performance.

**Records of Placement in DJS-contracted Community based Services
Informed Second-Degree Assault Cases**



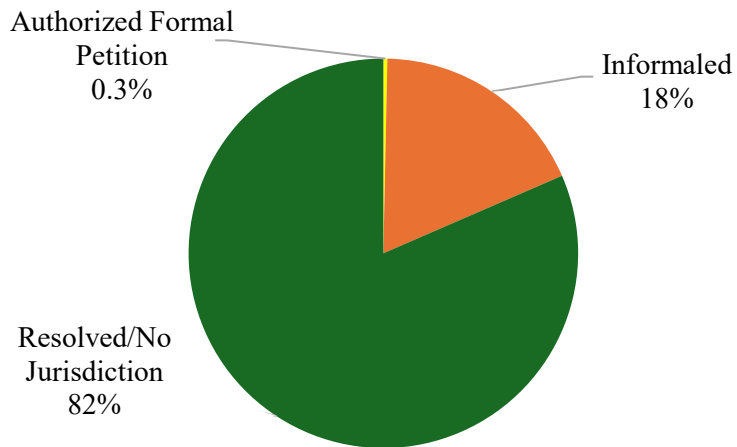
The Child in Need of Supervision (CINS) statute allows DJS to intervene with minors exhibiting challenging behaviors that do not necessarily constitute delinquent acts. CINS is focused on guidance, counseling, and treatment. CINS referrals more than tripled among juveniles ages 10 through 12 from 2020 through 2023.

Number of CINS Referrals for Youth Ages 10 through 12



Very few CINS cases are formally petitioned to court. Factors influencing the decision to file a formal petition include the youth's history with DJS and the severity of the offense. The rarity of formal petitions suggests CINS referrals are being used to divert youth from the court system.

DJS Intake Decisions for Sample of CINS Referrals



Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) is the State of Maryland’s primary agency responsible for providing care and treatment to youth under the age of 18 who have violated criminal law or are at risk of doing so. DJS operates under the statutory framework outlined in Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article § 3-8A-02, which mandates that the department’s activities must balance public safety, youth accountability, and competency development while preserving family ties and providing appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services.

The Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee directed the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) to conduct a performance evaluation of DJS. Based on conversations with stakeholders, OPEGA chose to examine the following:

- the effectiveness of DJS-contracted community-based services;
- the oversight and management of contracted community-based providers;
- case management for youth referred to DJS through a Child in Need of Supervision complaint; and
- the history of interaction between some specific youth and DJS.

The Department of Juvenile Services Case Processing

Youth can be referred to DJS by law enforcement agencies, schools, private citizens, victims, and family members. Generally, around 90% of referrals are from law enforcement. When DJS receives a referral, sometimes also called a “complaint,” intake staff assess whether the juvenile court has jurisdiction. In cases where the juvenile court has jurisdiction, DJS staff will contact the youth and their parent or guardian for an intake conference (“intake”). Generally, intakes result in one of the following outcomes:

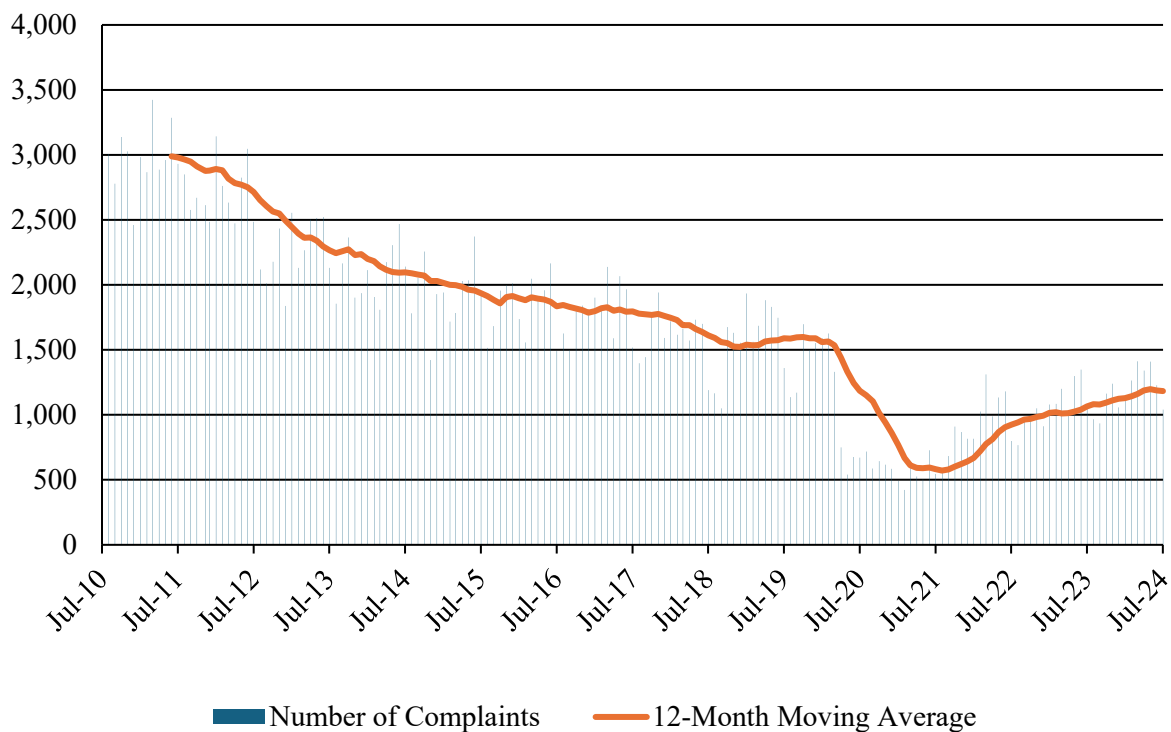
- Resolve, when it is determined that furthering the case would be disadvantageous to the youth and public safety. These youth may be referred to services. This is often called “resolved at intake.”
- Enter into a pre-court supervision agreement where the youth and their family agree to certain conditions without court involvement. These youth may be referred to services. This is often called “informaled.”
- Formally authorize the State’s Attorney to petition the juvenile court for a hearing. This is often called “formaled.”

DJS staff and other stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation tend to use the terms “referral,” “complaint,” and “intake” interchangeably to refer to the initial point of contact a youth has with DJS.

Observation: DJS receives over 1,000 complaints per month, down from almost 3,000 per month over a decade ago.

Intakes have declined steadily since 2011 until the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in **Exhibit 1.1**, DJS averaged about 3,000 intakes per month in 2011. That number steadily declined by about half before the pandemic. During the pandemic intakes declined to around 600 per month. Since the end of the pandemic, intakes have steadily risen to almost 1,200 per month.

Exhibit 1.1
DJS Intakes by Month

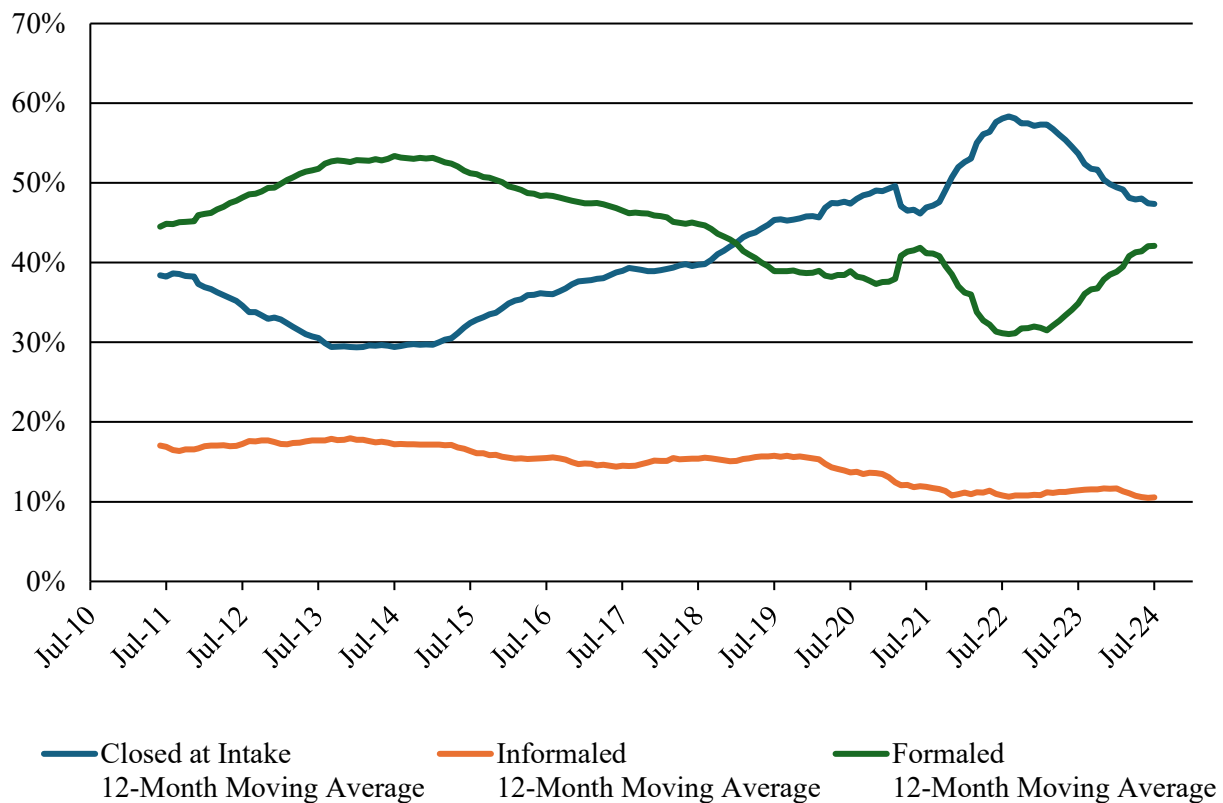


Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Observation: The percentage of complaints resolved at intake decreased from over 60% in summer 2022 to under 40% in summer 2024.

A decade ago, DJS formalized over half of complaints, resolved about 30% at intake, and informaled the remaining 20%. As shown in **Exhibit 1.2**, over the next decade the percentage of cases resolved at intake rose to over 60%. Between summer 2022 and summer 2024, DJS resolved about 20% fewer cases at intake and formalized about 20% more.

Exhibit 1.2
Trends in Intake Decisions
July 2010 through July 2024



Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

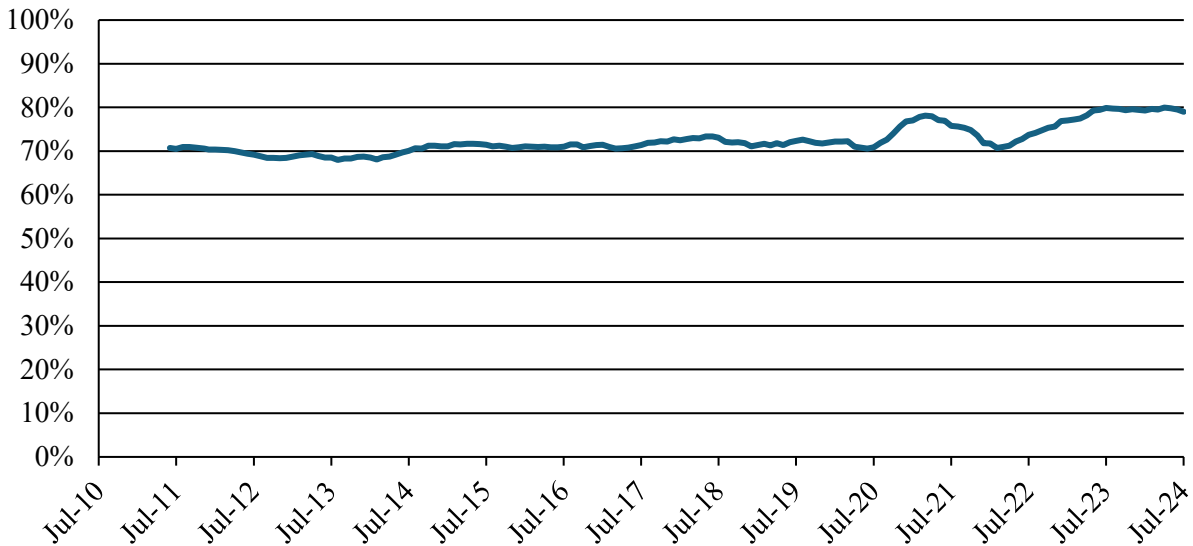
Over the same time period the percentage of complaints that DJS informaled declined by about half, from a peak of 18% in 2013 to around 10% in summer 2024.

Not every youth who DJS formalizes (or charges with a crime) is ultimately adjudicated. Cases can be dismissed, put on a stet docket, withdrawn, or have other outcomes. And not every youth who has a trial is adjudicated delinquent. Those who are adjudicated delinquent are referred to as “found delinquent” and receive either probation or are committed to an out-of-home placement.

Observation: Of formaled youth who are found delinquent, about 80% get probation, an all-time high. The other 20% are committed.

As shown in **Exhibit 1.3**, from 2011 until the COVID-19 pandemic about 70% of youth found delinquent received probation, and the other 30% were committed. During the pandemic the percentage receiving probation rose to almost 80% before declining back to around 70%. Since the beginning of 2022 that percentage has steadily increased to around 80%, which is an all-time high.

Exhibit 1.3
Percentage of Delinquent Youth Receiving Probation Instead of Commitment



Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

In summary, the number of youth referred to DJS is the lowest in almost 15 years, excepting the COVID-19 pandemic years. In 2022 fewer of those youth were formaled or informaled, and more referrals were resolved at intake. Since 2022 a higher percentage of youth are being formaled and a lower percentage of youth are being resolved at intake. Of youth who are found delinquent, the percentage receiving probation instead of commitment is the highest since at least 2011.

Chapter 2. Community-based Services

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) operates a complex system of community-based interventions designed to support youth involved with the juvenile justice system. These interventions range from nonresidential programs like family therapy and mentoring to more restrictive options like electronic monitoring and group homes. When a youth enters the DJS system through a complaint, staff use standardized assessment tools to determine the appropriate level of supervision and services, weighing factors such as the youth's risk of reoffending, family circumstances, and the severity of the alleged offense.

Community-based services represent a core component of DJS's work, particularly for youth under informal supervision or probation. These services aim to address underlying factors that may contribute to delinquent behavior while allowing youth to remain in their communities. However, tracking the effectiveness of these interventions presents challenges, as youth may receive services from multiple providers, both within and outside the DJS system. Additionally, the availability and accessibility of community-based services can vary considerably across Maryland's jurisdictions.

This chapter examines how DJS utilizes community-based services, focusing particularly on cases involving second-degree assault – the most common offense among youth referred to DJS between fiscal 2018 and 2023. Using data from DJS's Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools (ASSIST), we analyzed patterns in case processing, service referrals, and program placements across Maryland's jurisdictions. Additional details about these datasets can be found in **Appendix B**.

For the purposes of this report, the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) categorized community-based placement records from the DJS ASSIST database as outlined in **Exhibit 2.1**.

Exhibit 2.1 Categories of Community-based Services

<p>Community-based Nonresidential</p> <p>Programs that provide services and support to youth and families without requiring residential placement. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community-based Family Therapy Programs (Evidence-based Services) ● Advocacy, Mentoring, & Wraparound Programs
<p>Community-based Residential</p> <p>Residential care programs for youth who require structured, out-of-home placements. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster Care ● Group Homes ● Independent Living Programs
<p>Intensive Behavioral Health Treatment</p> <p>Facilities that provide intensive, long-term mental health services for children and adolescents with serious emotional, behavioral, or psychological challenges. This category includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Residential Treatment Centers ● Psychiatric Hospitals ● Diagnostic Units/Comprehensive Evaluation Units
<p>Evening Reporting Centers</p> <p>A program that serves youth as an alternative to detention. Youth are required to report daily to ensure the youth are monitored and get back to court for hearings.</p>
<p>Community Detention</p> <p><u>Community Detention</u>: A DJS program that monitors a delinquent child or a child alleged to be delinquent who is placed in the home of a parent, guardian, custodian, other fit person, or in shelter care, as a condition of probation or as an alternative to detention.</p> <p><u>Community Detention with Electronic Monitoring</u>: A statewide DJS program providing close monitoring of youth in the community as an alternative to residential placement/detention. Electronic monitoring includes voice verification (telephone call system), active electronic monitoring (anklet on the youth and a transmitter in the home that allows DJS to know if the youth is in the home or away), and, in some cases, satellite-based GPS tracking as a means of surveillance.</p>

DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

The analyses in this chapter largely uses individual placement records as the unit of analysis, since youth may have multiple cases and multiple placements within each case. Analysis

is of individuals referred to DJS between fiscal 2018 and 2023. Youth may receive services from providers who do not contract with DJS; these services are not captured in ASSIST and therefore are not reflected in our analyses.

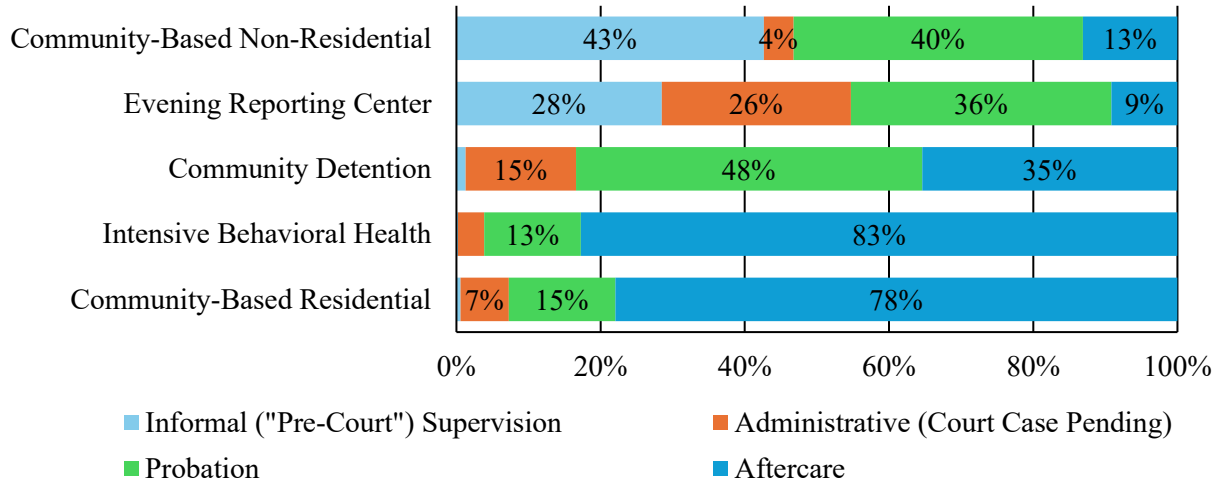
Observation: Most youth in community-based nonresidential programs are on either informal (pre-court) supervision, or probation.

DJS utilizes each category of community-based placement for youth across different supervision levels. Supervision levels include:

- **Informal (Pre-Court):** An agreement consented to by the youth and parent/guardian diverting the case from formal court proceedings. The term is up to 90 days and may be extended to 180 days for substance abuse and mental health treatment needs by DJS or as otherwise ordered by the court. Failure to comply with the supervision agreement may result in a formal petition being filed.
- **Administrative:** Supervision of youth with cases pending court decisions.
- **Probation:** Court-ordered supervision of youth in the community requiring youth to meet court-ordered probation conditions (general and case specific), including, for example, school attendance, employment, community service, restitution, counseling, or participation in substance abuse treatment.
- **Aftercare:** Supervision and individualized treatment services provided to youth in the community following discharge from a residential program. A youth is assigned an aftercare worker at the time of commitment.

As demonstrated in **Exhibit 2.2**, each category of community-based placement serves distinctly different populations. For example, nonresidential programs primarily serve youth with lower levels of justice system involvement. For example, 43% of placement records for community-based nonresidential programs were associated with youth on pre-court supervision, 40% are for youth on probation, and 13% are for youth in aftercare. Comparatively, community-based residential programs are predominantly used for youth in aftercare who are transitioning back to the community after a committed placement. Nearly 80% of placements in community-based residential programs are associated with aftercare cases.

Exhibit 2.2
Supervision Levels for Community-based Placements

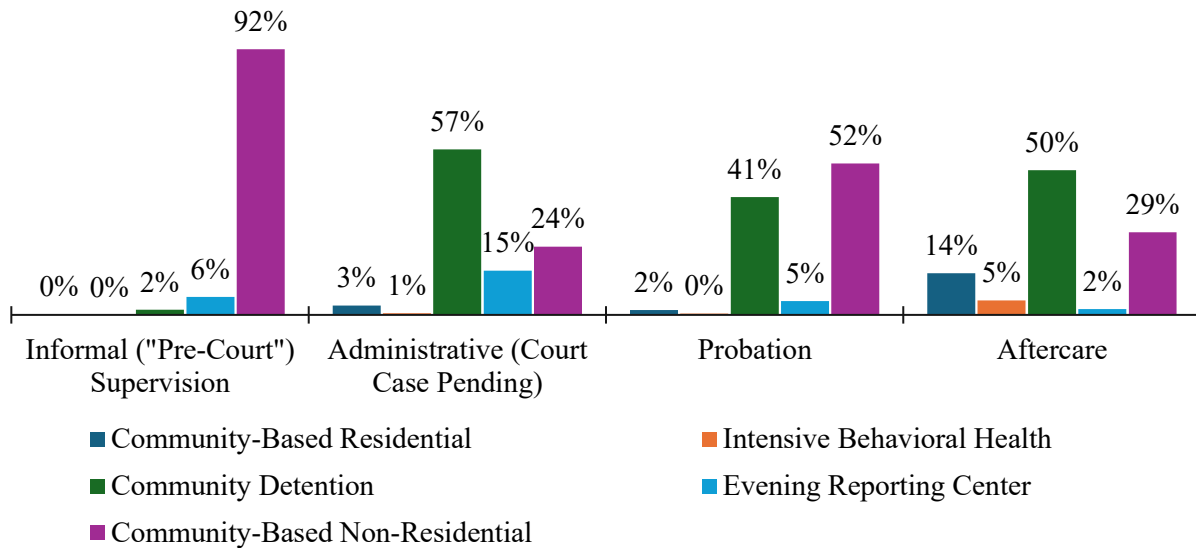


Note: Calculation excludes placements for which there was no associated supervision folder in ASSIST. Calculation also does not include placements for committed youth.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Exhibit 2.3 shows the percentage of placements made in the various types of community-based programs by DJS's level of supervision. For cases under informal supervision, most (92%) of placements are in community-based nonresidential programs. For cases under formal supervision (administrative, probation, and aftercare), most placement records are for community detention (with or without electronic monitoring) and community-based nonresidential programs. It is common that youth placed on community detention are concurrently receiving a service from a community-based nonresidential provider.

Exhibit 2.3 Community-based Placements by Supervision Level



Note: Calculation does not include placements for which there was no associated supervision folder in ASSIST. Calculation also does not include placements for committed youth.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Case Study: Second-Degree Assault Complaints

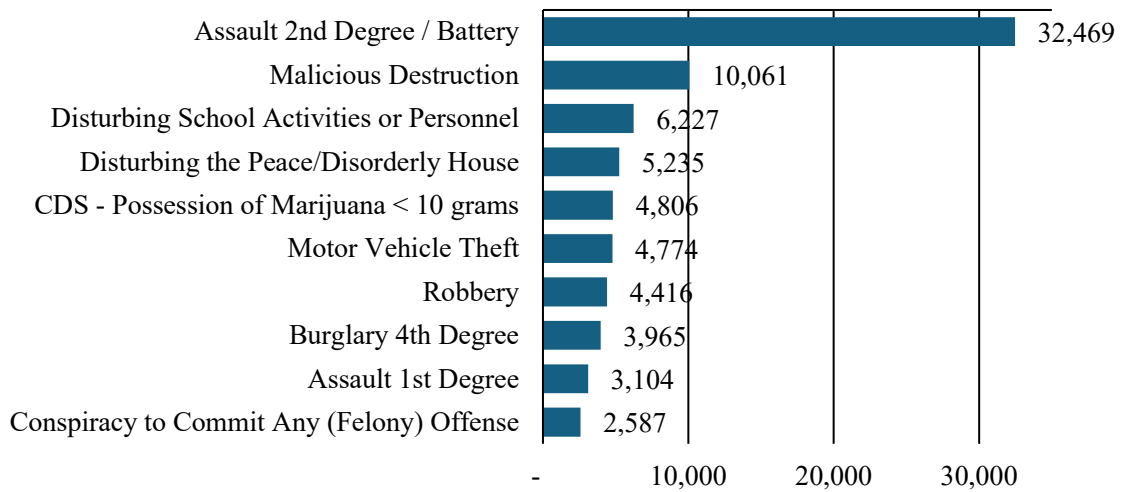
To better understand how cases moved through the DJS system, OPEGA examined 20,896 complaints for which the most severe offense included in the complaint was second-degree assault. This represents around a quarter of all complaints during the evaluation period. Second-degree assault is defined under Maryland Criminal Law § 3-203. The offense includes:

- intentionally causing physical injury to another person;
- attempting to cause physical injury to another person; and
- causing physical contact that a reasonable person would find offensive.

Observation: Second-degree assault was the most frequently alleged offense.

Exhibit 2.4 shows the total number of second-degree assault offenses alleged in all complaints against youth between fiscal 2018 and 2023. A single complaint against a youth may contain multiple alleged offenses.

Exhibit 2.4
Top 10 Alleged Offenses among All DJS-involved Youth



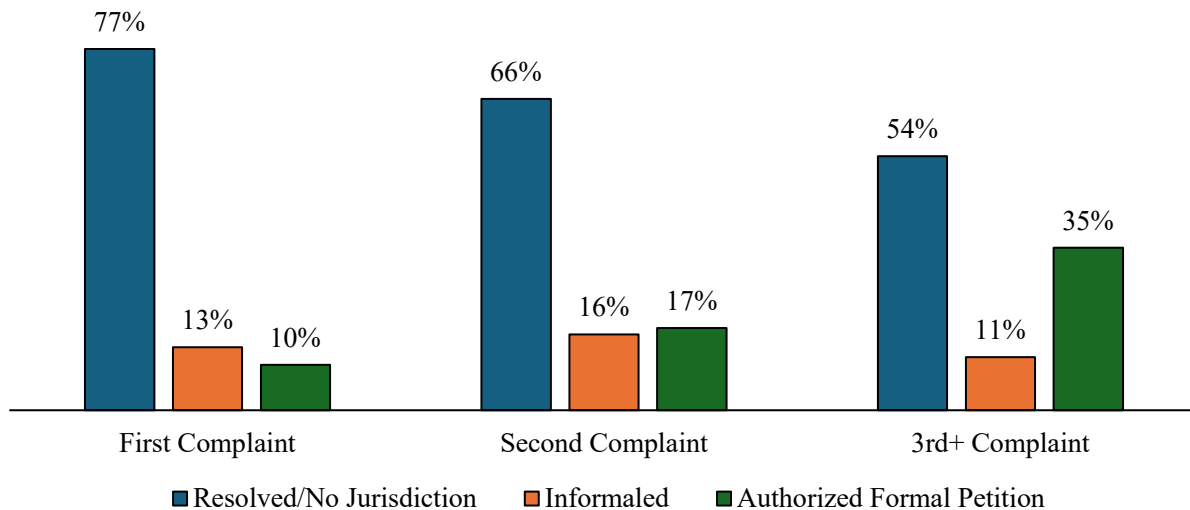
Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

The path a case takes through the DJS system is determined by a mix of legal requirements, internal policies, resource availability, and family input, among other factors. Many of these factors are outside of the control of DJS staff.

Observation: DJS resolved most second-degree assault cases at intake. Formal petitions were more likely for youth who had previous contact with DJS.

As shown in **Exhibit 2.5**, DJS was more likely to formal a case when youth have multiple previous complaints. For first-time offenders, DJS forwarded 10% of second-degree assault cases to the State's Attorney's Office (SAO). In contrast, among youth who had three or more complaints on their DJS record, DJS forwarded 35% of such cases to SAO.

Exhibit 2.5 Case Forwarding Decisions for Alleged Second-degree Assault



Note: Only cases for which the most severe alleged offense was “2nd Degree Assault/Battery” are included in these calculations. “First Complaint” means that the youth had no prior complaints with DJS. “Second Complaint” means that the youth had one previous complaint with DJS. “3rd+ Complaint” means that the youth had two or more previous complaints with DJS. One youth may have had multiple complaints during this period.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

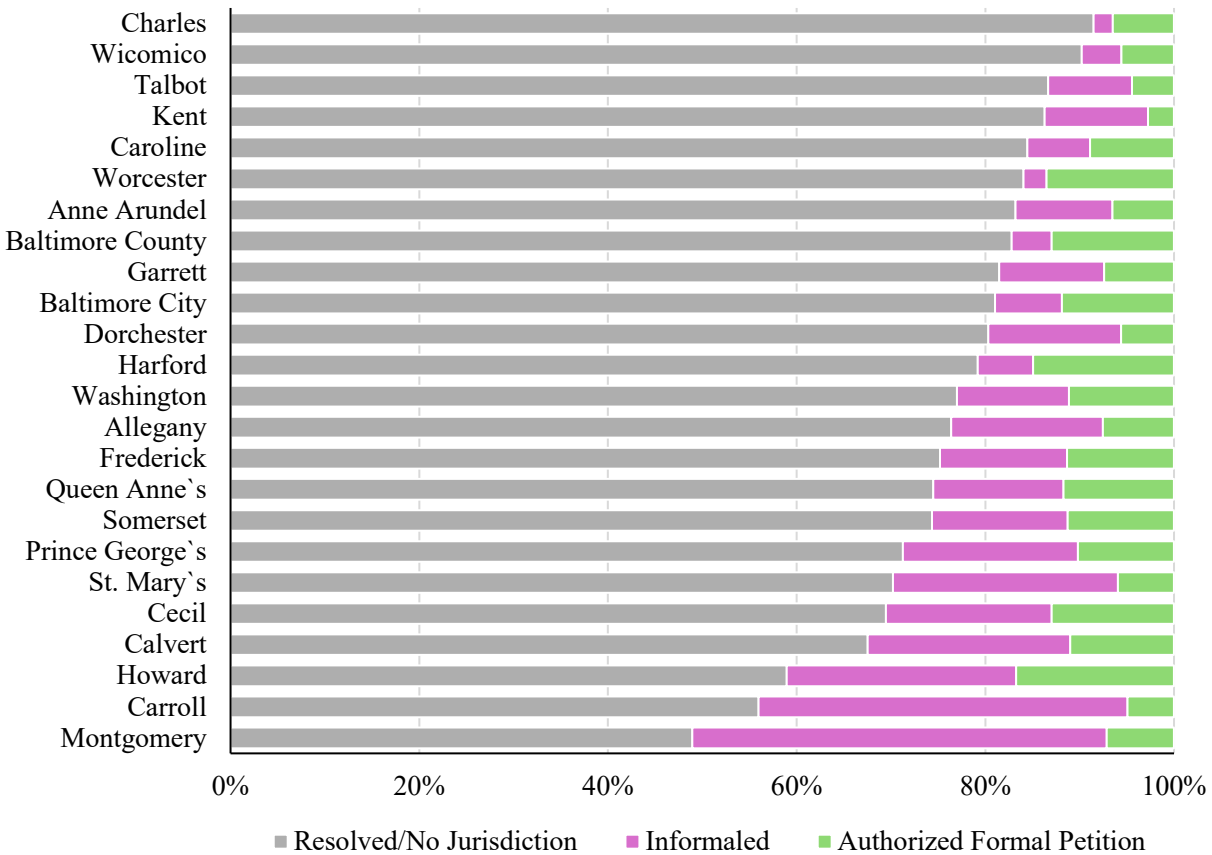
Observation: In 23 out of 24 jurisdictions, DJS resolved the majority of second-degree assault complaints at intake for first-time offenders.

Exhibit 2.6 shows the percentage of second-degree assault complaints against first-time offenders that were resolved at intake, informaled, or formaled in each jurisdiction during the period of fiscal 2018 through 2023. Case forwarding decisions by DJS varied across the State. For example, for a first-time offender facing a second-degree assault charge in Charles County, DJS was nearly twice as likely to have the complaint resolved at intake as compared to a similar youth in Montgomery County.

Among this sample during fiscal 2018 through 2023, complaints against youth in Montgomery and Carroll counties had the highest rates of informal (pre-court) supervision by DJS. DJS placed 44% of sampled cases in Montgomery County and 39% of sampled cases in Carroll County on informal supervision. These high rates of informal supervision may reflect several factors. Based on multiple conversations with stakeholders, it could reflect a greater availability

of community-based services or other resources for DJS-involved youth in those counties, or local policies related to juvenile offenders, among other possible community-specific factors.

Exhibit 2.6
Case Forwarding Decisions for First-time Offenders by County of Jurisdiction
Sampled Second-degree Assault Cases



Note: Calculations show case forwarding decisions for cases where youth have no prior offense history reported to DJS and have a complaint with the most severe offense being “2nd Degree Assault/Battery.”

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

DJS staff use standardized risk assessments to inform their decisions about how to handle a complaint:

- Intake Decision Tool (IDT) – Used at initial intake for a new juvenile complaint to determine the appropriate level of court involvement and service referrals.
- Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) – Used to evaluate requests to hold youth in detention.
- Maryland Comprehensive Assessment and Service Planning (MCASP) – Used for post-adjudication planning to determine long-term treatment and supervision for youth found to be in need of supervision or delinquent.

Each of these assessments results in an estimated “risk score” based on a youth’s risk factors for reoffending. According to the DJS Intake Policy, IDT should be administered with the youth and their parent/guardian/custodian during the intake conference and the results should be used to determine how DJS will proceed with the complaint. The assessed risk level directly corresponds to a recommended case forwarding decision:

1. Very Low/Low Risk: Resolve the case at intake, with or without referrals to services;
2. Moderate Risk: Propose an informal (pre-court) supervision agreement; or
3. High Risk: Forward the complaint to the State’s Attorney’s Office for a formal petition.

Along with the assessed risk level, intake staff may also consider the aggravating and mitigating factors outlined in **Exhibit 2.7** in their decision. Intake supervisors can override the IDT recommendation based on these factors.

Exhibit 2.7
Aggravating and Mitigating Factors for Intake Decision

Aggravating Factors	Mitigating Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent refused services ● Parent unavailable ● Youth has a history of violence in the home/victim resides in the home ● Refusal of Alternative to Detention option ● Shelter refusal ● Shelter unavailable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age of youth ● Parent willing/able to provide supervision ● Offense is less serious than indicated by charge ● New charge referred is not recent

Note: The risk scoring instrument is available in the DJS Intake Policy (Intake_CS-129-22). In the policy guidelines and the ASSIST database, the risk scoring instrument is referred to as the “detention” risk assessment for both IDT and DRAI.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services

Observation: DJS intake staff followed the recommendations of the standardized IDT in 52% of second-degree assault cases reviewed by OPEGA.

OPEGA conducted a review of intake records for a random sample of 75 complaints alleging second-degree assault. As shown in **Exhibit 2.8**, DJS staff adhered to the recommendation of the standardized IDT in 39 (or 52%) of sampled complaints.

Exhibit 2.8
IDT Recommendation vs. DJS Case Forwarding Decision
Sampled Second-Degree Assault Cases

IDT Recommendation	Actual Case Forwarding Decision by DJS			% of Actual Cases for which DJS followed IDT Recommendation
	Resolved at Intake	Informed/Pre-Court Supervision	Authorization of Formal Petition	
Resolve at Intake	32	4	2	84% (32 of 38)
Informal/Pre-Court Supervision	16	1	4	5% (1 of 21)
Authorize Formal Petition	7	3	6	36% (6 of 16)
<i>Case Forwarding Totals</i>	55	8	12	52% (39 of 75)

Note: Based on random sample of 75 2nd Degree Assault/Battery complaints received by DJS between fiscal 2018 and 2023.

Color coding based on difference in case forwarding severity between IDT recommendation and the actual decision of DJS: **De-escalated**, **Followed Guidelines**, **Escalated**

DJS updated IDT in fiscal 2021. IDT categorization prior to fiscal 2021 are not directly comparable to fiscal 2021 and after.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

For the 36 complaints in the sample where DJS' case forwarding decision differed from the IDT recommendation, DJS intake staff escalated 6 from "resolve at intake" to "informed/pre-court supervision" or "authorization of formal petition" and 4 from "informed/pre-court supervision" to "authorization of formal petition." The most common reasons that DJS escalated a case were:

- a request by the victim to pursue sanctions or treatment;
- a restitution requirement; or
- the intake meeting resulted in joint decision between DJS staff and youth's guardians that the youth would benefit from additional treatment or sanctions.

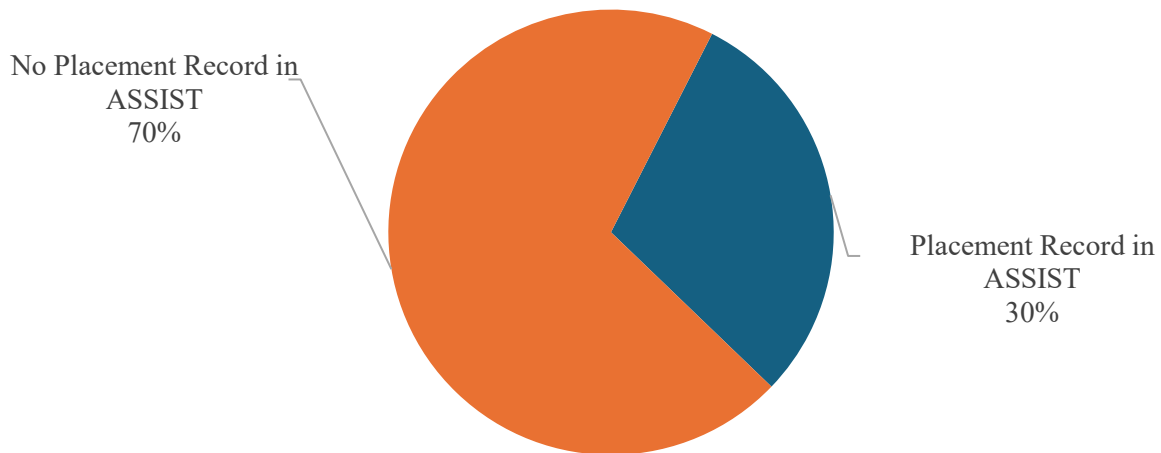
DJS intake staff de-escalated 26 of the 36 complaints in the sample where DJS' case forwarding decision differed from the IDT recommendation. The most common reasons that DJS reduced the sanctions for a case were:

- there was an active Department of Human Services case for the youth or their family;
- the youth was a respondent to a previous case and was already under formal or informal DJS supervision; and
- the youth/their guardians provided valid documentation that the youth was actively receiving mental or behavioral health services.

Observation: Most informed youth do not have evidence of a placement with a DJS-contracted community-based service provider.

When DJS places a youth on informal (pre-court) supervision, the youth, their family/guardians, and DJS enter into an agreement outlining the purpose of the supervision, the proposed length of supervision, conditions of behavior, and services to be accessed. Services may include placement in a DJS-contracted community-based program. As shown in **Exhibit 2.9**, over 70% of alleged second-degree assault cases on informal (pre-court) supervision that we sampled do not have an associated record in ASSIST of placement in DJS-contracted community-based services. It is possible these cases received community-based services funded through a different agency, or from a private provider, or received no such services, but we cannot determine this from the ASSIST records.

Exhibit 2.9
Records of Placement in DJS-contracted Community-based Services
Informed Second-Degree Assault Cases



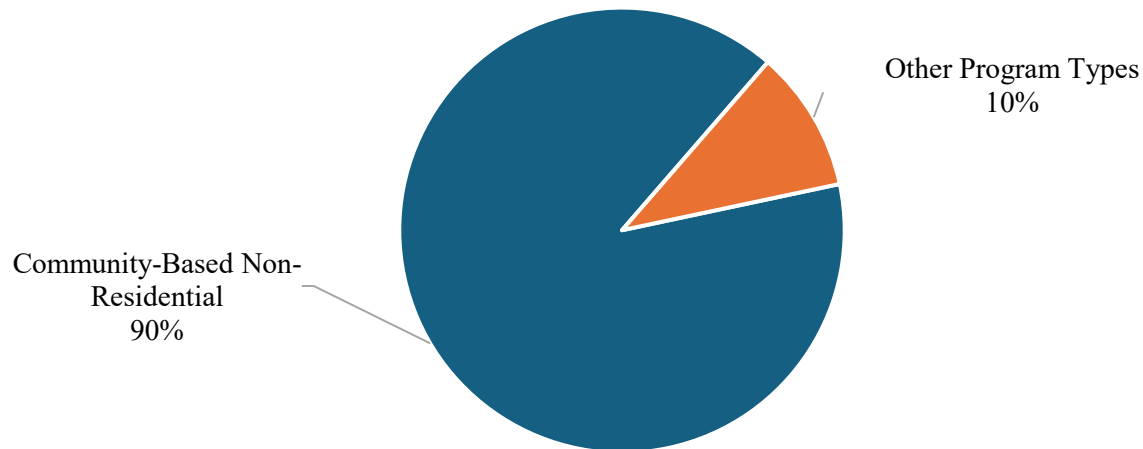
Note: Calculation includes only informed complaints where 2nd Degree Assault/Battery was the most serious alleged offense.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Observation: Most youth placements for informed second-degree assault cases were with community-based nonresidential programs.

As shown in **Exhibit 2.10**, among the sample of cases that had placement records in ASSIST, community-based nonresidential placements were the most common type of placement. 90% of placement records for informed second-degree assault cases were with community-based nonresidential programs.

Exhibit 2.10
Informaled Cases with Placement Records
Sampled Second-Degree Assault Cases



Note: Calculation excludes youth on informal supervision whose next placement records after the intake decision date are in staff or hardware secure facilities.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

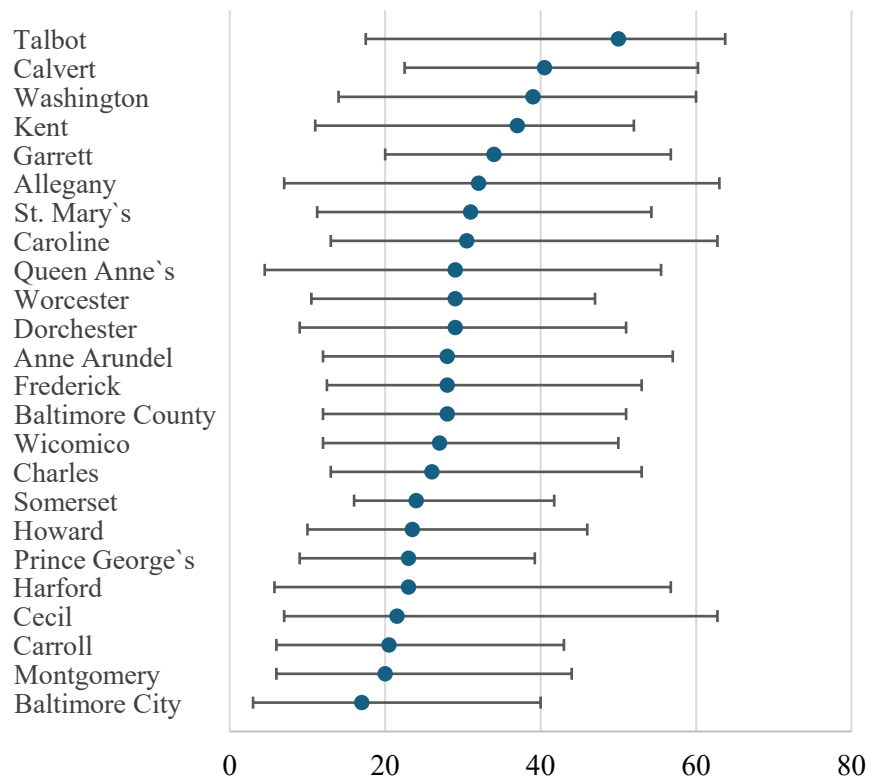
Observation: Youth may experience delays in accessing a service from DJS-contracted providers.

OPEGA reviewed the fiscal 2023 monthly statistical reports submitted by six vendors serving youth in community-based placements. These reports found no documented cases where a referral from DJS was explicitly rejected due to the length of a program’s wait list. However, this does not mean that capacity issues do not exist. A common concern raised by DJS staff, vendors, and other stakeholders was the limited number of community-based slots available for youth in the juvenile justice system, particularly in rural areas. One potential result of limited capacity are delays in getting youth into services that could help them. Vendor capacity challenges are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

To better understand potential placement delays, OPEGA analyzed data from ASSIST to determine the number of days between an intake decision and a placement starting (for cases where a placement record exists). As shown in **Exhibit 2.11**, Talbot County has the longest estimated wait times for youth in this sample. Half of placements in Talbot County began 40 or more days

after the intake decision. Baltimore City has the shortest placement wait times with a median of 17 days between intake decision and placements starting.

Exhibit 2.11
Wait Time Between Intake Decision and Placement (# Days) by Jurisdiction
25th Percentile, Median, and 75th Percentile
Sampled Second-Degree Assault Cases



Note: Wait time is calculated as the total number of days between the intake decision date and the subsequent placement record's start date. Placement records are not directly tied to offense records in ASSIST, so OPEGA matched placement records to offense records only when placements occurred within 90 days of intake decisions. Bars represent the range of wait times from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile.

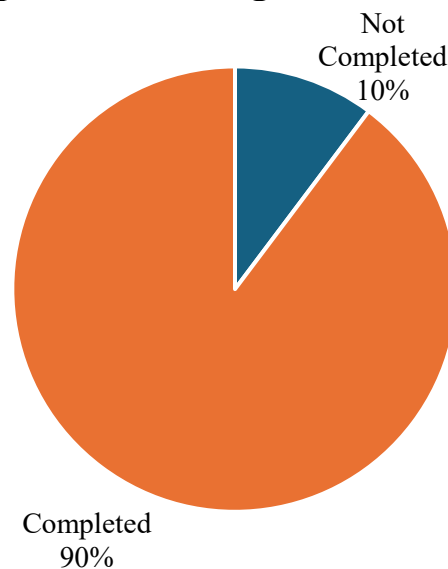
Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Observation: Nearly all youth placed with DJS-contracted providers completed their placements.

As shown in **Exhibit 2.12**, around 90% of the sampled second-degree assault cases on informal (pre-court) supervision with placement records in ASSIST successfully completed their placement. Successful placement completion does not, however, necessarily mean that a youth fully participated in the program as designed. The two most common ways that a youth might successfully complete their placement without participating in the full “treatment” are as follows:

- The length of the pre-court supervision agreement was shorter than the treatment intervention.
- The youth had completed the majority of sessions with the provider at the end of their pre-court supervision period and DJS staff determined it was in the best interest of the youth not to extend the term of the pre-court supervision agreement.

Exhibit 2.12
Placement Completion
Sampled Second-Degree Assault Cases



Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Multiple stakeholders stated the distinction between successful completion and completing the full treatment as designed is important because youth who do not complete the programs as designed may not benefit from the full therapeutic value of the program. When services are not delivered according to the program design, they may not have the intended effect on youth recidivism.

Observation: DJS-involved youth may receive community-based services not funded by DJS, but the agency does not track youth participation in services not funded by DJS.

Over the period fiscal 2018 through 2023, some DJS involved youth may have received non DJS funded community-based services (such as mental and behavioral health services, mentoring, workforce skills training, diversion or other community-based interventions) under a variety of circumstances. However, data on participation by DJS involved youth in non-DJS funded services was not available to OPEGA because DJS does not track that participation in its records.

In cases where DJS has had discretion about placements, DJS intake officers, RS, and CMS determined the best available provider options for youth given current contracts with providers and limited DJS resources. DJS sometimes recommended that a youth consider participating in non-DJS funded services, such as youth whose complaint was resolved at intake. Such services may have been delivered and paid for through the school system, DHS, the Maryland Department of Health, or a diversion program sponsored by a local police department.

Differences in community-based service placements among otherwise similar youth can depend on the following factors:

- *Where the Youth Lives:* Rural areas have fewer providers, which means fewer appointment time options and longer driving distances to appointments.
- *Whether the Youth Responds Well to Telehealth Providers:* Providers who offer telehealth appointments creates more referral options for DJS staff, but it is not always appropriate in every case and may be less effective than in-person interventions.
- *Whether the youth's family can afford private care.*
- *Whether the youth's family is willing or able to participate in the interventions.*
- *Whether a given DJS-contracted provider is at or under capacity when the youth needs the placement.*

Case Study: Community-based Service Integration in Prince George's County

Evidence from Prince George's County suggests a more complex and interconnected service delivery system that may not be fully captured in DJS placement records. One Prince George's County official referred to this informal network of providers as an "invisible wraparound," which allows youth and their families to access services through multiple entry points, including DJS referrals.

Several individuals interviewed for this evaluation pointed to Prince George's County as an example of what DJS engagement at the local level should look like statewide. Interviewees highlighted that DJS staff at all levels of the organization do not prioritize strong and collaborative relationships with local government agencies, law enforcement, and the juvenile court. Many indicated that Prince George's County is an exception, because DJS staff in the county have established an extremely collaborative relationship with local stakeholders.

For example, OPEGA attended a "Resources Fair" hosted by the Department of Juvenile Services at its local office in Largo, Maryland on November 7, 2024. DJS held the event to educate DJS case management specialists (CMS) and case management specialist supervisors (CMSS) about the community-based providers available to youth in their caseload. Representatives from nearly 20 providers gave presentations about the services their organizations offer to DJS-involved youth, many of which do not have a contractual or financial relationship with the department. When OPEGA spoke with presenters who operate statewide, they indicated that no other regional DJS offices had invited them to similar events in recent years.

Leadership in DJS' Capital South Region has encouraged their DJS case management specialists in Prince George's County to tap into a wide array of resources available to DJS-involved youth and their families, even if the providers of those resources are not under a direct contract with the department to provide services. DJS staff and local stakeholders noted that this approach offers potential advantages, including:

- increased flexibility in meeting the needs of youth and their families in a timely manner;
- reduced likelihood of youth falling through gaps in the social services system; and
- enhanced coordination between service providers ensures that treatment is holistic and consistent, even if youth and family circumstances change (for instance, when a youth's DJS supervision ends).

However, this broader array of potential services may present challenges for DJS supervision of youth in community-based placements. DJS staff mentioned the following challenges when working with providers who do not hold a direct contract with DJS:

- ASSIST is not being used to track data on youth participation or completions in non-DJS funded services or programs.
- ASSIST data cannot distinguish between DJS-involved youth who got no community-based services at all, and DJS-involved youth receiving community-based services that were not DJS funded.
- Providers who are not under a contract with DJS are not obligated to answer to DJS CMS or other DJS staff, such as by providing regular progress reports that DJS requires of its contractors.

Exhibit 2.13 provides an overview of the services available to DJS-involved youth and their families in Prince George’s County.

Exhibit 2.13
Community-based Providers in Prince George’s County

Provider	Service(s) Provided	Relationship with DJS	Recorded in ASSIST
DJS Evening Reporting Center (ERC) for Prince George’s County	Evening Reporting Center	DJS-Managed	Yes
Community Counseling & Mentoring Services, Inc. (CCMS)	Multi-Systemic Therapy	DJS-Contracted Provider	Yes
VisionQuest National, Ltd.	Functional Family Therapy	DJS-Contracted Provider	Yes
Institute of Family Centered Services, a/k/a IFCS of Maryland, DBA Sevita	Family Centered Treatment	DJS-Contracted Provider	Yes
iMind Behavioral Health	School-based Mental Health & Crisis Response	<i>Maryland Commission on Coordinated Community Supports Grant</i>	No
Maryland Family Resource, Inc.	Outpatient Mental Health Services	<i>Local System of Care Grant</i>	No
Synergy Family Services	Outpatient Mental Health	<i>Local System of Care Grant</i>	No
National Alliance on Mental Illness	Family Peer Support Services	<i>Local System of Care Grant</i>	No
Maryland Coalition of Families, Inc.	Family Peer Support Services	DJS-Contracted Provider & <i>Local System of Care Grant</i>	Yes, if referred by DJS
UMBC – The Choice Program	Mentorship and Advocacy	DJS-Contracted Provider	Yes
Bridges2Success	Mentorship and Advocacy	DJS-Contracted Provider	Yes
Youth Advocate Program	Mentorship and Advocacy	DJS-Contracted Provider	Yes
Pathways to Employment Program	Employment Services	Community Partner	No
Employ Prince George’s Inc.	Employment Services	Community Partner	No

Charlotte's Web	Boxing Mentoring and Employment Skills	Community Partner – ERC Enrichment Option	No (ERC Record Only)
Jacob's Ladder	Enrichment Program	Community Partner – ERC Enrichment Option	No (ERC Record Only)
Lead4Life, Inc. ¹	Gun Diversion & Alternative Placement	Community Partner – ERC Enrichment Option	No (ERC Record Only)
Prince George's County Problem-Solving Courts	Gun Possession, Drug Court, and New Direction Diversion Program	Community Partner	No

¹ Lead4Life, Inc. has served as a DJS contractor (19-CS-004), as well as a subcontractor to the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc. to operate the Evening Reporting Center for the Metro Region (under 22-IA-MONCCC-002).

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Observation: Information gaps about DJS-involved youth in community settings makes it challenging to determine the impact of these programs on youth outcomes.

OPEGA analyzed the relationship between community-based program participation and re-offense rates for second-degree assault cases using data from ASSIST. This analysis did not identify any significant relationship between the placement of a youth in community-based nonresidential programs and the likelihood that a youth would reoffend. For more information on this analysis, see Appendix B. Information gaps are discussed in more detail in **Chapter 3**.

Recommendations

1. **The Department of Juvenile Services should consider expanding the capability of its ASSIST database to capture placements with contracted providers and referrals to non-contracted community-based providers.** Currently, 70% of sampled cases placed on informal supervision lack records of DJS-funded services, and there are no consistent records of youth participation in programs that are not DJS-funded. As a result, it is not possible to determine whether these youth accessed services through providers who were not under contract with DJS. This lack of comprehensive service tracking makes it challenging to effectively evaluate youth outcomes. By expanding placement tracking to include non-contracted providers, DJS would gain valuable data about service utilization patterns and program effectiveness while maintaining the flexibility to refer youth to appropriate community resources.

2. **The Department of Juvenile Services should identify and replicate best-practices from local offices to ensure equitable treatment of DJS-involved youth throughout Maryland.** The chapter documents substantial regional variations in how cases are processed and services are accessed. For instance, a first-time offender facing a second-degree assault charge in Charles County is nearly twice as likely to have their complaint resolved at intake compared to a similar youth in Montgomery County. By systematically identifying successful practices, like the Capital South Region’s provider coordination approach and Resource Fairs, and implementing them statewide, DJS could help ensure that a youth’s access to appropriate services and supervision options does not depend on where they live in Maryland.

3. **The Department of Juvenile Services should support the Governor’s Office for Children with the development of the “public centralized database of all State, local, and private resources available for children, youth and families in the State” mandated in Chapter 408 of 2024.** DJS should also use the findings to inform departmental policy and resource decisions. Youth in some jurisdictions wait more than twice as long to begin receiving services compared to youth in other areas (40+ days in Talbot and Calvert counties versus 17 days in Baltimore City). Additionally, DJS staff expressed concerns about limited provider availability in rural areas, noting they may not refer youth to providers with known capacity issues. A comprehensive resource map would help identify service gaps, inform contract decisions, and support more equitable access to community-based services across the State. When combined with expanded service tracking data, this information could help DJS make more informed decisions about resource allocation and program development.

Chapter 3. Department of Juvenile Services Oversight of Community-based Service Providers

For Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)-involved youth not living in a secure correctional facility, DJS delivered most services via its contracted providers, rather than State employees. DJS procured the services using a variety of methods including competitively bid contracts, sole source contracts, and interagency agreements.

In evaluating the effectiveness of community-based services, the unit of analysis can be the youth who participated in the services, or the providers who delivered those services. Both analytic approaches are ultimately concerned with youth outcomes but review from different perspectives. The focus of this chapter is on how DJS assessed whether the providers of community-based services successfully achieved positive outcomes for the DJS-involved youth referred to them. Essentially the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) wanted to know the following: if a community-based service provider had done something inappropriate and/or was ineffective, how and when would DJS know it, and what did they do about it?

When procuring specialized services for children, DJS must consider factors not applicable to procuring common goods and services more widely demanded in the commercial marketplace, and competition is often limited.

DJS oversight of community-based service providers emphasized fiscal compliance. Provider-level oversight put less emphasis on assessing performance based on the outcomes for youth who participated in those programs. In terms of youth outcomes, as oversight was structured, resource specialists (RS) and case management specialists (CMS) would typically be the first to know about issues with a DJS-contracted community-based service provider.

Based on our interviews with DJS staff, site visits (scheduled or unscheduled) were rarely done by DJS for community-based programs (and according to DJS staff, site visits may often be inappropriate for in-home services).

All DJS community-based service providers received monthly oversight which could include technical assistance. In accordance with federal funding requirements, evidence-based service (EBS) providers received considerably more oversight and technical assistance under a DJS contract with the University of Maryland School of Social Work (UM-SSW).

(Note: In addition to community-based services paid for by DJS, some DJS-involved youth may also have participated in community-based programs run by other State agencies, local social service or law enforcement agencies, nonprofit organizations, or privately-paid providers, but DJS has no records of such services, and those services are outside the scope of this report.)

DJS offers programs for youth who are living in a range of housing options, who require a range of security and surveillance, and who may need specialized treatment services, as illustrated

in **Appendix C**. This OPEGA evaluation reviewed how DJS monitored the providers of community-based services.

Observation: DJS oversight of community-based services has been focused on fiscal compliance.

Many different DJS staff, and some entities outside DJS, contribute to monitoring and oversight of community-based service providers. **Appendix D** describes the entities that contribute, directly and indirectly, to oversight of DJS community-based service providers.

Based on OPEGA's review, the focus for DJS staff when monitoring the providers has been fiscal compliance. DJS has put more emphasis on oversight of DJS' residential facilities than on community-based services.

Based on our interviews with staff and contractors, site visits (scheduled or unscheduled), while specifically allowed under the contracts, were rarely done by DJS for community-based services. (According to DJS staff, site visits may often be inappropriate for in-home services.)

Based on our review, if a community-based service provider had done something inappropriate and/or was ineffective in producing positive youth outcomes, the first to know would typically be the RS and CMS, who regularly communicate with each other. Their respective roles in provider oversight are as follows:

- RS refer youth for placement in community-based service programs and can see if the provider refused the referral or took the referral but failed to connect with the youth within the required number of days (which might indicate staffing or other issues for the provider). RS meet monthly with providers.
- A CMS can become aware of problems with providers because they are responsible for following individual cases and observe outcomes for youth served by the various providers. CMS may communicate verbally with the RS/the resource specialist supervisors (RSS) and place notes in the Maryland Evaluation and Treatment Services (METS) and Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools (ASSIST) applications, which the RS can review.

Other entities and staff with a role in DJS provider oversight include the DJS Office of Inspector General and the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit in the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, but our review suggests that the focus of their oversight is on DJS facilities. Our review also suggests that the Contract Management Unit (CMU) staff and staff throughout DJS designated as contract monitors are primarily focused on fiscal compliance by community-based service providers rather than quality of services or the outcomes for youth served by those providers.

If a problem with a provider was identified, DJS remedies included the following options: providing technical assistance to the provider; placing a temporary moratorium on further youth

placements with that provider; delaying payment of the invoice; or terminating the contract. DJS staff told us, however, that most provider issues are resolved through technical assistance. DJS staff emphasized to us that they strongly prefer to improve provider performance rather than terminate providers since there are often few provider alternatives and the State procurement process to find others can be lengthy.

Evidence-based service (EBS) providers receive additional technical assistance through the DJS contract with UM-SSW. These providers have additional reporting and receive more technical assistance due to requirements under federal formula grants to assure that evidence-based service providers adhere to practice model fidelity. UM-SSW has fulfilled that function under a contract with DJS. (The UM-SSW Institute also works in this capacity with the Department of Human Services (DHS).)

Observation: We found no evidence that DJS validated the provider-submitted data in the *Monthly Statistical Performance Reports (MSPRs)*, nor that DJS used MSPRs to systematically assess provider quality or performance beyond basic fiscal compliance.

DJS' community-based service providers must send MSPRs to DJS' Office of Research & Evaluation (ORE). We asked DJS whether the data in these reports was audited or validated by ORE during the period under review. We could not find evidence that ORE verified the accuracy of these reports. Despite repeated attempts to discuss with the ORE staff about whether they ever attempted to verify the content or data reported by providers in these reports, as well as how ORE used these reports, we were unable to find evidence that ORE played an active role. ORE staff may have used these reports for occasional retrospective evaluations of specific research questions about services, but we could not confirm this.

We also asked DJS staff, including procurement officials, contract monitors, and RS, how they used MSPRs for monitoring and oversight of provider performance in improving youth outcomes. A theme emerged that staff who use these reports do so primarily for fiscal compliance, as follows:

- Staff in CMU in DJS' Support Services Division told us that if a provider fails to turn in these reports to ORE, ORE will alert CMU, and CMU will send a formal letter to the provider and withhold payment of an invoice until the report is turned in. According to CMU staff, this is rarely necessary as the provider will comply and turn in required reports.
- RSS said that in monthly meetings with providers, they rely more on communications with CMS, notes in METS and ASSIST, and direct conversations with providers to assess provider performance. Some RSS told us that because MSPRs have a lag time, they are not as useful to them in their monthly meetings with providers.
- Contract monitors told us they use these reports to check whether the invoices from providers reflect the services rendered.

OPEGA reviewed the content of MSPRs for fiscal 2023 from a sample of providers. Our review found that the reports did enable an assessment of individual youth participation in the programs and a check on specific services for which a vendor might bill DJS, but the reports were not well suited for provider-level assessments of performance. For example, while it is possible to use the data in the reports to calculate the average and median number of days between when DJS referred a youth to the program and when the youth was admitted to the program, that calculation took many steps. If such a metric is useful for a provider-level assessment of performance by DJS, then the reports forms could be designed to automatically calculate that metric from data provided.

Recommendation: DJS should collect data that allows for provider-level assessment of effectiveness based on youth outcomes.

In general, DJS does not collect data from providers that enables staff to quickly assess provider effectiveness in creating positive youth outcomes, beyond basic compliance. Since MSPRs are widely required already, DJS should consider reviewing their content and format. They could be redesigned to better assist DJS staff to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of providers (although strengthening provider-level assessments need not be limited to these reports).

DJS' *2024-2028 Strategic Plan* includes a goal to eliminate bureaucratic inefficiencies, including the launch of a Reinvent Paperwork and Streamline Services Improvement Team. The plan does not indicate if DJS' contracted providers will be included in the effort to reinvent and streamline paperwork, nor does the plan mention MSPRs. DJS should consider consulting the following stakeholders for their perspective on how the reports could be made more useful:

- DJS RSs and their supervisors;
- DJS contract monitors;
- DJS CMS and their supervisors;
- DJS Office of Research and Evaluation;
- DJS Procurement Office, including CMU; and
- DJS contracted providers.

Optimizing the utility of reports required from providers, and reducing provider paperwork wherever possible, could improve efficiency and effectiveness for both DJS and its providers.

Observation: Scarcity of vendors offering specialized community-based services for children can limit DJS options.

In our interviews, RS and RSS told OPEGA that there is limited availability of specialized providers who can serve DJS-involved youth, particularly in more rural areas. RS/RSS reported

that the region serving Baltimore City has no EBS providers available. RS/RSS told us that provider scarcity can affect youth outcomes and provider performance in several practical ways, as follows:

- DJS staff may delay referring a youth to services until they can find a provider. Such delays can negatively affect youth outcomes.
- DJS staff may refer youth to a provider with a waitlist, which can delay the youth being admitted to the program until space becomes available.
- DJS staff may refer a youth with specialized behavioral or other needs to a provider with available capacity, but less experience in addressing the unique needs of that youth. DJS staff believe that such placements may result in less positive youth outcomes than a referral to an optimal provider, but some treatment is better than no treatment at all.
- DJS staff know that if they terminated a provider for poor performance, it would be difficult to replace that provider, as the State procurement process means that any replacement could take many months. RS and RSS told us that they work closely with DJS contracted providers to assure they can continue to maintain services.

DJS procurement officials told OPEGA that in cases where DJS staff urgently need approval to use a non-contracted provider, the Office of State Procurement (OSP) may allow DJS to use an emergency procurement. OSP requires DJS to justify why a service cannot be procured through a current DJS contract and show what reasonable efforts they made to engage current vendors. For urgent cases, DJS staff prefer to use the emergency procurement method because it is the fastest way to meet an urgent need. In such cases, once the DJS Procurement Office has all necessary documents to complete the emergency procurement, they request a fund certification from its budget department.

DJS procurement officials cited the infrequency of emergency procurements for community-based services as evidence that there are generally enough providers available to meet the needs of youth. Taken together, these interviews suggest there may be an opportunity for further discussion between DJS procurement officials and regional staff, particularly in rural areas, about whether the contracted providers are sufficient to meet the needs of youth for community-based services. There may also be opportunity for greater collaboration between staff at DJS and DHS in locating community-based service providers for youth.

One option for increasing the number of potential vendors is to relax the requirements for potential providers to bid for DJS contracts, thereby allowing potential providers with fewer credentials or less experience to bid. Another option is to raise reimbursement rates, such as is being addressed by the Interagency Rate Committee for per diem contracts. Raising reimbursement rates may lure additional specialized providers to bid for DJS contracts, such as providers in other states who may be willing to relocate, or providers who currently work only at higher rates for private paying clients.

Recommendations:

- **DJS procurement officials should ensure they have enough providers throughout the State, working with RSS to map out where and when RSS feel they have too few provider options.**
- **DJS should ensure that youth in the Baltimore City area also have access to EBS providers.**

Observation: All DJS community-based service providers received oversight and technical assistance, but certain providers of evidence-based service providers received more through a contract with the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

According to DJS, over the 2018 through 2023 period, all community-based service providers met monthly with DJS staff. Much of the monitoring and oversight of nonresidential and community-based providers by DJS staff was done via verbal communications and emails. Communications happened internally at DJS between Community CMS (who manage individual youths) and the RS in the region (who send placement referrals to providers). Monthly meetings and ongoing communications also occurred between the RS and the providers and sometimes additional DJS staff such as Contract Monitors. The monthly meetings with providers over this period included the following:

- A review of placements.
- A review of whether the provider accepted the referrals and contacted the youth within the required number of days.
- A review of any concerns conveyed by community CMS.
- A review of provider staffing levels and other capacity or quality concerns.

The content of these meetings sometimes triggered technical assistance to the provider. All DJS providers of community-based services also typically submitted MSPRs to DJS' ORE.

Certain evidence-based service (EBS) providers models received additional oversight to assure they were delivering services with fidelity to their practice models. This additional monitoring was a condition of certain federal formula grants. During the period reviewed by this report, this additional monitoring was (and continues to be) done for DJS under a contract with the UM-SSW Institute for Innovation and Implementation (Institute). For this subset of providers, DJS held quarterly oversight and implementation meetings which included staff from the UM-SSW Institute. UM-SSW also required more frequent reports from these providers.

Over the period covered by this report, the UM-SSW Institute worked with both DJS and DHS to review and evaluate if EBS providers were delivering youth services with fidelity to their EBP models. Institute staff told OPEGA that they had worked with the following:

- providers of Functional Family Therapy® and Multisystemic Therapy®;
- providers of Family-centered Therapy; and
- more recently, UM-SSW began work with providers of the Credible Messenger Model.

All vendors who provided community-based services to DJS youth did not receive the same level of oversight and technical assistance.

Observation: Frequent staff turnover among community-based service providers can reduce capacity and service quality, but provider staff turnover is harder to see than agency staff turnover.

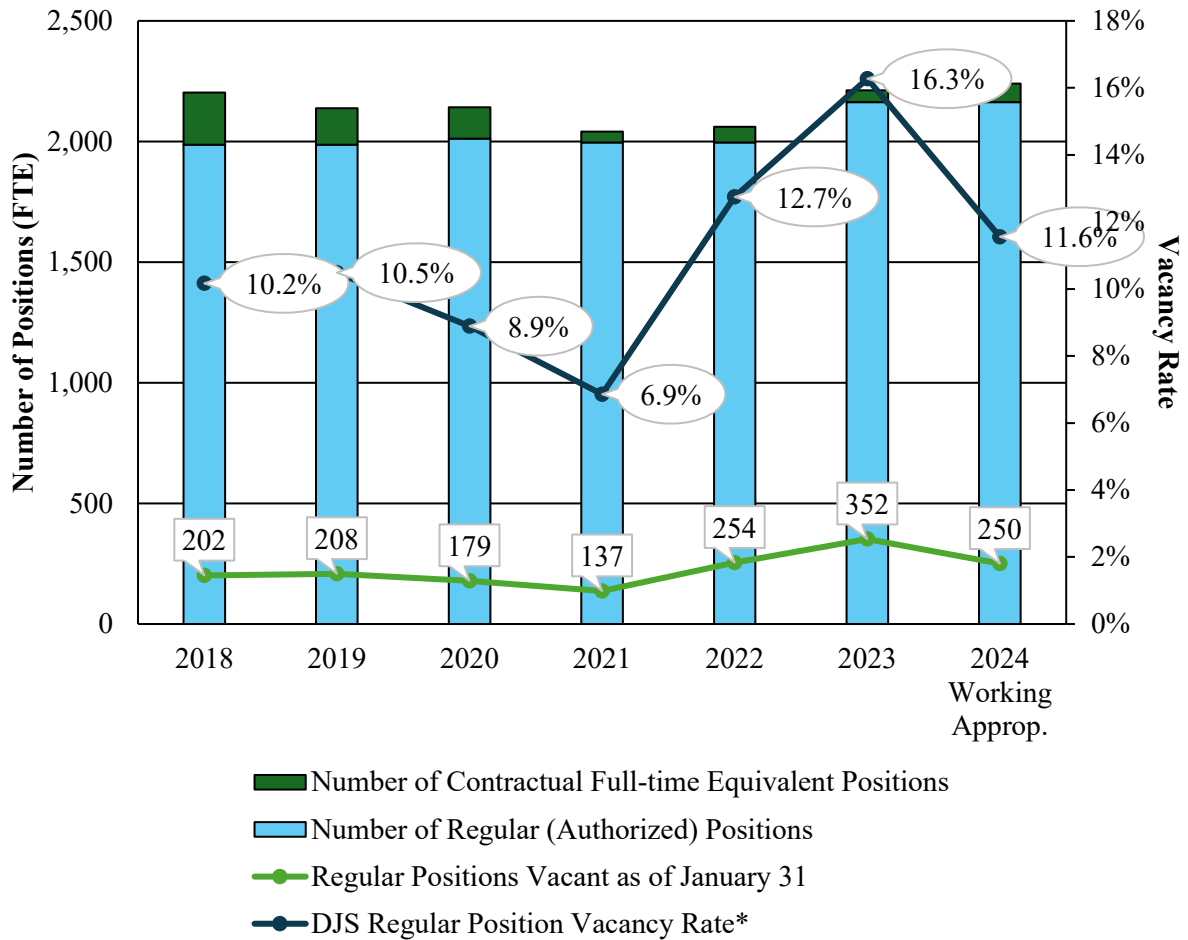
In [*DJS' 2024–2028 Strategic Plan*](#), the Secretary wrote the following:

We can't be successful without a complete, committed, valued and fully-trained workforce and without learning from the experiences of our staff. I pledge to fill our vacancies, eliminate forced overtime, install world-class training for DJS staff, and seek your input and thoughts as we improve our Department. (p. 4)

The DJS strategic plan notes that during the Secretary's 2023 listening tour, "Staff clearly voiced frustration with staffing levels, retention of staff, and workload demands, forced overtime, and morale issues related to sick rates." (p. 9) The plan sets a goal that by December 31, 2025, the agency will "determine how to add a Staff-Stat database with metrics for personnel, training, and other relevant metrics" and "adapt visual mapping technologies for a multi-layer look at resources for youth, family, neighborhood, and staff needs." (p. 34) These concerns seemed focused on DJS employees in its offices and facilities, but not on community-based service providers.

Provider staff turnover is harder to see than agency staff turnover. To illustrate what data legislators typically review as part of the annual agency budget process, **Exhibit 3.2** shows the vacancies among authorized positions at DJS over fiscal 2018 through 2024.

**Exhibit 3.2
DJS Staff Vacancies and Vacancy Rates**

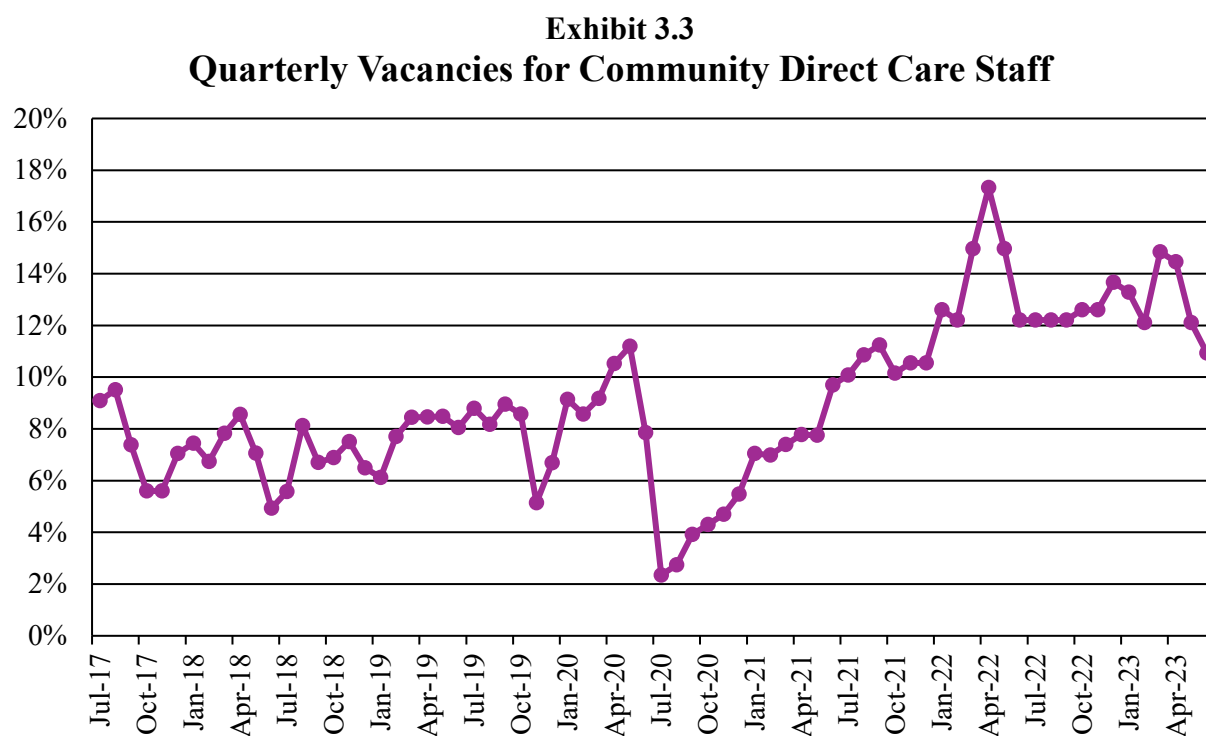


DJS: Department of Juvenile Services
FTE: full-time equivalent

* Vacancy rates are for January of each year.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Legislators also typically review monthly vacancy rates for DJS' community direct care staff, as shown in **Exhibit 3.3**.



Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

In contrast to vacancies among DJS personnel, staff vacancies by contractors are far less visible to DJS officials and legislators. In our interviews, several DJS staff told us that staffing levels and retention have also been a recurring issue for many of DJS' contractual community-based service providers, but providers hesitate to volunteer that information to DJS staff. Some RS told us they make it a point to ask providers at each monthly meeting if they are having any staff issues, and then offer technical assistance to help them remedy the issue as quickly as possible.

RS/RSS told us that if a provider delays in accepting a youth referral, excessive staff turnover can be one cause for that delay. DJS staff told us that one reason for provider hesitation in telling DJS about staffing issues is that if DJS places a temporary moratorium on referring to youth to the provider until staffing issues are resolved, this can also lower payments to the provider, putting the provider in a financial "doom loop."

Recommendation: DJS should consider establishing a process for reviewing contracted provider staffing vacancies.

Since DJS relies on vendors to deliver critical community-based services to youth, DJS should consider requiring its contracted providers to formally report their staff vacancies monthly, rather than expecting RS to inquire about staffing. For example, reports on staffing levels could be made part of MSPRs. DJS should also periodically verify the reported staffing levels.

Chapter 4. Children in Need of Supervision

The Child in Need of Supervision (CINS) statute allows the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to intervene with minors exhibiting challenging behaviors that do not necessarily constitute delinquent acts. CINS is focused on guidance, counseling, and treatment. This allows DJS, and potentially the juvenile court, to offer interventions aimed at preventing youth from entering the juvenile justice system.

A CINS referral may be made for a youth because they are habitually truant, ungovernable, dangerous to themselves or others, or have committed a status offense (an offense is considered illegal when committed by a minor). Based on a CINS referral, DJS can intervene to refer services that could include counseling or supervised support. In rare instances where a determination of significant behavioral or familial risk is present, the court has the authority to temporarily place the child in a structured setting like a group home.

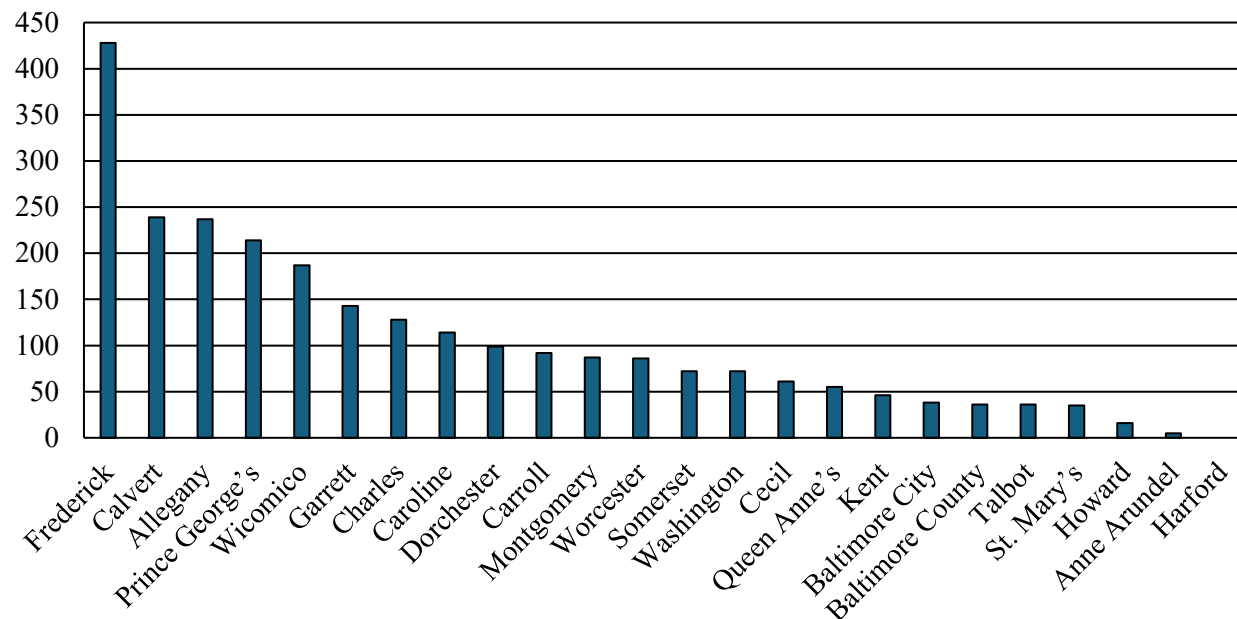
Staff at DJS often described CINS as a mechanism to encourage behavioral change while keeping the youth out of the system. However, changes in juvenile laws have led to some overlap where CINS may be applied in situations previously considered juvenile delinquency due to legal adjustments in charging minors with certain offenses.

Child in Need of Supervision Data Availability

Observation: Not all CINS referrals are entered into DJS’s Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools (ASSIST) database.

The process for CINS referrals varies by jurisdiction. **Exhibit 4.1** shows the total number of CINS referrals logged in the ASSIST database by each jurisdiction across fiscal 2018 and 2023.

Exhibit 4.1
Total CINS Referrals by Jurisdiction



CINS: child in need of supervision

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

CINS referrals in ASSIST ranged from 428 in Frederick County to 0 in Harford County. This range can be explained by different practices in different jurisdictions in handling CINS referrals and in data collection and entry practices. These may include:

- **CINS Referrals May Not Be Entered into ASSIST:** Baltimore City reported that it did not enter CINS referrals into ASSIST before fiscal 2022.
- **Diversion Programs:** Some jurisdictions, including Baltimore County, routinely send CINS referrals outside of DJS. This may result in referrals not being entered into ASSIST. Referrals may be recorded elsewhere at DJS.
- **Alternative Venues:** Behavior covered by the CINS statute may never reach DJS or a jurisdictional diversion program due to other available resources, such as truancy court.

This data shows the frequency with which CINS referrals are entered into DJS's ASSIST database but cannot be used to determine the total number of contacts made with DJS regarding CINS.

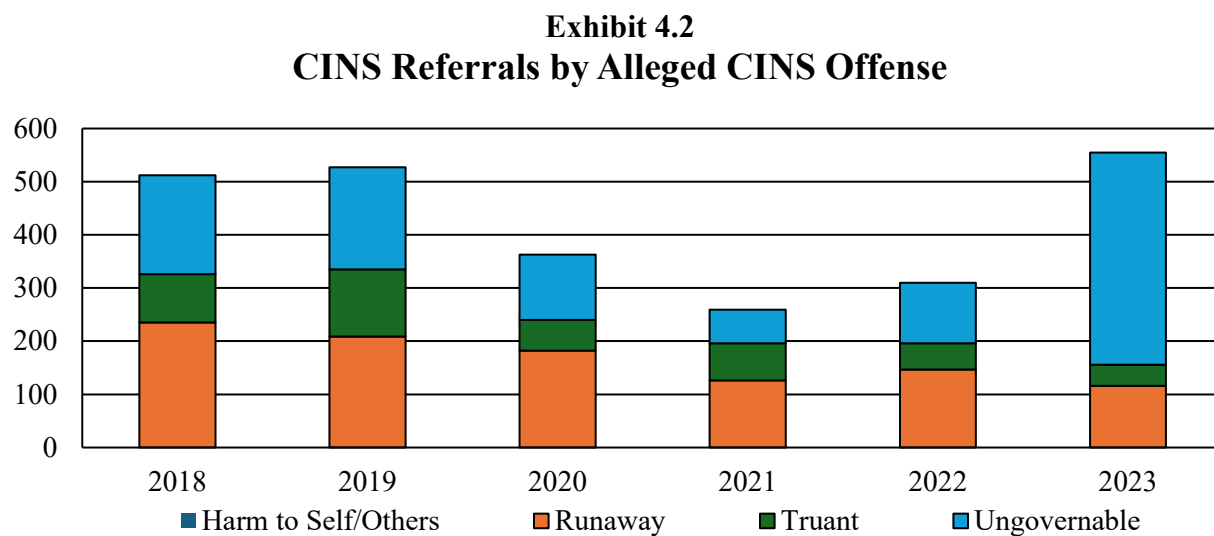
Child in Need of Supervision Referral Categories

CINS referrals may be made in one or more of four categories that address behaviors suggesting youth are at risk, though not classified as delinquent under the law. According to Maryland statute, a “child in need of supervision” is defined as a child who requires guidance, treatment, or rehabilitation and who:

- is legally required to attend school but is habitually truant;
- is habitually disobedient, ungovernable, and beyond the control of their guardian or custodian;
- engages in behavior that could harm or endanger themselves or others; or
- has committed an offense applicable only to minors.

DJS categorizes these behaviors into four main areas for data entry: self-harm or endangerment to others; running away; truancy; and ungovernable behavior.

Exhibit 4.2 shows trends across the different categories of CINS referrals for fiscal 2018 to 2023. There were no referrals in ASSIST for harm to self or others during the time period examined.



CINS: child in need of supervision

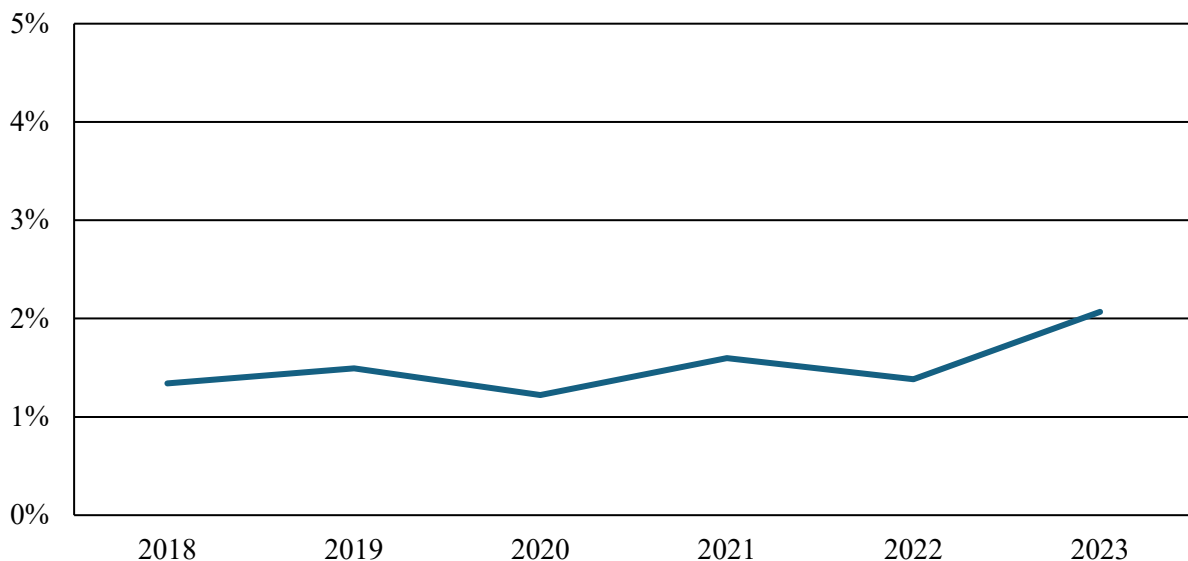
Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Child in Need of Supervision as a Portion of the Department of Juvenile Services Caseload

Observation: CINS are 1.5% of overall cases in the DJS ASSIST database.

Exhibit 4.3 shows the frequency of CINS referrals in ASSIST between fiscal 2018 and 2023 compared to all other types of contacts youth may have with DJS. The additional categories of contact types include delinquency offenses, citation or ordinance violation offenses, and other offenses including probation violations.

Exhibit 4.3
CINS as a Percentage of All Referrals to DJS



CINS: child in need of supervision
DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

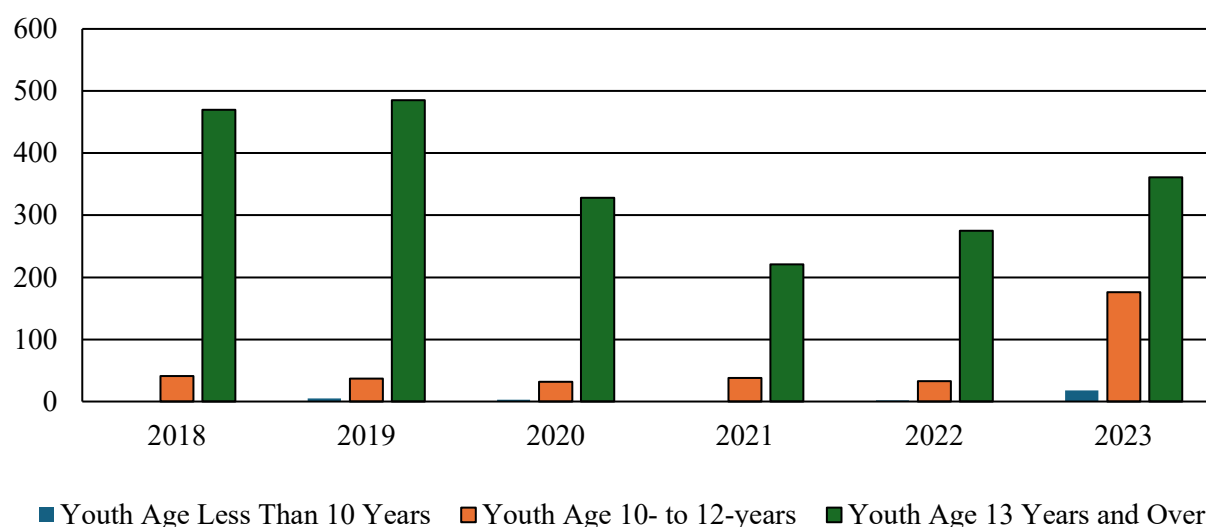
Although CINS remains a small percentage of these contacts, less than 4%, the proportion of CINS to all other cases nearly doubled from 1.3% (512 of 38,169) in 2018 to 2.1% (555 of 26,832) in 2023. Interviews conducted by the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) suggest that some of the increase in CINS could be due to improved education directed at schools, law enforcement, and the public.

Age Distribution of Child in Need of Supervision Referrals in the Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools

Observation: Youth age 13 years and over account for 65% of CINS referrals in fiscal 2023, down from 92% in fiscal 2018.

Historically, youth age 13 years and over accounted for most CINS referrals in DJS's ASSIST database. Youth with a CINS referral may also have referrals for delinquency or other reasons. **Exhibit 4.4** shows the frequency of CINS referrals for fiscal 2018 through 2023 by youth age at the time of complaint to DJS.

Exhibit 4.4
Number of CINS Referrals for Youth by Age



CINS: child in need of supervision

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

CINS referrals for youth age 13 years and over are the majority of CINS referrals, almost 85% of all CINS referrals between fiscal 2018 and 2023. There was an increase in CINS referrals in 2023 for all age cohorts, the largest for the 10- to 12-year-old group, which increased about 21 percentage points from fiscal 2022 to 2023.

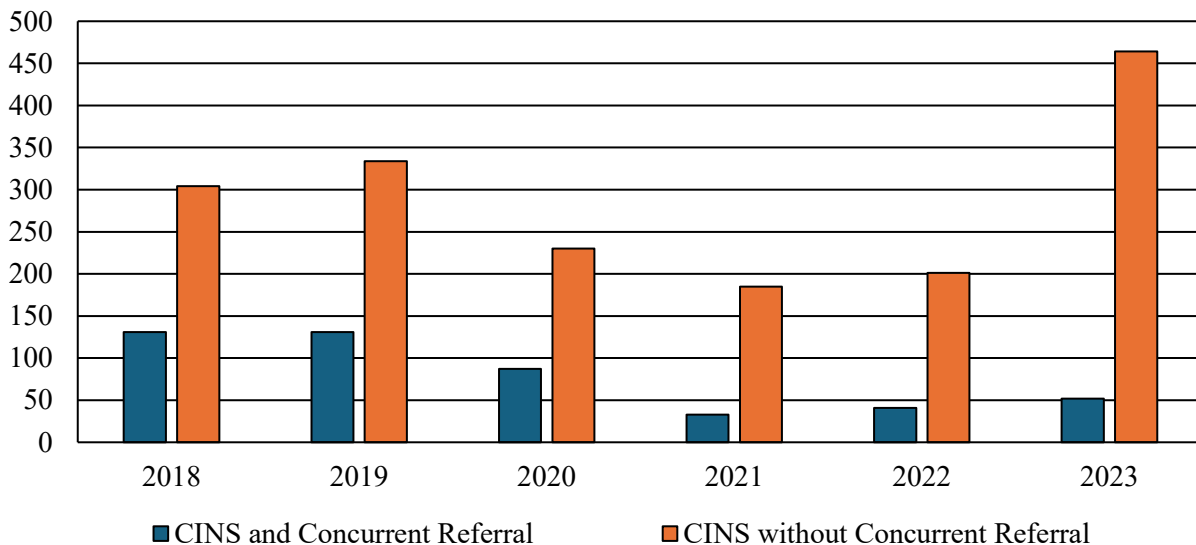
The cause of these increases may be due to overall usage or due to improved levels of entry of CINS referrals into the ASSIST database.

Child in Need of Supervision as a Stand-alone Tool

Observation: CINS is most often used independent of other referrals to DJS.

Although CINS is used to prevent future delinquent behavior, a CINS referral may be made at the same time as a delinquency referral. **Exhibit 4.5** shows the number of youth with CINS referrals by whether the CINS referral occurred with a concurrent referral including citations, ordinance offenses, and/or delinquency charges.

Exhibit 4.5
Number of Youth with CINS referrals by Concurrent Referral



CINS: child in need of supervision

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

The percentage of CINS referrals made without a concurrent referral has increased over the 2018 to 2023 time period. In 2018, 72% of CINS referrals were made without a delinquency or other referral. In 2023 this percentage increased to 92%. Determining the cause of this 20% increase was outside the scope of this evaluation, but interviews with DJS staff indicate that it may be due to concurrent referrals being redundant or the CINS referral was dropped, and services were provided via the delinquency referral.

Decisions at Child in Need of Supervision Intake

After the CINS referral, DJS looks to review the facts and circumstances of the case and schedule an initial intake meeting with the youth and their parent/guardian to discuss potential outcomes. As with other types of complaints handled by DJS, the three outcomes of an intake decision can be:

- ***Resolved at Intake:*** A determination by the DJS intake officer that furthering the case by forwarding it to the State’s Attorney Office for formal processing or informal pre-court supervision would be disadvantageous to the interests of the youth and to public safety.
- ***Informal Supervision/Pre-court Supervision:*** An agreement consented to by the youth and parent/guardian diverting the case from formal court proceedings. The term is up to 90 days and may be extended to 180 days for substance abuse and mental health treatment needs by DJS or as otherwise ordered by the court. Failure to comply with the supervision agreement may result in a formal petition being filed.
- ***Formal Petition:*** A decision by a DJS intake officer to petition the court for formal processing of a juvenile complaint. (Some jurisdictions file the petition through the State’s Attorney’s Office).

Observation: A quarter of the CINS cases that were resolved at intake were done so due to a failure of the youth or their parent or guardian to appear at an initial intake conference.

DJS has a statutorily specified time limit for holding a CINS referral initial intake conference with the youth and parent/guardian. This meeting was required to take place within 25 days of the referral reaching DJS.¹ During that window, DJS will make attempts to contact the youth and parent/guardian to discuss the CINS referral and determine the next steps.

OPEGA examined the intake decisions for a sample of CINS referrals where the CINS referral was the first time a youth had contact with DJS. The sample included 909 youth who had a referral documented in DJS’s ASSIST database between fiscal 2018 and 2023.

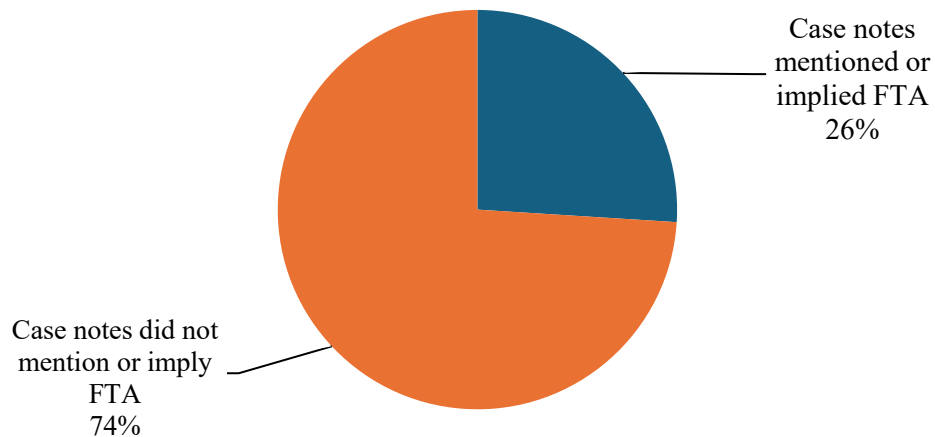
Of the 909 CINS referrals reviewed by OPEGA, 741 (82%) were resolved at intake. Although DJS does not systematically track reasons for a case being resolved at intake, DJS case managers may input a rationale for their decision into an open-text field in ASSIST. OPEGA reviewed the case notes for 50 of these referrals resolved at intake to understand the various rationales better. The following are examples of why some of the CINS referrals examined were resolved at intake:

¹ On Nov. 1, 2024, the time limit was statutorily changed to 15 business days after DJS received the CINS referral.

- The youth had no prior contact with DJS.
- The youth did not display habitual or routine misbehavior.
- The youth's behavior reportedly improved between the complaint date and the intake meeting.
- The youth was already receiving treatment or residing in an inpatient treatment facility.
- The youth and/or parent/guardian did not agree to further treatment and/or DJS involvement.
- The youth and/or parent/guardian failed to appear (FTA) at the intake meeting.

Exhibit 4.6 shows the percentage of reviewed referrals that were resolved at intake due to, according to the case notes, an FTA by the youth and/or parent/guardian.

Exhibit 4.6
Rationale for Resolving CINS Referrals at Intake



CINS: child in need of supervision

FTA: failed to appear

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

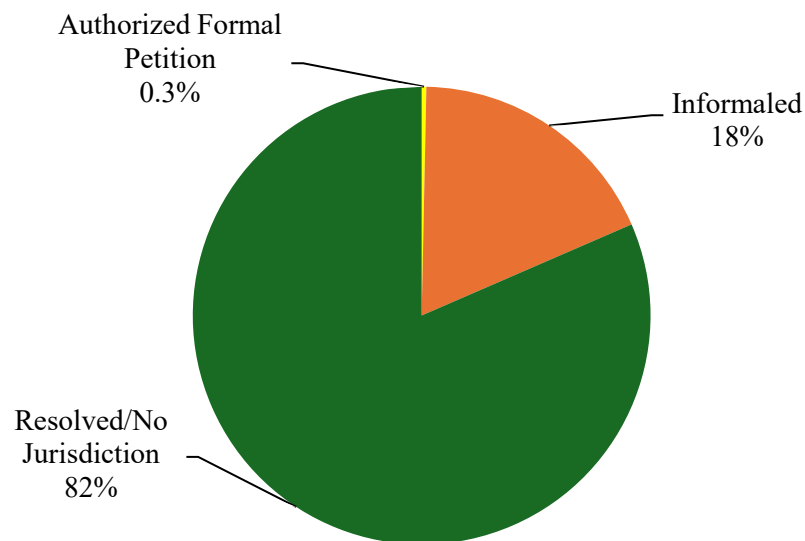
FTA involves the DJS case management specialist closing the referral without conducting an intake meeting with the youth and parent/guardian. DJS can use the information they have

available in ASSIST and other sources to make an informed decision if a youth and/or their parent or guardian does not appear for a scheduled intake conference. This could occur for various reasons, such as a family's disinterest in DJS involvement or the intake meeting not being scheduled within DJS's mandated timeframe. Making sure the intake meeting occurs within the statutorily mandated timeframe can depend on factors external to DJS, such as incorrect or incomplete contact information on the CINS referral, the willingness of the youth and/or parent/guardian to meet, and transportation or technology required for a meeting to occur.

Observation: Very few CINS cases are formally petitioned to court.

Exhibit 4.7 shows the distribution of intake decisions by DJS for the sample of CINS referrals.

Exhibit 4.7
DJS Intake Decisions for Sample of CINS Referrals



CINS: child in need of supervision
DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

Source: Department of Juvenile Service; Department of Legislative Services

Only three of the referrals in the sample resulted in a decision to file a formal petition (0.3% of the total sample). OPEGA looked specifically at these three referrals and found that:

- **Referral #1:** Youth was truant. Youth failed to appear for several scheduled intakes. Youth also continued to refuse to attend school.
- **Referral #2:** Local police department contacted DJS about a 14-year-old runaway. Youth reported being sexually assaulted and held against their will for three months. The youth was a missing person in another state. Local police requested DJS assist in returning the youth to their home state.
- **Referral #3:** Youth was truant. Youth was already involved in therapy for anxiety issues. The case was forwarded to the State’s Attorney’s Office after DJS attempted informal supervision.

A sample of all CINS referrals shows that 132 cases (5%) led to a formal petition being filed. Factors influencing the decision to file a formal petition include the youth’s history with DJS and the severity of the offense. The rarity of formal petitions suggests CINS referrals are being used to divert youth from the court system.

As of November 1, 2024, formal petitions are required in instances of 10- to 12-year-olds accused of car theft and could increase occurrences of formal petitions.

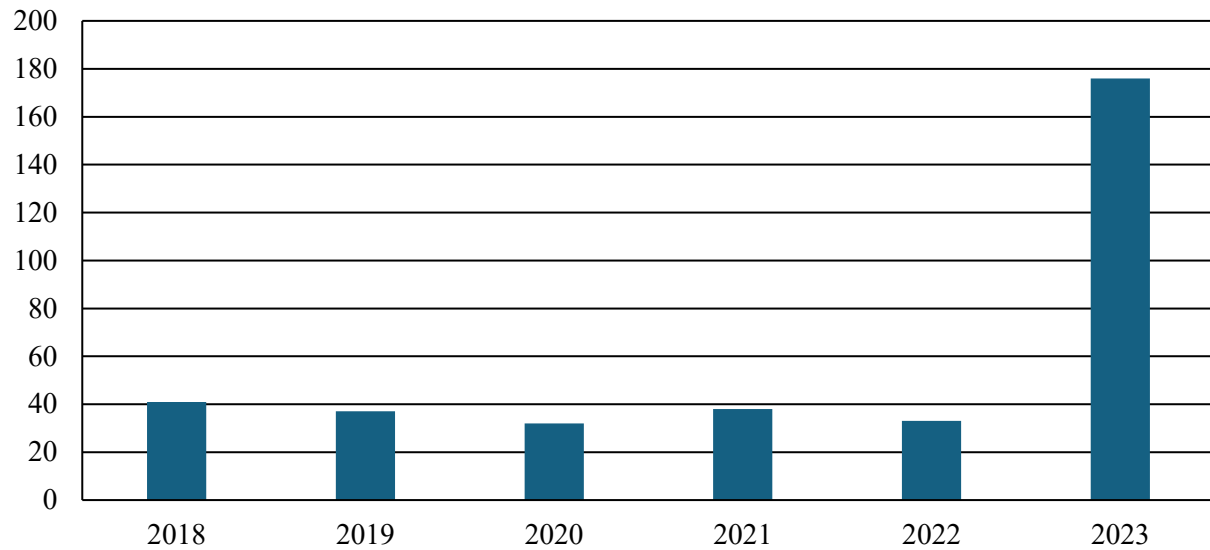
Child in Need of Supervision Use for Youth Ages 10 through 12

Youth ages 10 through 12 present a unique population of CINS referrals. Before the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA) of 2022, Maryland’s juvenile courts had jurisdiction over children of all ages. The JJRA introduced a minimum age for court involvement and restricted the types of cases juvenile courts could handle. Under that new law, youth at age 13 years became the minimum age for most criminal charges. Children under 13 can only be prosecuted in juvenile court for serious violent felonies, such as murder, rape, or armed robbery. Additional instances of jurisdiction for youth under 13 were added by Chapter 735 of 2024. In addition to expanding jurisdiction for certain delinquent offenses, Chapter 735 requires that DJS file a CINS petition for instances of alleged car theft for youth ages 10 through 12.

Observation: CINS referrals more than tripled among juveniles ages 10 through 12 from 2020 through 2023.

OPEGA reviewed the number of CINS referrals for youth ages 10 through 12 from 2018 to 2023. **Exhibit 4.8** illustrates the frequency of CINS referrals for this group.

Exhibit 4.8
Number of CINS Referrals for Youth Ages 10 through 12



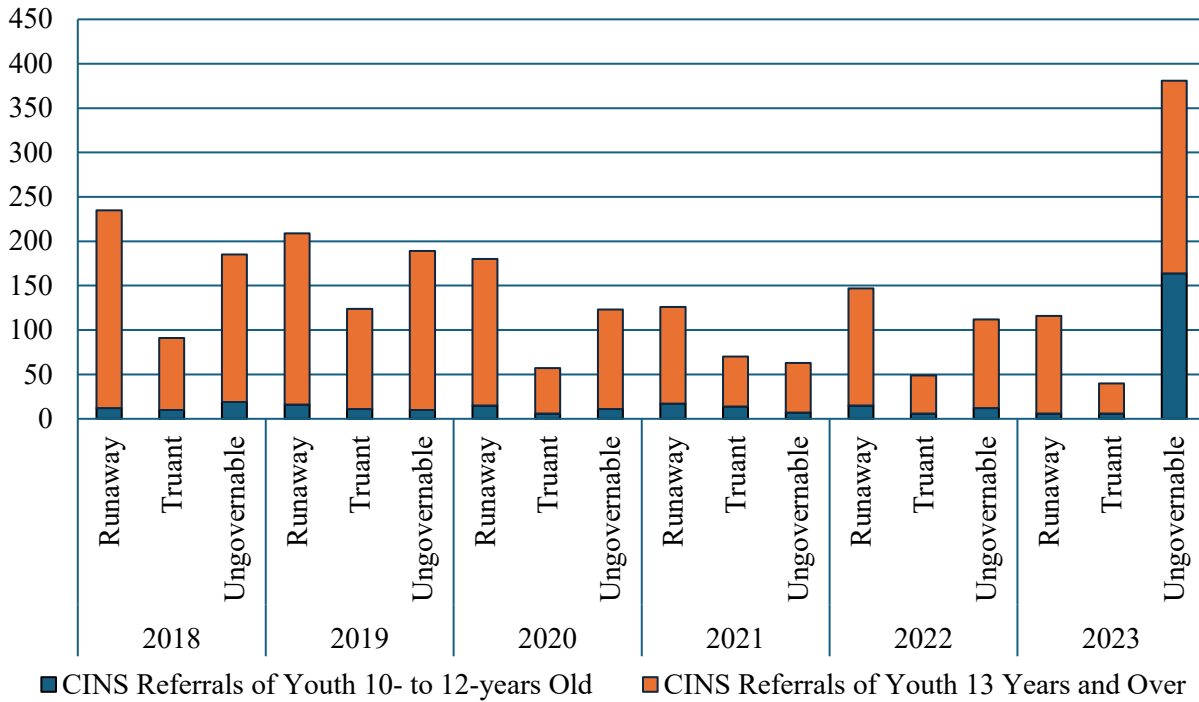
CINS: child in need of supervision

Source: Department of Juvenile Service; Department of Legislative Services

CINS referrals increased from 2022 to 2023 representing the largest increase during the 2018 to 2023 timeframe. Determining the cause of this increase was outside the scope of this evaluation but may be due to the law change in 2022 that prevented these juveniles from being charged with delinquent offenses in nearly all cases resulting in an increase in CINS referrals instead.

Exhibit 4.9 breaks down the number of referrals by category from 2018 through 2023 for both the 10- to 12-year-olds and the 13 and over age cohorts.

Exhibit 4.9
Categories of CINS Referrals to DJS by Age Cohort



CINS: child in need of supervision
DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

Source: Department of Juvenile Service; Department of Legislative Services

From 2018 to 2023 there were no CINS referrals related to harm to self or others in either age cohort. For the younger 10- to 12-year old age cohort the distribution of CINS referral categories remained stable from 2018 through 2021. However, the proportion of ungovernable referrals rose from a range of 26% to 32% between 2018 and 2021 to 77% in 2022 and 95% in 2023. While CINS ungovernable referrals increased among age 13 and over age cohort also, the larger shift for the younger 10 to 12-year-old cohort may reflect an increase in ungovernable category referrals for youth whose behaviors, if they were age 13 or older, would qualify as delinquent acts and fall under juvenile court jurisdiction.

Chapter 5. Case Histories

In February of 2024, the Maryland Attorney General announced the indictments² of several young people accused of multiple crimes including armed robbery and armed carjacking. The alleged offenses involved over 80 victims. The individuals named in the indictment included both juveniles and young adults.

The Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) requested all Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) case histories for these individuals to understand what, if any, interactions they had with DJS prior to the indictment. DJS identified and provided histories for 15 individuals involved in the aforementioned alleged crimes. This group is not representative of all juveniles who have been involved with DJS. The following observations are based on an analysis of data in the Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools (ASSIST), which does not include detailed case files stored in separate DJS systems. OPEGA did not validate the information in ASSIST against other sources.

Observation: Fourteen of the 15 individuals alleged to have committed these crimes had prior contact with DJS.

Prior to the indictments, DJS had received previous complaints about 14 of the 15 individuals. (Since the indictment, the one individual with no prior DJS history has been named in three complaints for multiple charges of robbery and robbery with deadly weapon). These individuals were first reported to DJS at the median age of 13. The age at first intake for these individuals ranged from 10 (or 11³) to 16.

Observation: DJS formalized over two-thirds of the complaints for these individuals and referred the cases to the State's Attorney's Office.

Collectively these youth generated a total of 45 complaints prior to the indictments. DJS resolved 10 of those complaints at intake. DJS “informalized” and provided pre-court supervision for 4 complaints. Thirty-one were “formalized” and referred to the State's Attorney's Office.

Observation: DJS was more likely to upgrade the disposition of a complaint than they were to downgrade.

In about 16 intakes, DJS overrode the recommendation of their risk assessment tools and upgraded the disposition of the complaint from “resolved at intake” to “informal” or “formal,” or from “informal” to “formal.” OPEGA found two instances where the recommendation of the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) was overridden and the resolution of the complaint was downgraded.

² It is important to note that suspects are individuals that have been charged with a crime but have not been adjudicated as guilty or innocent, or “facts sustained” or “facts not sustained.”

³ ASSIST is unclear on the youth's age at first intake.

Observation: DJS-contracted community-based service providers treated 5 of the 15 individuals prior to the indictments.

Youth were more likely to be placed in community detention with or without electronic monitoring, GPS monitoring, or the Evening Reporting Center, than to be placed with a DJS-contracted community-based services provider. In some cases, youth were referred to community-based service providers with whom DJS did not have a contract.

Individual Case Histories

The following are anonyms case histories of the 15 individuals provided by DJS. They exclude any reference to adult crimes or adult charges, and exclude any interaction with DJS subsequent to the date of the aforementioned indictment. They are based on OPEGA's review of ASSIST, and we cannot validate their completeness or accuracy.

Youth "A"

2/24/2017	12-year-old allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft.
2/25/2017	Intake of 12-year-old for Motor Vehicle Theft, Unspecified Misdemeanor, and Malicious Destruction. Formaled.
9/21/2017	Charges dismissed.
6/24/2018	Youth allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft.
6/25/2018	Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft. Formaled.
3/22/2019	Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft Felony – \$1,500 – < \$10,000. DRAI 8, indicating release. DJS formaled.
2/24/2020	Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft Felony – \$1,500 – < \$10,000, Unauthorized Removal of Property. Formaled, placed in PACT Evening Reporting Center.
4/2/2020	Intake for two incidents Assault 1 st Degree, three incidents Assault 2 nd Degree / Battery, two incidents Robbery with Deadly Weapon, two incidents Burglary 1 st Degree. Formaled. Placed at BCJJC.
4/3/2020	Released from BCJJC to Community Detention. Violates Community Detention, placed at Charles Hickey School.
4/6/2020	Placed on Community Detention with Electronic Monitoring.
4/8/2020	Released from Charles Hickey School.

- 2/11/2021 Released from Electronic Monitoring, placed on GPS.
- 4/13/2021 Motor Vehicle Theft charges dismissed.
- 9/7/2021 Multiple charges including Robbery with Deadly Weapon, Assault 1st Degree, and Motor Vehicle Theft “Nolle Prosequi.” Released from GPS.
- 1/6/2022 Intake for two incidents Burglary 2nd Degree and one incident Motor Vehicle Theft. Formaled. Placed at Maryland Youth Residence Center.
- 1/10/2022 Released Maryland Youth Residence Center, placed on PACT Evening Reporting Center.
- 2/3/2022 Released PACT Evening Reporting Center.

Youth “B”

- 3/23/2018 15–year-old scheduled for intake but they and family fail to appear.
- 4/13/2018 Intake for two incidents Disturbing the Peace/Disorderly House, one incident Theft Misdemeanor – \$100 - < \$1,500. Resolved at intake.
- 5/26/2019 Youth allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft and Burglary 4th Degree.
- 6/14/2019 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft and three incidents Burglary 4th Degree. Informaled (precourt supervision), referred to Evening Reporting Center.
- 6/25/2019 Starts with Evening Reporting Center.
- 7/26/2019 Released “successful” from Evening Reporting Center, having shown up 13 out of 21 days.
- 11/19/2019 Allegedly commits a number of offenses including Assault 1st Degree and Assault 2nd Degree / Battery.
- 12/7/2019 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft, Unauthorized Removal of Property, Theft Felony – \$25,000 to < \$100,000. Formaled “automatically.”
- 4/24/2020 Released from BCJJC, placed on Electronic Monitoring.
- 6/10/2020 Released from Electronic Monitoring, placed on GPS.
- 7/31/2020 Placed with contractual community–based program.
- 9/4/2020 Intake for a number of offenses including Assault 1st Degree and Assault 2nd Degree

/ Battery. Found “facts sustained” on Conspiracy to Commit Robbery. Placed on indefinite order of probation.

9/16/2020 Released from GPS.

10/1/2020 Begins probation.

3/7/2021 Released from contractual community-based program.

4/29/2021 Detained at Baltimore City Detention Center.

9/1/2021 Released from Baltimore City Detention Center. Placed on Electronic Monitoring.

1/10/2022 Released from Electronic Monitoring. Placed at Baltimore City Detention Center.

8/18/2022 Released from probation.

4/8/2023 Released from Baltimore City Detention Center.

Youth “C”

8/1/2019 11-year-old allegedly commits Robbery, Burglary 2nd Degree, and Trespassing.

9/12/2019 DJS attempts intake but youth and parent/guardian failed to appear. No previous history with DJS or DHR but notes indicate “two complaints.” Formaled.

9/4 or
9/9/2023 Allegedly commits Robbery.

Youth “D”

8/5/2020 Intake of 16-year-old for Motor Vehicle Theft. DRAI 4, indicating release. Informaled (pre-court supervision). Intake authorized placed Evening Reporting Center and a DJS-contracted community-based program.

11/5/2020 Released from Evening Reporting Center “successful.”

11/10/2020 Intake in community-based services program.

2/10/2021 Released “successful” from community services program.

Youth “E”

- 12/29/2020 Intake of 16-year-old for Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft Felony – \$25,000 – < \$100,000, and Unauthorized Removal of Property. DRAI 4, indicating release. Case informaled (pre-court supervision). Released to parent, referred to Evening Reporting Center, Teen Court, and a contractual community-based program. Begins Teen Court.
- 12/31/2020 Begins Evening Reporting Center.
- 1/26/2021 Previous Motor Vehicle Theft case formaled, referred to State’s Attorney’s Office.
- 2/22/2021 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft. Failed informal conditions from previous offense, formaled. DRAI indicated Alternative to Detention, DJS formaled. Placed at BCJJC, perhaps because parent refused to pick up.
- 3/1/2021 Released from BCJJC, placed Children’s Home Shelter Care. Placed Maryland Youth Residence Center.
- 3/3/2021 Released from Children’s Home Shelter Care.
- 3/16/2021 Released from Maryland Youth Residence Center.
- 5/12/2021 Intake for two incidents of Motor Vehicle Theft, and one incidence of Unauthorized Removal of Property – Vehicle. DRAI 12, formaled. Placed at BCJJC.
- 6/8/2021 Released BCJJC. Placed on Electronic Monitoring.
- 7/7/2021 Found delinquent on a charge of Motor Vehicle Theft, committed to DJS. Released from Electronic Monitoring.
- 6/15/2022 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft. DRAI 13, formaled. Placed on Community Detention with Electronic Monitoring.
- 7/1/2022 Released from Community Detention with Electronic Monitoring.
- 7/8/2021 Placed on GPS.
- 8/5/2021 Begins contractual community-based program.
- 9/8/2021 Released from GPS.
- 4/29/2022 Released from contractual community services program.
- 7/1/2022 Placed on GPS.
- 7/25/2022 Released from GPS.

9/1/2022 Begins contractual community-based program.

Youth “F”

7/17/2021 10 or 11-year-old allegedly commits Burglary 4th Degree.

10/4/2021 Intake rescheduled.

10/13/2021 Intake for Burglary 4th Degree. Youth and family did not show. IDT risk level “low.” Resolved at intake.

5/5/2022 Youth allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft.

5/6/2022 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft and Burglary 2nd Degree. DRAI 4 indicates release. Case formed, and an adjudication scheduled for 5/31/2022.

5/11/2022 Youth allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft.

5/13/2022 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft. Formaled. Placed on Community Detention. Release date later modified (extended).

6/8/2022 Youth is AWOL.

6/14/2022 Community Detention closed “unsuccessful” due to program noncompliance. Placed at BCJJC. Released to parent. Court ordered Community Detention pending adjudication. Release date later modified (extended). Placed in evening reporting center.

6/23/2022 Placed with non-contracted community-based service.

7/27/2022 Released from Community Detention for warrant and AWOL.

7/28/2022 Released from evening reporting center for warrant.

8/13/2022 Youth allegedly commits Robbery with Deadly Weapon.

8/18/2022 Court ordered placed on Electronic Monitoring and evening reporting center.

8/23/2022 Released “unsuccessful” from non-contracted community-based service.

9/1/2022 Released from evening reporting center for “not living in the area.”

9/12/2022 Electronic monitoring closed “successful.”

10/3/2023 Charge of Motor Vehicle Theft dismissed.

- 10/15/2023 Youth allegedly commits Robbery.
- 10/20/2023 Youth allegedly commits Robbery twice, and three separate Robbery with Deadly Weapon.
- 10/21/2023 Intake for Robbery with Deadly Weapon. DRAI 4. Formaled. Released to parent. Pending adjudication.
- 10/30/2023 Referred to multiple non–contracted community–based services.
- 10/27/2023 Youth allegedly commits Carjacking.
- 11/11/2023 Youth allegedly commits Robbery twice.
- 12/4/2023 Youth allegedly commits Carjacking.
- 1/31/2024 Intake for Assault 1st Degree, Attempted Rape 1st Degree, Attempted Sex Offense, 1st Degree, Assault 2nd Degree / Battery. DRAI 6. Mandatory hold. Formaled.
- 2/1/2024 Court ordered placed at BCJJC. Court ordered released to parents, placed on Community Detention with Electronic Monitoring.
- 2/20/2024 Court ordered placed on Community Detention with electronic monitoring and GPS.

Youth “G”

- 5/5/2022 13-year-old allegedly commits Burglary 2nd degree and Motor Vehicle Theft.
- 5/6/2022 Intake for Burglary 2nd degree and Motor Vehicle Theft. First encounter with DJS. DRAI 4 (low). DJS did not adhere to the DRAI and placed on straight community detention “per (name redacted).” Formaled, emergency arraignment scheduled for 5/6/2022.
- 7/13/2022 Placed with a DJS–contracted community–based program.
- 8/5/2022 Allegedly commits misdemeanor theft.
- 8/13/2022 Allegedly commits two separate robbery and handgun offenses. DJS conducts intake. DRAI 4 (low). Formaled, charged with Robbery with Deadly Weapon and Handgun Violation. Formaled. Detained at BCJJC.
- 8/25/2022 Released from BCJJC to community detention with electronic monitoring.
- 9/8/2022 Intake for Theft Misdemeanor < \$100. DRAI 7. Resolved at intake.

9/19/2022 Electronic monitoring extended.

10/2/2022 Downgraded to “straight community detention.”

10/11/2022 Released from community detention for “successful completion” “per the courts.”

1/19/2023 Released “successful” from DJS–contracted community–based program.

1/31/2023 Charge of Burglary 2nd degree dismissed.

Youth “H”

5/24/2023 16–year-old fails to appear for intake.

5/31/2023 Intake for Assault 2nd Degree / Battery. No prior history with DJS. Resolved at intake. Complaint source citizen.

11/8/2023 Case notes indicate youth was placed at a secure detention facility for youth waiting to go to court or be placed in a treatment program. Unclear for what reason.

12/5/2023 Case notes indicate youth release from secure detention facility.

Youth “I”

6/15/2023 13–year-old allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft Felony – \$1,500 – < \$10,000, Malicious Destruction, Unauthorized Removal of Property.

7/17/2023 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft Felony – \$1,500 – < \$10,000, Malicious Destruction, Unauthorized Removal of Property. DRAI 4. Formaled.

10/11/2023 Youth allegedly commits Robbery with Deadly Weapon (two counts), two separate Robbery with Deadly Weapon, and Carjacking – Armed.

10/26/2023 Youth allegedly commits two separate Robbery and two separate Carjacking – Armed.

11/3/2023 Intake for Handgun Violation (HGV) – unlawful wearing carrying. DRAI 8. Formaled. Notes say “DRAI states Mandatory Hold Overnight due to the seriousness of the charge.” “Executive Director...authorized downgrade to straight CD (Community Detention)” until court 11/6.

11/4/2023 Intake places on Community Detention.

11/6/2023 Court ordered Electronic Monitoring and PACT Evening Reporting Center.

- 11/15/2023 Motor Vehicle Theft charge placed on “STET” docket.
- 1/26/2024 Court finds “facts sustained” on HGV charge. Disposition hearing scheduled.
- 4/24/2024 Court ordered GPS.
- 1/30/2024 Released from PACT Evening Reporting Center.
- 2/2/2024 Released from GPS. Court ordered GPS.

Youth “J”

- 7/20/2023 Intake of 15-year-old for Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft – Felony – \$1,500 – < \$10,000, Malicious Destruction, and Unauthorized Removal of Property. DRAI 4 (low). Informaled, placed on pre-court supervision with referrals to Evening Reporting Center and Teen Court.
- 9/6/2023 Previous informal decision rescinded due to noncompliance, case formaled and referred to State’s Attorney’s Office.
- 10/18/2023 Allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft.
- 11/2/2023 Intake for Robbery, Assault 2nd Degree / Battery, Theft Misdemeanor \$100 – < \$1,500, and a separate incident of Carjacking – Unarmed. DRAI 8, indicating Alternative to Detention. Formaled, placed on Community Detention and Electronic Monitoring, released to guardian. Referred to mental health care provider.
- 11/3/2023 Court ordered placed on Community Detention and Electronic Monitoring, modified (extended) twice.
- 11/14/2023 Court ordered placed to Evening Reporting Center.
- 11/18/2023 Placed at BCJJC.
- 11/20/2023 Released from BCJJC to guardian.
- 11/21/2023 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft. “Risk” 6. Formaled, released to mother.
- 11/28/2023 Placed at DJS–contracted community–based provider.
- 12/1/2023 Court ordered released as “successful” from Community Detention and Electronic Monitoring to GPS. Ordered one year probation, 30 days GPS for Conspiracy to Commit Any Felony, and Unspecified Felony.

- 12/2/2023 Released from GPS as “successful”. Released from Evening Reporting Center as “successful.” Court ordered GPS. Court ordered Evening Reporting Center.
- 12/5/2023 Intake for Carjacking – Unarmed, Robbery, Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft Felony \$25,000 – < \$100,000, Assault 2nd Degree / Battery. DRAI 17, formaled, detained at BCJJC. Placed at Charles Hickey School. Released “unsuccessful” from GPS.
- 12/6/2023 Court ordered placed on Electronic Monitoring.
- 12/7/2023 Released from Charles Hickey School to grandparent with Community Detention and Electronic Monitoring.
- 12/12/2023 Court ordered released from Electronic Monitoring as “unsuccessful” for “leaving the house with a 1st infraction court order.” Released “unsuccessful” from DJS–contracted community–based provider for new offense. Placed at Charles Hickey School.

Youth “K”

- 7/21/2023 May have allegedly committed, or been charged with, Motor Vehicle Theft, Assault 1st Degree.
- 8/18/2023 DJS attempts intake for 15-year-old alleged to have committed Assault 1st Degree and Motor Vehicle Theft. Youth and parent/guardian fail to appear. Formaled. DRAI 4 (low).
- 9/5/2023 Intake for Carjacking – Armed. DRAI 8. Mandatory hold for “Category 1 offense.” Court ordered detention for evaluation, likely at BCJJC.
- 9/6/2023 Emergency arraignment. Released to evening reporting center, community detention, and electronic monitoring with GPS.
- 9/20/2023 Warrant issued. Released from evening reporting center as “unsuccessful.”
- 9/25/2023 May have allegedly committed, or been charged with, Conspiracy to Commit Any Felony. Hearing scheduled for 11/6/2023. Formaled, DRAI 19. Emergency arraignment scheduled for 10/18/2023.
- 9/26/2023 Released from electronic monitoring as an “unsuccessful runaway.”
- 9/28/2023 Detained at BCJJC.
- 10/5/2023 Released to parent per court.
- 10/6/2023 Placed to evening reporting center. Both placed on court ordered GPS monitoring, and released home as “successful.”

- 10/18/2023 Released as unsuccessful for new Carjacking charge. Detained for evaluation. Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft. Schedules hearing for 11/6/2023.
- 10/20/2023 Released as unsuccessful from evening reporting center.
- 11/3/2023 Released to parent on Community Detention and Electronic Monitoring.
- 11/6/2023 Released as “successful.” Court ordered GPS.
- 11/9/2023 Alleged to have committed Robbery.
- 12/4/2023 Alleged to have committed Handgun Violation – “unlawful wearing carrying,” notes first offense. Released as “unsuccessful runaway” after cutting off GPS.
- 12/5/2023 Intake for Carjacking – Unarmed, and for Handgun Violation – “unlawful wearing carrying”, notes first offense. Formaled, DRAI 19. Emergency arraignment, court ordered evaluation at BCJJC. Released home with Electronic Monitoring.
- 12/7/2023 Court ordered GPS.
- 12/22/2023 Intake for Robbery. Formaled, DRAI 6.
- 2/7/2024 Released as unsuccessful after being detained on a warrant for several adult charges.

Youth “L”

- 8/6/2023 Possible intake for Motor Vehicle Theft and Destruction of Property.
- 8/14/2023 Allegedly commits Robbery with Deadly Weapon.
- 8/18/2023 Intake of 14-year-old for Robbery with Deadly Weapon. DRAI 4. Formaled. Referred to mental health treatment and a non–contracted community–based provider.
- 10/15/2023 Allegedly commits Theft Misdemeanor – \$100 – < \$1,500.
- 11/15/2023 Allegedly commits Disturbing the Peace / Disorderly House.
- 11/16/2023 Intake for Disturbing the Peace / Disorderly House, and Theft Misdemeanor – \$100 – < \$1,500. DRAI 8 (moderate). Resolved at intake.
- 11/28/2023 Court finds “facts not sustained” on an earlier charge.
- 12/5/2023 Intake for Robbery, Carjacking Unarmed, Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft Felony – \$1,5000 – < \$10,000, Assault 2nd Degree / Battery. DRAI 8. Formaled. Placed on

Community Detention with Electronic Monitoring – GPS. Released to parent. Arraignment scheduled 12/6/2023.

12/20/2023 Admitted to PACT evening reporting center.

Youth “M”

10/20/2023 13–year-old alleged to have committed multiple counts of Robbery.

11/1/2023 Intake for Carjacking – Armed. No prior DJS contacts. DRAI 4 (low). DRAI recommendation overridden, formalized. Placed on court–ordered electronic monitoring. Later charged with Motor Vehicle Theft alleged to have occurred on this same date.

12/20/2023 After several extensions of electronic monitoring, released as “unsuccessful” due to a writ or warrant. Youth is runaway.

1/18/2024 Intake for aforementioned Motor Vehicle Theft, formalized. Overrode recommendation “from Detention to...Community Detention.” Court ordered detention.

1/31/2024 Released to parent.

2/5/2024 Released from community detention and detained at BCJJC for Alternative to Detention violation.

2/6/2024 Released to parent.

Youth “N”

11/11/2023 13–year-old allegedly commits Motor Vehicle Theft.

11/12/2023 Intake for Motor Vehicle Theft. No previous contact with DJS. DRAI 4, informalized.

11/16/2023 Placed on pre–court supervision, level moderate.

12/1/2023 Placed on evening reporting center.

1/4/2024 Released from evening reporting center “unsuccessful.” Of 30 days, absent 15, excused 5, present 5.

1/17/2024 Intake for Robbery. DRAI 7 indicates release. Notes “This case is being forwarded to the SAO for review.”

2/12/2024 Pre–court supervision closed “unsuccessful”, notes “parent refusal.”

Youth “O”

No contacts with DJS prior to indictment.

**Appendix A. Response from the
Department of Juvenile Services**



DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE SERVICES

217 East Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

Wes Moore
Governor

Vincent Schiraldi
Secretary

December 9, 2024

Michael Powell
Director
Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Department of Legislative Services
90 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

On behalf of the Department of Juvenile Services, we want to thank you for the thoroughness of the evaluation and report that was conducted by your office at the direction of the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee and the opportunity to respond to your team's recommendations. The agency response is attached.

Sincerely,

Vincent Schiraldi
Vincent Schiraldi
Secretary
Department of Juvenile Service



The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) responses to the Observations and Recommendations included in the OPEGA Report of DJS

December 3, 2024

Please find below the agency responses to content areas that were included in the report's recommendations.

Chapter 2: Community Based Services

Recommendation: The Department of Juvenile Services should consider expanding the capability of its ASSIST database to capture placements with contracted providers and referrals to non-contracted community-based providers.

DJS Response: The Department is currently exploring a new case management system to replace/upgrade its system which was procured in 1999 and is no longer supported by programming language(s) in order to effectively or efficiently alter the system. DJS does require that any contracted program have a parent organization created in ASSIST for placement admissions and releases. While the recommendation to capture all non-contracted community based providers is envious, it is not practical. The agency has annually partnered with the University of Maryland to conduct a resource repository and update its information for use by community staff; unfortunately, many of those same organizations do not respond to requests for information, including capacity and services. To create a system that would accurately capture the needed demographic information and services for any and all community based providers is not attainable given the sheer number of providers that may or may not be registered with the state.

Recommendation: The Department of Juvenile Services should identify and replicate best-practices from local offices to ensure equitable treatment of DJS-involved youth throughout Maryland.

DJS Response: DJS agrees on the importance of replicating best practices statewide to ensure equitable treatment for all youth. To address this, the Secretary has established the Assistant Secretary for Resources position, tasked with standardizing best practices for community-based services and ensuring consistent service availability across all counties. DJS has also received an \$850,000 grant from the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to assist us in surveying key stakeholders throughout Maryland to garner more information with which to discern gaps that need to be filled in urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout Maryland.

Recommendation: The Department of Juvenile Services should support the Governor's Office for Children with the development of the "public centralized database of all State, local, and private resources available for children, youth and families in the State" mandated in Chapter 408 of 2024.

DJS Response: The agency concurs with this recommendation and will continue its long standing partnership with GOC.

Chapter 3: Department of Juvenile Services Oversight of Community-based Service Providers

Recommendation: **DJS should collect data that allows for provider-level assessment of effectiveness based on youth outcomes.**

DJS Response: The Department remains committed to collecting data and expanding data collection tools to enhance data to ensure youth outcomes are at the optimal level and current providers are effective.

Recommendation: **DJS procurement officials should ensure they have enough providers throughout the State, working with RSS to map out where and when RSS feel they have too few provider options.**

DJS Response: The Department remains committed to the expansion of contracted providers and services throughout the State of Maryland; we are limited in terms of those providers that respond to Requests for Proposals and will continue to expand our outreach efforts. The Department is working closely with the Department of General Services and GOSBA to launch a DJS hosted Socio-Economic Event to bring in vendors throughout the State of Maryland that can meet the needs of all DJS identified regions, as well as to conducting the gap analysis noted above with our newly-hired Assistant Secretary for Community Resources aided by the federal OJJDP grant.

Recommendation: **DJS should ensure that youth in the Baltimore City area also have access to EBS providers.**

DJS Response: The Department remains committed to the expansion of contracted providers and services throughout the State of Maryland. To that end, The Department has partnered with the University of Maryland School of Social Work to obtain a grant covering the initial training and start-up costs for Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Multi-Systemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA) in Baltimore City. DJS will issue an Expression of Interest in the winter of 2025 and expects services to begin by the spring of 2025.

Recommendation: **DJS should consider establishing a process for reviewing contracted provider staffing vacancies.**

DJS Response: DJS is in process of establishing a consistent, statewide process for tracking and reviewing contracted provider staffing vacancies. While some contracts already require monthly reports, expanding this to all contracts with a standardized reporting format and centralized tracking system would improve accountability and help address staffing challenges effectively.

Appendix B. Methodology

This evaluation relied on a combination of semi-structured interviews, field observations, administrative datasets, and case files to examine the following:

- the effectiveness of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)-contracted community-based services;
- the oversight and management of contracted community-based providers;
- case management for youth referred to DJS through a Child in Need of Supervision complaint; and
- the history of interaction between some specific youth and DJS.

The Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) requested data from the Department of Juvenile Services' Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools (ASSIST) database. ASSIST has been the system of record for cases referred to DJS since 1999. It contains information about youth and their families, offenses, case processing, and placements. OPEGA requested read-only access to the full database and a data extract with records for each youth with a complaint record in ASSIST between fiscal 2018 and 2023. DJS also provided adult arrest data received on an annual basis from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) for the cohort of youth with intake records during fiscal 2018 through 2022.¹ These datasets are summarized in **Exhibit 1**.

¹ DJS receives adult arrest data from DPSCS on an annual basis. Information on the Fiscal 2023 cohort of DJS intakes had not been compiled at the time of this analysis.

Exhibit 1
Summary of Data Provided by DJS

Placement History All placements for children in the sample that have been recorded in ASSIST, including placement records that occurred outside of the evaluation timeframe. Includes details such as placement and removal dates, residence and jurisdiction counties, and reasons for removal.

Offense and Disposition History This dataset captures all complaints and offenses reported to DJS for children in the sample, including offense records records that occurred outside of the evaluation timeframe. It also includes information about alleged and adjudicated offenses, court decisions, and associated dates.

Child Information Contains a unique identifier for every child in the sample and demographic data such as date of birth, gender, and race.

Adult Arrests Arrest data provided by DPSCS to DJS on an annual basis. Data recieved by OPEGA contains arrest data for the cohort of youth with DJS intake records during fiscal 2018 through 2022.

ASSIST: Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools
DJS: Department of Juvenile Services
DPSCS: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
OPEGA: Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

The scope of records obtained from ASSIST for this analysis is summarized in **Exhibit 2**.

Exhibit 2
ASSIST Records Obtained by OPEGA

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total Records</u>
DJS-Involved Youth	42,946
Complaints Submitted to DJS ¹	84,034
Unique Offenses Alleged in Complaints ²	168,731
Unique Placement Records ³	49,970
DJS-Involved Youth With Placement Records	13,146

¹ One youth may have multiple complaints filed against them.

² One youth may have committed multiple offenses. One complaint may reference multiple alleged offenses by a single youth. All alleged offenses, ranging from the least serious (*e.g.*, truancy) to the most serious (*e.g.*, alleged homicide), are included in offenses.

³ Refers to all placement records recorded for sampled youth, including community-based placements and secure detention.

ASSIST: Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools

DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

OPEGA: Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Community-based Services Regression Methodology

Sample Selection

To examine the effect of community-based non-residential program placement on youth re-offense, we constructed a narrow sample of first-time juvenile offenders. The sample was restricted to youth with second-degree assault complaints who were placed on informal (“pre-court”) supervision and excluded cases that were either resolved at intake or forwarded for formal charges. This sampling strategy was chosen to create two comparable groups:

- youth under informal supervision with no record of program placement; and
- youth under informal supervision who have a record of program placement in a community-based non-residential program.

Both groups received standard DJS case management services, allowing us to isolate the additional effect of program placement on re-offense.

Outcome Variable

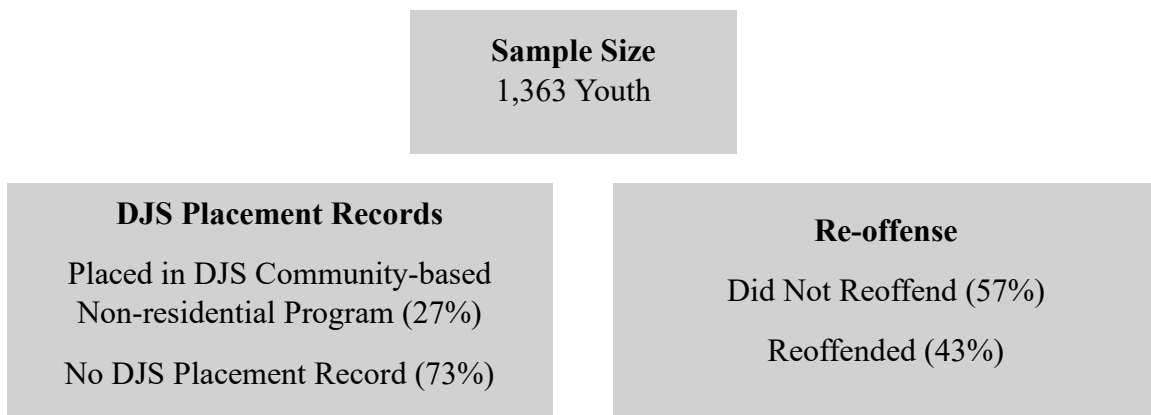
For this analysis, we define “re-offense” as any new complaint filed with DJS or adult arrest recorded by DPSCS since the initial second-degree assault complaint, excluding non-incarcerable adult offenses. This measure captures alleged subsequent offenses, regardless of eventual adjudication status. It was constructed as a binary variable to capture whether a youth had any new complaint filed with DJS or any adult arrest recorded by DPSCS, excluding non-incarcerable adult offenses.

Predictor Variables

The explanatory variable of interest was program placement (a binary of placed/not placed in a known DJS-funded community-based non-residential program). Control variables included individual characteristics (*i.e.*, sex, race, intake age), jurisdictional fixed effects to account for systematic differences between counties, and placement intensity measures (days in DJS placement and completion status).

Intake age was modeled with a quadratic term to capture the nonlinear relationship between age at first offense and recidivism risk. The specification was selected through cross-validation performance testing.

Regression Sample



Note: Re-offense is calculated based on *alleged* offenses reported to DJS or DPSCS. This does not indicate that a youth was later determined to be guilty of the offense.

Analytical Approach

- **Bootstrap Resampling:** The model utilized 1,000 bootstrap resamples to generate robust standard errors and confidence intervals, providing more reliable estimates of coefficient uncertainty than traditional methods. This approach helps account for the inherent variability in youth outcomes and provides more conservative estimates of program effects.

- **Nonlinear Age Effects:** A quadratic transformation of intake age was included to capture known nonlinear relationships between age at first offense and recidivism risk. The polynomial terms were normalized to ensure stable estimation across the age range.
- **Jurisdictional Fixed-Effects:** Fixed effects for county of case jurisdiction were included to account for systematic differences in local policies, resources, and decision-making practices.
- **Variable Selection:** The model employed correlation thresholds to remove highly collinear predictors, ensuring stable estimation of program effects. This helped prevent multicollinearity issues that could obscure the true relationship between program placement and outcomes.

Model Performance

The model’s performance was assessed using several metrics. The results suggest that while the model can identify some patterns in re-offense risk, there are likely important unmeasured factors influencing outcomes.

- **Binary Prediction Accuracy:** The model correctly predicted re-offense (whether a youth would have a new intake to DJS or adult arrest) in 65.7% of cases.
- **Kappa Statistic:** This metric shows that the model performs about 26% better than random chance would predict, after accounting for the natural imbalance in our outcome data.
- **ROC AUC (“Receiver Operating Characteristic Area Under the Curve”):** This score, which can range from 0 to 1, indicates that the model has fundamental challenges in distinguishing between youth who will and will not reoffend. A score of 1.0 would indicate perfect prediction. A value of 0.344 suggests that the model does not capture the complexity of factors influencing re-offense.

Coefficient Estimates²

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	95% Confidence		<u>P Value</u>
			<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	
(Intercept)	1.94125995	1.471058	0.847521	3.29682	0.186957
Placement Record = “Yes”	-0.00880435	0.081019	-0.17195	0.153989	0.913464
<i>County Fixed Effects</i>					
Dorchester County	-1.93715966	1.510658	-3.45735	-0.4511	0.199728
Frederick County	-1.45334728	1.539361	-2.97857	0.085233	0.345106
Garrett County	-1.49234789	12.02807	-18.0995	15.6557	0.901258

² Coefficients in logistic regression represent changes in the log-odds of re-offense.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>95% Confidence</u>		<u>P Value</u>
			<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	
Harford County	-2.0583298	1.532056	-3.51412	-0.64349	0.179107
Howard County	-2.7673432	1.523051	-4.27862	-1.50337	0.069221
Kent County	-1.9432543	3.544583	-15.4764	0.811983	0.583532
Montgomery County	-2.55165898	1.472829	-3.91431	-1.42008	0.083187
Prince George's County	-2.3839543	1.479062	-3.79035	-1.22213	0.107005
Queen Anne's County	-3.14571584	3.123482	-17.361	-0.82984	0.313878
Somerset County	-0.79597686	1.962207	-2.6489	0.885638	0.684997
Anne Arundel County	-2.11175231	1.479075	-3.39868	-0.93886	0.153363
St. Mary's County	-1.99291815	1.483472	-3.32906	-0.77106	0.179138
Talbot County	0.94809702	5.771413	-3.4262	14.9976	0.869515
Washington County	-1.22164828	1.489609	-2.63616	0.007552	0.412151
Wicomico County	-1.99964027	1.592985	-3.70786	-0.35615	0.209378
Worcester County	2.20270374	9.348796	-17.513	15.28884	0.813732
Baltimore City	-1.14572457	1.526129	-2.71728	0.422217	0.45281
Baltimore County	-2.1111296	1.480657	-3.46328	-0.96627	0.153924
Calvert County	-1.65585749	1.522442	-3.04861	-0.21262	0.276757
Carroll County	-1.71708609	1.49302	-3.05923	-0.55773	0.000464
Cecil County	-1.88887154	1.514003	-3.38939	-0.59176	0.250113
Charles County	-0.90771302	4.421086	-4.69304	13.96165	0.837326
<i>Age At Intake</i>					
Linear	-7.66379231	2.552797	-12.1704	-2.65402	0.002681
Age at Intake^2	-9.67338341	2.53312	-15.0373	-5.09329	0.000134
<i>Race (Comparison Group = Black/African American)</i>					
Asian	-14.76363562	1.167594	-16.1672	-13.4259	0.000000
Hispanic/Latino	0.09980157	0.253681	-0.39236	0.611057	0.694014
Unknown	-3.90946344	5.029994	-16.9286	-0.71923	0.437023
White or Caucasian	-0.61110187	0.191111	-0.98132	-0.2523	0.001386
<i>Gender (Comparison Group = Female)</i>					
Male	0.09475772	0.136462	-0.16653	0.374275	0.487438

This analysis provides the following insights:

1. Program Effects: The estimated effect of community-based non-residential program placement is very close to zero (-0.00382) with a 95% confidence interval of [-0.162 to 0.159], suggesting there is no discernable impact of program placement on re-offense outcomes above and beyond what would be expected from receiving informal supervision without community service placement (case management alone). However, this should be interpreted cautiously given the model's overall performance metrics.
2. Age Effects: The analysis reveals complex relationships between intake age and outcomes. Multiple polynomial terms for intake age are statistically significant. The negative

coefficients on the age terms suggest a generally declining relationship between age and re-offense risk, but the relationship is non-linear.

3. **Jurisdictional Variation:** Substantial variation exists across jurisdictions, with some counties showing large differences in outcomes. The magnitude of county effects ranges from -2.77 to 23.5, indicating important geographic disparities in outcomes. Several jurisdictional effects are statistically significant, suggesting systematic differences in local practices or contexts.

Analytical Constraints

Regression analysis on the impact of community-based interventions for DJS-involved youth was limited by multiple data constraints:





- Data on community-based programs operated by external vendors is relatively limited compared to the information that DJS collects for its own facilities. Vendors are required to submit monthly data on youth participation to DJS. However, the information contained in these reports is not validated by DJS and the quality of the reporting varies widely across vendors. Additionally, DJS does not integrate this vendor data into their case management information systems, meaning that information about participant engagement, program intensity, and implementation quality is not attached to youth placement records.
- Information about youth placements in ASSIST is not particularly useful for analysis because placement records may refer to a specific program (*i.e.*, the UMBC – Choice Program), a DJS initiative (*i.e.*, the Behavioral Health Diversion Initiative), or a set of restrictions on youth movement (*i.e.*, Community Detention with Electronic Monitoring). It is challenging to separate true placements with DJS-funded programs from youth who are only receiving case management from DJS.
- Many youths referred to DJS for a complaint also receive services (before the complaint, while involved with DJS, and/or after DJS involvement) outside of DJS. Such outside services may have been accessed through school or local departments of social services, via diversion programs offered by local law enforcement, through community or faith-based groups offering mentoring, or services from private therapists or other private providers. DJS does not systematically track youth participation in outside services.
- It is challenging to distinguish between the effects of a program and preexisting participant characteristics. Program participants may differ from nonparticipants in fundamental ways that cannot be measured using data collected by DJS. For instance, some evidence-based program models emphasize participation by the youth’s family in the intervention. DJS may not refer youth with families that cannot or will not get involved may not be referred to evidence-based service providers, creating a selection bias.

- Sequential and overlapping placements of youth with DJS-funded programs of differing intensities and durations make it hard to distinguish which program or what combination of programs may affect youth behavior over time.

Appendix C. DJS Program Categorizations by Type and by Level

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) uses the term “community-based services” to broadly refer to program levels for youth living either at home with their families or outside their home in a shelter, group home, or foster care, but not in a correctional facility. DJS also uses the term “non-residential services” to refer to a smaller set of program types. **Exhibit 1** shows how DJS categorizes its programs by level and by type, and factors related to these categorizations.

Exhibit 1
DJS Program Categorizations
(by type and by level)

DJS Program Type	Community-based Service		Community-based or Residential Service	Residential Service
DJS Program Level	In-Home Non-residential	Level 1 Residential: group home, foster care, or independent living	Level 2 Residential: high-intensity group home or facility	Level 3 Residential: locked facility
Factors affecting categorization of programs:				
 Where a youth sleeps	Youth living in their family home.	Youth living outside own home, such as in shelter care, a foster home, a group home, or living independently.		Youth living in a correctional facility.
 Risk: Security/surveillance	Non-secure (but youth may go to ERCs**, and/or in Community Detention (CD) w/ or w/o Electronic Monitoring (EM)/GPS tracking)		Staff-secured (youth may also be under CD/EM/GPS tracking)	Hardware-secured
 Where a youth attends school	Attends their home school.	May attend their home school or transfer to a school near group or foster home.	May get education or training services from private providers	Attends school inside the locked facility.
 Where a youth gets treated*	Outpatient		Inpatient	

DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

*Some DJS-involved youth may be ‘Crossover Youth’ involved with the Department of Human Services when they were referred to DJS. This report is focused on the DJS-funded services following a complaint to DJS.

**Varying by region, Evening Reporting Centers may be operated by DJS staff, by contractors, or a mix of both.

Appendix D. Monitoring and Oversight of Providers is Part of the Full Procurement Process

Exhibit 1 outlines the generic steps in State government procurement and then details how those apply to the specific task of procuring community-based services for DJS-involved youth.

Exhibit 1 Procurement Process for DJS-funded Community-based Services

Procurement process in general	Procurement process for DJS community-based services in non-residential and residential-Level 1 settings:
1. Identifying a need.	Needs, and what determines those needs, vary across cases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services may be ordered by a court and/or recommended by DJS Intake Officers for an informaled youth, or youth awaiting court adjudication. • A youth may receive multiple types of services over time.
2. Specifying the requirements to fulfill the need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input comes from subject matter experts in juvenile corrections, juvenile rehabilitation, and mental and behavioral health treatment. • Requirements are based on the specific practice model used by a provider and may be a condition of certain formula grants.
3. Identifying potential vendors.	Identifying potential vendors or intergovernmental entities, and the best contract vehicle. This function is handled by the Office of Procurement in DJS' Support Services Division.
4. Soliciting bids and proposals.	Soliciting bids and proposals. This function is handled by the Office of Procurement in DJS' Support Services Division.
5. Evaluating bids and proposals.	Evaluating bids and proposals. This function is handled by the Office of Procurement in DJS' Support Services Division.
6. Awarding contracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarding contracts or interagency agreements, a procurement vehicle often used by DJS. Interagency collaboration is arranged via MOAs/MOUs. Awards are handled by the Office of Procurement in DJS' Support Services Division. • Approving funding for services on short notice via emergency procurements when capacity is insufficient among contracted providers.
7. Tracking progress and ensuring compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designating a Contract Monitor for each contract or agreement. • Verifying that monthly statistical performance reports are submitted to the DJS Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE). ORE notifies the Contracts Management Unit if a provider has missing reports. ORE does not typically verify the data reported by the providers. • Verifying that providers turn in monthly case progress reports. This function is done by the Resource Specialists and Case Management Specialists. • For the subset of providers of certain evidence-based practice (EBP) models, verifying that additional required reports have been submitted to the University of Maryland School of Social Work (UM-SSW). This added oversight is a federal funding requirement for certain EBPs to assure fidelity to the practice model. UM-SSW provides this under a contract with DJS.

Procurement process in general	Procurement process for DJS community-based services in non-residential and residential-Level 1 settings:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifying that goals, objectives, and performance measures in the contract or agreement have been met. In general, regional offices meet monthly with providers to review cases and discuss performance issues. For providers of EBPs, quarterly Oversight & Implementation meetings also cover program data compiled from monthly statistical performance reports and UM-SSW reviews.
8. Taking delivery.	Referring youth to service placements and ensuring that providers connect with the youth within the required number of days. This function is done by Resource Specialists (RS), in collaboration with Case Management Specialists (CMS).
9. Inspecting and inventorying deliveries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifying that service delivery claimed and billed for by vendor or governmental entity was delivered, and that any subcontractors were authorized. Verifications is done by the RS, Contract Monitors, and the Contract Management Unit in DJS' Support Services Division. • Incorporating CMS observations in provider reviews. CMS may enter their observations about providers in METS and ASSIST. The RS may review such notes as part of their monthly meetings with providers. CMS and RS also communicate verbally. • Addressing formal complaints by youths or their families. The DJS Office of Inspector General investigates formal complaints. The Quality Assurance unit may also conduct a review based on formal complaints. According to DJS staff, formal complaints usually pertain only to facilities. • Conducting site visits. CMS are most likely to observe community-based service delivery, but according to DJS staff, in practice site visits for community-based services are rare and in some situations are not possible. • Addressing informal or anonymous complaints and suggestions placed in the drop-boxes. The Youth Advocacy Unit periodically collects and reviews the items placed in drop-boxes, but according to DJS staff, this opportunity for feedback pertains mainly to DJS facilities.
10. Paying the vendor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing invoices. The Resource Specialists and the staff of the Contract Management Unit check invoice accuracy against other service records and the monthly statistical performance reports. • Paying the vendors or governmental entities. The Contract Management Unit in DJS' Support Services Division processes the payments. (Prime contractors pay subcontractors directly.)
11. Disposing of a commodity at the end of its useful life or concluding a service.	<p>Assessing if a specific service provider should, at the end of the contract or agreement term, be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • renewed; • modified; or • concluded altogether.

ASSIST: Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools

DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

METS: Maryland Evaluation and Treatment Services

MOA/MOU: memorandum of agreement/memorandum of understanding

Source: Department of Juveniles Services; Department of Legislative Services

Appendix E. Entities Involved in Oversight of DJS Community-based Service Providers

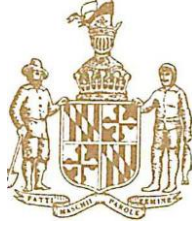
Entity/Staff	Community-based Service Providers Overseen by this Entity or Staff	Type of Oversight
DJS Resource Specialists (RS) and their supervisors (RSS) in the regional offices	All providers	Team meets monthly to discuss provider issues and concerns with specific cases under provider care
DJS Case Management Specialists (CMS) and their supervisors	All providers	Cases (youth) assigned to that CMS who are receiving services from that provider
University of Maryland, Baltimore–School of Social Work (UM–SSW) Institute for Innovation and Implementation (under contract with DJS).	Certain evidence-based service providers to assure model fidelity: Multisystemic Treatment/MST®; Functional Family Therapy/FFT®; and Family Centered Treatment/FCT ®	Quarterly Oversight and Implementation meetings; regular reporting by providers to UM–SSW
DJS Contract Monitors (function may be filled by a variety of staff with different job titles (e.g., Regional Directors) and/or DJS’ Interagency Budget Team	All providers	Oversight in practice is more indirect than oversight by RS/RSS, CMS, and UM-SSW
DJS Office of Procurement within Support Services Division	All providers	Works with SMEs to define service requirements; selects contract vehicles, solicits bids, and selects winning bid
DJS Contract Management Unit within Support Services Division	All providers	Fiscal compliance
DJS Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE)	All providers	Providers send monthly statistical performance reports to ORE
DJS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), including Internal Audit	Providers for whom an incident has been reported or a formal complaint filed; mainly pertains to residential facilities.	Investigates reported incidents or formal complaints, mainly pertains to residential facilities
DJS Quality Assurance Field Audit Team within Quality Assurance Unit	.	
DJS Licensing and Monitoring	Providers licensed by DJS.	License renewal process, other monitoring
DJS Internal Audit (within DJS OIG)	All providers	Fiscal and legal compliance, mainly pertains to residential programs

Entity/Staff	Community-based Service Providers Overseen by this Entity or Staff	Type of Oversight
DHS Office of Licensing and Monitoring	DHS–licensed providers working under a contract or agreement with DJS.	License renewal process
Maryland State Board of Education	Providers operating certain educational programs under a contract or agreement with DJS.	
Private licensing or accrediting entities, such as programs the use MST®, FFT®, or FCT® models	Providers authorized to operate certain evidence–based practice models.	The licensing or credentialing body periodically reviews providers
Interagency Rates Committee (IRC)	For providers working under per diem (PD) contracts, PD rate changes require an application to IRC by provider.	PD rate change application entails a paper review only by IRC (no site visits, limited additional oversight)
DJS-involved youth and their families	Any reported incidents or formal complaints are sent directly to OIG. Informal or anonymous complaints may be placed in a locked suggestion drop-box, periodically collected.	Formal complaints mainly relates to and designed for residential facilities
Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) within the Maryland Office of Attorney General	JJMU investigates the needs of children under DJS jurisdiction and determines if their needs are being met in compliance with State law. Includes reporting on allegations of abuse and on treatment of and services for youth held in facilities. JJMU reports quarterly.	JJMU emphasis is on DJS facilities

DHS: Department of Human Services
DJS: Department of Juvenile Services
SME: subject-matter expert

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Office of the Attorney General; Department of Legislative Services

Appendix F. Evaluation Request Letter



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

JOINT AUDIT AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

May 21, 2024

Mr. Michael Powell
Director, Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Department of Legislative Services
90 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. Powell:

Consistent with §2-1234 of the State Government Article, we are directing that the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability conduct a performance evaluation of the Department of Juvenile Services.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Senator Clarence K. Lam.

Senator Clarence K. Lam
Senate Chair

Handwritten signature of Delegate Jared Solomon.

Delegate Jared Solomon
House Chair

CKL:JS/MP:EP:DB:MM/bal

cc: Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee, Members and Staff
Victoria L. Gruber