

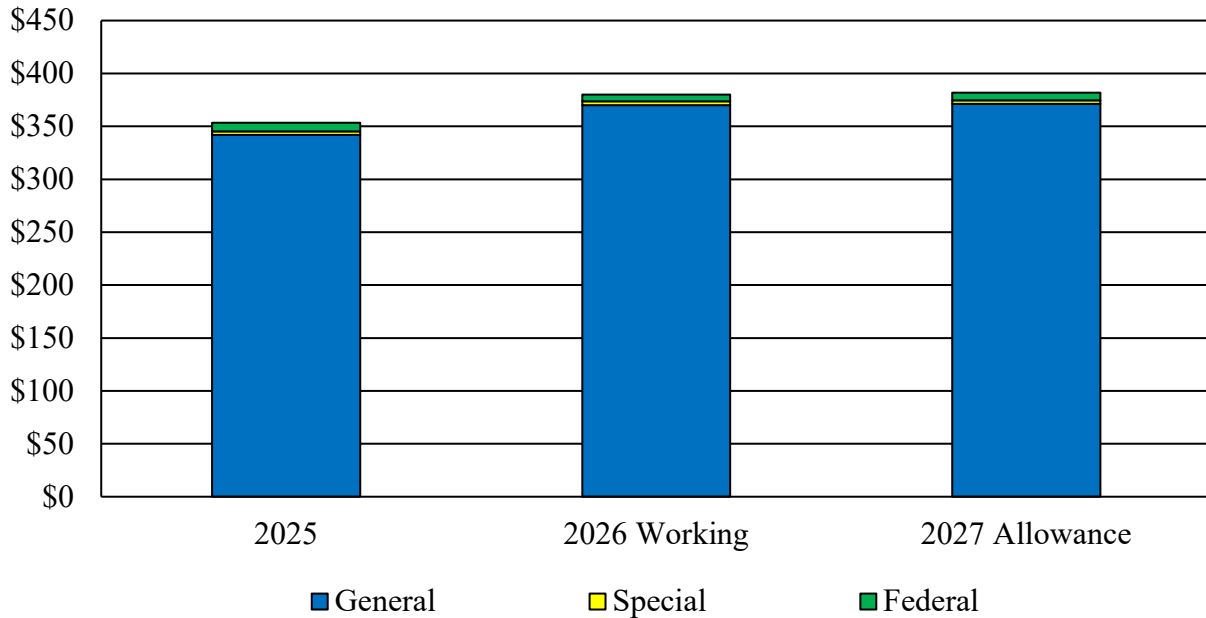
V00A
Department of Juvenile Services

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) is responsible for managing, supervising, and treating youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system in Maryland. DJS does this by providing needs assessment, intake, detention, probation, commitment, and aftercare services.

Operating Budget Summary

Fiscal 2027 Budget Increases \$1.9 Million, or 0.5%, to \$381.8 Million
(\$ in Millions)



Note: The fiscal 2026 working appropriation accounts for deficiencies. The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management are not included in this agency’s budget. Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

- The fiscal 2026 appropriation grows by a net of \$15.9 million in general funds for proposed deficiencies. These deficiencies add \$8.6 million for legal fees and data archival needs associated with the Child Victims Act (Chapter 5 of 2023), \$6.1 million of which is not continued in the allowance; \$4.2 million for medical care contracts; and \$3.8 million to fund shortfalls from fiscal 2025.

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- Most of the growth in the fiscal 2027 allowance (\$1.9 million) is attributable to net increases in the department’s personnel budget (\$18.8 million). If the deficiencies related to fiscal 2025 shortfalls were excluded, spending would increase \$5.7 million between fiscal years.

Key Observations

- ***Juvenile Populations Stabilize; Some May Decline Between Fiscal 2025 and 2026:*** DJS received 6.4% fewer complaints in fiscal 2025 than in the previous year. Based on data through December 2025, the total number received may increase 0.4% from fiscal 2025 to 2026. Between fiscal 2024 and 2025, the detained population was nearly level, with the population declining by only 0.5% between fiscal years. The average daily population (ADP) of the detained population is expected to decrease by 10.2% to 236 youths in fiscal 2026. For youth in committed treatment, ADP rose by 1.6% between fiscal 2024 and 2025 and is expected to be similar or to decline in fiscal 2026.
- ***Implementation of Corrective Actions Following Fiscal Audit:*** DJS reports that its corrective action plan addresses the recommendation of the Office of Legislative Audits’ (OLA) May 2025 report and is in progress.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Add language to restrict funds pending the submission of a report on the Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center and expenditures related to the substance abuse program.

Updates

- ***2024-2028 Strategic Plan:*** This plan is no longer in place, but certain actions that were planned to take place by December 31, 2025, have occurred or remain in progress.
- ***DJS Submits Addendum to 2024 Facilities Master Plan (FMP), Rethinks Where Committed Treatment Beds Should Be Added:*** DJS will not pursue the Maryland Youth Residence Center (MYRC) Renovation and Expansion project in Baltimore City and instead plans to build a committed treatment center for male and female youth at the Cheltenham campus.
- ***Expert Review Teams Visit Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Schools:*** As required by Chapter 147 of 2021, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) expert review teams visited JSEP schools in January and February 2026.

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Operating Budget Analysis

Program Description

DJS is an executive agency tasked with supervising and treating youth involved in Maryland's juvenile justice system. The department oversees youth from the point of referral, through the adjudication process, to reentry into society. DJS consists of several units that are broadly divided into two categories – administration and support and community and facility operations.

The Office of the Secretary and Departmental Support make up the centralized leadership of the department and provide various departmentwide services. Departmental Support includes research and evaluation, information technology (IT), budget services, general services, capital planning, human resources, and professional development and training.

Community and Facility Operations is the more regionally focused part of the department, which provides services to youth in community and residential settings. It consists of three programs: Community Operations Administration and Support; Facility Operations Administration and Support; and the JSEP. Programming and operations are currently organized around five regions:

- Baltimore City Region (Baltimore City);
- Capital South Region (Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's counties);
- Central Region (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard counties);
- Eastern Region (Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties); and
- Western Region (Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington counties).

The department's stated goals are to ensure the safety of the public and of youth, reduce recidivism rates of supervised and committed youth, and reduce youth involvement with the juvenile justice system through diversion efforts and partnerships with law enforcement.

Performance Analysis: Managing for Results

1. Crime Prevention Activities

Though DJS is tasked with supervising youth in the juvenile justice system, in recent years, DJS has also engaged in activities aimed at preventing youths from entering or reentering that system. To this end, the department reported the number of at-risk youths reached with preventive services, such as summer youth employees, in fiscal 2025 with its fiscal 2027 Managing for Results (MFR) submission. In fiscal 2025, 123 youth were reached with these services.

The following entities and programs receive funds through DJS and are designed to take a community-based approach to preventing youth involvement with the juvenile justice system: the Thrive Academy; the Enhance Services Continuum; and the Safer, Stronger, Together (SST) initiative, with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS).

Youth in the Thrive Academy are identified by DJS as being at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of gun violence and are paired with a DJS case manager and a life coach or credible messenger from a local nonprofit. As of fiscal 2026, the program operates in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties. DJS may also provide financial incentives, work and service stipends, relocation assistance, and college tuition or vocational training. In fiscal 2025, 157 youths received services through the Thrive Academy, a 45.4% increase compared with fiscal 2024 and 7 youths more than the department’s goal for fiscal 2025. DJS reports that it plans to publish a data dashboard with information about the Thrive Academy to its website later in calendar 2026. DJS has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the University of Pennsylvania to perform an evaluation of the program. The final report is expected before the MOU expires in October 2027.

DJS provides additional services and community-based programming to youth who cannot be prosecuted, youth who do not meet criteria for participation in the Thrive Academy, youth on probation and placed in the community, and youth who are on aftercare following their out-of-home placements. This effort is broadly referred to as the Enhance Services Continuum. Two such programs were announced in November 2024:

- The Community Assistance for the Release Eligible (CARE) program works with youth who are neither detained nor placed on community detention in an effort to support these youth and their families and provide service referrals and courses.
- The Accountability, Confidence, Communication, Economic Self-Sufficiency, Skills Training and Success (ACCESS) program supports youth who are placed by the courts in the community while their cases are pending with intensive supervision support. Intensive supervision is provided by credible messengers. This program was originally known as the Detention Diversion Advocacy Program.

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DJS reports that it will create data dashboards to show youth outcomes in its community-based programming in calendar 2026. The department is also conducting an equity analysis of its service continuum and expects to conclude this analysis in April 2026.

Funding for the SST initiative supports community network service hubs to address community-specific needs in targeted neighborhoods. DJS provides funds to the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, which then awards funds to community organizations. Neighbors are designated by zip code and were selected for their high concentration of multisystem-involved families. DHS, DJS, and DPSCS staff collaborate with a family navigator to serve families. Agencies also provide funding to community action boards, so that the community can allocate resources to public safety issues. Since launching in four sites in fiscal 2025, DJS reports that the SST initiative expanded to an additional site in Prince George’s County and expanded the family navigator work to an additional neighborhood in Baltimore City in fiscal 2026.

2. Complaints Fall After Three Years of Growth

Juvenile Arrest and Complaint Trends

Juvenile arrest trends for calendar 2020 to 2024 are shown in **Exhibit 1**. Total juvenile arrests over the referenced five years increased by 20.1% but are 60.1% higher than the pandemic era low of 7,775 arrests in calendar 2021.

Exhibit 1
Juvenile Arrest Trends
Calendar 2020-2024

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>2020-2024</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>2023-2024</u>
Total Arrests	10,371	7,775	10,318	11,548	12,451	20.1%	7.8%
Arrest Rate	1,643	1,237	1,650	1,821	1,945	18.4%	6.8%

Note: Due to data limitations, the number of juvenile arrests includes children under age 10. The arrest rate is per 100,000 children in Maryland, ages 10 through 17.

Source: *Crime in Maryland* reports; Maryland State Data Center; Department of Legislative Services

Complaints – written statements that allege that a youth has committed one or more delinquent acts or is a runaway, truant, or ungovernable and may be subject to juvenile court dispositions – can be made to DJS by law enforcement, schools, parents, and members of the community. Arrests and referrals by police accounted for 88.6% of complaints in fiscal 2025 and were the primary way that youth became involved with DJS and with the juvenile justice system.

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Other sources of complaints to DJS include transfers from the adult court system (4.6%), complaints from citizens (4.6%), and technical violations of probation (2.2%).

Complaints to DJS are categorized by the most serious offenses involved in the referral. **Exhibit 2** provides this data for fiscal 2023 through 2025. Of the 13,274 complaints in fiscal 2025, 61.9% are related to alleged misdemeanors. Approximately 6.5% of complaints were related to Child in Need of Supervision (CINS) petitions. A CINS petition may be filed for a child who requires guidance, treatment, or rehabilitation and is required by law to attend school and is habitually truant; is habitually disobedient, ungovernable, and beyond the control of the person having custody; acts in a way that is dangerous to self or others; or has committed an offense applicable only to children. Overall complaints decreased by 6.4% between fiscal 2024 and 2025, though the fiscal 2025 level is 7.2% higher than in fiscal 2023. Since Chapter 41 of 2022 took effect in June 2022, CINS referrals to DJS have increased in frequency; fiscal 2023 had 508 intake cases where CINS was the most serious alleged offense, compared to 865 in fiscal 2025, an increase of 70.3%. Of the intake case types, only CINS referrals increased between fiscal 2024 and 2025.

Exhibit 2
Most Serious Alleged Offense Category for Youth Referred to
the Department of Juvenile Services
Fiscal 2023-2025

	2023		2024		2025	
	<u>Intake Cases</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Intake Cases</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Intake Cases</u>	<u>%</u>
Crime of Violence	1,560	12.6%	2,480	17.5%	1,891	14.2%
Felonies	1,616	13.0%	2,187	15.4%	1,960	14.8%
Misdemeanors	8,058	65.0%	8,412	59.3%	8,217	61.9%
Ordinance Offenses	51	0.4%	91	0.6%	61	0.5%
Citations	595	4.8%	307	2.2%	280	2.1%
Child in Need of Supervision	508	4.1%	707	5.0%	865	6.5%
Interstate Warrant	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total Complaints	12,388	100.0%	14,184	100.0%	13,274	100.0%

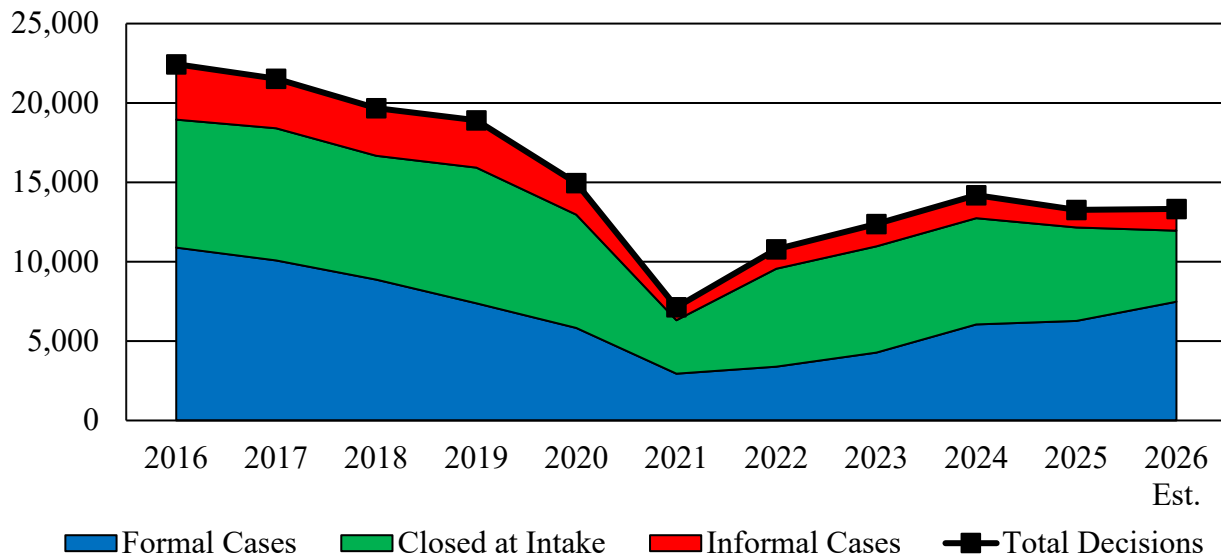
Source: Department of Juvenile Services

Complaints and Dispositions

After receiving a complaint, a DJS intake officer must make an intake decision guided by the Intake Decision Tool that was implemented in July 2020. The intake officer may decide that a complaint is disproved as legally insufficient or otherwise resolved, that the youth should be diverted from court through a pre-court supervision agreement (informal cases), or formally authorize the State’s Attorney to petition the juvenile court for a hearing. The intake decision officer may also use the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) to make an emergency detention until the next court day if requested by law enforcement. The DRAI tool is revalidated every five years, and the most recent validation was completed in May 2025, going into effect on February 18, 2026. Fiscal 2026 data may also differ from previous years due to a policy that was effective July 3, 2025, to detain youth on global positioning system (GPS) or electronic monitoring until the next court day if charged with a serious crime upon law enforcement request. Previously, the law enforcement officer’s request was optional for the department to follow.

Exhibit 3 displays the total number of complaints received by DJS over the past decade and the share of possible decision outcomes made each fiscal year.

Exhibit 3
Complaints by Decision Outcomes
Fiscal 2016-2026 Est.



Note: The fiscal 2026 estimate is based on data from the first six months of the year and assumes that approximately 46.0% of complaints were received between July and December.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Key trends shown in the exhibit are as follows:

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- DJS received 13,274 complaints in fiscal 2025, a 6.4% decrease from the previous year. Compared to 18,906 complaints in fiscal 2019, the last year of prepandemic data, the number of complaints in fiscal 2025 was 29.8% lower. However, the number of complaints in fiscal 2025 represents an increase of 80.6% over the historic low in fiscal 2021.
- Compared to fiscal 2024, a smaller percentage of the fiscal 2025 complaints did not require court intervention. Approximately 52.8% of cases in fiscal 2025 were either resolved at intake (44.3%) or referred for informal intervention (8.5%), compared with 57.3% in fiscal 2024. The share of complaints closed at intake is 8.4 percentage points higher than in fiscal 2016, when 35.9% of complaints had that disposition. The number of cases referred to informal interventions fell to 1,124 in fiscal 2025 and accounted for 8.5% of all dispositions. This reflects a decrease from fiscal 2016, when informal cases accounted for 15.6% of dispositions.
- Formal cases are those that require court intervention. Cases of this type increased by 3.5%, compared to fiscal 2024; however, the number was 14.9% lower than in fiscal 2019. Data from the first few months of fiscal 2026 suggest that the number of formal cases may increase by 19.2% compared with fiscal 2025 and may surpass fiscal 2019 levels by 1.4%.
- Fiscal 2025 is the first year since fiscal 2018 where the number of cases formally referred to the State Attorney's Office exceeded the number of cases closed at intake. Year-to-date data suggests that the share of formal cases will be 56.1% in fiscal 2026, and that the share of cases closed at intake will be 33.6%. The share of cases resolved formally was under 50% between fiscal 2016 and 2025.
- Fiscal 2026 year-to-date data suggests that there could be a 23.9% decrease in cases closed at intake compared to fiscal 2025, but that formal cases could increase by 19.2%, and informal cases could increase by 21.9%. Based on data through December 2025, complaints are projected to increase by 0.4% from fiscal 2025. This assumes that approximately 46.0% of all fiscal 2026 complaints were received in the first six months of the year, consistent with recent experience. Even increasing 0.4%, total complaints in fiscal 2026 would be 29.5% lower than the fiscal 2019 level.

3. Nonresidential Population Trends

The nonresidential placement population includes youths who are receiving informal supervision, on probation, or in aftercare programming. There are three types of nonresidential populations:

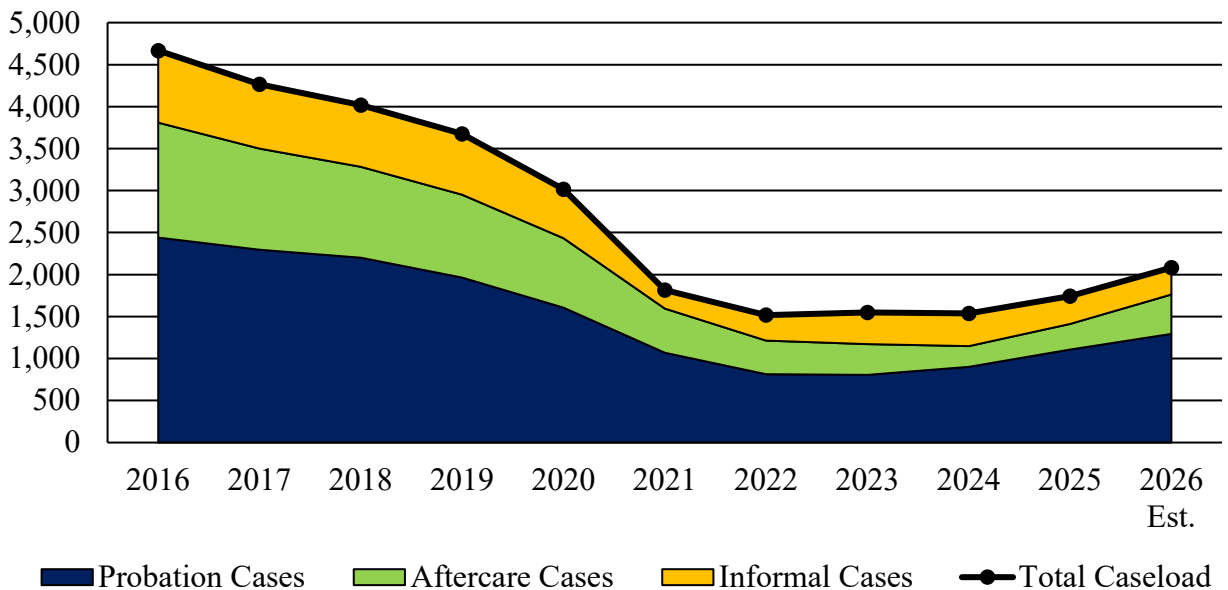
- informal, or pre-court, supervision is an agreement between DJS and a youth and their family to enter into counseling and/or DJS monitoring, through which the youth can avoid court involvement;

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- youth on probation receive court-ordered supervision in the community that requires the youth to meet court-ordered probation conditions, which may include school attendance, employment, community service, restitution, or counseling; and
- aftercare programming provides supervision and individualized treatment services to youth in the community following discharge from a residential program.

Nonresidential population trends are shown in **Exhibit 4**. Consistent with the overall decline in complaints, the department’s nonresidential caseload trends similarly declined between fiscal 2016 and 2021, though nonresidential caseloads continued to fall in fiscal 2022. Between fiscal 2016 and 2022, ADP for the nonresidential caseload decreased by 67.5%. Between fiscal 2022 and 2025, ADP for the nonresidential caseloads have risen by 14.8% to an ADP of approximately 1,742 youth. In fiscal 2025, probation cases accounted for 63.7% of caseloads, aftercare cases for 17.4%, and informal cases for 18.9%. The number of probation cases was 23.1% higher than in fiscal 2024, the number of aftercare cases 22.7% higher, and the number of informal cases was 14.9% lower. The ADP for the nonresidential caseload is estimated to increase by 19.6% between fiscal 2025 and 2026, with probation cases increasing by 16.7% to an ADP of 1,294 youths, and with aftercare cases increasing by 54.3% to an ADP of 468 youths.

Exhibit 4
Nonresidential Caseloads Average Daily Population
Fiscal 2016-2026 Est.



Note: Fiscal 2026 data reflects the first six months of the fiscal year.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

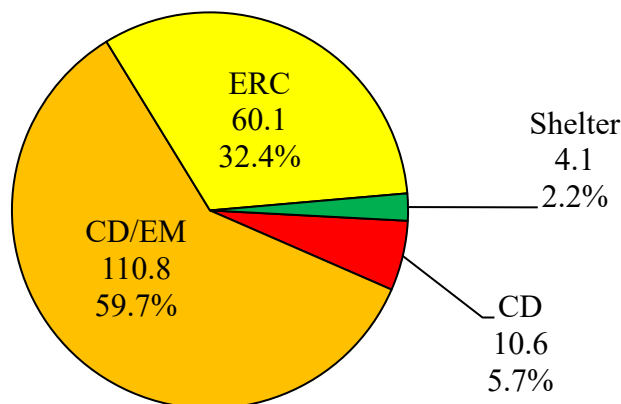
4. Alternatives to Detention Programming

DJS limits the number of youths committed to its facilities by diverting youth to more therapeutic placements when possible, such as an alternative to detention (ATD) program. When a youth enters the juvenile justice system, DJS personnel administer the DRAI to produce a recommendation of whether the youth should be detained, placed in ATD, or released. The DRAI's result determines the youth's risk level based on the severity of their offense, offense history, supervision, and their history of failing to appear for court. It must also be considered by juvenile courts when evaluating whether continued detention is necessary. If it is determined that it is in the best interest of the youth to be placed in ATD, they may be placed into one or more of the following programs:

- **Community Detention, with or without Electronic Monitoring:** Youth are restricted to stay at home and may only leave for court-ordered or DJS-approved activities (*i.e.*, work, school, etc.). More restrictive forms of community detention include the use of ankle monitors and GPS tracking;
- **Evening Reporting Centers (ERC):** Youth are transported to and from ERCs to receive meals, tutoring, counseling, and other services; or
- **Shelter Care:** Youth are provided shelter beds in cases in which the youth is unable to return home (because a parent is unable or refuses to retrieve the youth, for example).

Exhibit 5 shows ADP for each type of ATD program category in fiscal 2025. These programs are all a form of community detention, and participation may also be a court-ordered condition of probation. Electronic monitoring is the most frequently used program, accounting for 59.7% of the cases in fiscal 2025.

Exhibit 5
Alternatives to Detention
Average Daily Enrollment by Program
Fiscal 2025



CD: community detention without electronic monitoring
CD/EM: community detention with electronic monitoring
ERC: Evening Reporting Center

Source: Department of Juvenile Services

5. Secure Detention Population Stabilizes, May Fall in Fiscal 2026

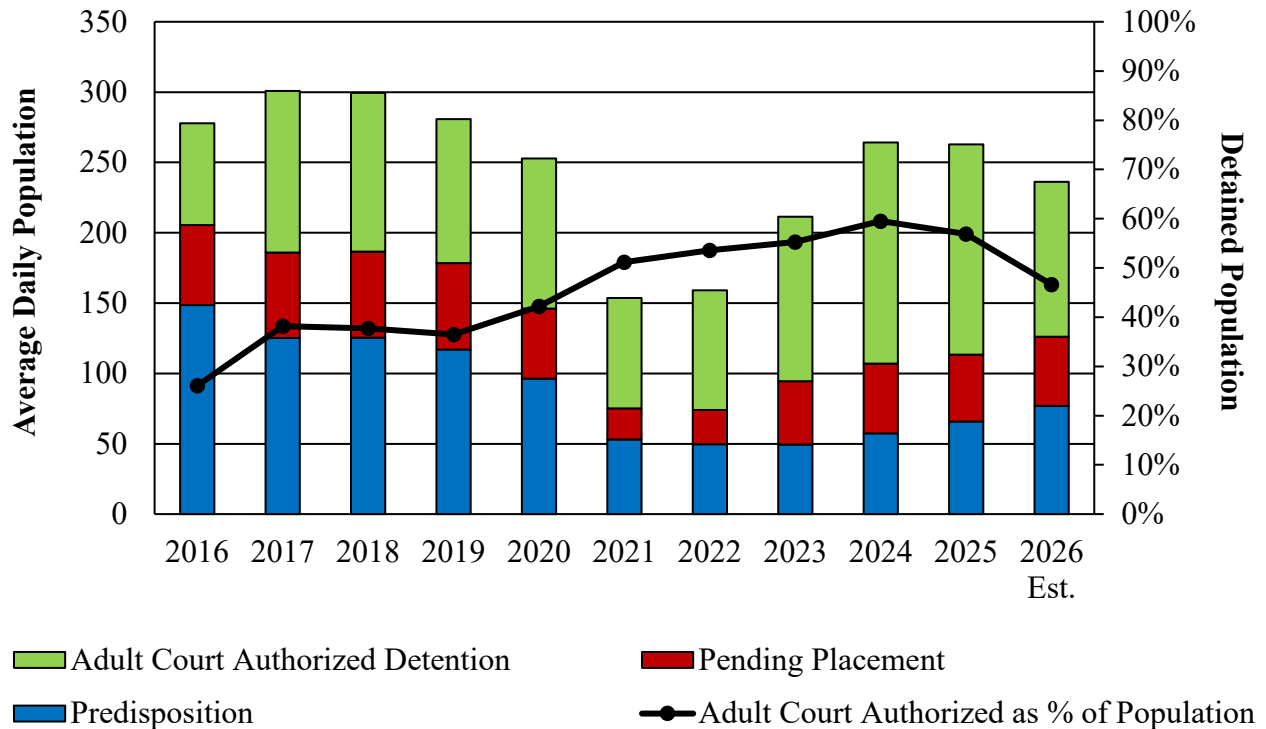
The detained ADP consists of three populations: the secured detention predisposition population; the secured pending placement population; and the adult court authorized detention population (or adult court population). Chapter 69 of 2015 requires a court to order a youth charged as an adult to be held in juvenile detention pending transfer if that youth is eligible to be transferred to the juvenile system. This Act codified an agreement between DJS and Baltimore City to divert youth charged as adults from adult detention to juvenile detention and expanded the practice statewide.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the total detained population showed signs of stability, even as overall complaints to the department declined. Between fiscal 2016 and 2019, the total detained ADP ranged between 278 and 301 youths. Complaints to the department declined further during fiscal 2020 and 2021, and the reduced operations of the Judiciary also yielded decreases in the detained and committed populations. In addition, on April 13, 2020, an order was issued directing local courts to find alternatives to detaining juveniles in facilities to minimize their risk of contracting COVID-19. This order formalized DJS's practice of minimizing youth interaction with the juvenile court system as well as its pivot toward community rather than residential

programming during the pandemic. Between fiscal 2019 and 2021, the total detained ADP fell by 45.3% to 154 youths.

As shown in **Exhibit 6**, since fiscal 2021, the detained ADP rose to 264 in fiscal 2024. This increase corresponds to overall complaints nearly doubling (98.8%) in the same period and in response to the courts being fully operational. However, the fiscal 2024 level remained 6.0% lower than in fiscal 2019 (281 youths). Between fiscal 2024 and 2025, the detained population was nearly level, a decrease of only 0.5% between fiscal years. Draft data published by DJS for the first six months of fiscal 2026 suggests that the ADP of detained youth is expected to decrease by 10.2% to 235 youths, compared to fiscal 2025. The adult court population became a larger percentage of the overall detained ADP nearly every year between fiscal 2016 and 2024, when it peaked at 59.5%; however, this population may be stabilizing or declining. Based on fiscal 2026 year-to-date data, the adult court population now accounts for 46.6% of the detained population – the lowest proportion since fiscal 2020 (42.2%).

Exhibit 6
Average Daily Population and Percentage of Adult Court Authorized
Fiscal 2016-2026 Est.



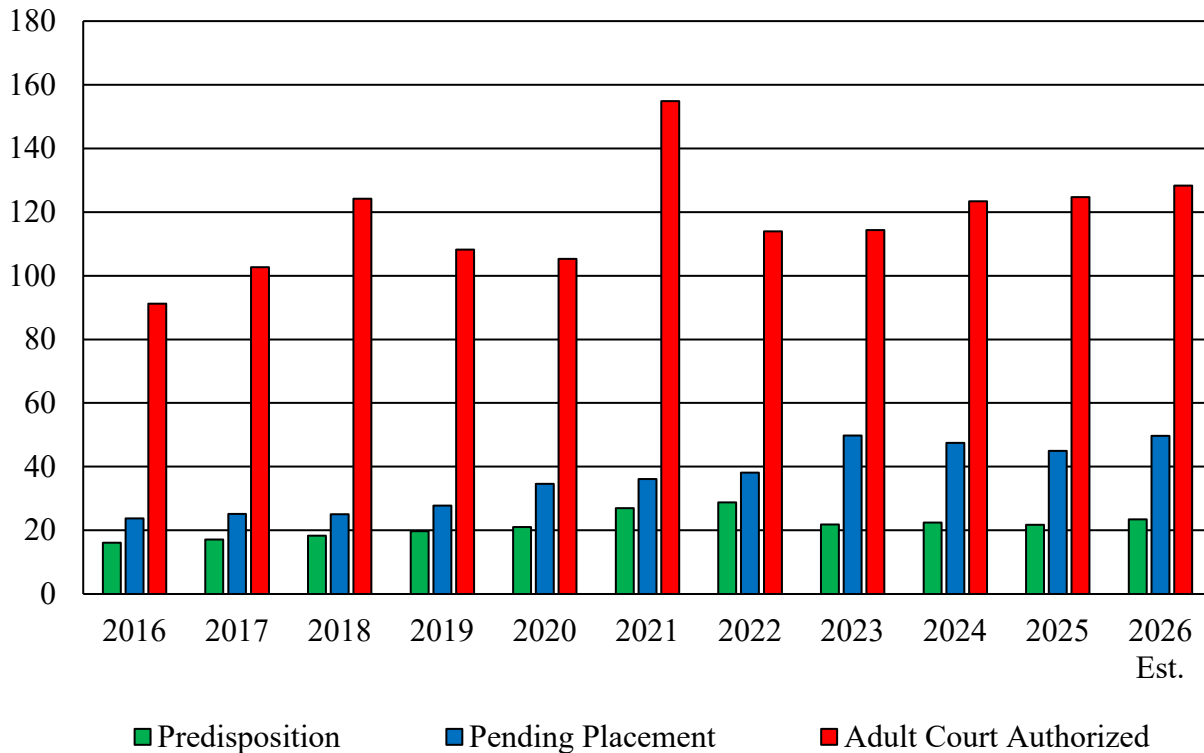
Note: Fiscal 2026 data reflects the first six months of the fiscal year.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Average Length of Stay

Compared to prepandemic levels in fiscal 2019, the average length of stay (ALOS) in fiscal 2025 for the predisposition, pending placement, and adult court authorized populations have increased by 10.1%, 61.9%, and 15.2%, respectively. As shown in **Exhibit 7**, the change is most dramatic for the pending placement population. Between fiscal 2019 and 2025, the ALOS for the pending placement population grew from 27.8 days to 45.0 days. Between fiscal 2024 and 2025, the ALOS for the three populations had limited change: the predisposition ALOS decreased by less than 1 day, the pending placement population decreased by 2.5 days, and the adult court authorized population increased by 1.3 days. All three populations are expected to grow (by 8.0%, 10.4%, and 2.9%, respectively) in fiscal 2026 based on the first six months of available data, even as the ADP is expected to decline in fiscal 2026.

Exhibit 7
Average Length of Stay by Placement
Fiscal 2016-2026 Est.
(Time in Days)



Note: Fiscal 2026 data reflects the first six months of the fiscal year.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

6. Committed Residential Population Trends

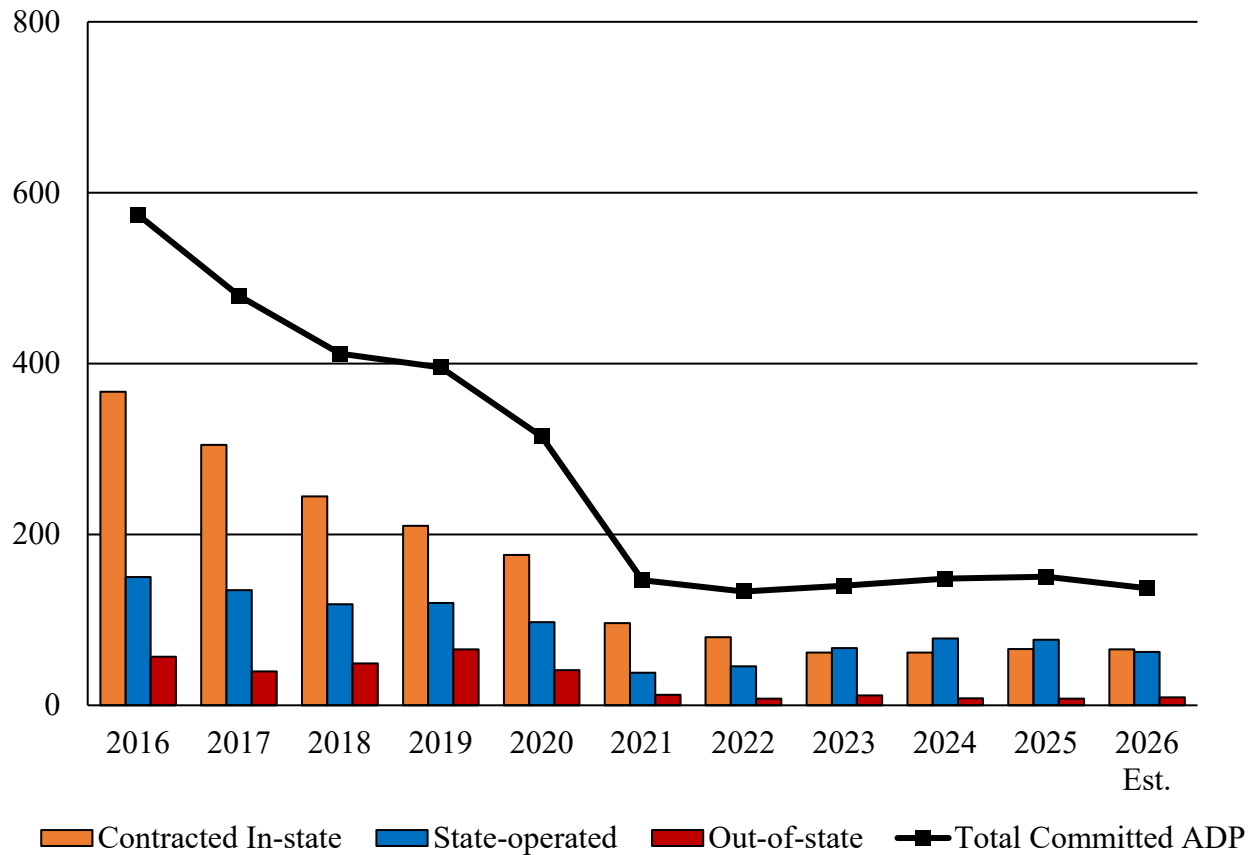
DJS has established three levels of residential program placements, based largely on the level of program restrictiveness:

- Level I – programs in which a youth resides in a community setting and attends local schools;
- Level II (staff-secure) – programs in which educational programming is provided on grounds, and youth movement and freedom is restricted, primarily by staff monitoring or supervision; and
- Level III (hardware-secure) – programs that provide the highest level of security by augmenting staff supervision with physical attributes of the facility (*e.g.*, locks, bars, and fences).

State-run committed residential facilities do not provide adequate capacity to accommodate the number of youths requiring out-of-home placements nor do they provide the full complement of programming required to address the variety of treatment needs for the committed population. To accommodate that need, DJS contracts with private in-state and out-of-state vendors to provide services to committed youth, and the State pays for only the number of days that a youth is placed in the program. A placement to a State-operated facility or contracted provider in-state does not guarantee that a juvenile would be placed closer to home than if placed out-of-state; all currently open State-owned committed treatment facilities are located in western Maryland.

Exhibit 8 shows the committed residential ADP for each of the possible committed placement types between fiscal 2016 and estimated data for fiscal 2026. Since falling from levels exceeding 300 in each year prior to fiscal 2021 (a decrease of 53.4% between fiscal 2020 and 2021), ADP of this population has been within the range of 133 to 151 youths. Between fiscal 2024 and 2025, the committed residential ADP rose by 1.6%, or slightly more than 2 youths. The committed residential ADP is expected to be similar or to decline in fiscal 2026 based on the first six months of data. Most of the projected decline would be from ADP in State-operated facilities and would be a second year of declines after decreasing by 2.0% between fiscal 2024 and 2025. Accordingly, the utilization of State-operated bed capacity fell from 86.0% to 84.3% between fiscal 2024 and 2025. The ADP of the State-operated population in fiscal 2026 is estimated to be 18.7% lower, at approximately 62 youths.

Exhibit 8
Committed Residential ADP
Fiscal 2016-2026 Est.



ADP: average daily population

Note: Fiscal 2026 data reflects the first six months of the fiscal year.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Since fiscal 2016, the contracted in-state (also referred to as per diem placements) ADP has fallen by 82.2% to 65 in estimated fiscal 2026 figures. The ADP of contracted in-state placements was higher than that of State-operated placements between fiscal 2016 and 2022. This changed postpandemic, and after the department stopped placing youth for treatment services at Silver Oak Academy in May 2022. Between fiscal 2023 and 2025, the ADP of contracted in-state placements ranged from 60 to 66 youths, while the ADP of State-operated placements ranged from 67 to 78 youths. In fiscal 2026 estimated data, the contracted in-state ADP is higher than State-operated ADP by 3 youths.

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The out-of-state ADP decreased by 3.6% from 8.3 to 8 youths between fiscal 2024 and 2025. Out-of-state placements accounted for just 5.3% of the department’s total committed ADP in fiscal 2025. During the pandemic, DJS made efforts to bring youths back into the State and reduce the number of placements made out-of-state. These efforts were successful and have continued. For example, compared to fiscal 2019, the ADP for these placements was 87.8% lower in fiscal 2025, and is 86.0% in estimated fiscal 2026.

7. Reentry Measures and Recidivism

As youth in court-ordered probation or from committed treatment care leave the juvenile justice system, they face several challenges. This can include reenrolling in school, finding work, or addressing somatic or behavioral health needs. DJS case managers complete predischarge checklists and postdischarge checklists 30 days after a youth’s release to determine if a youth is appropriately connected to needed services, has successfully enrolled in school, and remains in stable and suitable housing. DJS reports outcomes of the follow-up visits through its MFR data, though insufficient data collection limits this reporting. **Exhibit 9** shows the three reported outcome measures of the follow-up visits.

Exhibit 9
Strategic Reentry Plan Performance Measures
Fiscal 2021-2025

<u>Strategic Measure</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
% of DJS Youth Enrolled in Workforce Development Programs	12.3%	26.0%	20.8%	14.4%	5.5%
% of Families of Committed Youth Attending Youth Reentry Planning Meetings	97.4%	91.7%	81.5%	80.0%	86.9%
% of Youth in DJS Facilities Completing Program Units in Education, Work Readiness, Life Skills, Wellness, Specific Trade, or On-the-job Training	70.0%	82.9%	85.6%	93.3%	85.9%

DJS: Department of Juvenile Services

Source: Department of Juvenile Services

Recidivism Data

DJS reports recidivism outcomes for its probation and treatment program cohorts through its annual Data Resource Guide (DRG). To accomplish this, the department tracks whether a released youth has been rearrested, reconvicted (or readjudicated), and reincarcerated (or recommitted) through the juvenile or adult justice systems. Youth recidivism rates are calculated within one, two, and three years of release. Through the fiscal 2025 DRG, DJS reports that for the fiscal 2023 cohorts, 83.0% of youth with probation dispositions and 81.5% of youth released from committed treatment were successful and not reconvicted of a new offense within 12 months.

Exhibit 10 details two- and three-year recidivism rates for youth released from probation dispositions and for youth released from committed treatment placements. Generally, youths who were released from probation have a lower recidivism rate than those released from committed treatment. Between fiscal 2022 and 2023, the rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration rates rose for both populations. Within two years, 78.3% and 72.4% of released probation and committed youth from the fiscal 2022 and 2023 cohorts were not reconvicted of a new offense.

Exhibit 10
Youth Recidivism within Two and Three Years of
Release from Probation versus a Committed Treatment Program
Fiscal 2019-2023

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	<u>Two Years</u>	<u>Three Years</u>	<u>Two Years</u>	<u>Three Years</u>	<u>Two Years</u>	<u>Three Years</u>	<u>Two Years</u>	<u>Three Years</u>	<u>Two Years</u>	<u>Three Years</u>
Probation										
Rearrest	51.1%	55.0%	46.1%	52.3%	44.3%	50.1%	46.4%	51.3%	48.7%	-
Reconviction	21.3%	23.7%	18.0%	21.3%	17.1%	20.4%	19.9%	21.4%	21.7%	-
Reincarceration	11.9%	13.3%	8.7%	10.7%	9.5%	11.3%	9.9%	11.1%	10.0%	-
Committed Treatment										
Rearrest	61.7%	66.3%	53.8%	59.5%	53.6%	57.8%	60.4%	64.6%	63.8%	-
Reconviction	26.7%	30.0%	22.9%	27.0%	21.3%	27.0%	23.3%	27.5%	27.6%	-
Reincarceration	18.7%	20.6%	14.3%	16.7%	12.5%	15.2%	13.8%	16.3%	17.7%	-

Note: Releases from committed treatment include: State-operated, group homes, residential treatment centers, out-of-state placements, independent living, and foster care.

Source: Department of Juvenile Services

Fiscal 2025

Between the start and end of fiscal 2025, the DJS budget experienced a \$4.4 million net increase from its legislative appropriation of \$348.9 million. The department's fiscal 2025 actual expenditures were approximately \$353.3 million, including \$341.9 million in general funds. In its fiscal 2025 closeout, DJS reverted approximately \$124,000 in general funds. However at closeout, DJS reported unprovided for expenditures to the Comptroller's Office of approximately \$3.0 million in fiscal 2026 deficiencies to pay for services from fiscal 2025, including, but not limited to, \$1.3 million for purchase of care and legal services and \$1.5 million for somatic health and nursing services. Closeout actions are discussed further in the Fiscal 2026 portion of this analysis.

Fiscal 2026

Status of Legislative Additions

Section 21 of the fiscal 2026 Budget Bill added \$150,000 in general funds to the Community Operations Administration and Support program for providing a grant to Roca, Inc. to expand services outside of Baltimore City. DJS reports that the funding is being used for Roca to provide DJS personnel with training based on cognitive behavioral theory and other technical assistance. Training has already been provided to staff at the Western Maryland Children's Center, and upcoming training will be provided at the Victor Cullen Center.

Budget Amendments

Budget amendments have increased the working appropriation by a net of \$3,466,811 in general funds since the start of the fiscal year. These amendments include those to reduce the appropriation by \$262,878 based on reducing the number of vehicles approved for replacement (from 15 to 2) by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) in connection with the Government Modernization Initiative. Additional reductions of \$52,558 were also associated with this initiative related to telephone utilization and use of lower cost options for computers and other products. These decreases have been more than offset by an increase of \$3,782,247 associated with statewide salary adjustments that were centrally budgeted at the start of the fiscal year.

Proposed Deficiency

The fiscal 2027 allowance includes 14 proposed deficiencies that add a net of \$15,944,160 in general funds to the fiscal 2026 appropriation. Of this amount, 24.1% (approximately \$3.8 million) will be used to fund fiscal 2025 shortfalls or prior year planned expenditures that were delayed due to the shortfalls. In addition to what was reported to the Comptroller's Office at closeout, proposed deficiency appropriations related to these costs included \$445,000 provided for vehicle replacement costs, and \$473,000 provided for the remainder of the programmable logic

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controller replacement at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC). Additional areas of change through proposed deficiency appropriations are:

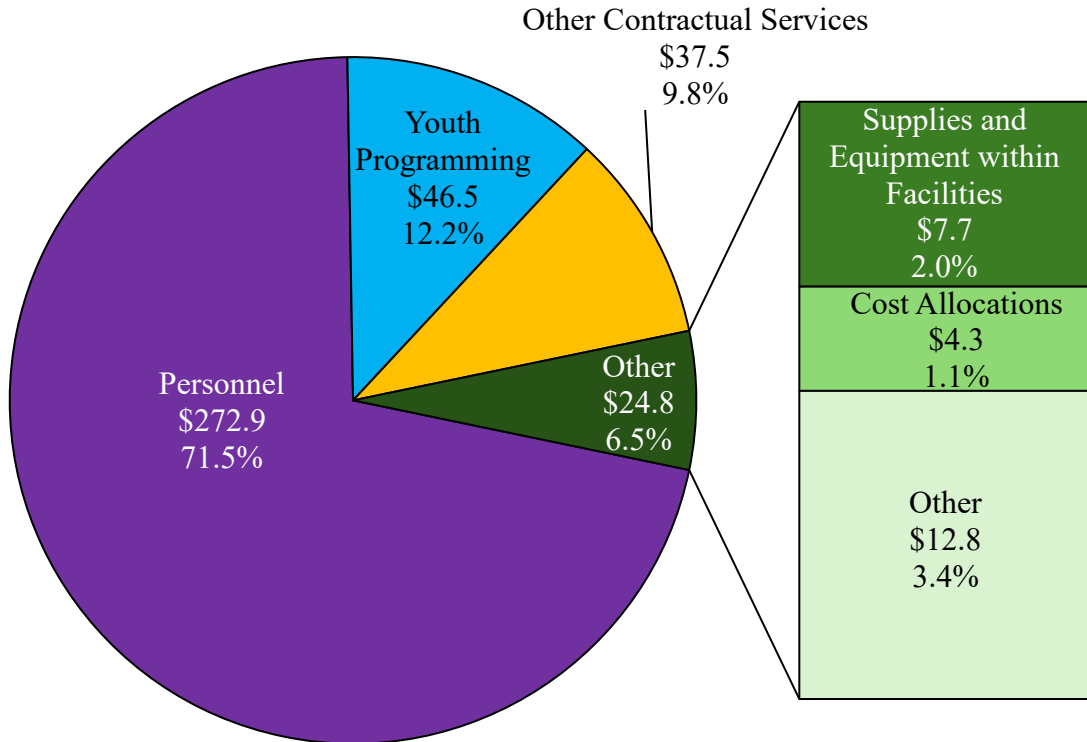
- \$8,551,131 for legal fees and data archival contractual services needs arising from the Maryland Child Victims Act. For data archival services, DJS reports that it has an interagency agreement (\$1,605,000) with the Maryland State Archives to archive documents related to the Child Victims Act in fiscal 2026. Additionally, DJS will use this funding to make payments to the legal counsel hired through the Office of the Attorney General. An estimated \$2.5 million is provided in fiscal 2027 for this purpose;
- \$4,207,483 is added to three programs to fund medical care contracts to meet youth nursing and behavioral health needs. These deficiencies bring total medical care contract spending to \$8.9 million in fiscal 2026, compared with \$8.5 million in fiscal 2025;
- \$630,000 is added for contractual services to continue the use of temporary air conditioning at BCJJC while HVAC repairs are underway. For additional information, please refer to the capital analysis for V00* – DJS;
- a reduction of \$350,000 in IT equipment replacement funding;
- a reduction of \$433,785 in contractual services to reduce funding for nonresidential per diems; and
- a reduction of \$500,000 for a youth drug treatment center. Additional information can be found in the Fiscal 2027 section of this analysis.

Though language in the fiscal 2027 operating budget bill specifies that \$433,785 be reduced for nonresidential per diems based on projected expenditures, DBM reports that this deficiency should apply to residential per diems instead.

Fiscal 2027 Overview of Agency Spending

As shown in **Exhibit 11**, the fiscal 2027 allowance of DJS totals \$381.8 million. Approximately 71.5% of the allowance is for DJS personnel expenses, which supports the department's large workforce that not only supports day-to-day operations of DJS facilities but also provides security at its facilities and the rehabilitative programming for the youth who move through the DJS system. With over 2,100 regular positions, DJS is one of the largest agencies in the Executive Branch. Youth programming, including the purchase of care services and youth education programming, accounts for approximately 12.2%, or \$46.5 million, of the allowance. These services are contracted out to private vendors who provide a variety of programs and services, such as language interpretation, mental health evaluations, and behavioral health treatment. These costs fluctuate according to the department's population trends.

Exhibit 11
Overview of Agency Spending
Fiscal 2027 Allowance
(\$ in Millions)



Note: The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget.

Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2027 Budget Books

Proposed Budget Change

DJS’s budget increases by \$1.9 million in fiscal 2027 compared to the fiscal 2026 working appropriation, or by \$5.7 million if the deficiencies related to fiscal 2025 are excluded. **Exhibit 12** provides additional detail on the factors driving this change. Much of the increase is attributable to net increases in the department’s personnel budget (\$18.8 million), including 8.0 new positions that will provide educational services at the Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center (Noyes) facility when it reopens for non-DJS youth. The largest decrease in spending is associated with Chapter 5 (the Child Victims Act). Though the allowance includes \$2.5 million for legal services expenditures, DJS reports that costs of this type are estimates.

Exhibit 12
Proposed Budget
Department of Juvenile Services
(\$ in Thousands)

How Much It Grows:	General Fund	Special Fund	Federal Fund	Total
Fiscal 2025 Actual	\$341,866	\$3,254	\$8,152	\$353,272
Fiscal 2026 Working	370,143	3,465	6,328	379,936
Fiscal 2027 Allowance	371,370	3,288	7,153	381,811
Fiscal 2026-2027 \$ Change	\$1,228	-\$177	\$825	\$1,875
Fiscal 2026-2027 % Change	0.3%	-5.1%	13.0%	0.5%
 Where It Goes:				<u>Change</u>
Personnel Expenses				
Employee and retiree health insurance.....				\$11,185
Salary increases and associated fringe benefits.....				7,591
Workers’ compensation premium assessment.....				961
8.0 new positions to open a JSEP school at the Noyes facility.....				915
Turnover decreases from 7.57% to 7.37%.....				423
Deferred compensation match due to a statewide change in budgeting.....				252
Overtime.....				-2,612
Other fringe benefit adjustments.....				45
Population-driven Adjustments				
Food and dietary service and supplies.....				1,246
Recreational supplies.....				575
Educational and library supplies.....				186
Youth uniforms.....				175
Medical care, equipment, and supplies.....				-114
Nonresidential per diems.....				-5,353
Community Programs and Initiatives				
Enhanced Services Continuum spending.....				-1,250
Other Changes				
Costs for opening Noyes and operating a substance abuse program at a neighboring facility increases from \$2.5 million to approximately \$3.0 million.....				466
Travel.....				384
Non-DGS rent.....				285
Boys’ Village Cemetery Project.....				250
Utilities.....				54

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Where It Goes:	<u>Change</u>
Statewide cost allocation	-113
One-time legislative addition.....	-150
Removal of one-time funding for temporary air conditioning at BCJJC	-630
Removal of funding to replace programmable logic controllers at three detention facilities and to replace video surveillance services	-2,950
Removal of one-time fiscal 2026 deficiency spending, including \$3.8 million related to fiscal 2025 costs.....	-3,839
Funding associated with the Maryland Crime Victims Act is reduced to an estimated \$2.5 million in fiscal 2027.....	-6,051
Other	-56
Total	\$1,875

BCJJC: Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center
DGS: Department of General Services

JSEP: Juvenile Services Education Program
Noyes: Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center

Note: The fiscal 2026 working appropriation accounts for deficiencies. The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget. Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding.

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act

Section 10

The fiscal 2026 budget as introduced included \$3.0 million in general funds for DJS to open the Catoctin Treatment Center – a facility on the campus of Victor Cullen – as a substance abuse facility for youth. Language added to the fiscal 2026 Budget Bill specified that the \$3.0 million provided for the purpose of opening the Catoctin Treatment Center may only be used to reopen Noyes as an adolescent drug treatment center that serves as a treatment alternative to detention and commitment. Noyes was a hardware-secure facility that operated in Montgomery County prior to its temporary closure in October 2022. DJS temporarily closed the facility, rather than permanently, to maintain flexibility in its overall bed capacity. At that time of its closure, Noyes’s rated capacity was 29 beds, though it had previously been 57. Section 10 in the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) of 2026 proposes altering the language to instead allow the funds to be used for providing drug treatment services at other youth-serving facilities and to reopen Noyes as a facility for children. In fiscal 2026, the \$2.5 million is largely being used to dehardden the facility and prepare it for a population that would be provided with a staff-secure level of supervision. A deficiency appropriation withdraws the other \$500,000.

Noyes is located immediately next to a Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA) facility. In coordination with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and DHS, DJS plans to relocate to Noyes the Facility For Children (FFC) that is currently located at the RICA facility. FFC operates for youth who have been court-ordered to seek treatment. DJS would then open a substance use program at the RICA facility. The department reports that this would allow

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the current FFC to expand from a capacity of 8 youths to 16. DJS also plans to provide educational services on the Noyes campus with JSEP staff. The fiscal 2027 allowance includes approximately \$3.0 million for these purposes, including \$915,000 for new JSEP positions and \$1.5 million for DJS to procure services for operating an 8-bed substance abuse program. It is not yet possible to determine if DJS's operation of such a substance abuse program would be reimbursable with federal funds or if it would need to be entirely supported with general funds. DJS reports that its goal would be to have educational staff in place in advance of full operations. An opening date for Noyes or a date that the facility swap would occur is not yet certain, though it is estimated to be in calendar 2026.

Information about the operation of both facilities, the populations each will serve, and the roles of DJS and MDH have not yet been finalized. For fiscal 2026, the BRFA provision would be required to use the restricted funds in this manner. **The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends that \$250,000 in general funds be withheld pending the receipt of a report on the operation of both facilities, the ongoing relationship between DJS and MDH, and the fiscal 2026 and 2027 spending plan.**

Section 12

Section 12 of the BRFA as introduced states that no amount may be expended in fiscal 2027 to pay increases over the rate in effect on January 21, 2026, for providers with rates set by the Interagency Rates Committee under § 8-417 of the Education Article. No contingent reduction is included in the DJS fiscal 2027 allowance for this provision, but some of its providers would be impacted.

Nonresidential Per Diems

Nonresidential per diems are contracts with service providers who administer intensive in-home family therapy and supports for a region. Accounting for the proposed deficiency appropriation, the fiscal 2026 working appropriation includes \$9.6 million in this cost category. However, as noted, this understates planned spending as the proposed deficiency appropriation is intended to relate to residential per diems. As shown in **Exhibit 13**, between fiscal 2023 and 2025, spending of this type fell 44.2%. Fiscal 2027 costs are budgeted 56.0% lower than in the working appropriation but are in line with fiscal 2025 actual spending. Contracts of this type might support the department's nonresidential caseload, such as youth who are receiving informal or pre-court supervision, youth on probation, or youth receiving aftercare programming following their discharge from a residential program. As discussed previously, the department's nonresidential caseload is estimated to increase between fiscal 2025 and 2026. **DJS should comment on the variations in budgeted levels between fiscal 2025 and 2027 and the reasonableness of the fiscal 2027 allowance, given recent trends in this caseload.**

Exhibit 13
Spending on Nonresidential Per Diems
Fiscal 2023-2027

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Wrk. Approp.</u>	<u>Allowance</u>
Nonresidential per diems	\$7,548,274	\$6,046,592	\$4,212,115	\$9,564,726	\$4,212,115

Note: The fiscal 2026 working appropriation accounts for deficiencies.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Community Programs and Initiatives

The fiscal 2027 allowance continues funding prevention initiatives – the Enhance Services Continuum, SST, and the Thrive Academy – that were launched in fiscal 2024 and 2025. These programs receive \$10.55 million, \$3.25 million, and \$3.75 million in fiscal 2027, as shown in **Exhibit 14**. Information that was provided during the 2025 Session indicated that, for fiscal 2026, \$4.35 million would be provided for the Thrive Academy and \$11.2 million would be provided for the Enhance Services Continuum in fiscal 2026. The budget information provided for the 2026 session, however, indicates that those amounts are \$3.75 million and \$11.8 million, instead. For the Enhance Services Continuum, the fiscal 2027 allowance therefore represents a reduction of \$1,250,000. DBM reports that the reduction in fiscal 2027 is due to start up delays in providing the programming expansion funded in the fiscal 2026 budget. **DJS should comment on why lower levels of funding are being provided for these programs in fiscal 2027.**

Exhibit 14
Select Community Programs and Initiatives
Fiscal 2025-2027

	Actual <u>2025</u>	Wrk. Approp. <u>2026</u>	Allowance <u>2027</u>	Total <u>2025-2027</u>
Safer, Stronger, Together	\$1,276,147	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$7,776,147
Thrive Academy	1,776,788	3,750,000	3,750,000	9,276,788
Enhance Services Continuum	2,884,008	11,800,000	10,550,000	25,234,008
<i>ACCESS</i>	2,821,312			
<i>Other Programs</i>	62,696			
Total	\$5,936,943	\$18,800,000	\$17,550,000	\$42,286,943

ACCESS: Accountability, Confidence, Communication, Economic Self-Sufficiency, Skills Training, and Success

Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Cemetery Restoration

The Cheltenham Youth Detention Center is a successor facility to one known as the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children (HRICC). Several detention facilities have been operated at the Cheltenham campus since 1870 with other former facilities and facility names, including Cheltenham School for Boys, Boys’ Village of Maryland, and Cheltenham Youth Facility. In July 2025, the recognition of a burial ground for boys who died at HRICC was publicly announced. The site is on land currently owned by the Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF). At its January 28, 2026 meeting, the Board of Public Works (BPW) approved the use of \$200,000 in general obligation bond funding from the African American Heritage Preservation Grant Program for DJS to procure ground penetrating radar services to identify unmarked burials; through a hired contractor, reset and repair extant grave markers; install fencing around the cemetery’s perimeter and erect commemorative signage; and, in collaboration with DVMF, develop a cemetery conservation plan. The fiscal 2027 allowance includes \$250,000 in general funds to be used for this cemetery project, though a specific spending plan is not yet known. DJS reports that planning is anticipated to last 9 to 12 months and actual site work to take up to two years.

Juvenile Case Management Modernization Project

Critical to the department’s operational capabilities is its case management information system. Since calendar 1999, DJS has used a client database referred to as the Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools (ASSIST) along with other reporting systems. ASSIST does not use a common programming language, and it is therefore challenging and inefficient to modify. Previously, the department’s budget included funding for the Child, Juvenile, and Adult Management System (CJAMS) to replace ASSIST as the agency’s case management system. CJAMS is the system used by DHS for its child welfare and adult services program. DJS did not move forward with CJAMS as its case management system because CJAMS lacked functionalities required by its frontline staff. As a Major Information Technology Development project, \$1.0 million in funding is provided in the Information Technology Investment Fund rather than the budget of DJS in fiscal 2027. Additional information is available in **Appendix 3**.

Personnel Data

	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 26-27
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Working</u>	<u>Allowance</u>	<u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	2,155.95	2,126.95	2,134.95	8.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>46.00</u>	<u>47.00</u>	<u>47.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Personnel	2,201.95	2,173.95	2,181.95	8.00

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	157.35	7.37%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/2025	247.00	11.61%
Vacancies Above Turnover	89.65	

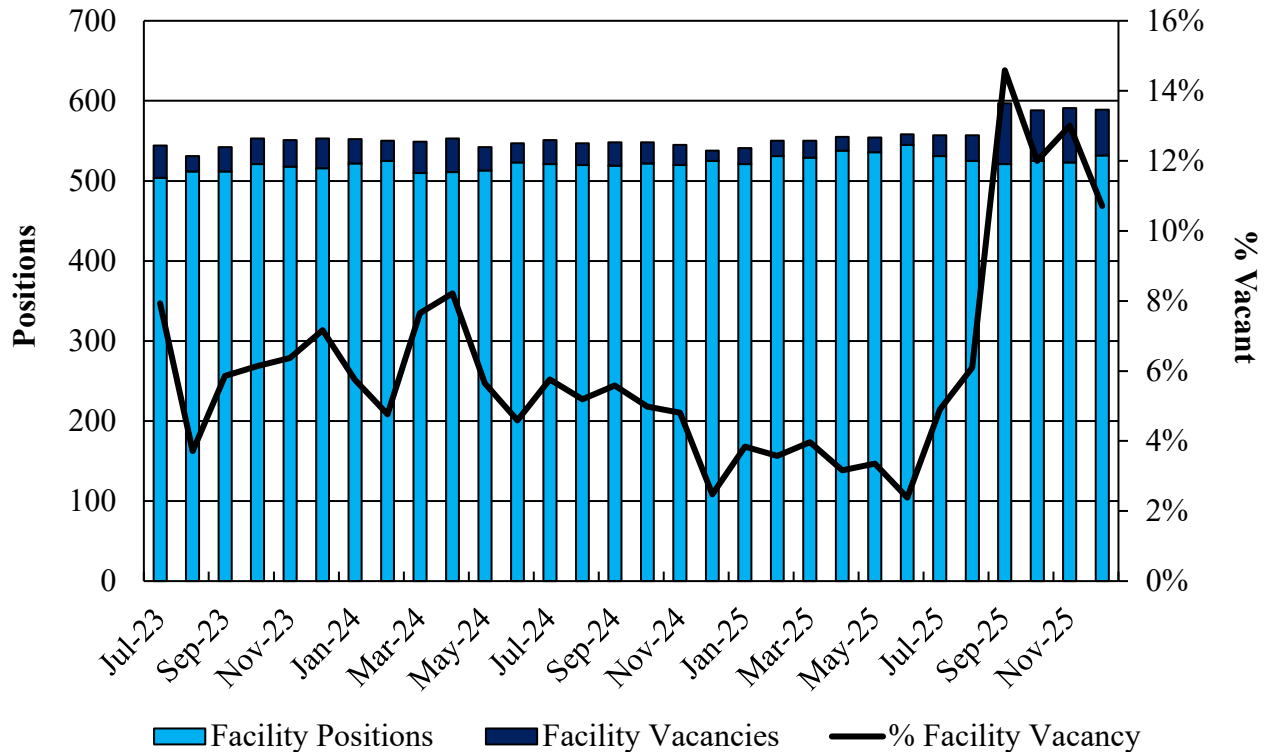
- In October 2025, BPW approved the abolition of 502.7 positions statewide, including 170.07 vacant positions and 332.0 positions associated with the Voluntary Separation Program (VSP). In this department, 11.0 positions were abolished due to the VSP.
- The fiscal 2027 allowance includes the addition of 7 regular positions and 2 part-time regular positions (total increase of 8.0) to work as education staff at Noyes. DJS reports that the turnover rate for these positions is currently set to 10.5% to reflect the tentative timeline of the facility swap and when education services at Noyes would need to be provided.

Vacancies Increase for Facility Direct Care Staff

At the close of calendar 2025, DJS had 247 (11.6%) vacant regular positions, well above its budgeted turnover rate (7.37%) and above the December 2024 vacancy rate of 11.1%. High vacancies, particularly among facility direct care employees, typically result in increased overtime expenses and can cause further issues for the department.

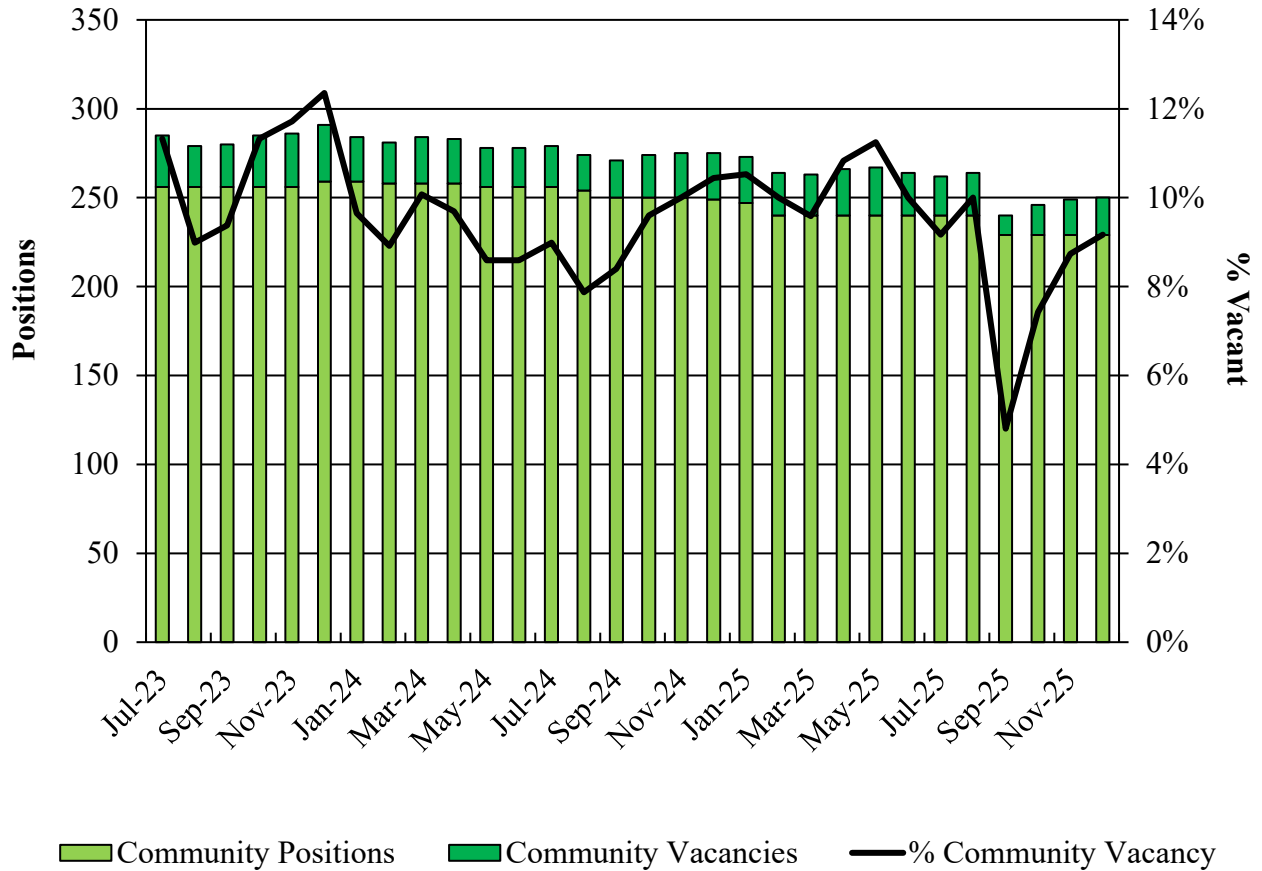
Exhibit 15 and **Exhibit 16** show filled and vacant positions, as well as monthly vacancy rates, for community and facility direct care staff between July 2023 and December 2025. Vacancy rates for residential direct care staff have risen from a monthly average of 6.2% in fiscal 2024 to a monthly average of 10.2% in fiscal 2026 year-to-date data. This is in part due to the department realigning vacant positions from its other functions to this position type. In fiscal 2024, there was an average of 483.92 filled residential direct care staff positions each month. In fiscal 2025, that average rises to 505.75 (4.5% increase). In year-to-date data for fiscal 2026, there is an average of 526 positions each month, and only 472.5 of those positions are filled.

Exhibit 15
Monthly Vacancies for Residential Direct Care Staff
Fiscal 2024-2026 Year to Date



Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

Exhibit 16
Monthly Vacancies for Community Direct Care Staff
Fiscal 2024-2026 Year to Date



Source: Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Legislative Services

The vacancy rate for community direct care staff has fallen since fiscal 2024, when the monthly average rate was 10.1%. In fiscal 2026 year-to-date data, the monthly average is now 8.2%. This change is also due in part to a changing number of community direct care staff positions. In fiscal 2024, there was an average of 231.2 filled positions each month. In fiscal 2025, the average declined 4.0% to 222.3. In fiscal 2026 year-to-date data, it fell 3.9% further to 213.5 filled positions.

Overtime expenditures are impacted by departmental vacancies, as well as increases in regular earnings. Though vacancy rates are higher, DJS reports lower overtime usage among its facility staff in fiscal 2026. There were approximately 326,000 hours of overtime used in fiscal 2025 for facility employees, as reported through performance reports published to the

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department’s website. In the first 13 pay periods of fiscal 2026, there were approximately 137,000 hours of overtime used by facility employees. If these hours were annualized (which provide an estimated 274,000 hours of overtime) in fiscal 2026, that would be a 16.0% decline compared with fiscal 2025. In fiscal 2025, actual spending on overtime was \$19.7 million. If that figure was reduced by 16.0%, DJS would require \$16.6 million in budgeted overtime in fiscal 2026, which is slightly higher than the level provided in the fiscal 2026 working appropriation of \$16.1 million. Additional reductions in overtime usage may be necessary though, as the fiscal 2027 allowance only includes \$13.5 million for that purpose. Alternatively, DJS may need to maintain a vacancy rate higher than its budgeted turnover. **DJS should comment on its recent efforts to reduce its vacancies, particularly among facility staff, following a spike in vacancies in fall 2025 and its anticipated overtime usage.**

Issues

1. Implementation of Policies Following Performance Evaluation, DJS Submits Requested Follow-up Letter

The DLS Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) published an evaluation of DJS on December 16, 2024. The evaluation was conducted on behalf of the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee (JAEC). It included information about long-term trends in juvenile justice, the contractual community services that DJS procures, CINS referrals to the department, and case histories of specific anonymous juveniles. During the 2025 session, several committees of the General Assembly held hearings related to the OPEGA evaluation. Some of the questions raised during the hearings for DJS to address were related to the use of its case management system; the practice of resolving cases at intake due to the failure of the youth or their parent or guardian to appear; youth recidivism; the department’s evaluation of contractual community-based service providers; and the availability of evidence-based services (EBS) in different regions. These questions and concerns about current policies resulted in language being added to the fiscal 2026 Budget Bill to restrict funds pending submission of a report to the budget committees and JAEC. The required report was submitted on September 25, 2025, and the funds were authorized for release on November 19, 2025.

Upon review of the submitted report, DLS recommended that the committees request that DJS submit the following information by February 1, 2026: (1) an update on the department’s decision on whether it will make changes to the scoring of the DRAI decision-making grid; (2) a progress update on the evaluation model DJS is using for some providers to better determine outcome measures for program participants; (3) key findings of the systemwide review of placements and outcomes across all contracted service providers; and (4) if this information is not available by the date of submission, the expected timeframe for availability of this information. The letter was shared with the budget committee chairs and DLS on February 3, 2026.

DRAI

DJS reported that it would be making changes to the DRAI decision-making grid, with the updated grid expected to be published on February 26, 2026. DJS reported that it was developing training materials for its staff, and that it would be in communication with stakeholders regarding the change. The department published a memorandum on its website on February 12, 2026, describing the major differences, and this policy went into effect on February 18, 2026, ahead of schedule. Compared with the previous version of the decision-making grid, DJS staff no longer have the ability to override the DRAI to a less restrictive outcome for complaints involving category 1 offenses, category 2 offenses, or handgun violations.

Evaluation Model

To better determine outcome measures for program participants, DJS reports that it began implementing a continuous quality improvement (CQI) framework in November 2025 with contractors that work statewide. In March 2026, quarterly CQI meetings will be held to review the first quarter of performance data. DJS does not anticipate enhanced reporting being available in this area until December 2026 and cited limitations with ASSIST as one of the reasons why data reporting in this area is challenging.

Systemwide Review of Placements and Outcomes

Data review includes placement utilization, length of stay, geographic access, alignment of services with youth needs, and outcome trends. DJS reports that this review is ongoing, and that preliminary findings are currently being compiled and validated for use during upcoming contract sunset reviews later in calendar 2026.

2. Fiscal Compliance Audit

In May 2025, OLA published an audit of DJS which covered the period of April 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023. The audit had nine findings, which can be found in **Appendix 2**. Of the nine findings, one was related to residential service facility operations, one was related to criminal background checks, three were related to procurements and disbursements, two were redacted cybersecurity-related findings that are related to information systems security and control, one was related to payroll, and one was related to materials and supplies. In its response to the findings, DJS reported that it was addressing all, but that it required additional time to completely implement the recommendations. Projected completion dates ranged from June 30, 2025 to January 31, 2026. DJS has made progress in completing implementing the corrective action plan.

Criminal Background Checks

The audit's second finding was that the department did not ensure criminal background checks were properly completed for contractors providing youth care services. As of January 2026, DJS reports that it is on track with this action and reports that no contract modifications are necessary to ensure compliance. A centralized email address was established at the end of fiscal 2025 for vendors to submit this information. A memorandum explaining the new process for the reporting of criminal background checks will be issued to currently contracted vendors after the agency's legal counsel completes their review. **DJS should comment on the anticipated timeline or date by which the memorandum will be or was issued to current contracted vendors.**

Documenting Critical Components of Procurements

To address the finding that the department could not document critical components of certain procurements and did not publish six awards as required, DJS reports that staff training was delivered in March 2025. Additionally, the department developed a procurement tracker tool for better record keeping. This tracker was fully implemented as of November 17, 2025.

Overtime Policy

The audit's eighth finding was that DJS did not approve employees working double shifts on four or more consecutive days in accordance with its overtime policy and did not analyze activity to identify and evaluate the consistently high levels of overtime. In its response to OLA, DJS reported that it would develop comprehensive procedures to routinely monitor overtime activity and investigate the necessity and propriety of high levels of overtime by September 30, 2025. Though the reduction in facility staff overtime hours worked between fiscal 2025 and year-to-date fiscal 2026 is not definitive proof that this monitoring occurred (*i.e.*, overtime usage may have decreased for other reasons), it does suggest that the approval of overtime may be more scrutinized now. DJS also reported that it would review its overtime policy, update it, and distribute it to staff by the end of calendar 2025. As of January 2026, DJS reported that its overtime policy was still in development and had not yet been shared with staff.

Materials and Supplies Procedures and Controls

In response to the ninth finding, DJS reported that it had established regional hubs to implement internal controls over materials and supplies at each facility. Those hubs are located at the Cheltenham campus in Prince George's County, the Charles H. Hickey School in Baltimore County, and in Allegany County. Inventory management is now assisted by a system called Hi-Tech that automates receipt tracking. This had an approximate cost to implement of \$100,000 between the fiscal 2025 and 2026 budgets. As of January 2026, DJS reports that physical inventories have been implemented in the majority of operations, but that the inventorying of nutrition services is still in progress. The department provided an updated completion projection of June 30, 2026, rather than the end of calendar 2025.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Add the following language:

. provided that \$250,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of administrative expenses may not be expended until the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) submits a report to the budget committees on the operations of the Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center (Noyes) and the DJS substance abuse program at the neighboring Maryland Department of Health (MDH) facility. In this report, DJS shall describe any formal agreement that it has with MDH for the administration of either facility. Additionally, DJS will report the following information:

- (1) a description of its role and responsibilities at each facility;
- (2) an estimated or actual date for which DJS and MDH will begin their facility swap;
- (3) an estimated or actual date for which juvenile justice involved youth will begin receiving care through the substance abuse program;
- (4) a description of the care that youth will receive through each provider;
- (5) a status update on the hiring of educational staff who will work at Noyes; and
- (6) a list of estimated expenses associated with the programs in fiscal 2026 and 2027.

The report shall be submitted by August 1, 2026, and the budget committees shall have 45 days from the date of the receipt of the report to review and comment. Funds restricted pending the receipt of a report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Explanation: The fiscal 2026 budget as introduced included \$3.0 million in general funds for DJS to open the Catocin Treatment Center – a facility on the campus of Victor Cullen – as a substance abuse facility for youth. Language added to the fiscal 2026 Budget Bill specified that the \$3.0 million provided for the purpose of opening the Catocin Treatment Center may not be expended for that purpose but instead may be used only to reopen Noyes as an adolescent drug treatment center that serves as a treatment alternative to detention and commitment. In coordination with MDH and the Department of Human Services, DJS plans to relocate to Noyes the Facility For Children that is currently located at a neighboring facility owned by MDH. DJS would then open a substance use program at the MDH facility. DJS also plans to provide educational services on the Noyes campus with the Juvenile Services Education Program staff. Details of the plan are not yet public.

V00A – Department of Juvenile Services

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on Noyes and the substance abuse program	DJS	August 1, 2026

Updates

1. **2024-2028 Strategic Plan No Longer in Place**

On January 31, 2024, DJS published the *2024-2028 Strategic Plan* with four goals: (1) improve public safety; (2) improve youth outcomes; (3) build partnerships to improve all outcomes; and (4) achieve organizational excellence. The plan included short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions for the department to accomplish related to 11 strategies. Several of the goals had an expected completion date of December 31, 2025, or earlier. While DJS reports that the strategic plan is no longer in place, citing leadership changes, several of the actions were completed or modified as of that time. Updates on select actions include the following:

- ***Validate Assessment Tools, Investigate Whether New or Different Tools May Be a Better Fit:*** The DRAI was revalidated in early 2025, and DJS made adjustments to the decision-making grid that are effective as of February 18, 2026.
- ***Evaluate the Thrive Academy for Possible Statewide Expansion:*** Thrive Academy providers and locations were updated in fiscal 2026 to include Montgomery County. DJS also aims to expand the population served to youth with possession of a handgun, though this has not yet occurred.
- ***Conduct an Equity Analysis on the Impact of the Department’s Service Continuum:*** DJS reports this analysis has an expected completion date of April 2026.
- ***Determine How to Add a Staff-Stat Database with Metrics for Personnel, Training, and Other Relevant Metrics:*** DJS is not pursuing this as of December 2025.

2. **DJS Submits Addendum to 2024 FMP, Rethinks Where Committed Treatment Beds Should Be Added**

In conjunction with the department’s decision to stop pursuing the MYRC project, DJS submitted an addendum to its FMP to the General Assembly on January 5, 2026. The addendum does not contain updated population projection information, though it continues to recommend the addition of hardware-secure capacity and a potential facility to be located more centrally, rather than in Western Maryland. Instead of moving forward with MYRC, the addendum recommends that a new Cheltenham Youth Treatment Center (CYTC) be added to the fiscal 2027 capital budget. The new CYTC project will construct a 48-bed hardware-secure facility of approximately 106,000 gross square feet (GSF) for male and female (8 beds) youth. The facility would expand committed treatment capacity and relocate some of this capacity outside of Western Maryland. The project also adds a maintenance and storage facility of approximately 16,000 GSF and includes the demolition of 10 existing buildings. Additional discussion of this facility can be found in the capital analysis for V00* – DJS.

3. Expert Review Teams Visit JSEP Schools; Evaluation Expected in Fiscal 2027

Chapter 147 – which transferred the responsibility of implementing and providing educational programming and services to all juveniles placed in DJS-operated detention and residential facilities from MSDE to DJS and the Juvenile Services Education Board and Program – requires MSDE to send an expert review team to every residential facility in which juveniles are educated by the end of the 2025-2026 school year. This requirement is also related to Chapter 36 of 2021 and the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. In December 2025, DJS reported that this requirement would be fulfilled in January and February of 2026, with expert review teams visiting the eight facilities where DJS provides instruction on the following dates:

- January 14 (BCJJC and Backbone Mountain Youth Center);
- January 28 (Charles H. Hickey School Detention Center and CYDC);
- February 11 (Green Ridge Youth Center and Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center); and
- February 25 (Victor Cullen Center and Western Maryland Children’s Center).

The Act also requires DJS to contract a public or private entity to conduct an evaluation of the Juvenile Services Education Board’s, the superintendent’s, and the department’s policies and practices regarding the educational services provided to juveniles in residential facilities. That report is due on or before October 1, 2026. On August 27, 2025, BPW approved the use of \$200,000 in general funds for that evaluation to be performed by Policy Studies Associates.

Appendix 1 2025 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency

The 2025 *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR) requested that DJS prepare three reports. Electronic copies of the full JCR responses can be found on the DLS Library website.

- ***Report on Departmental Practices and Tools, Recidivism, Evaluation, and the Availability of EBS:*** During the 2025 session, policy and budget committees held hearings related to an evaluation of DJS published by OPEGA. Some of the questions raised for DJS to address in the hearings related to the use of its case management system; the practice of resolving cases at intake due to the failure of the youth or their parent or guardian to appear; youth recidivism; the department’s evaluation of contractual community-based service providers; and the availability of EBS in different regions. These questions and concerns about current policies resulted in language being added to the fiscal 2026 Budget Bill to restrict funds pending submission of a report to the budget committees and JAEC. The required report was submitted on September 25, 2025, and DJS submitted a letter with additional information on February 3, 2026. Further discussion of this report and letter can be found in Issue 1 of this analysis.
- ***Report on a Community Case Management (CMS) Apprenticeship Program:*** The report, submitted on December 10, 2025, states that creating a registered apprenticeship for CMS roles would be feasible but does not state whether the department will pursue one. DJS reports that CMS applicants are currently required to meet the following criteria: have an associate’s degree; be at least 21 years old; and “have 2 years’ experience providing services to youth in a residential or community setting.” A potential apprenticeship pathway could include “a 24 to 26 month curation with approximately 2,000+ hours of [on-the-job training] and 144 to 240 or more hours of related technical instruction.” DJS identified several related decisions that would need to be negotiated with collective bargaining representatives and other Executive Branch agencies, including, but not limited to, integration of positions with the State’s existing classification framework, retirement rules, and various policy changes.
- ***Report on MYRC:*** The MYRC project proposed renovating a DJS facility in Baltimore City and adding a two-story addition to create a 24-bed hardware secure treatment facility for male youth. After consulting with the Mayor of Baltimore City and the Baltimore City delegation to the General Assembly, DJS decided to not move forward with the MYRC project. The department submitted this report on October 29, 2025. Instead of MYRC, DJS will pursue adding additional committed beds for its male and female populations at the Cheltenham campus. Additional discussion of this report can be found in the Updates section of this analysis and the capital analysis for V00* – DJS.

**Appendix 2
Audit Findings**

Audit Period for Last Audit	April 1, 2020 – December 31, 2023
Issue Date	May 2025
Number of Findings	9
Number of Repeat Findings:	2
% of Repeat Findings:	22.2%
Rating (if applicable)	

Finding 1: DJS did not have a process to ensure that residential service facilities timely corrected deficiencies identified by its Office of the Inspector General, resulting in numerous deficiencies going uncorrected.

Finding 2: DJS did not ensure that criminal background checks were properly completed for contractors providing youth care services, resulting in at least one individual with a previous conviction working directly with children.

Finding 3: DJS could not document critical components of five procurements to support the propriety of the award and did not publish six awards as required.

Finding 4: **DJS paid vendors using a method that was not in accordance with State policies and which circumvented available system controls.**

Finding 5: DJS could not justify a \$1.5 million payment that was originally rejected and paid certain invoices without verifying that goods or services were received and that the related charges were proper.

Finding 6: Redacted cybersecurity-related finding.

Finding 7: Redacted cybersecurity-related finding.

Finding 8: DJS did not approve employees working double shifts on four or more consecutive days in accordance with its overtime policy and did not analyze activity to identify and evaluate the consistently high levels of overtime.

Finding 9: **DJS did not have adequate procedures and controls over its materials and supplies.**

*Bold denotes item repeated in full or part from preceding audit report.

Appendix 3
Juvenile Case Management Modernization
Major Information Technology Development Project
Department of Juvenile Services

Additional information can be found in the Proposed Budget Change section of this analysis.

New/Ongoing: New					
Start Date: September 30, 2024			Est. Completion Date: 2029		
Implementation Strategy: Agile					
(\$ in Millions)	Prior Year	2026	2027	Remainder	Total
GF	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$1.000	\$9.000-\$19.000	\$10.000-\$20.000
Total	\$0.000	\$0.000	\$1.000	\$9.000-\$19.000	\$10.000-\$20.000

- Project Summary:** This project will replace ASSIST using either a comprehensive modernization effort or by implementing a commercial off-the-shelf solution. ASSIST is a client database, the department’s primary data collection and reporting tool, and it is used for managing all of the department’s case management workflows for each youth that it serves. A critical goal for the new system will be for it to interface with the CJAMS application so that the State can meet certain federal Title IV-E requirements and reporting standards. Other goals include adding mobile data collection and the migration of historical data to the new platform.
- Need:** DJS has used ASSIST since calendar 1999. ASSIST does not use a common programming language, and it is therefore challenging and inefficient to modify and maintain. It does not have modern security features. This is of particular importance, given that the system contains sensitive information about the department’s youth clientele.
- Observations and Milestones:** DJS reports that the initial project scope has been finalized and that in parallel, internal based development has continued because it is being validated as the most viable solution. The project’s spending plan may need to reflect contracted technical expertise and potentially software licensing to enable project management. DJS reports that technical expertise may be required to finalize project scope, develop the solution roadmap, and support ongoing development.
- Changes:** While no funding for replacing ASSIST was included with the fiscal 2026 budget, DJS began working with the Department of Information Technology in calendar 2024 to identify future options for the case management system. Previously, CJAMS was expected to replace the case management functions of ASSIST by the end of fiscal 2024, but CJAMS lacked functionalities that DJS frontline staff requires.

Appendix 4
Object/Fund Difference Report
Department of Juvenile Services

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 25 Actual</u>	<u>FY 26 Wrk Approp</u>	<u>FY 27 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 26 - 27 \$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Positions					
01 Regular	2,155.95	2,126.95	2,134.95	8.00	0.4%
02 Contractual	46.00	47.00	47.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Positions	2,201.95	2,173.95	2,181.95	8.00	0.4%
Objects					
01 Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits	\$255,405,590	\$254,368,570	\$270,629,156	\$16,260,586	6.4%
02 Technical and Special Fees	2,174,108	2,279,019	2,304,763	25,744	1.1%
03 Communications	2,446,510	2,744,620	2,480,264	-264,356	-9.6%
04 Travel	934,256	545,288	929,029	383,741	70.4%
06 Fuel and Utilities	5,312,711	5,694,546	5,706,708	12,162	0.2%
07 Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	1,643,584	2,052,690	1,447,814	-604,876	-29.5%
08 Contractual Services	67,311,832	93,791,542	81,739,687	-12,051,855	-12.8%
09 Supplies and Materials	9,169,609	7,608,792	8,529,325	920,533	12.1%
10 Equipment – Replacement	970,138	4,181,921	1,264,811	-2,917,110	-69.8%
11 Equipment – Additional	252,872	170,909	252,872	81,963	48.0%
12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	3,405,280	2,553,022	2,373,217	-179,805	-7.0%
13 Fixed Charges	4,138,868	3,944,820	4,046,369	101,549	2.6%
14 Land and Structures	107,054	0	107,054	107,054	N/A
Total Objects	\$353,272,412	\$379,935,739	\$381,811,069	\$1,875,330	0.5%
Funds					
01 General Funds	\$341,866,244	\$370,142,548	\$371,370,112	\$1,227,564	0.3%
03 Special Funds	3,253,710	3,464,918	3,288,142	-176,776	-5.1%
05 Federal Funds	8,152,458	6,328,273	7,152,815	824,542	13.0%
Total Funds	\$353,272,412	\$379,935,739	\$381,811,069	\$1,875,330	0.5%

Note: The fiscal 2026 appropriation includes proposed deficiency appropriations. The fiscal 2027 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.

**Appendix 5
Fiscal Summary
Department of Juvenile Services**

<u>Program/Unit</u>	<u>FY 25 Actual</u>	<u>FY 26 Wrk Approp</u>	<u>FY 27 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 26 - 27 \$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
01 Office of the Secretary	\$14,518,811	\$11,050,016	\$12,481,568	\$1,431,552	13.0%
01 Departmental Support	49,043,552	52,293,955	50,817,956	-1,475,999	-2.8%
01 Community Operations Administration and Support	95,570,615	121,835,506	110,890,735	-10,944,771	-9.0%
02 Facility Operations Administration and Support	\$168,001,921	\$169,246,912	\$178,605,122	\$9,358,210	5.5%
03 Juvenile Services Education Program	26,137,513	25,509,350	29,015,688	3,506,338	13.7%
Total Expenditures	\$353,272,412	\$379,935,739	\$381,811,069	\$1,875,330	0.5%
General Funds	\$341,866,244	\$370,142,548	\$371,370,112	\$1,227,564	0.3%
Special Funds	3,253,710	3,464,918	3,288,142	-176,776	-5.1%
Federal Funds	8,152,458	6,328,273	7,152,815	824,542	13.0%
Total Appropriations	\$353,272,412	\$379,935,739	\$381,811,069	\$1,875,330	0.5%

Note: The fiscal 2026 appropriation includes proposed deficiency appropriations. The fiscal 2027 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.