



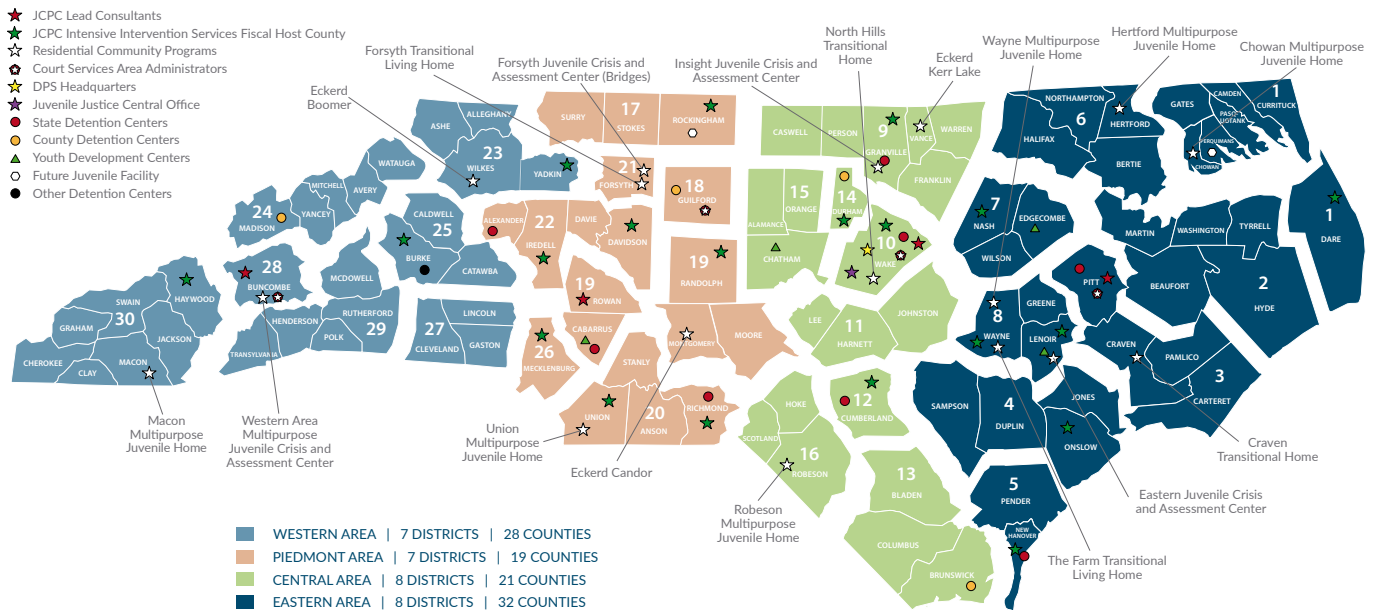
# Annual Report 2023





# COMPREHENSIVE MAP

## Juvenile Justice facilities in North Carolina



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Residents of North Carolina:

It is my pleasure to present the 2023 Annual Report, on behalf of the Department of Public Safety, Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP).

In 2023 we attained project milestones and made positive steps forward in handling continuing staff retention and recruitment concerns throughout the Division, and in managing detention capacity issues within our facilities. We reached these achievements only through the dedication and commitment of the outstanding staff members of DJJDP, in concert with enactment of a comprehensive pay plan during the 2023 legislative session.

In 2023 the state's overall juvenile delinquency rate was 28.81. More complaints were received in 2023 than in 2022, and 42% of all complaints received were linked to the Raise the Age population.

DJJDP kicked off the **NC S.A.F.E. (Secure All Firearms Effectively) campaign** in late spring. NC S.A.F.E. is a comprehensive media and communications campaign focused on the issue of safe firearm storage. The campaign utilizes community outreach, partnership building and paid media tactics to reach its audience of gun owners. The campaign's website, [www.ncsafe.org](http://www.ncsafe.org), contains printable resources in both English and Spanish, as well as a toolkit for communities to host events. Approximately 25,000 cable gun locks and 200 personal gun vaults were distributed during the initial portion of the campaign. To kick off the NC S.A.F.E. Campaign, Governor Roy Cooper [proclaimed](#) June 4-10, 2023, as the inaugural NC S.A.F.E. Week of Action to raise awareness about the importance of safe gun storage. As part of this week, DJJDP representatives traveled across the state to spread this message along with local law enforcement, juvenile justice and other partners in public safety.

DJJDP is studying its detention assessment tool, the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI), and piloting a restorative justice program in a facility with close to **\$1 million in system reform funding received through the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**. This work should inform policy and practice on case planning and matching juveniles with the most appropriate services.

The **Breakthrough Series Collaborative** with Georgetown University was fully implemented in 2023 in Cumberland County – one of five jurisdictions from across the country selected to address racial and ethnic disparities in a local juvenile court system. Priorities for the Cumberland team included establishing cohesive relationships with all youth-focused stakeholders and partners related to the youth legal system; supporting the development and implementation of the County's School Justice Partnership; and overall reducing the number of youth of color placed in DSS custody from juvenile delinquency court in Cumberland County.

Methodist Home for Children, in partnership with the DJJDP Community Programs section, opened a **new transitional living site as**

**well as a new crisis and assessment center** in 2023. Admission to The Farm, a four-bed residential program for male youth, began accepting admissions in November. One month later, its new eight-bed crisis and assessment center began operations in Kinston.

Detention admissions increased in 2023, related to the increase in age of juvenile jurisdiction, and the legislative mandate that calls for non-jurisdictional juveniles to be held in juvenile detention rather than county jails. Admissions of juveniles have increased 33% since 2020. On an average day in 2023, more than one-third the juvenile detention population were youth who were transferred to superior court to have their cases heard in the adult system. On average, youth who are transferred to superior court stay 150 days longer in juvenile detention than their juvenile justice system counterparts. The increase in admissions, increase in transfer to superior court youth, continuing impacts related to the loss of detention beds upon the closure of the Mecklenburg Juvenile Detention Center in November 2022, and rising staff recruitment and retention challenges brought ever-increasing capacity issues to state juvenile detention centers. Renovation to former centers (Perquimans and Richmond) are underway, as is construction of the Rockingham Youth Development Center, slated to open in late spring 2024. Planning and capital funding were also furnished to begin plans to construct a new 48-bed juvenile detention center. Careful evaluation and analysis of data will inform the decision as to location of this new facility.

To accomplish its statutorily mandated tasks, hiring and retaining direct care staff continued to be the Division's top priority. Larger than historically typical vacancy rates persisted within both Facilities and Court Services sections. Effective July 2023, DJJDP began processing certified candidates under the Regional Employment Office system, expanding the number of sites to eight and increasing the number of candidates processed each week, resulting in a quicker turnaround between a conditional offer and Criminal Justice Standards approval. DJJDP's Human Resources unit also worked with local hiring managers and DPS Human Resource staff to conduct hiring events and job fairs across the state.

During the 2023 legislative session, at long last a **comprehensive pay plan** for youth counselor technicians, youth counselors, youth services behavioral specialists, and court counselors was enacted as part of the ratified budget. In addition to the pay plan associated with these specific positions, the budget provides funding for salary adjustments for Juvenile Court Counselor Supervisors on top of the across-the-board salary increases. And the Department (DPS) as a whole received \$5.2 million to provide labor market salary adjustments to address specific staffing issues by providing targeted salary increases to recruit and retain capable staff, to those positions not covered by a pay plan.

I am proud to lead the outstanding juvenile justice professionals of DJJDP, and work in partnership with our stakeholders, in our efforts to protect public safety and improve the lives of juveniles and their families in North Carolina.

**William Lassiter**  
Deputy Secretary, Division of Juvenile Justice  
and Delinquency Prevention

## JUVENILE JUSTICE & DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

# YEAR IN REVIEW

2023 saw the NC Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reach a number of milestones, and a variety of longstanding projects and goals came to fruition. While detention capacity and staffing continued to be the Division's greatest challenges, DJJDP made significant strides in addressing these issues, thanks to increased compensation for Division staff and progress on a number of big-ticket capital projects.

### PREPARING FOR EXPANSION

With capacity strained at existing DJJDP facilities, the Division has overseen simultaneous construction projects and renovations of existing facilities statewide to alleviate that pressure:

- Rockingham Youth Development Center – Located in Reidsville, this state-of-the-art facility is anticipated to open by mid-2024. This 60-bed facility will function as a multi-use facility, including providing juvenile detention services.
- Perquimans Juvenile Detention Center – Closed in 2012 due to budgetary restrictions and falling detention numbers, this facility is tentatively set to reopen in spring 2024.
- Richmond Juvenile Detention Center – Richmond Juvenile Detention Center is anticipated to open in 2025. In the meantime, DJJDP renovated the Jenkins Building on the former minimum-security unit located on the campus of Richmond Correctional Institution. This will serve as a temporary location to house youth in detention while construction is completed at the Richmond JDC. Renovations to the Jenkins Building included installation of a building HVAC system, new roof, flooring, beds, Prison Rape Elimination Act compliance measures for restrooms, internet/wi-fi access and security camera upgrades.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPERIENCE-BASED PAY SCALE

For the first time in 2023, thanks to support from Gov. Roy Cooper and the NC General Assembly, DJJDP was able to implement an experience-based pay scale for front line employees in the Division's Facility Operations and Court Services sections. This has become an invaluable tool for recruitment and retention of quality staff members.

### UPDATED RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Effective July 2023, DJJDP began processing certified candidates under its own Regional Employment Office system, previously managed by Adult Correction. DJJDP expanded the number of sites to eight and increased the number of candidates processed each week, resulting in a quicker turnaround between a conditional offer and Criminal Justice Standards approval.

### NC S.A.F.E. MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The Division awarded a request for proposals to Reingold Inc. in early 2023 and kicked off the North Carolina Secure All Firearms Effectively (NC S.A.F.E.) campaign in late spring. NC S.A.F.E. is a comprehensive media and communications campaign focused on the issue of safe firearm storage. In addition to strong community outreach and partnership building to spread this message, this campaign has also utilized a variety of paid media tactics to reach its audience. The campaign's website, [www.ncsafe.org](http://www.ncsafe.org), contains printable resources in both English and Spanish, as well as a toolkit for communities to host events. Approximately 25,000 cable gun locks and 200 personal gun vaults were distributed during the initial portion of the campaign. Campaign evaluation is planned for 2024 and 2025.

### OJJDP SYSTEM REFORM GRANT AWARD

DJJDP was awarded close to \$1 million under the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Juvenile Justice System Reform Grant. In partnership with Research Triangle Institute, DJJDP is studying its Detention Assessment Tool, the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument, and implementing a restorative justice pilot in a facility. The result of this work is expected to inform policy and practice on case planning by matching juveniles with the most appropriate services; improving the use of the DAT; and informing the use of restorative justice in secure facilities.

### BREAKTHROUGH SERIES COLLABORATIVE

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative in Cumberland County was fully implemented in 2023. The BSC is focused on transforming the youth justice system by revising or eliminating policies and practices that disproportionately or disparately impact youth of color. Priorities for the Cumberland team include establishing partnerships and cohesive relationships with all youth-focused stakeholders and partners related to the youth legal system; supporting the development and implementation of the county's School Justice Partnership; working to create crossover youth programming and remediation to address the needs of youth who are dual system involved; and overall reducing the number of youth of color placed in DSS custody from juvenile delinquency court in Cumberland County.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY PILOT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The Court Services Stakeholder Survey Committee continued its work in 2023, creating additional stakeholder surveys to obtain feedback on how Court Services performs and needed improvements. The committee has developed a law enforcement survey to query law enforcement agencies across North Carolina about customer service, collaboration, training and fostering and maintaining professional relationships. This will help identify key issues where strategies are needed to ensure effective communication in addressing community needs, juvenile behavior and juvenile crime.

## **CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL COVID-19 MITIGATION GRANT FUNDING**

The DJJDP Clinical Services and Programs section received \$5.2 million in grant funding from the CDC for mitigation of COVID-19 within DJJDP facilities. These funds will be used to hire 40 additional contractual nursing positions; provide rapid COVID-19 testing for both staff and detained youth; provide telehealth devices for all JJDP secure custody facilities to allow remote interface with providers and patients; and to purchase testing equipment, tablets for all clinical staff, and educational tablets for detained youth.

## **HEALTH SERVICES STAFFING IMPROVEMENTS**

After enduring a 50% nurse staffing shortage throughout 2022, the Health Services unit was able to recruit nursing staff at all secure custody DJJDP facilities. The Clinical Services and Programs section was also able to hire an assistant director of health services, a position that had been vacant for two years. A lead nurse position was created for each DJJDP secure custody facility.

## **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SPECIALIST**

A DJJDP restorative justice specialist was hired in February 2023, through OJJDP grant funding, to help enhance restorative justice programming for youth in the youth development centers. This specialist has assisted in creating a 25-week syllabus for restorative justice healing circles for justice-involved youth and conducted a circle keeper training for staff. A 14-week consecutive healing circle was held at C.A. Dillon Juvenile Detention Center with 100% participation from the youth.

## **TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING**

The transition coordinator at Chatham YDC started a debate team, and members demonstrated their skills to visitors including the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Chatham, Lenoir and Edgecombe YDC facilitated a real-world simulation with local business and banking partners to allow youth to experience life in the real world.

## **EXPANDED INTENSIVE INTERVENTION SERVICES**

Intensive Intervention Services are regionally based programs funded by Community Programs to provide a specific treatment need to youth identified as having higher risk and needs, to meet a specialty need in the area. As of July 1, 2023, Intensive Intervention Services spanned across 49 counties, in partnership with 20 nonprofit agencies, providing targeted services to high-risk juveniles across the state. Regionally based programming models have allowed the section to discern the need for economy of scale of specific program models prior to elevating such models to state contract e-procurement funding processes.

## **GRAND OPENING OF NEW TRANSITIONAL LIVING SITE**

Methodist Home for Children, the contracted provider for this transitional model, began accepting admission to The Farm in November of 2023. This six- to 12-month, four-bed residential program serves as a stepdown out-of-home placement for male youth transitioning from a youth development center or who are 16 and older and need support developing into self-sufficient young adults. The program will assist youth in acquiring the academic, agricultural and vocational skills needed for independent living. The program gives youth a choice of four educational tracks and ensures youth gainfully contribute to the community and are employed. The clients will also grow produce and prepare the items for sale at the local farmers market.

## **NEW CRISIS AND ASSESSMENT CENTER**

Just a month after opening the Farm, Methodist Home for Children unveiled a new crisis and assessment center in Kinston on the former Dobbs Training School Campus. This eight-bed facility will provide evidence-based services, crisis care, assessment and therapeutic residential services for youth ages 10-17 who require temporary out-of-home placement to assess and/or stabilize their behaviors.

## **NC TEEN COURT EVALUATION PROJECT**

DJJDP has initiated its first statewide Teen Court evaluation through a collaboration with the NC Office of State Partnerships. Through the assistance of OSP and a grant from the NC Evaluation Fund, the section engaged with Montreat College researchers, who anticipate project completion by June 30, 2024.

## **REENTRY TO RESILIENCE PROGRAM CONTINUATION**

DJJDP secured an extension of federal funding for the Reentry to Resilience (R2R) Program, currently administratively managed by Communities in School. The R2R program is a wraparound intensive case management and navigation model that begins working with youth upon admission to the a youth development center. Youth from Mecklenburg, Nash, Edgecombe, Wilson, Cumberland, Wake, Guilford and Durham counties are eligible for participation.



# JUVENILE JUSTICE COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

The NC Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention works to provide the state of North Carolina with a comprehensive strategy that helps prevent and reduce juvenile crime and delinquency. This strategy focuses to strengthen families, promote delinquency prevention, support core social institutions, intervene immediately and effectively when delinquent behavior occurs, and identify and control the small group of serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders in the local communities.

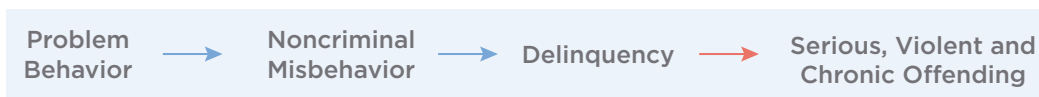
The Division provides a full continuum of public safety interventions involving all children and youth ages 10-17 either at-risk, alleged to or have been found to have committed an undisciplined or delinquent offense.

The Division uses a comprehensive strategy rooted in social science and evidence-based practices throughout the continuum to achieve its outcomes (Howell, 2009). The strategy allows for a system of graduated responses based on a youth's seriousness of risk/behavior or crime, their history of offending, coupled with the needs of the youth and their family or support systems within their local communities. DJJDP's philosophy is that to be evidence-based and effective, the most successful way to approach risk and problem behaviors in youth is through effective prevention, treatment,

education and accountability-based sanctions that are used in graduated levels and guided by professional, strategic leadership through a tapestry of local and state partnerships. This approach requires effectual partnerships in local jurisdictions and values close relationships with families, local resources, law enforcement and the courts to achieve the most effective levels of impact before seeking "state resources" through institutionalizing youth in detention or youth development centers.

Data is presented throughout this report to mirror DJJDP's philosophy of use of graduated sanctions with youth. The initial data displays the early stages of the continuum (focusing on the programs targeted at the youth at greatest risk of entering the juvenile justice system and those receiving beginning or intermediate sanctions or dispositions, through Juvenile Community Programs). The following data encompasses information regarding those entering the juvenile justice system through their alleged delinquent behavior, through Juvenile Court Services; and finally data is provided describing those juveniles whose delinquency behaviors led to secure custody, the most stringent sanction within the juvenile justice system. Also included is data related to clinical services, education and the administrative functions of DJJDP.

## NC's Comprehensive Strategy for Juvenile Delinquency



### Prevention

Target Population: At-Risk Youth

### Graduated Sanctions

Target Population: Delinquent Youth



#### Youth Development Goals:

- Healthy and nurturing families
- Safe communities
- School attachment
- Prosocial peer relations
- Personal development and life skills
- Healthy lifestyle choices

#### Youth Habilitation Goals:

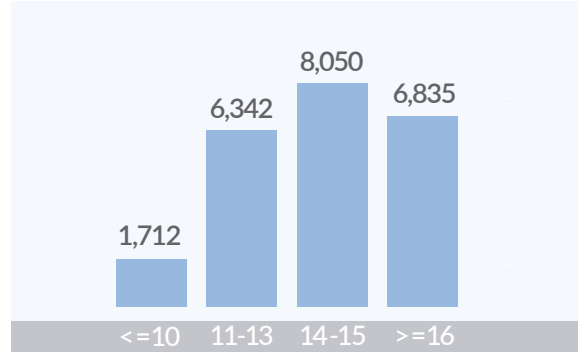
- Healthy family participation
- Community reintegration
- Educational success and skills development
- Healthy peer network development
- Prosocial values development
- Healthy lifestyle choices

# Youth Served in JCPC Programs

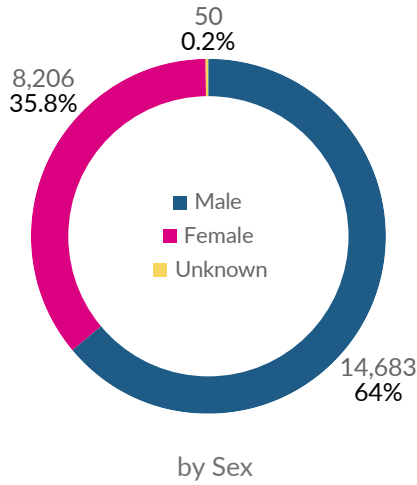
Fiscal Year 2023

The Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention partners with Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils in each county to galvanize community leaders, locally and statewide, to reduce and prevent juvenile crime. JCPC board members are appointed by county boards of commissioners and meet monthly in each county.

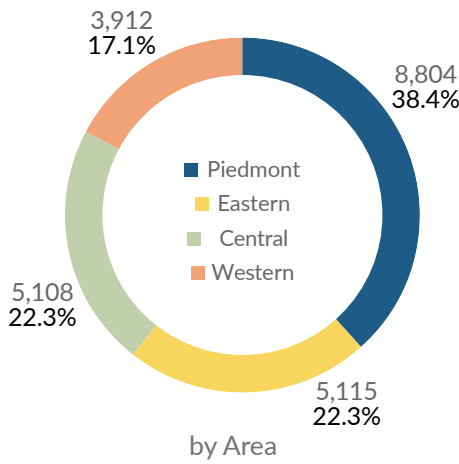
Programming and services funded through JCPCs, targeted in each county to address the problem areas, risks and needs of its juvenile population, include: assessment, clinical treatment, structured day programs, residential programs, restorative justice, mentoring and skill-building programs.



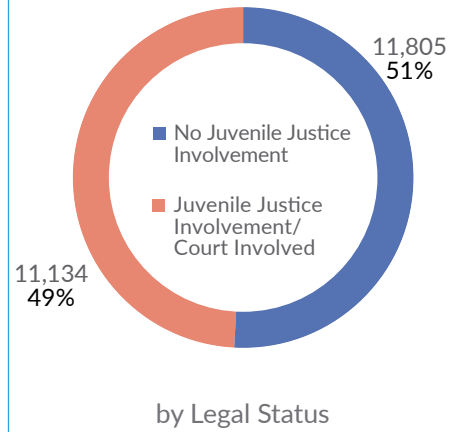
by Age



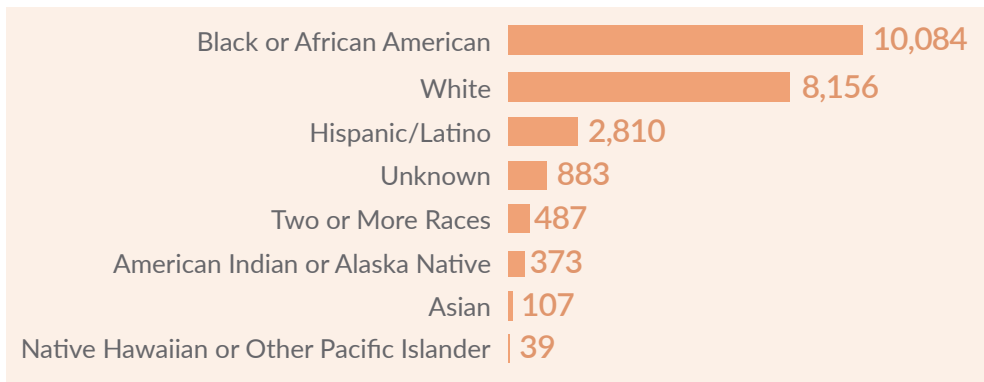
by Sex



by Area



by Legal Status



by Race/Ethnicity



### JCPC Youth Served by Program Type FY 2023

Program Type	Youth Served
Interpersonal Skill Building	4,941
Restitution/Community Service	4,857
Teen Court	4,310
Assessments	1,373
Tutoring/Academic Enhancement	1,276
Mediation/Conflict Resolution	920
Parent/Family Skill Building	855
Individual Counseling	733
Juvenile Structured Day	725
Mentoring	588
Vocational Skills	480
Group Counseling	352
Family Counseling	338
Substance Abuse Counseling	291
Experiential Skill Building	252
Home-Based Family Counseling	249
Temporary Shelter Care	209
Runaway Shelter Care	105
Services Addressing Problem Sexual Behavior	52
Group Home Care	20
Specialized Foster Care	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,939</b>

### Youth Served by Funding Source FY 2023

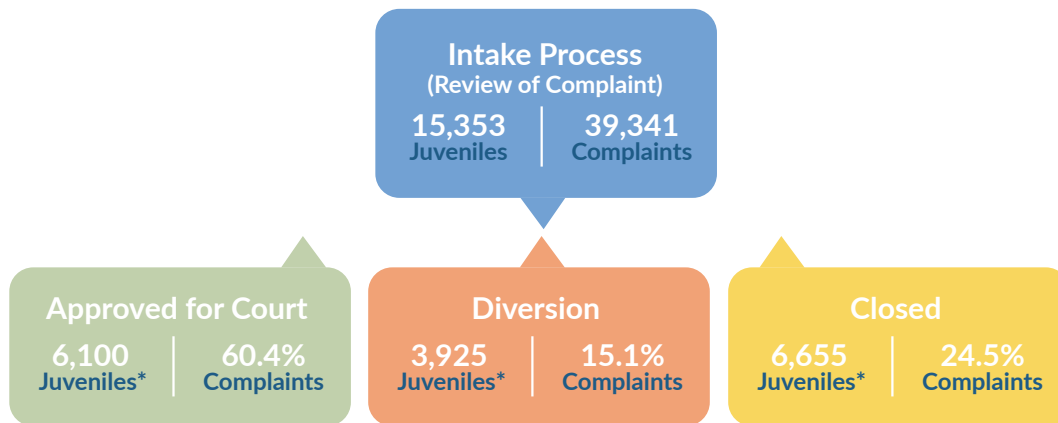
Funding Source	Youth Served
JCPC Funds	22,939
Residential Contractual Services	774
Community-Based Contractual Services	358
Intensive Intervention Services	354
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,425</b>



## Decision Outcomes

Juvenile complaints received by DJJDP have three potential outcomes following an intake evaluation. Complaints can either be:

- (1) approved for court (become a petition), requiring the juvenile charged with the complaint to appear in court;
- (2) diverted, which means the juvenile and legal guardian agree to enter into a diversion plan or contract potentially including programming/services. If the conditions of a diversion plan or contract are met, the complaint does not go to court. If the conditions are not met, the complaint may be approved for court.;
- (3) closed, meaning the complaint does not need to go to court or be diverted. Closed on this page of data means closed at intake.



\* A juvenile can have complaints receive multiple outcomes over the course of a year (e.g., one complaint approved for court, another diverted and another closed). The combinations cause the juvenile count for approved, diverted and closed to sum more than 15,353.



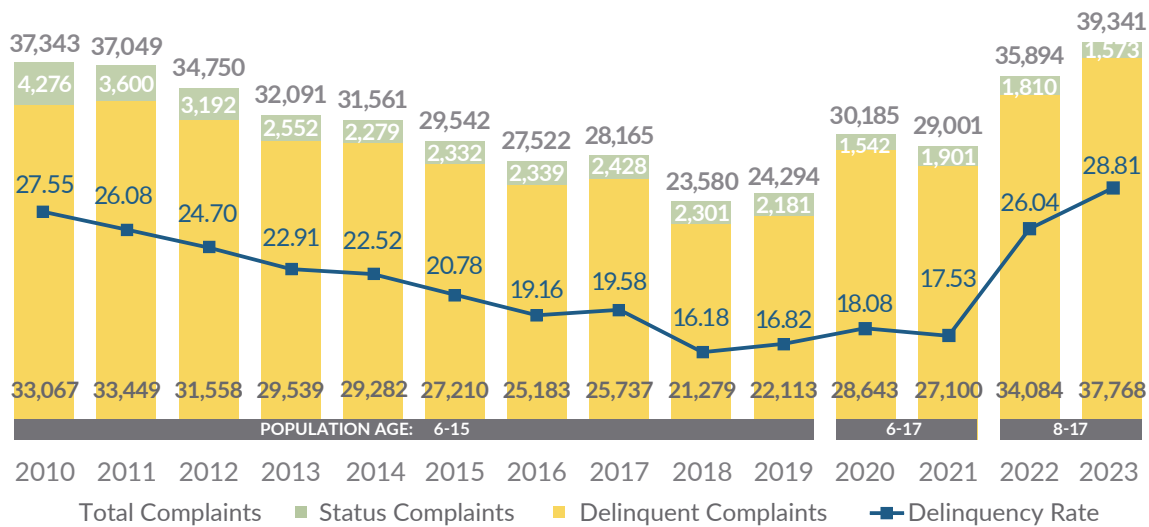
# Complaints Received & Delinquency Rate

2010-2023

Due to significant legislative juvenile jurisdictional changes, the juvenile justice system experienced upper and lower age boundary modifications. These changes require different age ranges for the respective years since implementation.

- Pre-2019, the age of juvenile jurisdiction was 6-15.
- Dec. 1, 2019: Upper boundary change from age 15 to age 17 (Raise the Age)
- December 1, 2021: Lower boundary change from age 6 to age 10 with some exceptions for 8-9 year-olds (Raise the Minimum Age)

As of 2022, these two legislative changes were in effect for the full year, placing the age of juvenile jurisdiction at 10-17, with exceptions for 8-9 year olds.



The number of 16- and 17-year-old juveniles served in Community Programs has increased steadily since Raise the Age implementation. We have seen a 72% increase since FY19. Raise the Age juveniles are more likely to receive intensive community intervention services.

Commitments to youth development centers have not risen significantly since last year, but the proportion of YDC commitments that are Raise the Age juveniles now exceeds the proportion that were younger than age 16 on the date of their offense.

School-based offenses decreased during the coronavirus pandemic and its accompanying school closures. In 2023, 21% of offenses

committed by youth aged 16 or 17 at the time of offense (RtA juveniles) were SBOs, down slightly from 23% in 2022..

Forty-two percent of all complaints received in 2023 were linked to 16- and 17-year-olds.

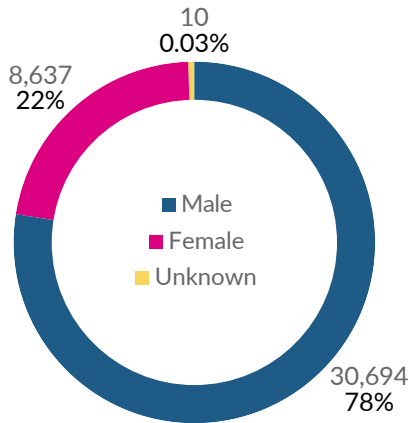
The juvenile delinquency rate for 2023 is 28.81, and may reflect full implementation of the added Raise the Age population, along with the reduction in 6- and 7-year-olds who are now served through vulnerable juvenile consultation instead of through juvenile jurisdiction (approximately 100-300 complaints regarding juveniles under age 10 occurred annually, prior to raising the minimum age).

# Complaints Received

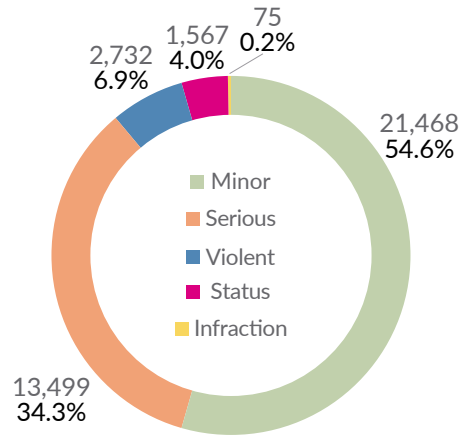
2023

A complaint is a written allegation that a juvenile is delinquent or undisciplined, which is submitted to a juvenile court counselor for evaluation. Most complaints are for minor offenses. Status offenses are offenses that are based on the youth's age (e.g., runaway, truancy, etc.).

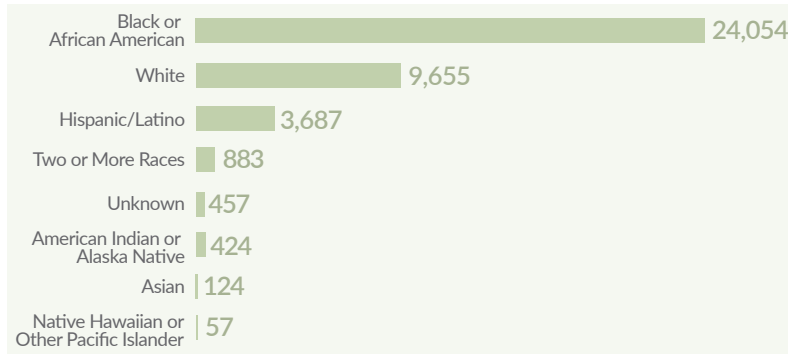
The 2022 Annual Report reflected the change in minimum age of juvenile jurisdiction, whereby fewer complaints for youth under age 10 are represented, along with the addition of vulnerable juvenile consultations for youth under age 10.



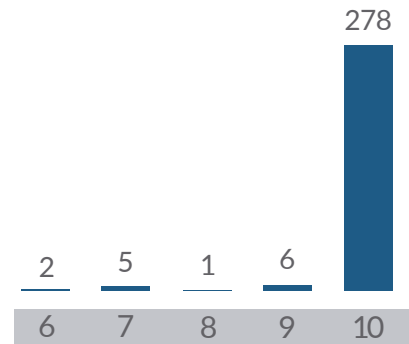
Complaints Received by Sex



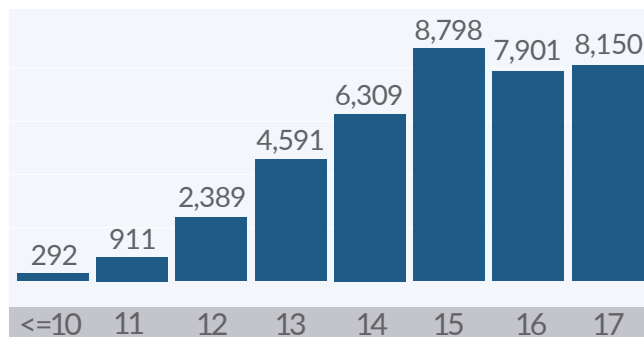
Juvenile Crime and Offenses



Complaints Received by Race/Ethnicity



Complaints Received by Age <=10



Complaints Received by Age

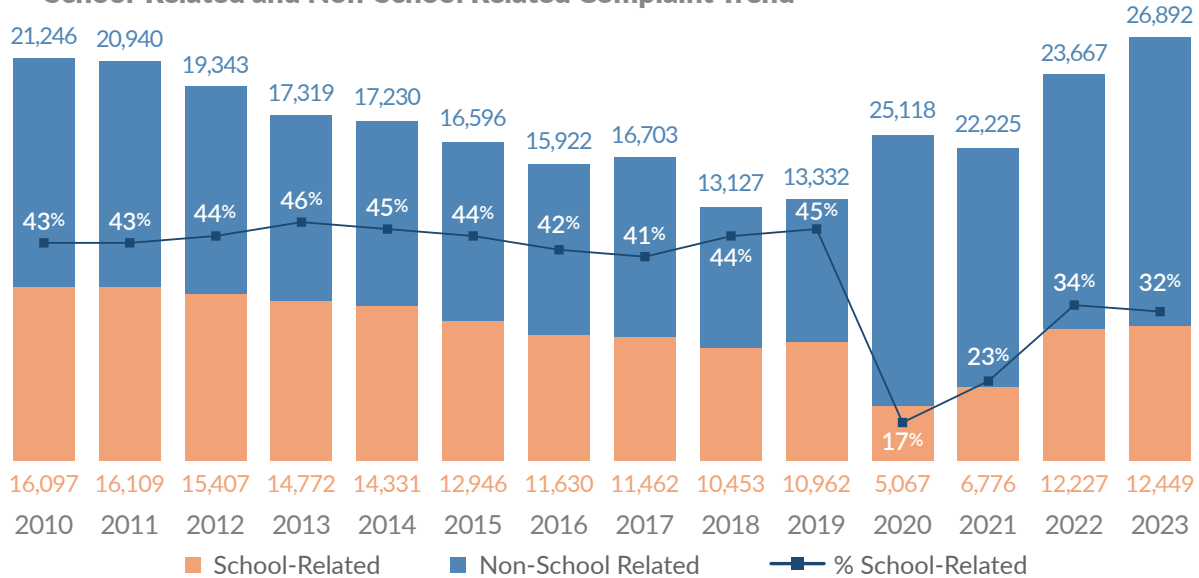


# Juvenile School-Based Offenses

2023

A school-based offense is an offense that occurs on school grounds, school property (buses, etc.), at a school bus stop, or at an off-campus school-sanctioned event (field trips, athletic competitions, etc.) or whose victim is a school (such as a false bomb report). School includes any public or private institution providing elementary (K-8), secondary (9-12), or post-secondary (community college, trade school, college, etc.) education, but excludes home schools, preschools and day cares.

School-Related and Non-School Related Complaint Trend



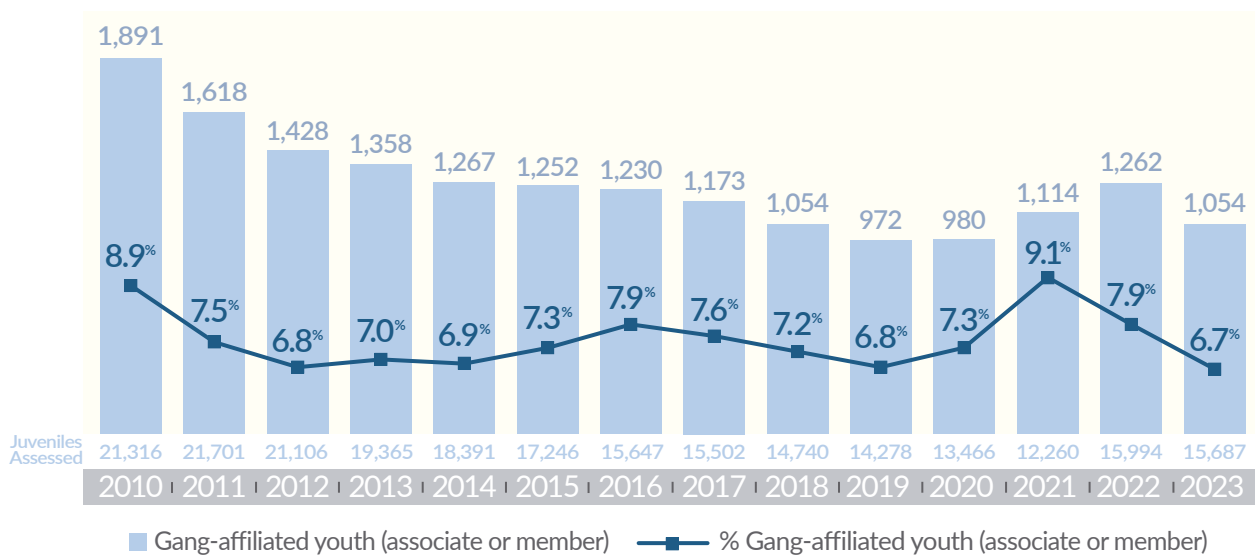
\*School-based offenses decreased in 2020 and 2021 largely due to the coronavirus pandemic and accompanying school closures.

## Top 10 School-Based Offenses: CY 2023

Charged Offense	Complaints
(M) misdemeanor (F) felony (S) status offense	
Simple assault (M)	2,477
Simple affray (M)	1,371
Disorderly Conduct at School (M)	1,132
Communicating threats (M)	675
Possession of weapons other than firearms and explosives on school grounds (M)	659
Truant < 16 (S)	596
Simple possession schedule VI controlled substance (M)	393
Communicating Threat of Mass Violence on Educational Property (F)	355
Assault government official / employee (M)	319
Disorderly Conduct by engaging in fighting or other violent conduct or in conduct creating the threat of imminent fighting or other violence (M)	272

Top 10 Juvenile Offenses: CY 2023			
Offense (M) misdemeanor (F) felony (S) status offense	Complaints	Distinct Juveniles	Complaints per juvenile
Simple assault (M)	4,204	3,513	1.2
Break or enter a motor vehicle (F)	2,895	560	5.2
Simple affray (M)	1,510	1,430	1.1
Larceny (M)	1,309	911	1.4
Communicating threats (M)	1,196	979	1.2
Resisting public officer (M)	1,192	1,051	1.1
Disorderly Conduct at School (M)	1,140	1,047	1.1
Larceny of motor vehicle (F)	1,079	582	1.9
Possess handgun by minor (M)	999	825	1.2
Breaking and or entering (F)	936	553	1.7

### Juvenile Gang Associates or Members 2010-2023

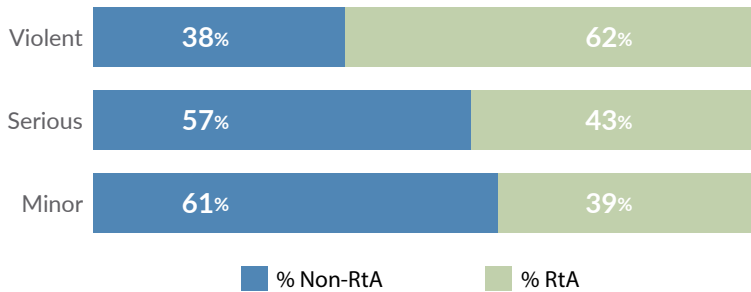


\* The 2021 slight increase in gang-identified juveniles is due to fewer juveniles assessed and a small increase in juveniles identified as gang-involved.

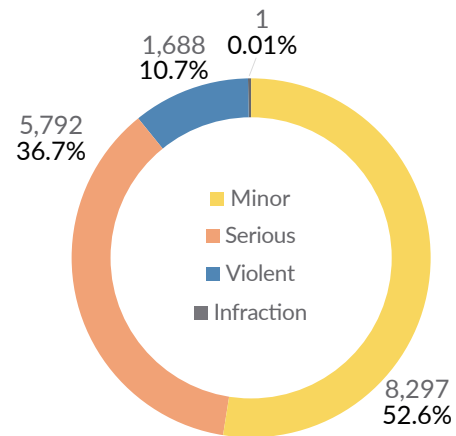
# Raise The Age Offenses

2023

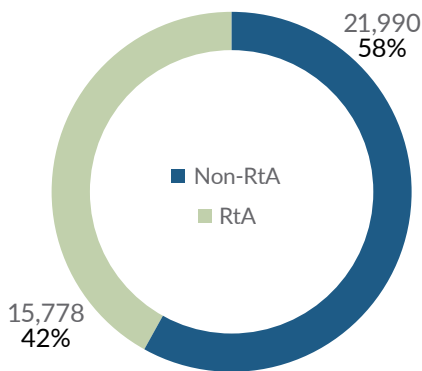
On Dec. 1, 2019, the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act (S.L. 2017-57) raised the age of juvenile jurisdiction for most offenses to include 16- and 17-year-olds under juvenile jurisdiction. Raise the Age allows charges against 16- and 17-year-olds to be heard in the juvenile justice system if they are charged with non-violent crimes classified as low-level felonies and/or misdemeanors.



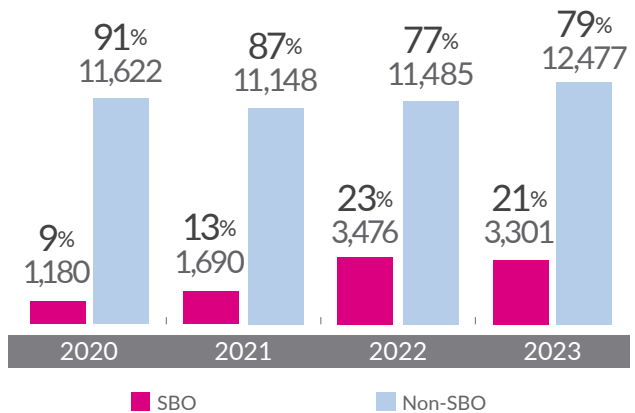
Non-RtA and RtA Proportions by Offense Class Group



Complaints for 16- and 17-year-olds by Charged Group



Complaints by RtA and Non-RtA Designation

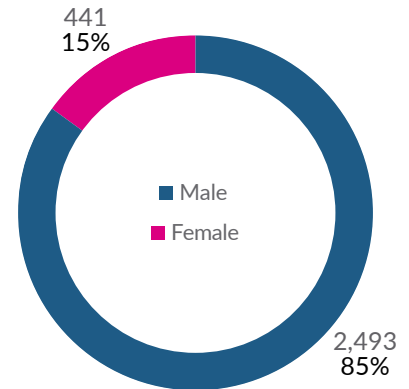


Raise the Age: School-Based Offenses

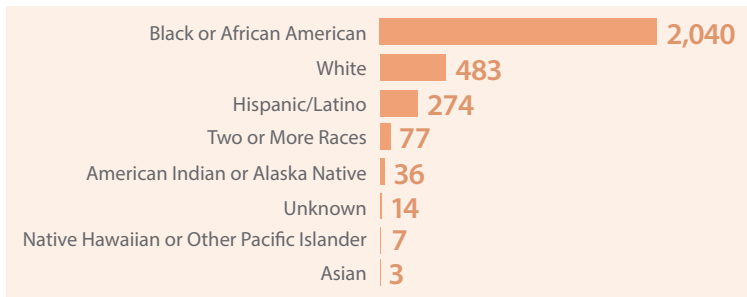
# Juvenile Detention Center Admissions

## 2023

Juvenile detention centers are secure facilities that temporarily house youths alleged to have committed a delinquent act or to be a runaway. Youths are generally placed in a juvenile detention center while awaiting a court hearing, or until another placement can be found, either in a community-based program or service or in a youth development center following commitment.

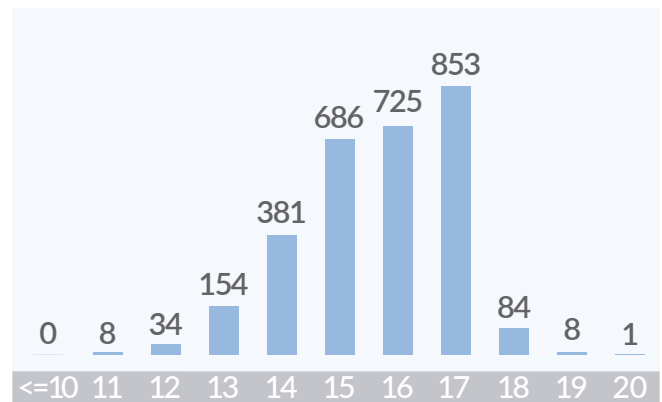
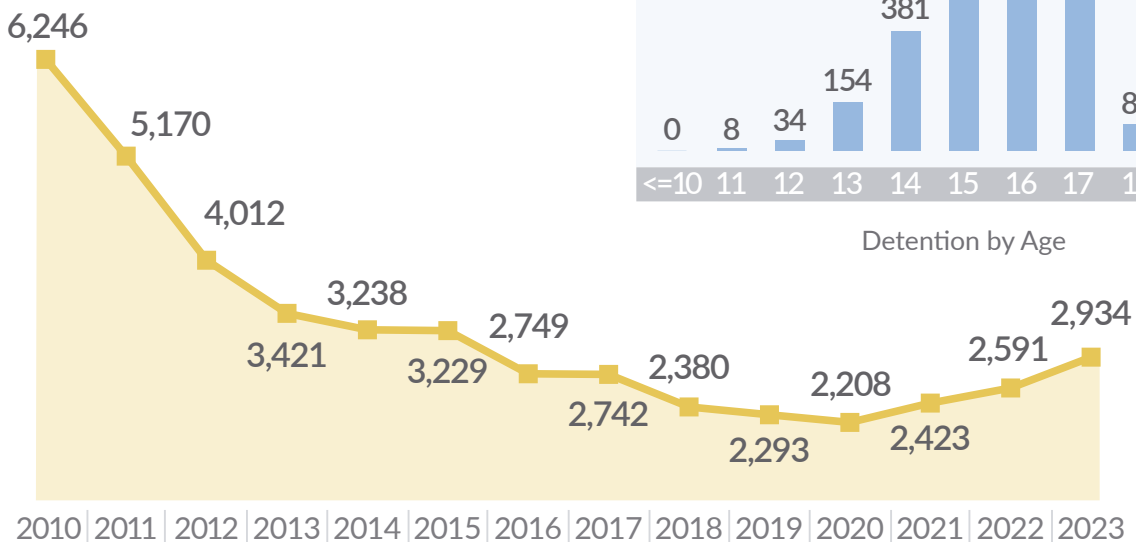


Admissions by Sex



Admissions by Race/Ethnicity

### Detention Admissions 2010-2023



Detention by Age



# Detention

2023

Legislation (S.L. 2020-83) resulted in all youth under the age of 18 who are ordered to be detained in secure custody, to be housed in a juvenile detention center instead of jail, ensuring compliance with the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. This population includes juveniles classified as "Criminal Court Youth" who are not subject to juvenile court jurisdiction, but rather are charged/sentenced outside of the juvenile justice system.

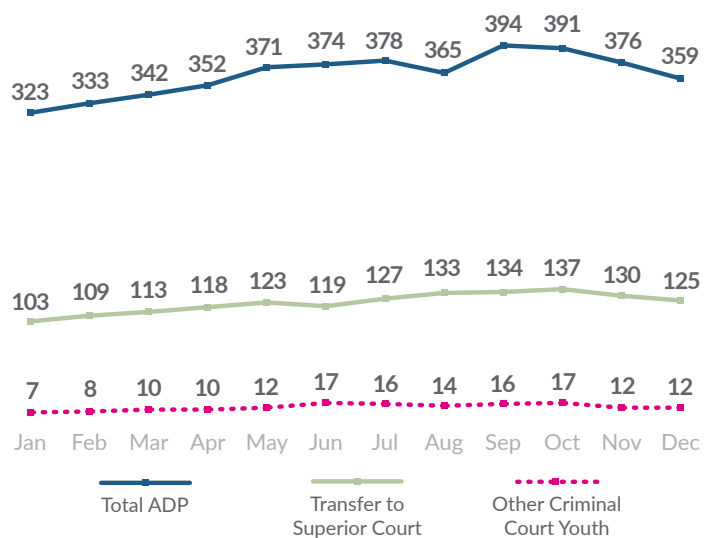
By statute some offenses must be heard from beginning to end in the criminal court (adult) system (H593), despite the youth being under the age of 18. Included in this population is also "Transfers to Superior Court," (TSC) which are cases involving youths who are transferred from juvenile to superior court due to the severity of their charges. Those with certain prior adult convictions; emancipated youth and youth aged 16 or 17 alleged to have committed a Chapter 20 motor vehicle offense are excluded from juvenile jurisdiction, but are housed in juvenile detention when a secure custody order is issued, and thus are counted in the population for average length of stay. Transfers and superior court youth have a longer length of stay as their cases proceed through the adult system, causing increase in average length of stay over time in juvenile detention.

Detention admissions have increased 33% since 2020; however, length of stay has increased 40% since 2020 due to transfer to superior court length of stay being 150 days longer (than juvenile justice system youth stays in detention).

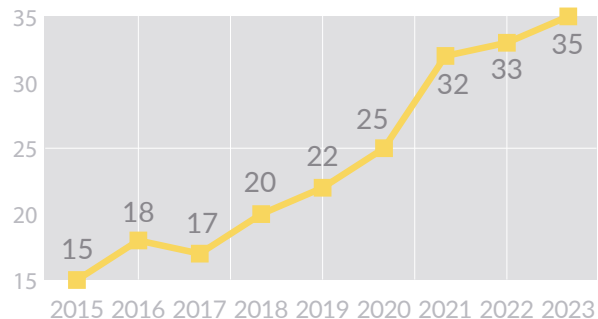
Detention Average Length of Stay – CY 2023

Year	Average Length of Stay (in days)
2015	15
2016	18
2017	17
2018	20
2019	22
2020	25
2021	32
2022	33
2023	35

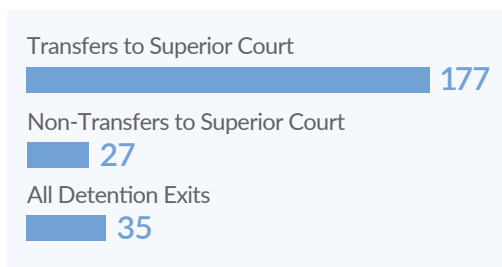
Detention Average Daily Population (ADP) by Month  
Total Criminal Court Youth CY 2023



Average Length of Stay in Detention (Days)  
CY 2015-2023



Detention Average Length of Stay (Days) – CY 2023



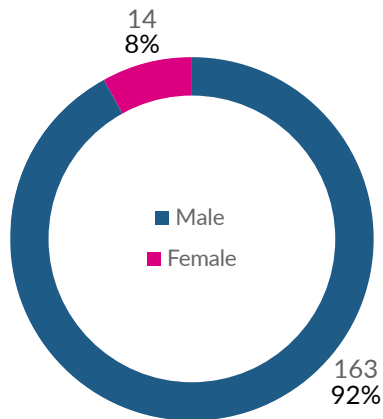
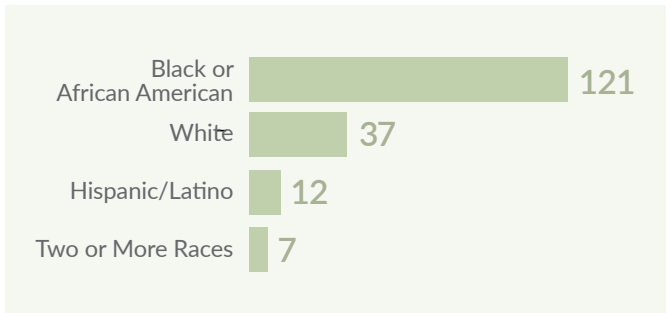
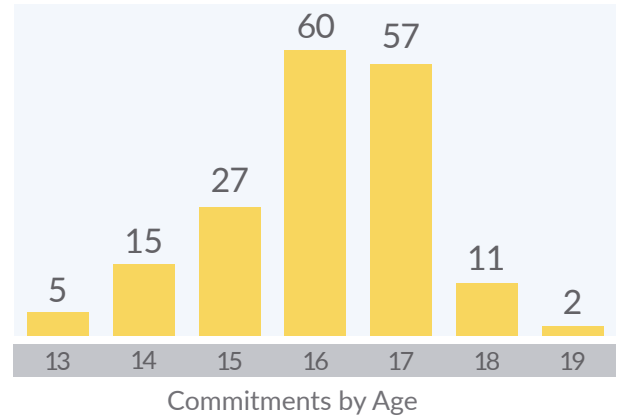


# Youth Development Center Commitments

2023

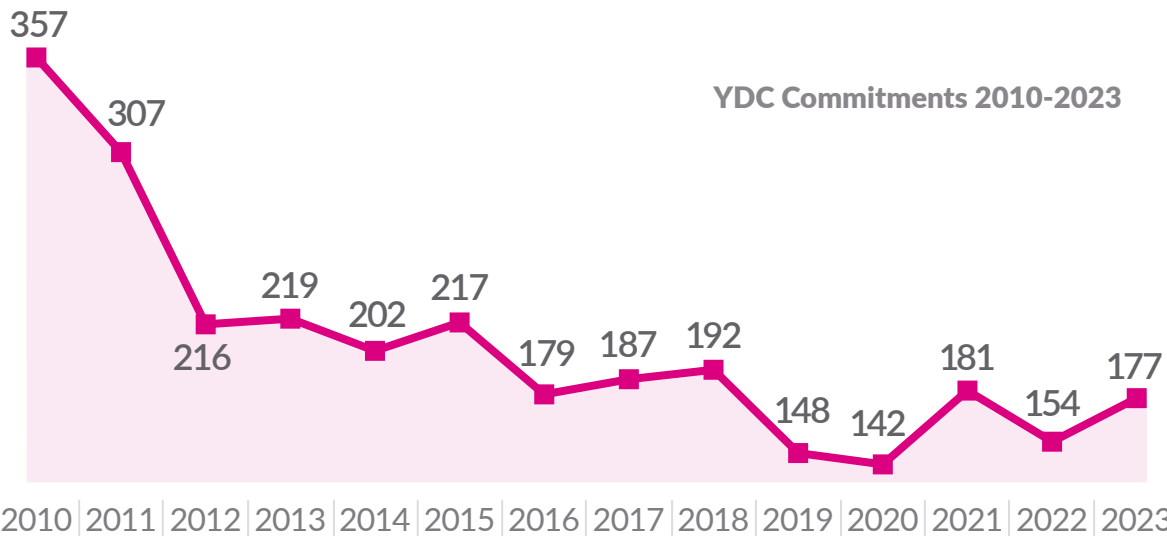
Youth development centers are secure facilities that provide education and treatment services to prepare committed youth to successfully transition to a community setting. Youth receive educational, recreation, vocational, mental and physical health, nutritional and risk/needs specific programming in youth development centers.

This type of commitment is the most restrictive, intensive dispositional option available to the juvenile courts in North Carolina. The structure of the juvenile code limits this disposition to those juveniles who have been adjudicated for violent or serious offenses or who have a lengthy delinquency history.



Commitments by Race/Ethnicity

Commitments by Sex



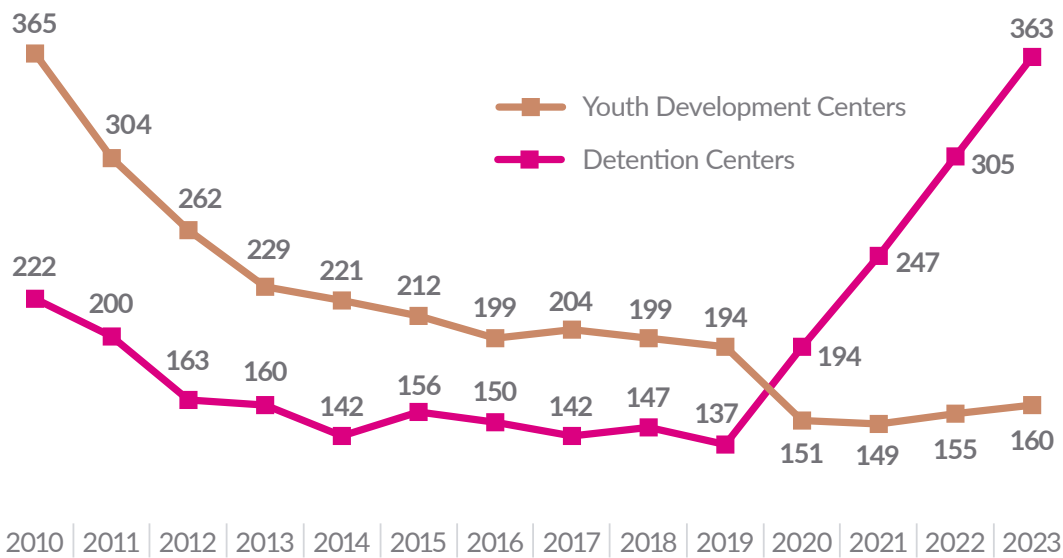
YDC Commitments 2010-2023



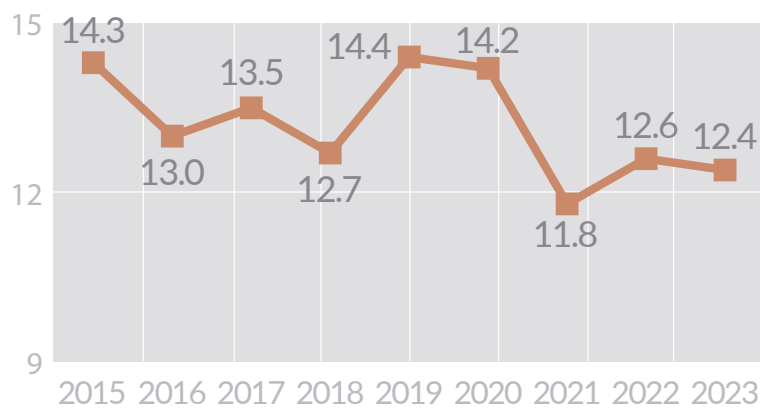
## Average Daily Population

In 2023, the daily YDC population averaged 160 juveniles, who stayed for an average commitment length of 12.4 months.

Youth Development Center (YDC) and Detention Center (DC) ADP by Year 2010-2023



Average Length of Commitment (in Months) in Youth Development Centers 2015-2023



## Capacity & Staffing

2023

The average daily population at juvenile detention centers statewide in 2023 was 363 youth, placing many juvenile detention centers over capacity for a large portion of the year. For the third year in a row, detention average daily population exceeds the youth development center average daily population.

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Facility Type	Facility	Capacity	Average Daily Population
Youth Development Centers	Cabarrus	64	62.0
	*Chatham	24 32	28.5
	Edgecombe	44	42.4
	*Lenoir	22 32	27.0
State-Operated Juvenile Detention Centers	Alexander	24	32.1
	Cabarrus	62	71.8
	Chatham	8	7.4
	Cumberland	18	23.9
	*Dillon	35 45 47 70	50.1
	*Dobbs/Lenoir	22 12	16.4
	New Hanover	18	22.2
	Pitt	18	24.2
	Richmond Jenkins	24	5.3
Wake	24	26.9	
County-Operated Juvenile Detention Centers	*Brunswick	12 10	9.8
	Durham	14	12.6
	Foothills	15	8.7
	Guilford	44	32.4
	*Madison	19 25	28.6

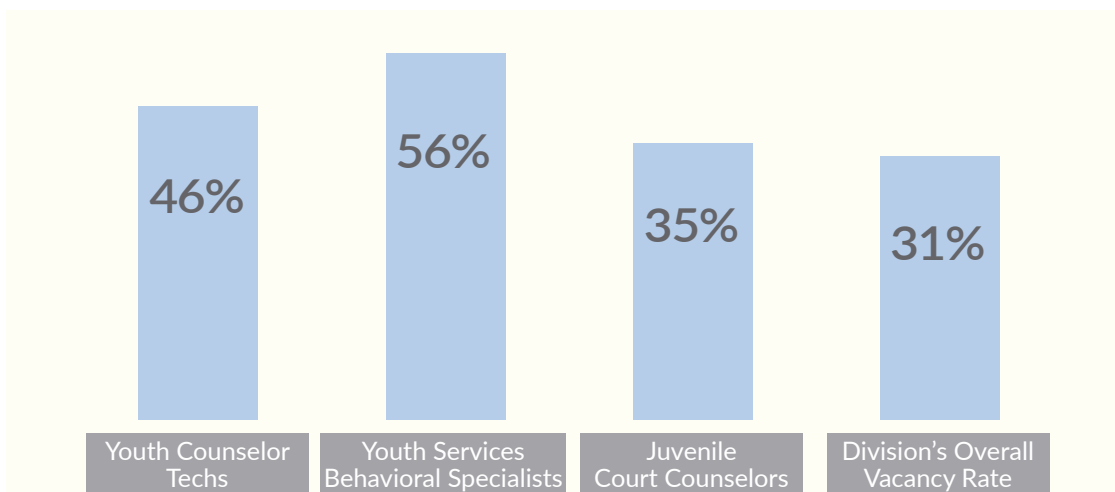
\*Facilities indicating multiple capacity counts throughout 2023 reflect 1) changes from YDC to DC beds, 2) openings/closures due to staffing, renovation, or other operational needs.



As detention admissions and length of stay have steadily increased since 2020, DJJDP has also been losing direct care staff at an alarming rate. In 2023, the vacancy rate for direct care staff was 45% in December. High vacancy rates persisted for frontline roles such as youth counselor technician (46% vacancy rate), youth services behavioral specialist (56%) and juvenile court counselor (35% vacancy rate). The vacancy rate for the division overall was 31% as of December 2023.

While 2023 saw an overall increase in direct care vacancies, the 1% increase over 2023 is an improvement from 2022, which saw a 15% increase in direct care vacancies from January to December. A number of factors, including a strong focus on retention and employee satisfaction, a comprehensive recruitment marketing campaign and the implementation of a long-sought experience-based pay plan have placed the division in a favorable position to overcome its staffing difficulties in the long term.

### 2023 Vacancies for Direct Care Staff – Percentages\*



\* As of the end of 2023

\* The average vacancy rate for direct care staff at DJJDP rose by 1% throughout the year, increasing from 44% in January to 45% in December.

## Clinical Services and Programming by Youth Development Centers

Juveniles committed to North Carolina’s juvenile justice system in 2023 presented with multiple and complex behavioral health needs. A representative point-in-time survey of youth confined in youth development centers on Dec. 31, 2023, (149 males and 16 females), revealed that:

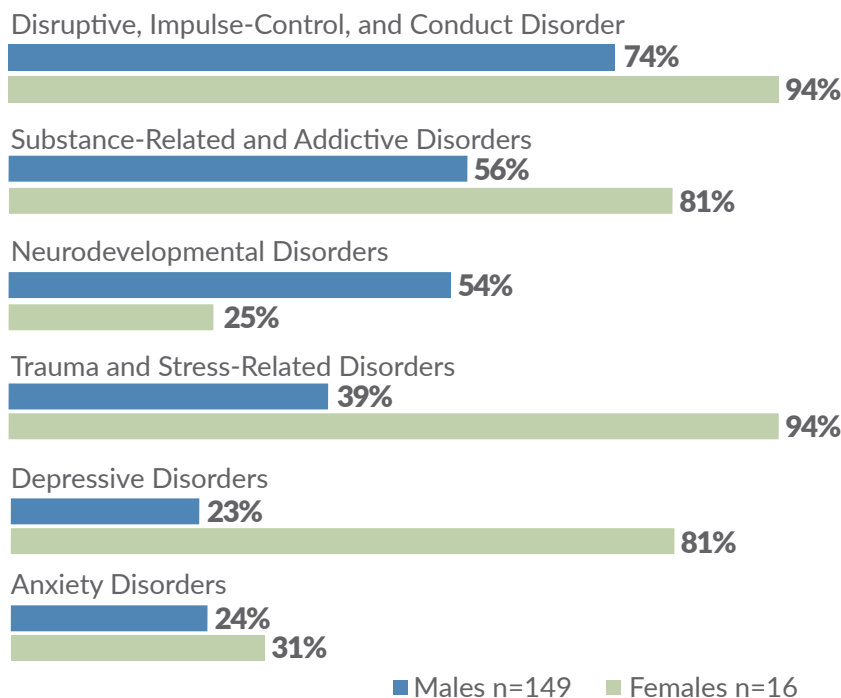
- 98% carried at least one mental health diagnosis;
- 56% had co-occurring mental health and substance use diagnoses;
- 41% were taking prescribed psychotropic medication (88 % of girls and 36% of boys); and
- youth committed to YDCs had an average of four distinct mental health and/or substance use disorder diagnoses, and in some cases as many as twelve.

These findings are similar to diagnostic trends found over recent years in this population, with one exception: the rate of substance use disorders, which has been steadily declining among the YDC population since 2015 with the exception of a small increase that was previously noted in 2021, saw a slight increase in 2023. In 2015, substance use disorders were present in 74% of the YDC population. That rate fell to 64% in 2016, to 60% in 2017, to 55% in 2018, 48% in 2019, 46% in 2020, 51% in 2021, 49% in 2022, and then an increase to 56% in 2023.

The most frequent categories of diagnoses within the 2023 population of YDC youth, found after completion of a comprehensive evaluation using standardized assessment tools by a licensed mental health clinician, were within the category of disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders. These diagnoses describe problems of self-control manifested in behaviors that violate the rights of others and/or bring an individual into conflict

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### Most Prevalent Diagnostic by Percentage of the 2023 YDC Population





with rules, laws or authority figures. The 2023 data indicated that 76% percent of youth confined in YDCs carry at least one diagnosis within this class (74% of males and 94% of females). Sixty-one percent (61%) of the overall YDC population was diagnosed with Conduct Disorder (61% of males and 63% of females) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder accounted for 30% of the population (30% of males and 31% of females).

The second most frequently found category of diagnoses was Substance-related and addictive disorders, reported in 58% of the YDC population (56% males and 81% females). Of these, 95% were cannabis-related and 1% were a combination of opioid, alcohol-related, hallucinogen or stimulant abuse. The further analysis of this category indicated that YDC youth were 2.3 times higher to have cannabis-related issues compared to youth in community-based residential programs.

The third most common diagnostic category was neurodevelopmental disorders. Disorders within this class manifest early in life and are characterized by developmental deficits that affect personal, social, academic or vocational functioning. Neurodevelopmental disorders were diagnosed in 51% of the YDC population (54% of males and 25% of females). The most frequently diagnosed disorders within this category were attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), found in 36% of the YDC population (39% of males and 6% of females).

The fourth most common diagnostic category was trauma- and stress-related disorders, present in 44% of the YDC population.

Disorders within this class arise in response to exposure to one or more traumatic or stressful life events. A marked discrepancy is seen in the frequency of these problems by gender: trauma- and stress-related disorders were more than twice as common in females than males, with 94% of females fitting into this category and 39% of males.

The 2023 point-in-time survey administered the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) inventory to all youths residing in the YDC. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is defined as different traumatic events that an individual was exposed to prior to the age of 18. These childhood adverse experiences include childhood abuse (i.e., physical, emotional and sexual abuse), neglect (i.e., physical and emotional neglect), and household challenges (i.e., substance misuse, mental illness, violent treatment of mother or stepmother, parental separation/divorce, and incarcerated household member). A respondent's ACE score is between 0-10 based on how many of the 10 types of adverse experiences they report experiencing prior to their 18th birthday. Empirical evidence has consistently shown that a higher ACE score is directly related to an increased risk of delinquency, fighting, dating violence, mental health issues, physical health issues, and suicidal ideation and attempts. The average ACE score for all youth in the YDC was 3.5. Statistically significant differences were seen in female youth who reported experiencing an average of 4.3 events while males reported an average of 2.9 adverse events.

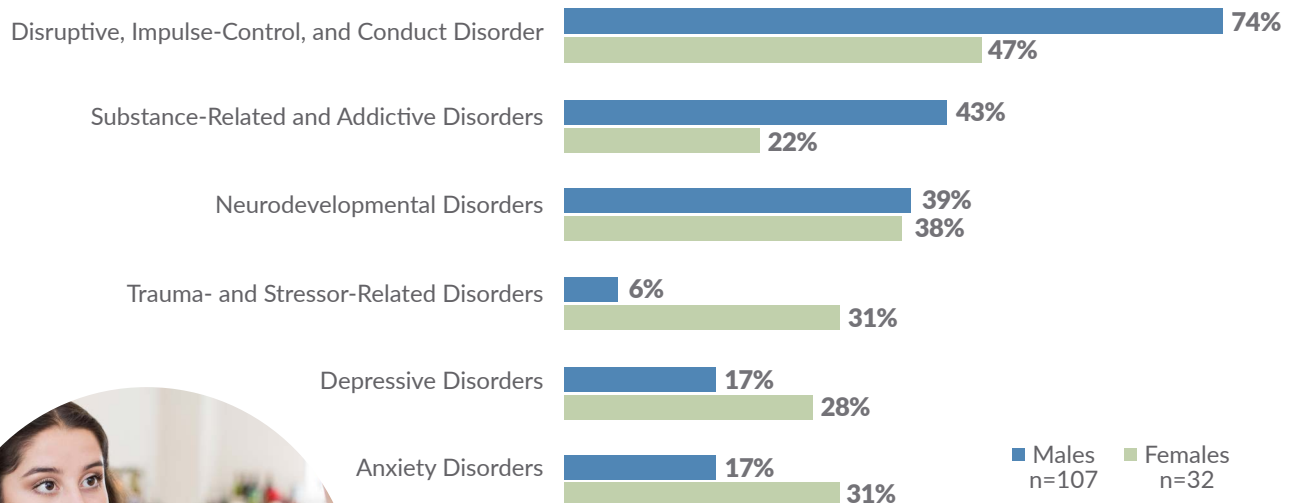
Depressive disorders (29% of YDC population) and anxiety disorders (25% of YDC population) were the fourth and fifth most common diagnostic category for the YDC population.

A representative point-in-time survey of youth confined in the **contract residential population (CRP)** on Dec. 31, 2023, (107 males and 32 females), revealed that:

- 93% carried at least one mental health diagnosis
- 37% had co-occurring mental health and substance use diagnoses;
- 19% were taking prescribed psychotropic medication (42% of females and 58% of males) and;
- youth in CRP had an average of three distinct mental health and/or substance use disorder diagnoses, and in some cases as many as 10.

The most frequent categories of diagnoses within this group of youth were within the category of disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders. In other words, 68% percent of the contract residential population carry at least one diagnosis within this class (74% of males and 47% of females). This category is followed by neurodevelopmental disorders with 39% of the overall CRP population (39% of males and 38% of females). The third most diagnosed category was substance-related and addictive disorders which included 38% of the population (43% of males and 22% of females). The fourth most common category was anxiety disorders (20%) followed by depressive disorders (19% overall). Trauma and Stress-Related Disorders was the sixth most common diagnosis in the contract residential population with 12% of the CRP population (6% of the males and 31% of the female population). The average ACE score for all youth in the CRP was 2.7.

### Most Prevalent Diagnostic with the Contract Residential Population





## Education Services

Juvenile Justice Education Services (JJES) serves a diverse population of students and provides instruction and activities that support students' goals for a successful transition to their communities. Depending on the student's academic standing and personal goals, he/she will receive:

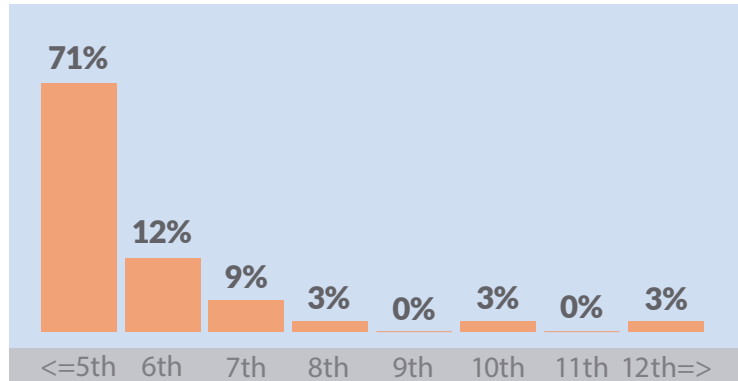
Instruction aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, which leads to a standard high school diploma; instruction toward obtaining their high school equivalency (HSE) by passing all sections of the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET); or enrollment in a web-based post-secondary course.

Upon entry to a youth development center (YDC), students' reading and math skills are assessed through the Woodcock Johnson IV assessment.

Juvenile Justice classrooms are led by state-licensed teachers who provide personalized instruction, incorporating direct instruction as well as supplemental web-based instruction. While most students are enrolled in their core curriculum courses (English, Math, Science, Social Studies), they also have the opportunity to take career and technical education (CTE) courses such as Career Management, Personal Finance, Entrepreneurship, Horticulture or Principles of Business. Students who are pursuing their HSE diploma receive instruction from a community college instructor through partnerships established between the YDC and the local community college. Students who qualify for special education services receive support from exceptional children's (EC) teachers and/or related service providers as stated in their individual education program (IEP), per the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

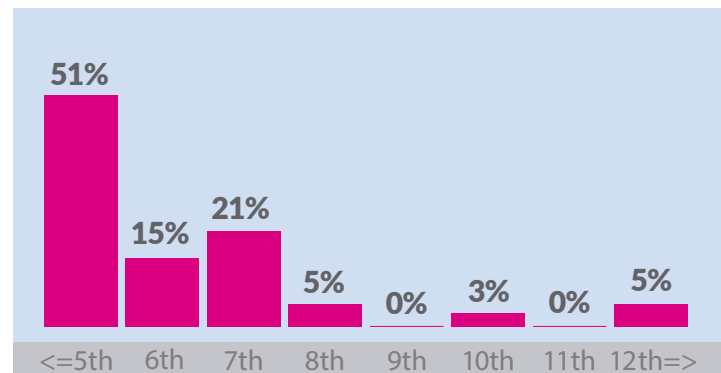
### Students Released from YDC in 2023 Grade Level at Time of Commitment

Math for those entering YDC during CY 2023 (Pre-test only)



### Students Released from YDC in 2023 Grade Level at Release

Broad Reading and Math for those who exited YDC during CY 2023 (Pre and Post tests)

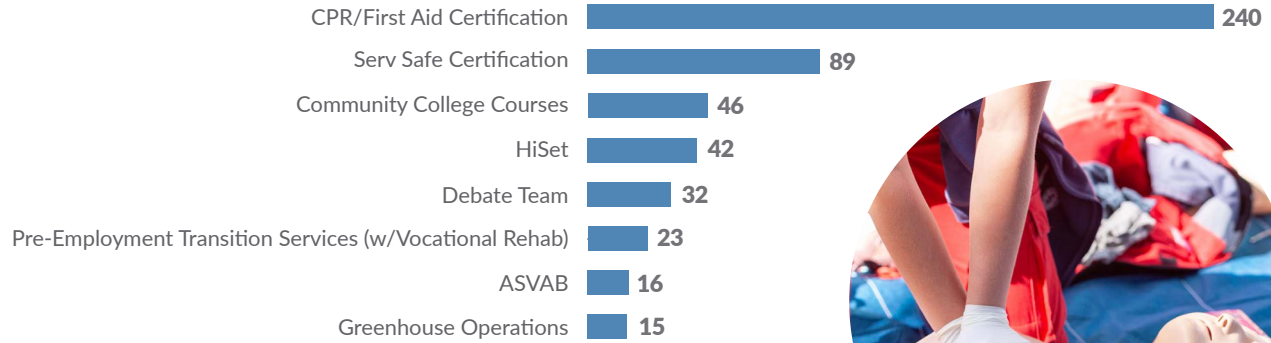


\*33 students obtained their High School Diploma

\*6 students obtained their High School Equivalency Certificate



### Students Participating in Career Preparation and Post-Secondary Programs, Certifications and Credentials



\*Youth may participate in more than one career preparation and post-secondary program.





## Employees and Staffing

2023

Juvenile Justice Employees			
Section	Total Number of Staff	Number of Criminal Justice Certified Staff	% of Staff that are Criminal Justice Certified
Community Programs	31	0	0%
Court Services	687	588	86%
Facility Services (Includes Education/Health/Clinical)	880	709	81%
Transportation Services	70	60	86%
Administration	74	0	0%
Total	1,742	1,357	78%

## Appropriations

2023

**28.3%** Juvenile Court Services – \$61,501,227

**15.1%** Community Program Services – \$32,825,013

**13.5%** Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPC) – \$29,407,147

**13.2%** Youth Development Services – \$28,702,474

**11.9%** Youth Detention Services – \$25,988,819

**8.7%** Youth Treatment Services – \$18,896,386

**5.5%** Administration – \$11,896,679

**3.9%** Youth Education Services – \$8,419,039

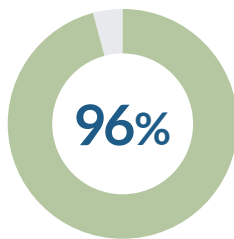
## Basic Training Certification Exam Pass Percentages

2023

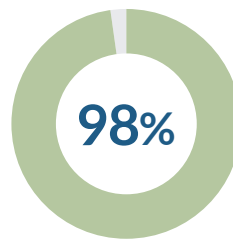
The Staff Development and Training unit in the Juvenile Justice section is responsible for the delivery of basic training for juvenile justice officers and juvenile court counselors.

The Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission provides end-of-course testing for basic training.

DJJDP delivers both basic and in-service training to Juvenile Justice staff. To maintain employment, all Juvenile Justice officers and court counselors must demonstrate course proficiency with passing scores on end-of-course testing within one year of their appointment to the Basic Training School.



Juvenile Justice Officers passed



Juvenile Court Counselors passed

All Classes			
Class Type	Total # Trainees	Total # Passed	% Passed
Females	109	107	98.17%
Males	76	72	94.74%
Total	185	179	96.76%
Juvenile Justice Officers	129	124	96.12%
Juvenile Court Counselors	56	55	98.21%



Crime is a cycle  
Break The Chain

Family  
crime  
cycles

Peer  
pressure

