

# Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Plan



**Prepared for  
The Honorable Josh Shapiro,  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

By the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's  
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee

**March 2024**

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*LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR*

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Dear Governor Shapiro,

We are pleased to present the 2023 Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan. This plan has been prepared on behalf of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee.



During my tenure as a judge in the family division, where I primarily heard juvenile court cases, and in my prior role as a prosecutor in the Allegheny County District Attorney's office, I have seen firsthand key issues facing Pennsylvania's youth. I have seen how trauma, poverty, hunger, and housing insecurity can be root causes of youth's justice system involvement, and how creating safe spaces where young people and their families feel heard can be transformative.

I have also seen the issues facing youth-serving systems and professionals, such as the current detention crisis, chronic and acute workforce challenges, limited options for youth with complex needs, and community-based resources and programs stretched to breaking points and how all of these factors can negatively impact youth experiences once they are involved in the system.

And as a long-time member – and now chair – of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee, I've also seen how dialogue and commitment at the state level can result in significant and sustained system-wide improvements.

Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system is at an important crossroads. As a result of increased coordination and adoption of evidence-based practices, the Commonwealth has seen steady and sustained decreases in the number of youth arrests, referrals, dispositions, and placements. However, as laid out in this plan, many significant issues facing Pennsylvania youth, families, communities, and the juvenile justice system remain.

This plan provides an up-to-date view of data, trends, key issues, priorities, and recommendations following months of research, information gathering, and collection of feedback from experts and key stakeholders in the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system.

It is our hope that you can use this plan as a building block for investing vital funding and prioritizing key executive actions to meet this moment and address issues facing our juvenile justice system.

On behalf of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee, thank you for your time and commitment to improving the lives of Pennsylvania's youth while making our communities safe.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "KB Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Judge Kim Berkeley Clark  
Chair, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee

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## INTRODUCTION

For nearly 45 years, the *Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)* has supported justice system improvements, victim services and compensation, and other initiatives responsive to the needs of practitioners, communities, and the Commonwealth. In recent years, the agency has also been tasked with addressing emerging public safety issues like improving school safety, responding to the overdose crisis, and addressing gun violence.

As Pennsylvania's justice planning and policymaking agency, PCCD brings together a wide range of people and perspectives necessary to understand the issues facing our communities, identify potential solutions, and invest in effective strategies that can make a real difference. PCCD also serves as Pennsylvania's State Administering Agency (SAA) for federal justice-related funding, administering a wide range – and growing number – of programs, funding streams, and initiatives aligned with our mission.

PCCD also serves as Pennsylvania's designated state planning agency for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention, pursuant to the requirements of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. The agency's [\*Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee \(JJDP\)\*](#) is comprised of representatives from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC), juvenile court judges, law enforcement, chief juvenile probation officers, victims' services, non-profit prevention and treatment service providers, special education specialists, youth, and other related stakeholders.

By law, the JJDP is tasked with:

- Developing a [comprehensive plan](#) relating to juvenile justice and delinquency prevention for the Commonwealth;
- Advising the Commission on funding decisions, standards, and programs;
- Collaborating with state agencies on planning and programming related to juvenile delinquency prevention and the reduction of violence by and against youth; and
- Advising and assisting the Commission in designing and promoting comprehensive, research-based initiatives to help communities promote the positive development of children and reduce youth delinquency, violence, and risky behaviors.

## BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

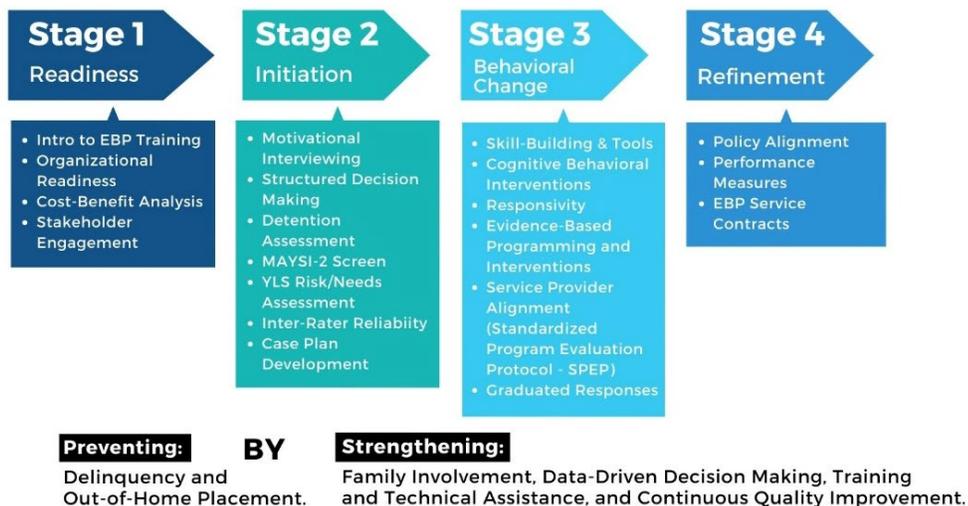
The [Juvenile Act of 1972](#) codified Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system, which is comprised of a blend of state and local and public/private approaches. As described in state law, Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system's mission centers on 'balanced and restorative justice':

***“Consistent with the protection of the public interest, to provide for children committing delinquent acts programs of supervision, care and rehabilitation which provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed and the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community.”***

Pennsylvania's juvenile justice and delinquency prevention efforts are also guided by the federal [Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act \(JJDP\)](#) and its 'Core Requirements':

- ***Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders:*** Requires that juveniles not criminally charged are not securely detained in adult jails, adult lockups, juvenile detention centers, and juvenile correctional facilities.
- ***Separation of Juveniles from Adult Inmates:*** Requires that juveniles who are securely detained do not have sight and sound contact with adult inmates.
- ***Jail Removal – Removal of Juveniles Prosecuted as Adults from Adult Facilities:*** Requires that juveniles accused of delinquent offenses may not be securely detained in adult jails and adult lockups for more than six hours.
- ***Racial and Ethnic Disparity:*** Addressing and eliminating racial and ethnic disparities within the juvenile justice system.

**Figure 1: Pennsylvania's JJSES Framework**



Pennsylvania has also adopted and implemented the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES). JJSES is a framework focused on preventing youth delinquency and out-of-home placement. Principles of strengthening family involvement, data-driven decision-making, training and technical assistance, and continuous quality improvement guide this approach.

## CORE PRINCIPLES ("PILLARS")



- **Balanced & Restorative Justice.** Pennsylvania's [Act 33 of 1995](#) codified goals of 'balanced and restorative justice' in its juvenile justice system, emphasizing the equal importance of promoting positive youth development, ensuring community safety, as well as ensuring accountability and victim restoration.
- **Accountability & Oversight.** Ensuring proper standards and practices at all levels is paramount for the well-being and rights of every youth involved in the juvenile justice system, as well as their families and communities.
- **Engaging Youth & Families.** Engaging youth and families in discussions about the juvenile justice system and other youth-serving systems is crucial, as their firsthand experiences and insights can inform more effective and compassionate policies and practices.
- **Race Equity & Inclusion.** Achieving race equity and inclusion in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system is essential as addressing and reducing racial and ethnic disparities ensures fairness and justice for all youth.
- **Adequate & Sustained Funding.** Adequate and sustained funding is vital to bolster effective youth-serving systems and ensuring that both juvenile justice and delinquency prevention initiatives can thrive and provide essential support for at-risk youth.
- **Policy & Legislative Reforms.** Pennsylvania has a strong track record of advancing key reforms through policy and legislation and they remain crucial for driving forward progress in juvenile justice and delinquency prevention.
- **Commitment to Data & Evidence.** Since 2011, Pennsylvania's JJSES has emphasized the importance of implementing evidence-based practices for advancing the goal of 'balanced and restorative justice,' which requires proper data collection for comprehensive planning.

## PENNSYLVANIA'S 2023 PLANNING PROCESS

PCCD is required under 71 P.S. §1190.23 to “prepare and, at least every two years, update a comprehensive juvenile justice plan on behalf of the Commonwealth based on an analysis of the Commonwealth’s needs and problems, including juvenile delinquency prevention.” Responsibility for developing this Plan is delegated to PCCD’s Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee (JJJPC).

In undertaking this latest strategic planning process, PCCD and the JJJPC identified the following goals for Pennsylvania’s 2023 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan:

- Provide a common understanding of key issues facing Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system;
- Acknowledge areas of strength and progress as well as opportunities for improvement;
- Take a balanced approach, seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders, including youth, families, justice practitioners, victim services, and other stakeholders who are involved with and/or impacted by the juvenile justice system;
- Identify the top priorities and recommendations for the Governor’s consideration that can be championed and/or accomplished by executive action;
- Focus on the most urgently needed actions, resources, and/or decisions and provide a clear framework that can be used by decision-makers at the state level; and
- Provide a basis for measuring impact and success.

PCCD utilized a three-phased strategic planning process to inform the development of the 2023 *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan*:

- ***Phase 1: Initial Planning & Information Gathering***
- ***Phase 2: Synthesizing Findings & Identifying Early Priorities***
- ***Phase 3: Refining & Finalizing the 2023 Plan to the Governor***

### ***Engaging Youth, Families, and System Stakeholders***

PCCD recognizes the importance of capturing feedback from our stakeholders. To that end, surveys were developed and deployed in Phases 1 and 2 to collect input from system and community partners to ensure the plan reflects the needs of communities the system serves. Three surveys were designed and released to the JJJPC and its Subcommittees, communities, youth and parents/caregivers with system experience, and a broad selection of system partners. Although questions varied on each survey, everyone responding was asked some variation of the question about listing and prioritizing what they view as system and/or community needs.

- Members of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee and Subcommittees (43 responses)
- Juvenile Justice System Partners & Related Stakeholders (e.g., juvenile probation court services, local law enforcement, local government, community-based organizations, juvenile and family court judges, victim services, prosecutors, mental/behavioral health, etc.) (217 responses)
- Youth, Families, and Community Members (261 responses, including 49 responses from individuals with direct experience with the juvenile justice system)

PCCD was also interested in understanding how youth and families with current or former involvement with the juvenile justice system felt about their treatment at various points of system contact, from arrest to confinement. In addition, PCCD asked respondents indicating they were involved in the system (currently or in the past) to rate their overall experiences with the juvenile justice system, including impacts of their involvement. A summary of key findings and response data is available in Appendix B. A number of common themes and priorities emerged from PCCD’s stakeholder surveys, as shown in Figures 2 and 3 below.

*Figure 2: “Biggest Issues” Facing Communities*

- **Substance misuse, drug use, and related offenses** (50% of system practitioners, 54% of youth/family/community stakeholders) – *including smoking/vaping*
- **Gun violence and youth access to guns** (42% of system practitioners, 26% of youth/family/community stakeholders)
- **Violent crime, gang, and group-related violence** (42% of system practitioners, 24% of youth/family/community stakeholders)
- **Youth mental health, and responding to behavioral health needs/crises** (41% of system practitioners, 61% of youth/family/community stakeholders)

When asked about the biggest issues facing young people and communities today, many youth, families, and community stakeholders responding to the survey emphasized the ‘root causes’ of juvenile justice involvement, such as poverty (50%), hunger and food insecurity (39%), and homelessness and housing insecurity (35%). Many also pointed to school-related concerns, such as truancy and chronic absenteeism (48%) and school based-incidents like fights, bullying, and other classroom disruptions (47%) as significant issues. System practitioners focused heavily on system operation issues facing youth-serving systems, such as limited availability of secure detention beds (62%), workforce challenges (50%), lack of referral services and awareness of services (41%), and limited availability of community-based resources and programs (37%).

*Figure 3: Top Areas of Need Identified by Juvenile Justice Stakeholders*

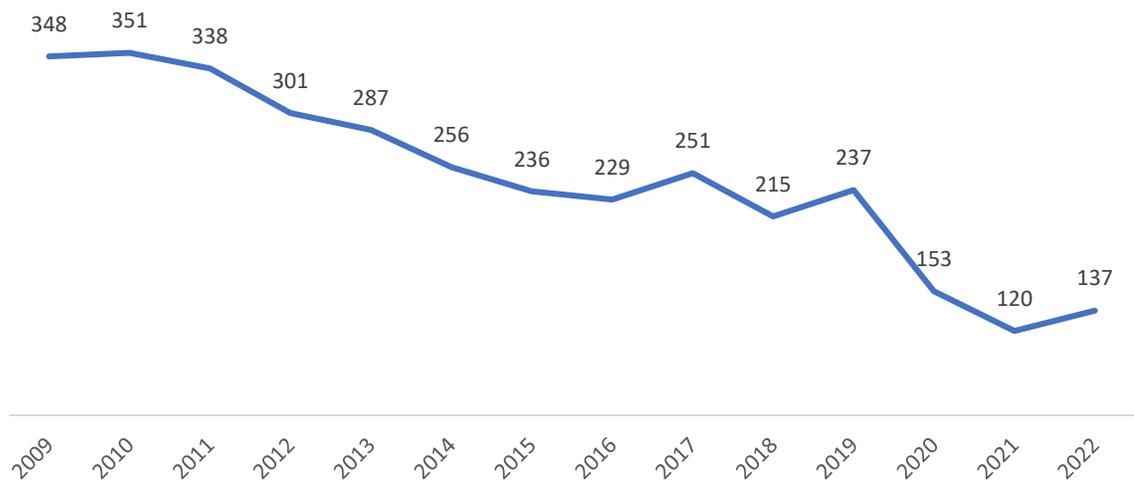
<b>System Practitioners</b>	<b>Youth/Families/Community Members</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure detention/residential treatment facility bed availability (57%)</li> <li>• Adequate staffing (33%)</li> <li>• Managing/referring youth with mental health needs (30%)</li> <li>• Gun violence prevention/reduction (18%)</li> <li>• Access to/availability of community services (17%)</li> <li>• Mental health/suicide prevention and intervention (16%)</li> <li>• Diversion programs (including school-based) (15%)</li> <li>• Violent crime reduction (12%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health/suicide prevention and intervention (60%)</li> <li>• ‘Safe spaces’ for youth to hang out, gather, and enjoy free time (53%)</li> <li>• Life skills (51%)</li> <li>• Positive youth development (49%)</li> <li>• Evidence-based programs (programs proven to be effective in reducing or preventing unhealthy behaviors in youth) (43%)</li> <li>• Career/vocational education (36%)</li> <li>• Alcohol and substance use disorder treatment and services (34%)</li> </ul>

## RECENT DATA & TRENDS

Over the past two decades, sustained investments and key reforms have resulted in improved community safety and accountability. As a result of these cross-system collaborative efforts and the increased adoption of evidence-based practices, the Commonwealth has seen steady and sustained decreases in the number of youth arrests, referrals, dispositions, and placements.

Rates of juvenile arrest for violent crimes have increased slightly in recent years, but remain at historic lows, according to JCJC data.<sup>1</sup> As shown in Figure 4 below, Pennsylvania's juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes decreased 72% between 2012 and 2021.

*Figure 4: Juvenile Arrest Rate (per 100,000) for Violent Crimes in PA, 2009-2022<sup>2</sup>*



As the Commonwealth and country emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, arrests increased 14% between 2021 and 2022. Delinquency-related allegations also rose 41% year-over-year, with delinquency-related placements ticking up slightly over 2021 levels (5% increase). These trends have largely been attributed to steep declines in juvenile justice allegations during the pandemic, with recent increases bringing the number of allegations closer to PA's pre-pandemic levels but may be cause for concern if the trend persists beyond 2022. In 2021, theft-related offenses (1,593) were the most frequently alleged offense category in juvenile delinquency dispositions, followed by non-payment of fines (1,377), simple assault (1,233), possession of drugs (1,083), weapons offense (754), aggravated assault (672), and sexual assault (577).<sup>3</sup>

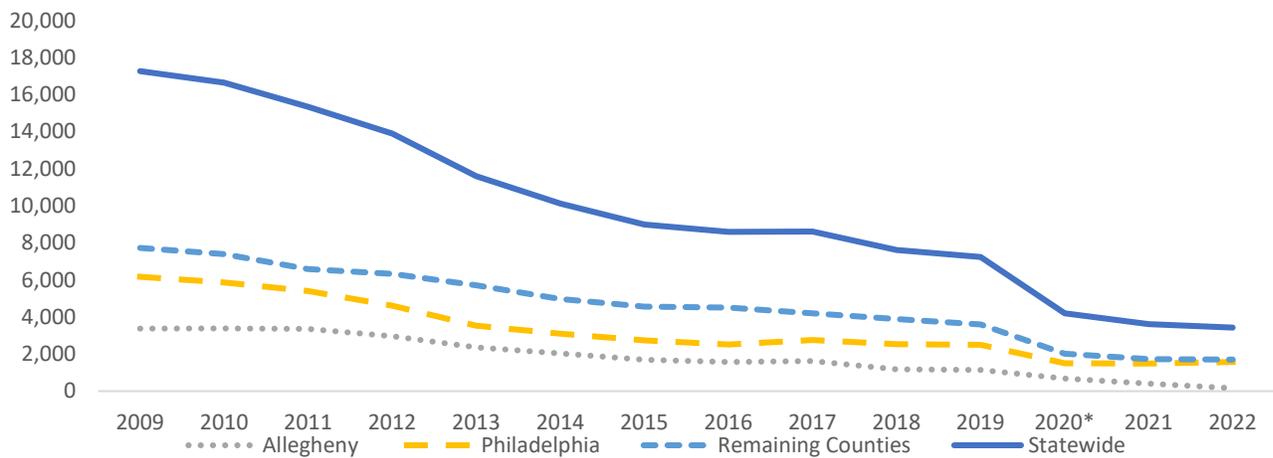
In addition, according to the JCJC:<sup>4</sup>

- Fewer youth are entering Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system compared to a decade ago, with 38% less referrals in 2022 compared to 2013.
- In 2022, the number of youth who received a juvenile justice disposition – similar to a “sentence” in the adult system – was 15% lower than the prior year, and 57% lower than levels in 2013-14.<sup>5</sup>

- The use of secure detention and residential placement as dispositions has decreased approximately 70% in the past decade, resulting in nearly \$156 million less in juvenile delinquency placement expenditures in FY 2021-22 compared to FY 2012-13.

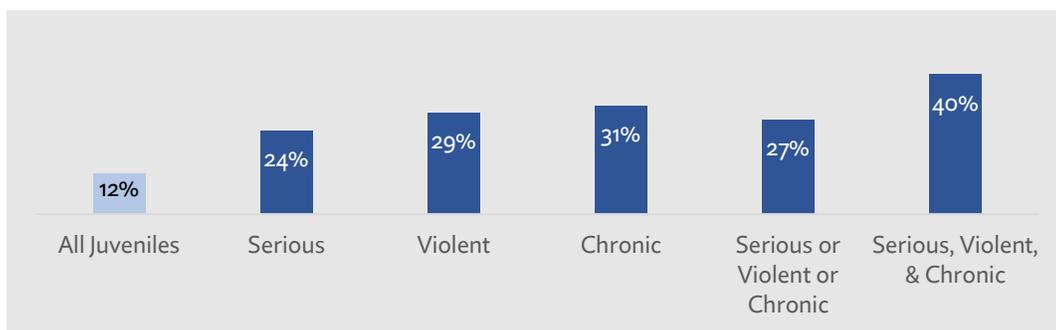
While there are still improvements needed to increase use of pre-arrest diversion,<sup>1</sup> through both policy and practice, Pennsylvania has worked to make diverting youth from detention through pre-adjudication practices the ‘norm’. Data shows Pennsylvania has largely been successful in that endeavor, with decades of declines in referrals and secure placements in Pennsylvania. According to the JCJC, there were 3,431 secure detention admissions in Pennsylvania in 2022 - a 75% decrease from 2012 (see Figure 5 below). According to the JCJC, secure placement dispositions accounted for 4.5% of all juvenile justice dispositions in 2022.

*Figure 5: Secure Detention Admissions (2009-2022)*



In addition, fewer youth are returning to the system after they leave it. Research from the JCJC found that in 2019, the state’s two-year recidivism rate was 11.7% - the lowest in recorded history. As shown in Figure 6, below, recidivism rates varied by types of offense; in general, juveniles who met criteria for being Serious, Violent, and/or Chronic recidivated at a higher rate than those who only met the less restrictive criteria of only one of those elements.<sup>6</sup>

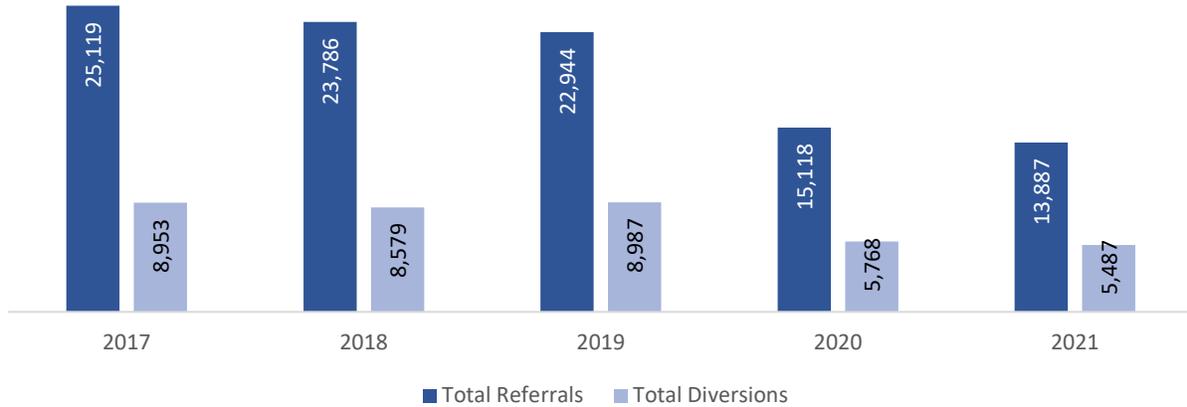
*Exhibit 6: Recidivism Rates Among Serious, Violent, and/or Chronic Youth Offenders (2019)<sup>7</sup>*



<sup>1</sup> See p. 14-15, as well as strategic priorities (#5 and #7) and recommendations (#3 and #7) for more information.

Importantly, Pennsylvania’s efforts have also focused on preventing young people from getting involved in the system in the first place. Today, more than three-quarters of all cases were diverted from formal court processing, including 86% of first-time juvenile offenders.<sup>8</sup>

*Figure 7: Pennsylvania 5-Year Referrals & Diversions (2017-2021)<sup>9</sup>*



Despite the significant investments and progress to date, Pennsylvania continues to face challenges and is at an important crossroads. This includes recent concerning trends that, if not addressed effectively, could persist into the longer-term.

## SYSTEMS IN CRISIS: THE NEED FOR URGENT ACTION

***“Every county, every judge that I’ve talked to has had those most serious cases where they have a kid who’s shot somebody, and then that kid is also a target because they shot someone, and we can’t put them in detention, and we can’t place them. And so, in our county, we’ve lost at least seven kids this year... When a kid dies, it should make you sit up and notice that.” – JJDPC member***

As described in the previous section, Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system has made significant progress over the past decade thanks to reforms, sustained investments, and the increased use of evidence-based practices. As a result of these welcomed outcomes, however, there have been unintended consequences. Like other states,<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system now faces a challenge of readiness and a moment of crisis. After years of declines in the number of dispositions and placements, a perfect storm of the COVID-19 pandemic, workforce challenges, complex cases, and facility closures have resulted in a critical juncture for Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system. By late 2022, state-run Youth Development Centers reached full capacity, with 166 youth awaiting placement, many having complex needs not fit for private or community-based solutions. More than a third of youth on the waitlist were assessed as high/very high risk, committing serious offenses (e.g., firearm-related offenses, robbery, or aggravated assault). As of November 2023, there were 106 youth awaiting placement in state-run facilities.

One of the most critical issues raised by JJDPC members regarding the current detention crisis was related to workforce shortages; while Pennsylvania has 513 available/licensed detention beds, limited staff means only 200 beds are available for youth. Members also cited challenges with private providers and increasing costs associated with liability insurance, leading to a growing reliance on state-funded/managed services to provide services and care for youth with complex needs. JJDPC members also noted the significant lack of resources for ‘difficult to serve’ youth and young adults, including unwillingness of many providers to take on certain youth, as well as long waitlists for community-based services.

Recent testimony<sup>11</sup> as well as information shared by JJDPC members during the strategic planning process suggests that limited access to secure placement beds in Pennsylvania – either from state-run facilities or more local private providers – has created serious safety concerns for youth and communities alike. In many cases, the placements of youth are driven less by individual needs and more by the services and resources that are – or, more often, are not – available in many communities. JJDPC members shared examples of situations in which placement decisions are made in part because “there are no other options for where to send kids.” These limited options have resulted in situations where youth safety may be compromised.

In the face of this urgent challenge, it is critical to develop a clear understanding of the issues facing the system and communities and recommend a path forward for change. To that end, this Plan offers some initial recommendations for actions the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can take and calls for the Shapiro-Davis Administration to support a more comprehensive assessment of these issues to develop a much-needed coordinated response.

## KEY ISSUES FACING PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES & THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

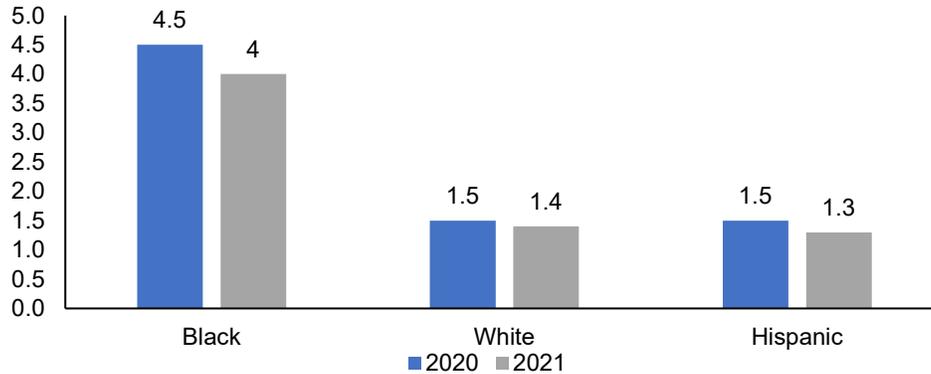
- **Pennsylvania faces a significant shortage of intensive treatment supports and secure placements for justice-involved youth, putting youth and community safety in jeopardy.** In Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system, secure detention and residential treatment facilities play an important role in providing structured environments for youth offenders, aiming to ensure public safety while also offering rehabilitative and therapeutic services. As rates of juvenile arrests and referrals plummeted and the juvenile justice system employed evidence-based strategies, use of secure detention also decreased significantly. Pennsylvania has also made significant inroads in ensuring that placement decisions are informed by individual factors and evidence-based criteria, such as those found in the PA Detention Risk Assessment (PaDRAI) screening instrument and case management tool, which is now used to inform the majority of youth detention admissions in the Commonwealth. However, as described in the previous ‘Systems in Crisis’ section, limited availability of treatment services and reluctance or inability of private providers to take on additional youth has resulted in significant gaps in care. The JCJC’s May 2023 report on [Pennsylvania’s Secure Detention Bed Gap Analysis](#) spotlighted a growing concern: many Pennsylvania counties are struggling with limited access to secure detention beds. This shortage stems from the closure of 15 detention facilities over the past five years due to decreased demand, staffing shortages, and other factors. Additionally, waitlists are expanding for residential placements, notably in state-run Youth Development Centers and Youth Forestry Camps. Federal shifts have also led to more “interest of justice” youth,<sup>ii</sup> traditionally held in adult jails, now occupying juvenile detention facilities, causing overcrowding and potentially unsafe conditions for youth and staff. Consequently, almost half of Pennsylvania’s counties cannot promptly accommodate youth in need of detention.<sup>12</sup>
- **Racial and ethnic disparities, among other equity concerns, persist within Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system.** The increasing use of pre-adjudication diversion as well as declines in arrests, referrals, and secure placements overall in Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system have not been felt equally. As shown in Figures 8 and 9 below, Black youth in Pennsylvania are still significantly more likely than White youth to be arrested, detained, confined, and transferred to adult court.<sup>iii</sup> Black youth make up only 14% of PA’s population but represent 37% of delinquency allegations, nearly a third of youth arrests, and 63% of secure detentions. Youth of color also face broader systemic inequities beyond the juvenile justice system and are more likely to live in communities with concentrated poverty and disinvestment. A recent report analyzing ‘shifting’ juvenile justice trends in Pennsylvania’s largest city, Philadelphia,

<sup>ii</sup> See Section 223(a)(11)B) of the federal JJDP Act.

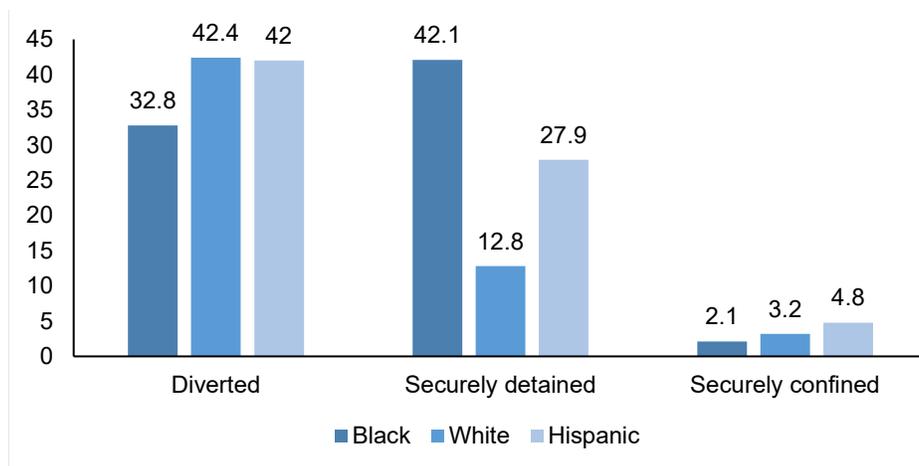
<sup>iii</sup> See Appendix A, Figure A.1 for detailed breakdown of these trends for 2020-2021.

found clear overlaps between places of concentrated poverty and youth justice involvement.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 8: Percent of Youth Population Arrested by Race/Ethnicity (2020-2021)<sup>14</sup>**



**Figure 9: Juvenile Justice System Referrals by Race/Ethnicity (2021)<sup>15</sup>**



- Youth mental and behavioral health needs are increasing, and community-based services are strained.** Post-pandemic, Pennsylvania has witnessed a surge in youth mental and behavioral health needs, exacerbated by the limited availability of community-based services. Recent data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) shows increasing levels of depression and other mental health concerns among middle and high school students; four in 10 students reported feeling depressed or sad most days in the past year, and the share of students reporting self-harm, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts has also increased in recent years. Amid escalating concerns, Pennsylvania’s youth face limited access to mental and behavioral health treatment resources. This shortage is even more pronounced for youth in the juvenile justice system, who might lack access to private treatment or reside in communities where suitable resources are scarce or unavailable. Research suggests justice-involved youth experience greater rates of mental illness and behavioral health issues compared with youth who are not system-involved,<sup>16</sup> and that many system-involved youth with these

issues have not been previously diagnosed or treated, creating gaps in care. In addition, there is a well-documented link between traumatic experiences and involvement with the justice system, and trauma histories among justice-involved youth can trigger the onset of behavioral health concerns.<sup>17</sup> PCCD's recent survey of juvenile justice practitioners and related professionals reinforced that addressing surging behavioral health needs among youth is one of the most urgent needs the Commonwealth faces. Managing/referring youth with mental health needs was identified as a top area of need by nearly a third of system practitioners (30%); system partners also identified mental health/suicide prevention and intervention as another area of concern (16%).

- **Gun violence and gun involvement significantly impact Pennsylvania youth, especially youth of color.** While overall levels of violence and delinquency among youth have steadily declined in recent decades, gun violence and gun involvement are growing problems that disproportionately impact young people – and especially young people of color. Gun violence has now surpassed car accidents as the leading cause of death among American children and youth.<sup>18</sup> A recent report published by PCCD found that Pennsylvania lost 1,151 children and young adults between the ages of 10 and 19 to gun violence between 2011 and 2020.<sup>19</sup> Recently published research has also linked exposure to gun violence among youth to significant physical, mental, and financial costs, as well as ‘ripple effects’ across entire communities.<sup>20</sup> Formerly detained youth also face heightened risk of gun violence victimization, reiterating the need to provide comprehensive support to young people as they return to their communities.<sup>21</sup>
- **Complex cases (e.g., youth with intersecting concerns, needs, and/or multiple system involvements) present a significant challenge to Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice and youth-serving systems.** Youth with complex cases<sup>iv</sup> often face intertwined challenges, with research indicating around two-thirds have one or more mental or behavioral health issues.<sup>22</sup> Many of these youth have encountered traumatic events<sup>23</sup> that may include sexual identity and gender expression issues and have ties to the child welfare system,<sup>v,24</sup> which, alongside their involvement in the juvenile justice system, creates a complex web of challenges for both youth and the supporting professionals.<sup>25</sup> To address this, comprehensive and coordinated efforts are essential for effective intervention, with action needed to ensure providers and other system partners have the capacity and oversight to adequately meet the cross-system needs of these youth, especially as many private sector providers are reluctant to accept such cases, often leaving state-operated Youth Development Centers as the sole recourse.

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<sup>iv</sup> Complex cases can include youth with developmental, social, cultural, emotional, behavioral, and/or physical health needs that often require services from more than one child-serving system (e.g., education, child welfare, juvenile justice, health care, etc.). This includes youth with mental/behavioral health diagnoses or substance use issues (or both). See DHS’ Bulletin (14-Bul-110) on [Complex Case Planning for Children and Youth Under Age 21](#) (April 6, 2021) for additional information.

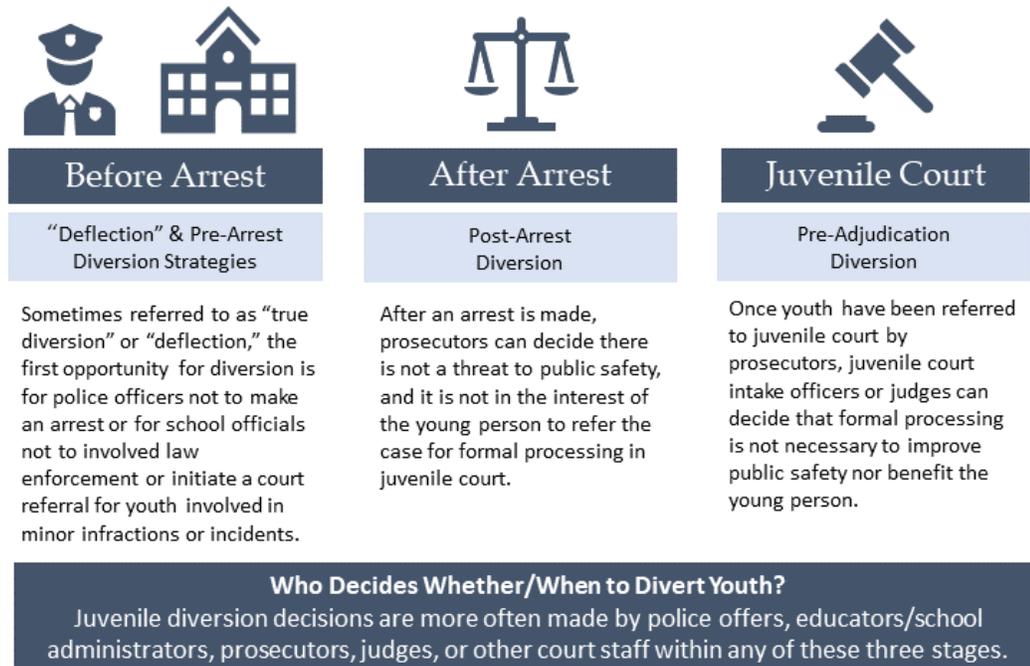
<sup>v</sup> 7% of survey respondents (stakeholder/practitioner feedback survey) identified “Dually involved youth (e.g., child welfare and justice system involved)” as a top area of need.

- **Despite overall use of pre-adjudication diversion increasing, pre-arrest diversion (including school-based diversion) remains underutilized.** Diversion from formal processing can significantly improve youth outcomes. A longitudinal study tracking more than 1,200 boys over five years who were arrested for “moderate severity” offenses like assault and theft found that “youth who were more formally processed during adolescence were more likely to be re-arrested, more likely to be incarcerated, engaged in more violence, reported a greater affiliation with delinquent peers, reported lower school enrollment, were less likely to graduate high school within five years, reported less ability to suppress aggression, and had lower perceptions of opportunities than informally processed youth.”<sup>26</sup> While overall use of pre-adjudication diversion programs has increased in recent years, and most youth are diverted from formal system involvement, levels of availability and use vary significantly from county to county.<sup>27</sup> For example, although 92% of youth in Pennsylvania who committed a first-time misdemeanor offense were diverted at the juvenile court level in 2022, county-specific pre-adjudication diversion rates ranged as low as 40-50% in some jurisdictions. Given the research demonstrating positive impacts of pre-arrest and ‘deflection’<sup>vi</sup> strategies on long-term youth outcomes, Pennsylvania could benefit from increased adoption of these approaches.<sup>28</sup> It is worth noting, however, that even in areas where there is interest in pre-arrest diversion strategies, limitations in local infrastructure and capacity (especially in rural communities) may hinder the ability to meaningfully adopt diversion and deflection strategies because community-based options are limited.

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<sup>vi</sup> “Deflection” is a type of pre-arrest diversion strategy that includes policies, practices, and programs designed to prevent youth arrest and subsequent court involvement and provide linkages to community-based resources, services, and supports for youth. See *Data-Driven Deflection: A Systems Approach to Reducing Juvenile Arrests*, R Street, June 2023.

Figure 10: Juvenile Justice Deflection & Diversion 'Steps'<sup>29</sup>



- School-based referrals continue to drive significant involvement with the juvenile justice system.** School-based referrals have been linked to increased involvement in the juvenile justice system, a phenomenon often referred to as the “school-to-prison pipeline.” This connection underscores the potential consequences of disciplinary policies in educational settings, where minor infractions can escalate to legal ramifications. Nearly one-third of juvenile delinquency allegations in Pennsylvania are for school-based incidents.<sup>30</sup> Pennsylvania also has one of the highest school-based arrest rates in the country.<sup>31</sup> In addition, while school-based diversion<sup>vii</sup> programs are a proven strategy for safely reducing school-based arrests and reducing recidivism rates, utilization of these programs in Pennsylvania remains limited.<sup>32, 33</sup>
- Counties have increasingly sought alternatives to secure placement, but these can come with unintended consequences.** More than 80% of juvenile justice system practitioners surveyed by PCCD said that electronic monitoring was available in their communities as an alternative to secure detention. Electronic monitoring aims to maintain community ties while ensuring public safety. However, various research studies have pointed out unintended consequences associated with the utilization of electronic monitoring in the juvenile justice realm, including stigmatizing and social isolation, concerns around invasion of privacy for monitored individuals and their families, as well as over-surveillance and “net widening.” Compliance challenges often abound, especially for youth with unstable living conditions or lack of adequate support

<sup>vii</sup> Diversion is a term used to describe intervention approaches that redirect youth away from formal processing in the juvenile justice system, while still holding them accountable for their actions.

systems; several respondents to PCCD's survey of system partners also cited cutting off GPS monitors as a frequent occurrence, including for youth with gun charges.

- **Pennsylvania's upstream prevention 'infrastructure' relies on a patchwork of limited and siloed funding sources and initiatives.** Decades of research show that evidence-based upstream prevention programs hold the potential to transform the lives of young people and their families, creating opportunities for healthier, more vibrant communities. PCCD has been a long-time investor in evidence-based prevention programs designed to address root causes of violence and delinquency among youth and to help young people meet their full potential. These evidence-based programs have proven impactful and cost-effective,<sup>34</sup> and can help bolster protective factors identified through sources like [PAYS](#).

## 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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*These strategic priorities underpin the recommendations made by the JJDPC to the Shapiro-Davis Administration. They will also guide and inform investments in programs and initiatives supported by the JJDPC over the next two years.*

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### **Strategic Priority #1: Elevate and center the voices and experiences of people most impacted by the juvenile justice system, including youth, families, and victims.**

One of the JJDPC's top priorities is the implementation of strategies and programming involving/led by community members with lived experience. The Committee has invested in efforts to engage with affected people and communities, especially youth and families with current/prior involvement within the juvenile justice system, as well as victims. This commitment focuses on ensuring voices are heard, addressing the holistic needs of youth and families, adopting healing-informed approaches, and enhancing public safety. As an example, Pennsylvania recently launched eight Youth Justice Advisory Boards (YJABs) statewide, emphasizing issues like the well-being of unhoused youth and human trafficking. YJABs help boost youth participation in statewide advisory groups, ensuring they shape policies. Additionally, PCCD and its partners champion models and practices that engage and support youth, including evidence-based programs and Youth/Law Enforcement Forums. Since its inception, the JJDPC's vision of 'Balanced and Restorative Justice' has also emphasized the equal role victims deserve in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system and the importance of considering the individuals who have experienced harm as part of the accountability process. It also reinforces the need to acknowledge harms caused by acts of violence and delinquency – both to victims as well as to communities. Accountability and healing require acknowledging these harms as a first step, and Pennsylvania's emphasis on 'Balanced and Restorative Justice' reinforces the important role youth, systems, and communities play in repairing those harms and helping to chart a path forward toward healing. As such, the JJDPC reaffirms its commitment to ensuring victims' voices and perspectives shape decision-making and programming (e.g., diversion, Youth Aid Panels, etc.).

### **Strategic Priority #2: Address the root causes and 'social determinants' of juvenile justice involvement.**

Juvenile justice involvement is rooted in broader systemic problems, including poverty, systemic racism, disinvestment in communities, and cycles of trauma and violence, among other factors. One of the common themes from surveys of stakeholders as well as discussions among JJDPC members was the lack of community resources and opportunity; many cited poverty, lack of affordable housing for families, food insecurity, lack of opportunity, and limited availability of resources and programs for youth in the community. In addition, the intersections between experiencing harm and inflicting harm on others are well-documented; it is often said that 'hurt people hurt people.' Decades of research have shown that exposure to violence and victimization among youth is one of the strongest predictors of juvenile

delinquency; youth victims are at high risk for further victimization and future offending, especially in the immediate aftermath of victimization.<sup>35</sup> This dynamic is sometimes referred to as the ‘victim-offender overlap’,<sup>36</sup> and it reaffirms the importance of taking trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches to accountability and restorative justice.

### **Strategic Priority #3: Ensure fairness and reduce racial and ethnic disparities within the juvenile justice system.**

Pennsylvania is dedicated to ensuring fairness in the juvenile justice system, with an enhanced focus on youth of color and youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning/queer, gender non-conforming, and transgender (LGBQ/GNCT) youth. The JJDP is required by federal law to identify strategies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities within Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system. This strategic planning effort and related initiatives has been championed by the Committee’s Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) Subcommittee since its establishment in 1990. The Pennsylvania Youth/Law Enforcement Corporation in Philadelphia is one example of an initiative supported by the JJDP and the R/ED Subcommittee to diminish racial disparities. It offers training to promote positive interactions between law enforcement and youth, aiming to reduce confrontations and unnecessary arrests. Additionally, the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform’s program provides training to local jurisdictions to address disparities in juvenile justice. Counties such as Allegheny, Chester, and Philadelphia have participated in this initiative, which has resulted in promising strategies explored and implemented through ‘Capstone Projects’ focused on deflection and diversion strategies, among other evidence-based practices that can advance racial equity within the youth legal system.<sup>viii</sup> In addition, the PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers has formed a “Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression” (SOGIE) Committee to standardize policies and procedures and increase access to supportive services to youth and families. The JJDP has also supported and recommended the development of comprehensive nondiscrimination policies and procedures around SOGIE to prevent harm and promote fair and equitable services for all youth who come into contact with Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system.

### **Strategic Priority #4: Strengthen Pennsylvania’s youth-serving workforce.**

For Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system and related youth-serving institutions and programs to meet their responsibilities, they need more tools in the toolbox to employ, train, and support excellent staff. Stakeholders engaged during the 2023 planning process frequently mention workforce issues as a top concern, citing “churn” as well as chronic/acute staffing shortages for key systems, including children and youth, juvenile justice, education, and law enforcement, among others. Workforce shortages have also exacerbated Pennsylvania’s secure detention and placement facility bed availability crisis, as described in the ‘Systems in Crisis’ section on page 12. Having a stable, well-supported workforce is also critical for meeting basic safety needs and responsibilities; improving oversight and accountability to ensure that youth-serving institutions, including juvenile detention centers and treatment or placement facilities, are

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<sup>viii</sup> You can learn more about these Capstone Projects in the [Advancing Racial Equity in Pennsylvania’s Legal System report](#), published in August 2023 by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University.

keeping youth in their care safe, healthy, and treated with respect requires attention and long-term investments in the professionals who work in these settings. Recognizing this urgent need, the JJRPC will prioritize efforts that can bolster the Commonwealth's youth-serving workforce, including supporting emerging models such as credible messenger mentoring programs, and working with partners to identify key barriers and potential solutions for the short- and long-term. (See Recommendation #2, pages 24-25 for more information.)

**Strategic Priority #5: Increase access to a full continuum of care for youth at risk of or already involved in the juvenile justice system.**

***“When our youth and young adults struggle, they are often otherized and categorized. This is the time to wrap SUPPORTS around our youth and not simply label them as their behaviors and pushed further into a broken system.”*** –

*Youth/Family/Community Member, survey respondent comment*

Many stakeholders pointed to evidence of overwhelmed and strained systems – from shortages and waitlists for mental/behavioral health providers to the limited availability of placement options for youth who need more intensive treatment and/or supervision. In addition, many cited family/home dynamics as a driving force for juvenile justice system involvement (initial or continued), raising issues like child abuse/neglect, substance use, and domestic violence. Investing in efforts to build and sustain a full continuum of supports for young people – from upstream prevention programs that build protective factors to diversion and intervention strategies that can prevent youth from moving deeper into the system – would increase options available to both youth and their families/caretakers, as well as practitioners working within the juvenile justice system. A thoughtful, deliberate, and well-resourced approach is needed, however, to make this coordinated approach a reality. System practitioners surveyed by PCCD indicated that training on collaboration with other departments and agencies (e.g., open communications, data sharing) was one of the most important/beneficial training topics needed (43%). Coordinated efforts within the juvenile justice system can also foster a more positive perception of fairness and legitimacy by streamlining processes, reducing confusion, and enhancing the overall experience of justice-involved youth and their families. As described in Recommendation #3 (pages 26-28), these efforts should focus on:

- Addressing substance use and behavioral and mental health needs of youth (including prevention, crisis management/referrals).
- Supporting community-based services prior to court intervention.
- Reducing reliance on deeper system involvement to access resources (e.g., treatment, etc.) by providing access to services instead of incarceration (drug and alcohol services, behavioral/mental health supports, life skills, etc.).

**Strategic Priority #6: Prevent and reduce youth gun involvement and gun violence.**

Gun violence has surpassed car accidents as the leading cause of death among American children and youth.<sup>37</sup> Between 2011 and 2020, Pennsylvania lost 1,151 adolescents and teens

between the ages of 10 and 19 to gun violence.<sup>38</sup> During a similar time period, 2,169 youth and adolescents were treated for firearm-related injuries in Pennsylvania hospitals.<sup>39</sup> Experiencing or witnessing gun violence can have significant and far-reaching ripple effects for young people. Research shows that children exposed to gun violence often experience negative short- and long-term psychological effects, such as anger, post-traumatic stress, withdrawal, and desensitization to violence – all of which can fuel a continuing cycle of violence.<sup>40</sup> Research examining gun carrying patterns among adolescents found that gun carrying is more common among Black youth in large urban cities, and that more than half of justice-involved youth have carried a firearm in their lifetime.<sup>41</sup> Members of the JJDPC as well as stakeholders engaged through the 2023 planning process consistently pointed to increasing gun violence victimization as well as easy access to firearms as a top concern threatening the well-being and safety of Pennsylvania’s youth and communities. As such, the JJDPC has identified preventing and reducing youth gun violence and gun involvement as a strategic priority for the next two years.

### **Strategic Priority #7: Reduce the number of youth with low-level cases driven further into the juvenile justice system.**

The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Task Force’s [report](#) revealed that most youth in the system have minimal delinquency history, haven’t committed serious offenses, and pose a low reoffending risk. Yet, due to inconsistent criteria in responding to youth behavior based on offense or prior history, many with low-level cases end up on probation or in residential placement. It was reported that according to 2018 data, many low-level cases end up on probation (43%) or in residential placement (59%) with 39% having committed offenses against persons. Since the release of the task force report, 2022 data reveals slight reductions have occurred with low-level cases placed on probation (39%) or into residential placements (53%) with 40% having committed offenses against persons. Technical supervision violations often push these youth deeper into the system. In addition, lack of pre-arrest diversion programs in some jurisdictions, including school-based diversion programs, further exacerbate this challenge. The JJDPC has consistently championed adoption of diversion and deflection strategies at the local level and will continue to support efforts to increase availability of these programs across Pennsylvania.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SHAPIRO-DAVIS ADMINISTRATION

**Recommendation #1:** Champion historic investments in upstream prevention, intervention, and engagement strategies that can pay dividends for Pennsylvania’s future.

*“If you build a solid continuum of care – starting with upstream prevention – you won’t need [further intervention].” – JJDP member*

*Why Is This Recommendation Needed?* As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Decades of research highlight the importance of a supportive and safe environment for preventing youth violence and delinquency. Despite the unchanged core principles, the emergence of social media, fast-evolving technology, and shifting cultural norms have significantly altered the landscape of delivering prevention and intervention programs compared to just a few years ago. As Pennsylvania navigates these tectonic shifts and growing needs, the Shapiro-Davis Administration can play an important role in making effective, relevant early prevention programs more accessible across the state. This includes an opportunity to support and sustain historic investments in proven and emerging strategies that better position youth, families, and communities to succeed.

### *Recommended Actions:*

- **Budget:** The Governor should propose an unprecedented \$50 million in a new “Youth Prevention & Engagement” line item within PCCD’s budget. This new line item would replace the longstanding Violence and Delinquency Prevention Programs (VDPP) line item as well as consolidating other state funding streams focused on prevention (e.g., Substance Abuse Education and Demand Reduction/SAEDR), to accelerate implementation of a wide range of evidence-based strategies designed to bolster protective factors and help youth reach their full potential – from mentoring (including credible messenger mentoring and peer mentoring approaches) to [out-of-school-time programs](#) to pre-arrest deflection and diversion programs to interventions focused on reducing substance use initiation and other risk factors. This investment would be the largest in PCCD’s history and would serve as a vital ‘down payment’ for Pennsylvania’s next generation.
- **Policy:** Direct state agencies (e.g., PDE, DDAP, DHS, DCED, etc.) to identify opportunities to utilize guidance, regulations, funding priorities, grant agreements, and other policy levers to increase adoption of evidence-based prevention programs in schools and communities across the Commonwealth.
- **Data/Research:** Dedicate a portion (5%) of appropriated “Youth Prevention & Engagement” funding to invest in rigorous evaluation and research of upstream prevention programs that can help state and local leaders understand what really works, ideally in a timeframe that also allows those insights to guide decisions and action. These investments should also seek to elevate youth voice and experience to ensure that programs are designed, delivered, and assessed with active input and direction from those they intend to serve.

**Recommendation #2:** Address chronic workforce challenges in the juvenile justice system by developing a new comprehensive strategy to address system staffing needs.

*Why Is This Recommendation Needed?* Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system, like other youth-serving systems, has experienced chronic workforce challenges, including structural and administrative barriers to staff hiring and retention. A third (33%) of system practitioners surveyed by PCCD identified “Adequate staffing” as a top need/priority for the juvenile justice system (#2 ranked need for practitioners). Employee wellness and safety was also identified as an area of concern/priority (9%).

These longstanding challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic’s impacts, as well as Pennsylvania’s funding mechanisms for youth-serving agencies, including private providers who serve most justice-involved youth in the state.<sup>ix</sup> During strategic planning discussions, JJDP members noted that many private providers refuse to accept justice-involved youth (especially complex cases), in part because the costs to effectively serve them have grown, while the state’s reimbursement rate for costs associated with these services has remained stagnant. Pennsylvania’s reimbursement rates for secure detention and residential treatment programs have not changed in more than five decades. Currently, the state provides 50% reimbursement to providers for costs incurred by secure detention admissions and 60% reimbursement for residential treatment placements. This low reimbursement rate hinders the ability of community providers to hire and retain adequate staff throughout the system. Youth, families, and counties are left in a holding pattern waiting for state beds as the only viable pathway for meeting intensive case management, treatment, and other services. These dynamics have also exacerbated availability of treatment services (including those offered through residential treatment facilities) for youth in need of more intensive care.

In addition, the types of roles found within the juvenile justice system has evolved in recent years, including the emergence of new models like credible messenger mentoring and other promising approaches designed to improve outcomes for justice-involved youth.<sup>42</sup> These new models move beyond traditional conceptions of the juvenile justice ‘workforce’ by pairing specially trained adult mentors who have similar life experiences (“credible messengers”) with young people in the juvenile justice system. These practices could be expanded in Pennsylvania with investments and support and should be considered as part of an examination of the broader workforce landscape and needs.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

- **Policy:** To address these unprecedented challenges, Pennsylvania needs a new, comprehensive statewide workforce development strategy for the juvenile justice system and related youth-serving sectors.<sup>43</sup> To that end, the Governor should direct Pennsylvania’s Workforce Development Board (WDB) and other relevant agencies and offices to support the JJDP in developing a plan for long-term transformation

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<sup>ix</sup> Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system relies heavily on private facilities compared with other states across the country and have fairly wide latitude in what youth they can accept for placements. See [Transforming Justice: Bringing Pennsylvania’s Young People Safely Home from Juvenile Justice Placements](#), Juvenile Law Center (2019).

of the Commonwealth's juvenile justice workforce. Since Pennsylvania's WDB is [charged](#) with examining and implementing strategies designed to improve workforce outcomes for Pennsylvanians, including youth and individuals who face barriers to employment (including justice involvement), it is uniquely situated to provide a neutral and data-driven examination of the system's needs.

This comprehensive plan should identify relevant data, policies, programs, funding, and other strategies needed to:

- Explore increasing rates of reimbursement as an option to help ensure that staff can be compensated competitively and appropriately for their work, potentially alleviating the workforce recruitment and retention issues currently challenging the system.
- Identify workforce needs for other youth-serving roles in the juvenile justice system (e.g., credible messenger mentors), including guiding principles for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals in these roles.<sup>44</sup>
- Modernize and standardize salaries, qualifications, and administrative hiring and compensation requirements across youth justice and family serving agencies to ensure positions are competitive and commensurate with job requirements.
- Conduct a market analysis to compare current juvenile justice staff salaries to jobs that require similar experience and expertise, as well as identify sectors that are currently 'competing' with the juvenile justice system.
- Evaluate 'time to hire' for posted positions, including current vacancy rates, time to fill, and other barriers to employing qualified and interested individuals.
- Evaluate opportunities to improve career readiness and opportunities for justice-involved youth.
- Identify strategies to fund necessary staff supports, including staff wellness, professional development and support, etc.
- Recommend strategies to eliminate barriers to employment for individuals seeking employment in the juvenile justice system and/or related youth/family-serving sectors.
- Identify strategies to improve recruitment and retention within the juvenile justice system, including promoting awareness of the benefits of these careers.
- Identify recommendations to improve data collection, analysis, reporting, and accountability related to hiring, retention, and other workforce related trends for the juvenile justice system.
- Recommend strategies to promote staff wellness, including mechanisms to improve responses to potential safety or related concerns.

**Recommendation #3** Make a call to action directing the JJDC to develop a ‘whole of government’ and community-informed statewide action plan for addressing the urgent crises facing the juvenile justice system, including supporting at-risk and justice-involved youth along an equitable continuum of care and opportunity.

**“The state needs to commit to addressing these collective issues through legislation, regulation, funding, and other mechanisms that provide communities the support they need. We need a sustained, strategic investment in programs that are addressing these issues.” – JJDC member**

**Why Is This Recommendation Needed?** Pennsylvania has a strong track record of reflecting on the policies and practices of the juvenile justice system and related areas to determine if they are aligned with research and best practices. This included the creation of the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy, born from the recognition that it was necessary to adapt practices to become more effective at achieving the goals of ‘Balanced and Restorative Justice.’<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 11: Continuum of Care and Opportunity for Youth<sup>x</sup>**



Enhancing coordination among youth-serving systems at both the state and local levels is essential for improving outcomes for young people and their families, as well as for victims and communities that have experienced harm. While adoption of evidence-based practices has

<sup>x</sup> [Promoting a New Direction for Youth Justice: Strategies to Fund a Community-Based Continuum of Care and Opportunity](#), Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, March 2019.

become fairly standardized within Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system, these have not necessarily encapsulated the broader ecosystem of mental health, substance use, public health, housing, education, workforce, etc. These practices must also adapt to evolving risk factors, and ideally should be addressed together by these interrelated systems. This includes a continued need to inform and involve victims as part of efforts to improve the juvenile justice system, especially in the wake of recent increases in youth victimization. The growing mental and behavioral health needs of youth coupled with strains on youth-serving systems point to a need for ecosystem partners to work together to improve system implementation readiness and providing services across a continuum of care and opportunity for youth (see Figure 11 on page 26) while reinforcing the tenets of accountability and victim restoration enshrined in Pennsylvania’s ‘Balanced and Restorative Justice’ framework.

In addition, as described previously in this Plan, Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system is facing a moment of significant pressure – from acute workforce shortages to limited options available within many communities for meeting youth needs.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

The Governor should direct the JJDPC to develop a ‘whole of government’ approach and community-informed blueprint to address these urgent challenges, and to support youth, families, and communities, with a focus on providing an equitable continuum of care for at-risk and system-involved youth. This directive should also task state agencies with sharing information and data at key points across the Sequential Intercept Model<sup>xi</sup> and aligned with Pennsylvania’s JJSES Framework (see Figure 1) that can trigger or deepen juvenile justice system involvement, as well as supporting the overall development of this plan.

With support from designated state agencies (e.g., DHS, PDE, JCJC, etc.), the JJDPC would be responsible for developing consensus-based policy, programmatic, and funding recommendations within one year for consideration by the Governor and Lt. Governor focused on the following areas:

- Direct the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board to work with the JJDPC to analyze the current state of the juvenile justice system’s workforce needs and make recommendations for improving recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion. (See Recommendation #2 for additional information.)
- Conducting an inventory of gaps in programs and services necessary to build a continuum of care and opportunity for youth, with a focus on youth who are at risk of or currently involved with the juvenile justice system, as well as youth who have experienced victimization.<sup>xii</sup>

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<sup>xi</sup> **Note:** While the Sequential Intercept Model’s design and application has primarily been within the adult criminal justice system, it offers a relevant and useful lens for assessing how young people come in and out of contact with the juvenile justice system, and ways to consider the specific needs of justice-involved youth at specific ‘intercepts’ or ‘touchpoints’ along a continuum.

<sup>xii</sup> **Note:** This echoes a unanimously supported recommendation (#4) of the [PA Juvenile Justice Task Force](#).

- Develop recommendations to improve the funding and regulatory structure to alleviate current ‘pressure points’ and support the quality and breadth of private providers who play a critical role in delivering services in the juvenile justice system. This should include an examination of ways to improve and streamline monitoring and oversight of licensed facilities to reduce duplication and burden, as well as strategies to improve staff recruitment, hiring, and retention practices.
- ‘Mapping’ of programs, policies, funding, and other resources/services currently available at each point of this continuum, aligned with points along the Sequential Intercept Model and JJSES Framework, including an assessment of diversion practices at each ‘step’ of the system (see Figure 10 on page 17).
- Identify key data points for tracking and monitoring progress related to youth needs and drivers of justice involvement, including the intersections between youth victimization and youth offending.
- Explore strategies to enhance coordination between victim services and juvenile justice practitioners, with a goal of ensuring accountability, increasing transparency, and promoting healing for victims and communities.
- Continue to build on current efforts to reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) with increased access to culturally responsive programming.
- Recommending a comprehensive funding strategy (including training/TA and capacity building supports) that commits resources to critical services and transformative programs for consideration by the JJDPC for inclusion in the *2025 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan to the Governor*.
- Revisit mechanisms to reinvest savings in community-based alternatives and evidence-based practices, including expansion of nonresidential services to address young people’s needs without referring them to the juvenile justice system in order to get those services.
- Development of specific recommendations and action steps to increase availability of alternatives to secure detention in Pennsylvania communities beyond electronic monitoring, in-home confinement, and intensive community supervision to include after-school/out-of-school-time programs for at-risk youth as well as day treatment services (programs that allow youth to reside at home and attend daily).<sup>xiii</sup>
- Explore and recommend data sharing mechanisms across state agencies (human services, education, public safety, health, etc.), including examination of available demographic data, and development of tools/resources that can inform ongoing decision-making.

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<sup>xiii</sup> A significant majority of system practitioners responding to PCCD’s stakeholder survey indicated availability of electronic monitoring (83%), in-home confinement (55%), and intensive community supervision (45%) as alternatives to secure detention. Only a quarter (26%) said after-school/out-of-school-time programs were available for at-risk youth in their community, and only a fifth (21%) indicated availability of day treatment programs.

**Recommendation #4:** To address the current crisis and prevent others in the future, evaluate the Commonwealth’s short and long-term needs related to residential treatment and detention centers and take steps to expand availability of high-quality nonresidential alternatives.

*Why Is This Recommendation Needed?* Despite the preference to use less restrictive options, there are times when secure detention facilities are necessary. When such facilities are needed, they should be of high quality and close to a young person’s community. However, as described earlier, many Pennsylvania jurisdictions are seeing a decrease in available detention beds. Even when beds are available, the facility may be far away, making it harder for juveniles to connect with their lawyers, families, schools, and community services. As of April 2023, only 13 facilities are providing secure detention services in Pennsylvania.<sup>46</sup> The majority (57%) of system practitioners surveyed by PCCD identified availability of secure detention and residential treatment facility beds as a top priority/area of need.

**Recommended Actions:**

- **Policy:** Direct the JJDPCC to assess actual needs as well as current capacity for out of home beds to ensure that investments are ‘right sized’ and do not lead to overreliance, as well as ongoing monitoring of secure detention and residential bed capacity. Ensure use of residential placement or detention admission is reserved for young people who pose the most serious risk to community safety.
- **Funding:** Increase availability and utilization of diversion to prevent youth from moving further into the system by making a significant investment in community-based diversion programs and alternatives to incarceration for youth.

**Recommendation #5:** Increase resources for oversight and monitoring to ensure the safety of youth and staff in Pennsylvania’s residential and detention facilities, and overall system accountability.

*Why Is This Recommendation Needed?* Ensuring the safety of youth and staff in residential and detention facilities must be a top priority. While Pennsylvania has made important progress in recent years, high-profile incidents of violence, abuse, and mistreatment within facilities, as well as security breaches, indicate a need for increased oversight, monitoring, and resources within the juvenile justice system. When incidents occur in facilities, local children and youth service agencies are tasked with responding and investigating. State regulations also require annual inspections of licensed facilities by DHS/OCYF (55 Pa. Code §3800.4). However, Pennsylvania currently lacks a centralized mechanism to track and respond to incident reports, which could be used to proactively monitor and address potentially unsafe or abusive conditions.

Improved oversight, monitoring, and technical assistance will help to ensure overall system accountability and that every young person placed in custody is safe, treated fairly and effectively, and receives a quality education. The Commonwealth should take steps to adopt more rigorous monitoring policies and procedures for juvenile detention and residential

facilities, as well as dedicate necessary resources to implement these practices statewide. These increased resources, coupled with standardized practices to reduce the number of youth referred to secure detention (see Recommendation #8, page 28), will close critical gaps that result from a current lack of centralized oversight and monitoring practices at the state level.

**Recommended Actions:**

- **Policy:** The JCJC, in partnership with DHS, PDE, and PCCD, should develop more proactive monitoring of juvenile detention and residential facilities. The goal of this monitoring policy would be to prevent more serious incidents in facilities by consistently monitoring facility incident reports, identifying any negative data trends, and taking corrective action as necessary (including providing technical assistance supports). The adopted monitoring and technical assistance policy should account for existing oversight procedures already in place (e.g., licensing inspections, etc.) to prevent duplication and unnecessary burdens for facilities as well as ensure efficient use of resources.
- **Funding:** The Governor should propose investing an additional \$2 million in the state budget to increase the JCJC’s complement in order to carry out the recommended policy action (FY 2023-24 appropriation for the JCJC was \$3,152,000).

**Recommendation #6:** Develop and invest in youth-informed/co-developed strategies to prevent and reduce gun involvement and gun violence.

***“Kids with gun possession can get crushed by the system – it stays with them for a long time.” – JJDPC member***

**Why Is This Recommendation Needed?** Research has shown that adolescents who carry firearms and/or experience gun violence victimization are significantly more likely to perpetrate firearm violence into adulthood.<sup>47</sup> This cycle of gun involvement and gun violence was identified by JJDPC members as well as stakeholders as one of the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system and broader communities: 18% of system practitioners surveyed by PCCD identified gun violence as one of the top areas of concern/need/priority for the juvenile justice system. JJDPC members noted that there should be more effort to understand how and why youth get access to guns in the first place. Members shared themes from recent discussions with youth/young adults who were involved in the system with gun-related charges on motivations for gun possession, such as protection, clout, and revenge/retaliation. In addition to a comprehensive plan to address gun violence as a whole, the Shapiro-Davis Administration can seek input from youth to inform a ‘blueprint’ for reducing gun involvement among youth and young adults under the age of 24.

**Recommended Actions:**

- **Funding:** Continue to champion state investments in programs like the Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grants, which have supported a wide range of

strategies and programming to prevent and reduce gun involvement among at-risk youth. This should include a continued commitment to coordination and collaboration between system partners and youth-serving organizations (e.g., require or incentivize through funding announcements or other criteria). The Administration should also continue to advocate for and support increased resources for victims' services and compensation, including championing necessary changes to federal and state funding mechanisms.

- **Policy:** The Shapiro-Davis Administration should spearhead the development of a comprehensive youth gun involvement and violence reduction plan for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Develop forums for hearing from youth directly on motivations for gun possession, then identify recommendations and strategies responsive to those findings to drive out investments, programming, policy, etc. centered on the main drivers of youth gun involvement.
- **Data/Research:** Direct the JJDPDC to examine youth involvement in the juvenile justice system who have gun-related charges. This should include supporting research exploring the major correlates of youth gun involvement and sources of supply, as well as the motivations for gun possession.

**Recommendation #7:** Direct relevant state agencies to implement and evaluate pre-arrest and school-based diversion programs as well as other promising strategies to reduce referrals to the juvenile justice system.

*Why Is This Recommendation Needed?* School-based diversion programs have demonstrated significant promise in keeping students in school, addressing and preventing future problematic behaviors, and preventing youth from becoming formally involved in the juvenile justice system. When implemented with fidelity, and with care to include the voices and perspectives of victims/survivors, diversion programs can promote restorative justice and prevent further harm. This includes school-based diversion efforts in Pennsylvania, such as the Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program, which has resulted in positive outcomes for youth as well as cost savings compared with more traditional school-based arrest practices.<sup>48</sup> Despite these promising impacts, adoption of school-based diversion programs has been limited in Pennsylvania's school entities and communities. In a survey of system practitioners conducted by PCCD, 15% of respondents identified diversion programs (including school-based) as one of the top areas of need.

**Recommended Actions:**

- **Funding:** Direct agencies to leverage available state and federal funding streams (e.g., Every Student Succeeds Act [Title I, Part D funds](#), etc.) to support implementation and/or evaluation of school-based diversion programs and other efforts to coordinate referrals to school- and/or community-based services and resources as an alternative to formal processing within the juvenile justice system. These programs should prioritize use of evidence-based practices as well as align with the tenets of the 'Balanced and Restorative Justice' framework, including

ensuring victims' needs and perspectives are considered as part of accountability and restorative practices.

- **Policy:** Revisit Chapter 10 (Safe Schools) regulations and related sections of the School Code to determine whether incidents should be reported to law enforcement, as well as other relevant and appropriate policy changes to reduce unnecessary involvement in the juvenile justice system.
- **Data/Research:** Invest in research/evaluation of deflection, pre-arrest, and school-based diversion initiatives to determine impacts of these programs on student, school, and community outcomes (including potential cost savings). Pursue strategies to improve the availability and quality of data related to pre-arrest diversion programs in the Commonwealth in partnership with JCJC and other key stakeholders. Direct PDE and PCCD's School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) to monitor and track data on referrals to school-based diversion programs (including those supported with state and federal grants), as well as relevant data related to school-based incidents, arrests, etc. Examine data and relevant outcomes for youth in Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) programs, including data on school-based referrals to these programs as well as intersections between referral of students to AEDY programs and future/deeper juvenile justice system involvement.

**Recommendation #8:** Increase investments in juvenile probation and standardize use of evidence-based screening instruments and case management tools as a condition of funding.

*Why Is This Recommendation Needed?* The JCJC's Juvenile Probation Services (also known as "grant-in-aid" funding) is the state appropriation that has been most critical to the early success of Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy, and the evidence-based practice conditions of this grant program will be critical to the future success of the initiative. Pennsylvania's county grant-in-aid program received an \$18.9 million state appropriation in the FY 2023-24 budget; this line item has remained level funded for more than a decade. Increased state investments are needed to enable the JCJC to provide the resources, training, and technical assistance needed by juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments, and to expedite JJSES-related program evaluation, enhancement, and research.

In addition, Pennsylvania has taken steps to standardize processes within the juvenile justice system to improve outcomes and alignment with evidence-based practices.

**Figure 12: Youth Level Service Domain and Risk/Need Factor Examples**

Domain	Example of Risk/Need Factor
Prior and Current Offenses	Prior Probation
Family Circumstances and Parenting	Inadequate Supervision
Education and Employment	Disruptive Classroom Behavior
Peer Relations	Few Positive Friends
Substance Abuse	Chronic Drug Use
Leisure and Recreation	Limited Organized Activities
Attitude and Orientation	Defies Authority
Personality and Behavior	Physically Aggressive

As an example, all county juvenile probation offices in Pennsylvania are required to utilize the [Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory \(YLS/CMI\)](#) risk/needs assessment and case management tool. YLS/CMI is used by juvenile probation departments to help determine the appropriate level of supervision for youth, establish case plan goals, and better allocate resources to achieve effective outcomes for youth and their families. During strategic planning discussions, some JJDP members noted that while the YLS/CMI tool has had positive impacts, sometimes the results of the YLS do not accompany juveniles to facilities, creating gaps in information and supports.

Most – but not all – Pennsylvania counties utilize the Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI) – a tool used to guide decision making about youth placement (e.g., release, alternative to detention, diversion) prior to a hearing. PaDRAI provides for three detention/supervision recommendations based on a youth’s cumulative risk score: Release (low risk), Alternative to Detention (moderate risk), and Secure Detention (high risk).

Increasing investments in juvenile probation services – coupled with standardizing use of screening, assessment, and structured decision-making – can potentially reduce restrictive placements and improve practices in juvenile probation.<sup>49</sup>

**Recommended Actions:**

- **Funding:** The Governor should propose a \$10 million increase for the Juvenile Probation Services line item (for a total of \$28,945,000) in the FY 2024-25 state budget to further enhance training and professionalism, improve the quality of services provided to youth, and ultimately reduce recidivism. These efforts would complement the Governor’s recent call for increased investments in adult probation services as part of the FY 2023-24 budget.
- **Policy:** The JCJC should require the use of the PaDRAI by all counties in Pennsylvania as a condition of receiving state funds. The JCJC should also ensure that statewide validation studies and a review of quality assurance protocols for screening and assessment instruments are conducted every 4-5 years.
- **Data/Research:** Explore the feasibility of establishing pre-arrest diversion programs in Pennsylvania jurisdictions where these programs are currently unavailable. Examine

current ‘rates’ at which YLS and PaDRAI are utilized with fidelity and identify potential opportunities to improve consistent use of these tools.

**Recommendation #9:** Direct the JJDPCC to examine potential adoption of “raise-the-age” policies to align Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system with the latest research on brain development and the potential for rehabilitation among young adults.

*Why Is This Recommendation Needed?* There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that youth and young adults are more likely to engage in risky behavior because the human brain continues to develop and mature well into the 20s. There is a growing movement to reconsider and examine the parameters of juvenile court jurisdiction to increase the upper age boundary, commonly referred to as “raise-the-age” policies.<sup>50,51</sup> These policies aim to better meet the developmental needs of young people by establishing age boundaries of the juvenile justice system to developmentally appropriate levels. A handful of states<sup>52</sup> have considered or adopted increases to the age threshold for juvenile delinquency offenses. Currently, Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system deals with children and youth whose offenses occur between the ages of 10 to 18 years old; supervision of justice-involved youth can continue until age 21.<sup>53</sup> Further, approximately 5% of the state’s adult prison population is under 25 years of age.<sup>54</sup>

***Recommended Actions:***

The Governor should direct the JJDPCC to examine “raise-the-age” policies adopted in other states, including: 1) raising the maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction above 18 years; 2) raising the “floor” (minimum age) at which a young person can be processed through juvenile courts; and 3) updating transfer laws limiting the extent to which youth and young adults can be prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system. This analysis should take into account any increased resources or capacity that would be necessary to provide ‘coverage’ for expanding an already strained juvenile justice system, including steps that other states have taken in this regard. The JJDPCC would be tasked with analyzing available data, engaging relevant stakeholders, and sharing findings and recommendations with the Governor’s Office within a year.

## APPENDIX A: Additional Data Tables & Figures

Figure A.1: Arrests, Diversions, Secure Detention, Secure Confinement & Adult Transfer in PA by Race/Ethnicity (2020-2021)

	Total Youth Population *	% of Total Population	Arrests <sup>14</sup>	% of Population Arrested	Referrals to Court	% of Arrested Youth Referred to Court	Diversions**	% of Referred Youth Diverted	Secure Detention	% of Referred Youth Detained	Youth Petitioned to Court	% of Referred Youth Petitioned to Court	Youth Found to be Delinquent	% of Youth Petitioned to Court Found to be Delinquent	Secure Confinement	% of Delinquent Youth Securely Confined	Adult Transfer	% of Petitioned Youth Transferred to Adult Court
2021 Total	1,362,936		20,661	1.5%	13,887	67.2%	8,064	58.1%	3,612	26.0%	8,400	60.5%	3,115	37.1%	98	3.1%	41	0.5%
2021 White	842,568	69.5%	11,831	1.4%	6,310	53.3%	4,263	67.6%	809	12.8%	3,607	57.2%	1,394	38.6%	44	3.2%	15	0.4%
2021 Black	168,360	13.9%	6,679	4.0%	5,211	78.0%	2,326	44.6%	2,196	42.1%	3,502	67.2%	1,195	34.1%	25	2.1%	20	0.6%
2021 Hispanic	155,485	12.8%	2,005	1.3%	1,733	86.4%	1,030	59.4%	484	27.9%	1,006	58.0%	399	39.7%	19	4.8%	6	0.6%
2021 Asian	46,023	3.8%	135	0.3%	65	48.1%	41	63.1%	13	20.0%	32	49.2%	15	46.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

\*2021 population data is from the United States Census Bureau. Previously, these population figures were retrieved from The Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Therefore, use caution when comparing 2021 data with data from previous years. Please also note that this report's 2020 population data was updated since being reported last year. When last year's report was originally released, 2020 CDC data was not yet available, and 2019 data was used for 2020.

\*\*Includes Consent Decrees

<sup>14</sup> Note: Arrest data is from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) and may include multiple counts for a single juvenile.



# 2023 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan to the Governor

Analysis of Feedback Survey of Youth, Families & Community Members

*Revised – November 2023*

# Strategic Planning Goals

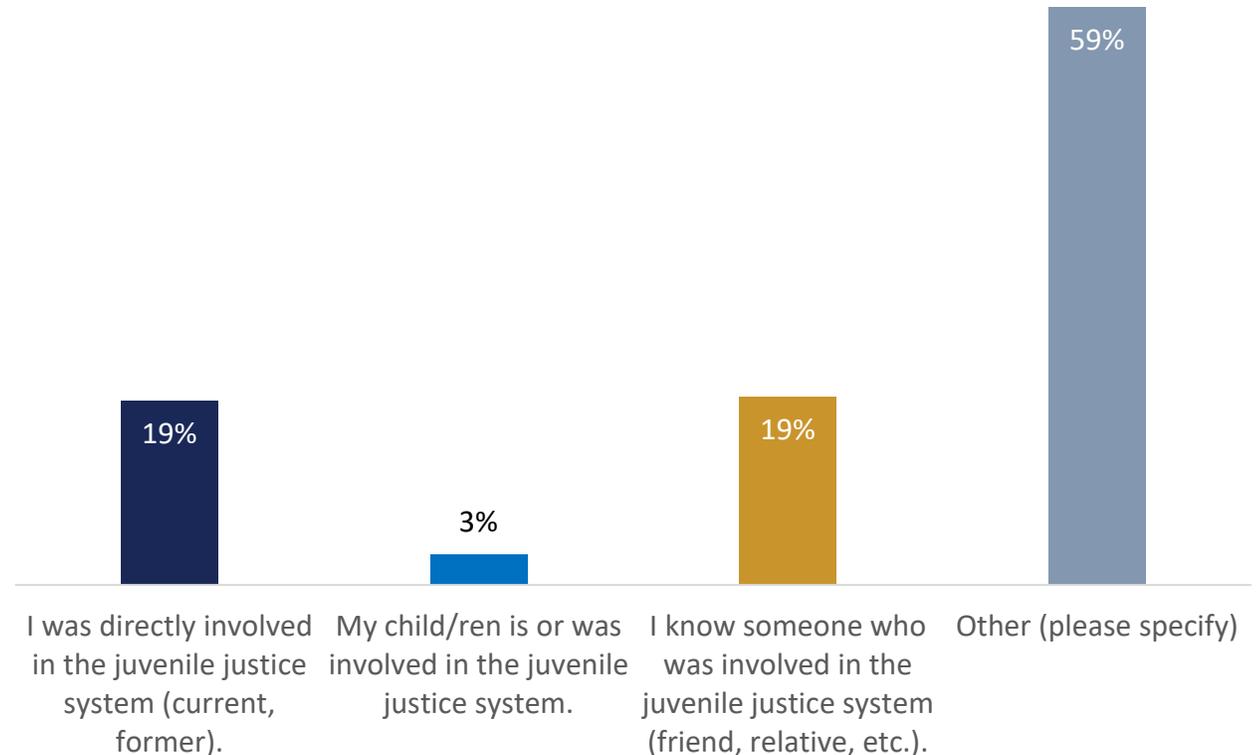
## Develop a 2023 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan to the Governor that:

- Provides a common understanding of key issues facing Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system;
- Acknowledges areas of strength and progress as well as opportunities for improvement;
- Takes a balanced approach, seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders, including youth, families, practitioners, and other stakeholders who are involved with and/or impacted by the juvenile justice system;
- Identifies the top priorities and recommendations for the Governor's consideration that can be championed and/or accomplished by executive action;
- Focuses on the most urgently needed actions, resources, and/or decisions and provides a clear framework that can be used by decision-makers at the state level; and
- Provides a basis for measuring impact and success.

# Who responded to the survey?

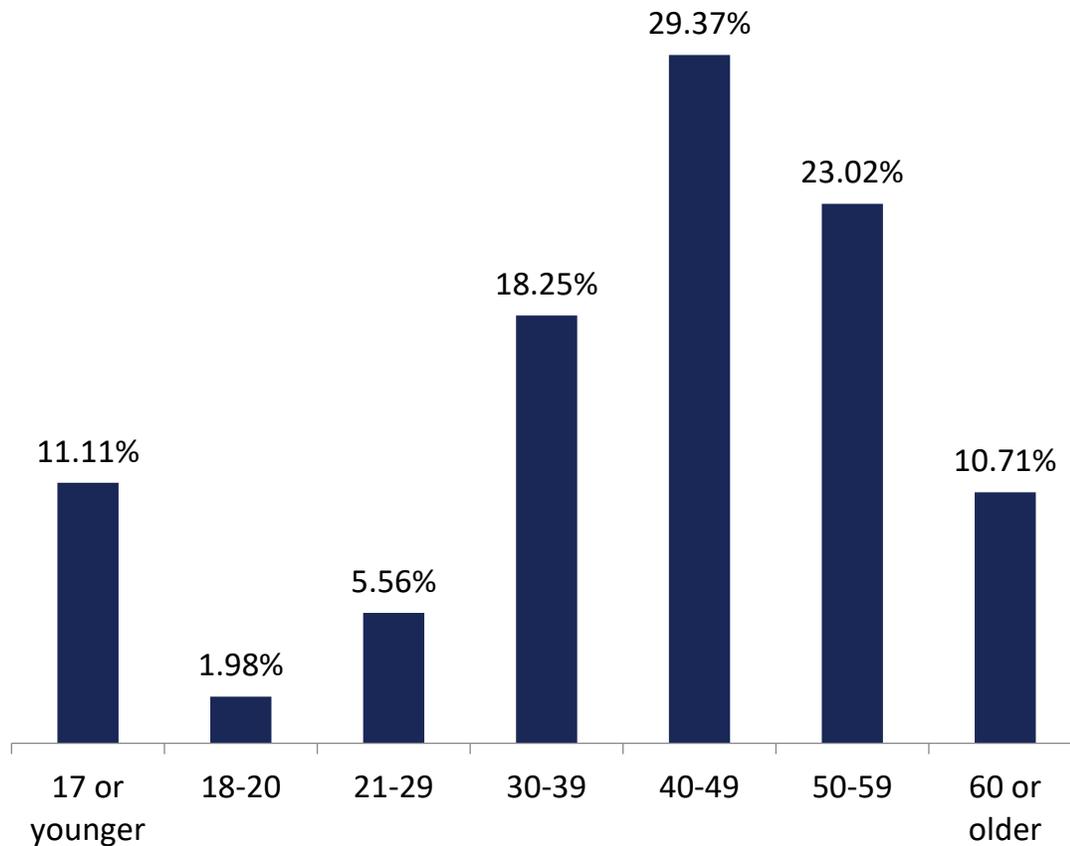
- **261 complete responses received.**

- Nearly one in five respondents reported they are or were **directly involved in the juvenile justice system**.
- An additional 3% of respondents were **parents/guardians** of a child involved in the juvenile justice system.
- 19% said they **knew someone involved in the juvenile justice system**.
- The **remaining respondents** were selected 'Other' and included youth-serving professionals, foster youth/families, community partners, and other stakeholders.

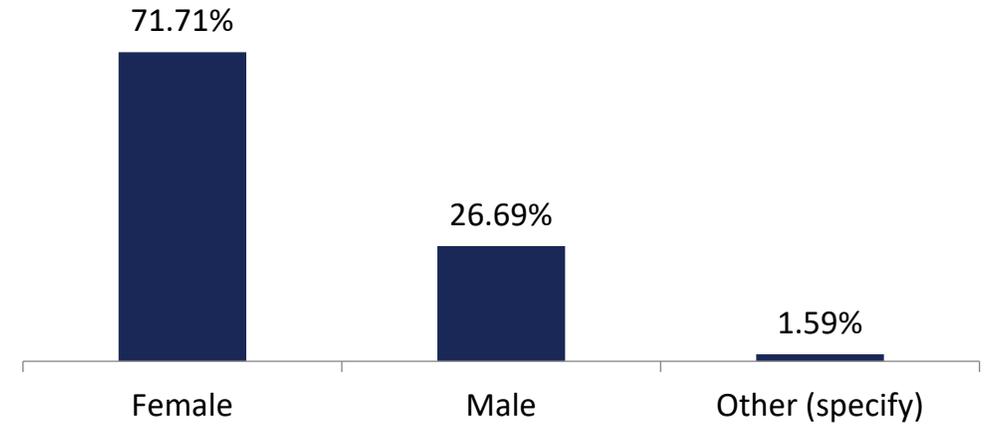


# Demographic Data

Which category below includes your age?

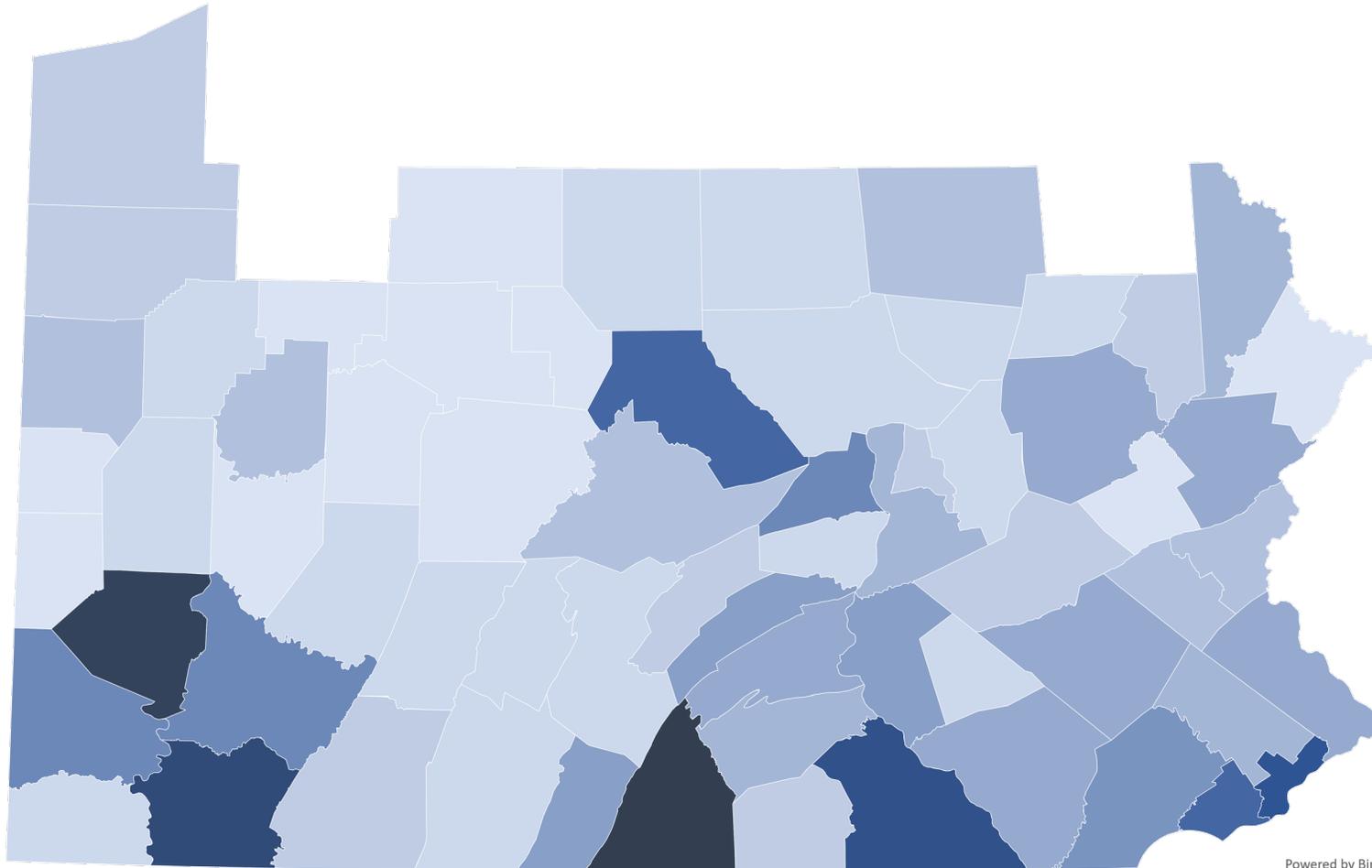


What is your gender?



Asian	1%
Black or African American	13%
Hispanic or Latino	2%
Middle Eastern or North African	0%
Multiracial or Multiethnic	4%
Native American or Alaska Native	0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%
White	79%
Another race or ethnicity	1%

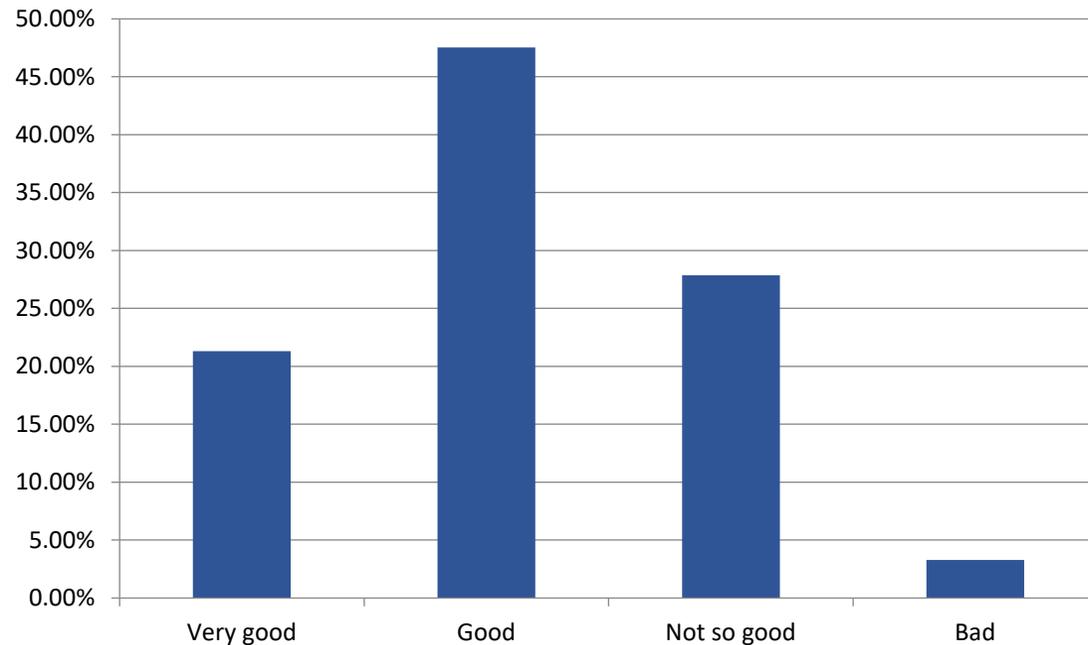
# Where were survey respondents from?



- Top 10 counties:**
1. Franklin (10%)
  2. Allegheny (9%)
  3. Fayette (7%)
  4. York (6%)
  5. Philadelphia (5%)
  6. Clinton (4%)
  7. Delaware (4%)
  8. Union (3%)
  9. Washington (3%)
  10. Westmoreland (3%)

# Perceptions of Treatment & Fairness

*“If you are or were involved in the juvenile justice system, how would you describe your overall experience with the system?”*



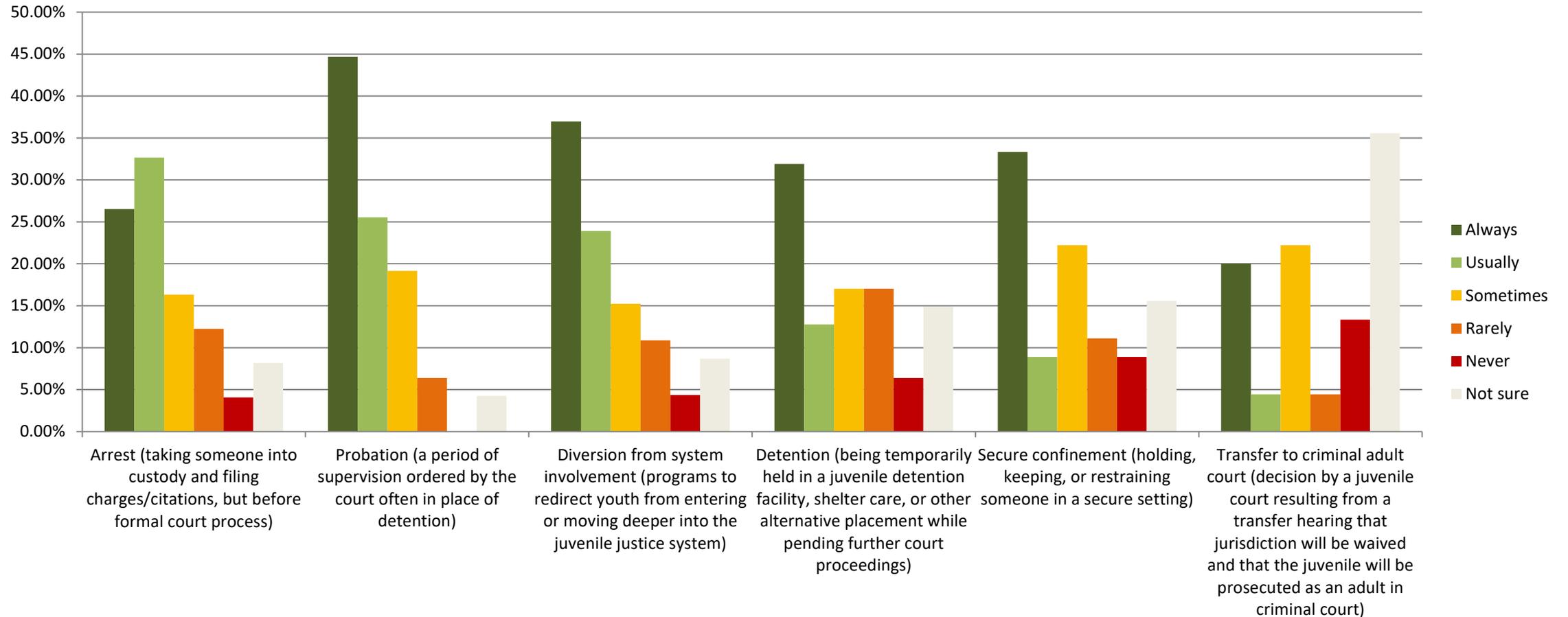
“

*I was fortunate to have a Juvenile probation officer who saw me as a human being and not just a problem to be solved or set aside.*

”

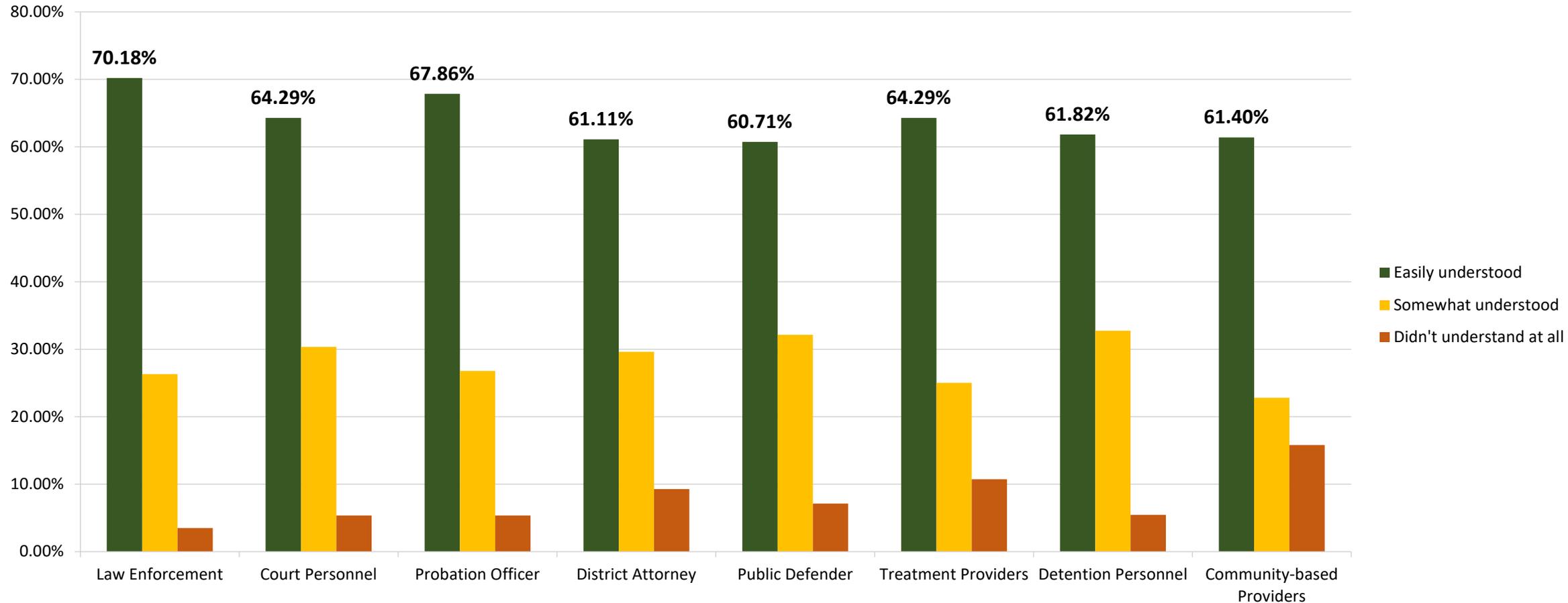
# Perceptions of Treatment & Fairness (cont.)

*“The juvenile justice system has six major points of contact with young people. Do you feel you were treated fairly at each of these contact points?”*



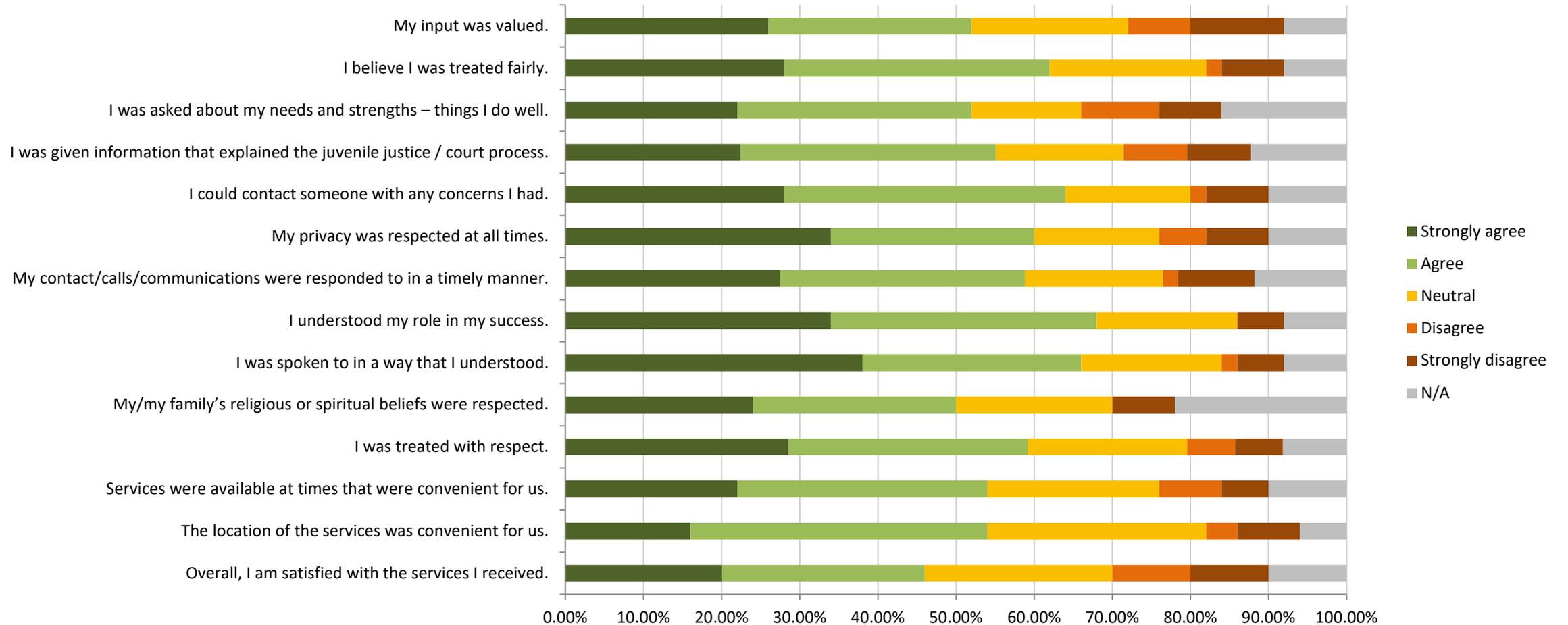
# Experiences with the System

*“Thinking back to your interactions with individuals, how well did you understand what was being said or shared with you by each group?”*



# Experiences with the System (continued)

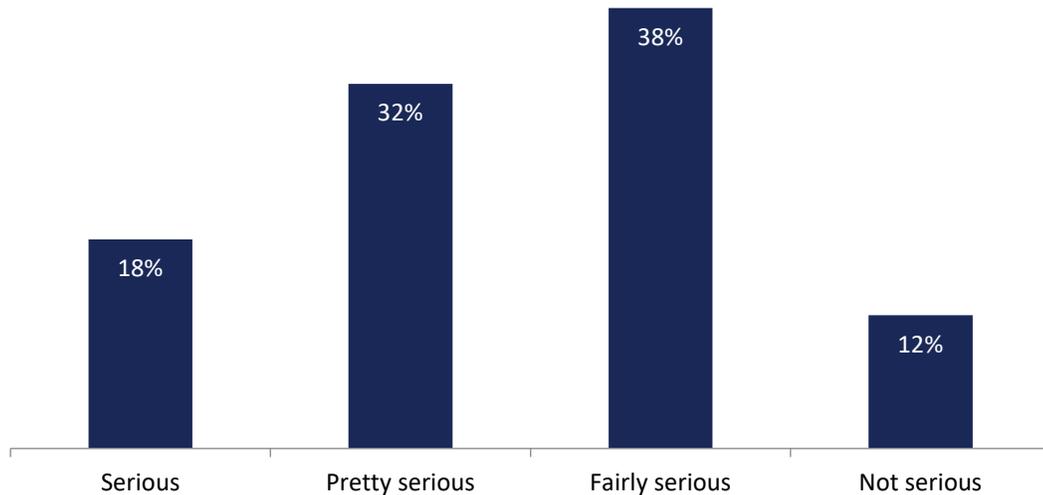
*“If you’ve had experience with the juvenile justice system, please rate your agreement with the following statements.”*



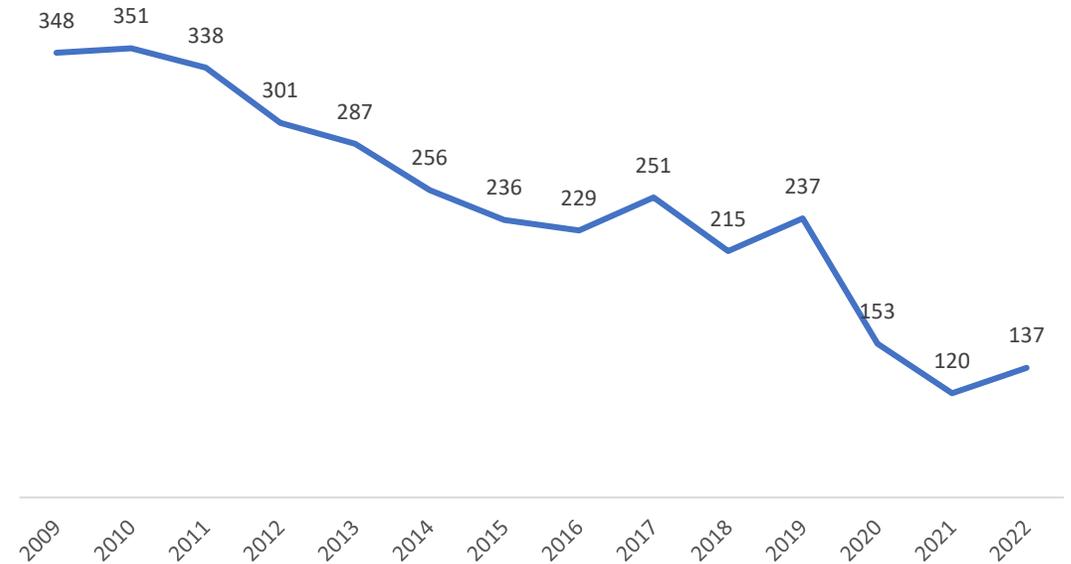
# Perceptions of Juvenile Crime + Delinquency vs. Data Trends

## Perceptions of Stakeholders

*How serious is juvenile crime and at-risk behaviors in your community?*



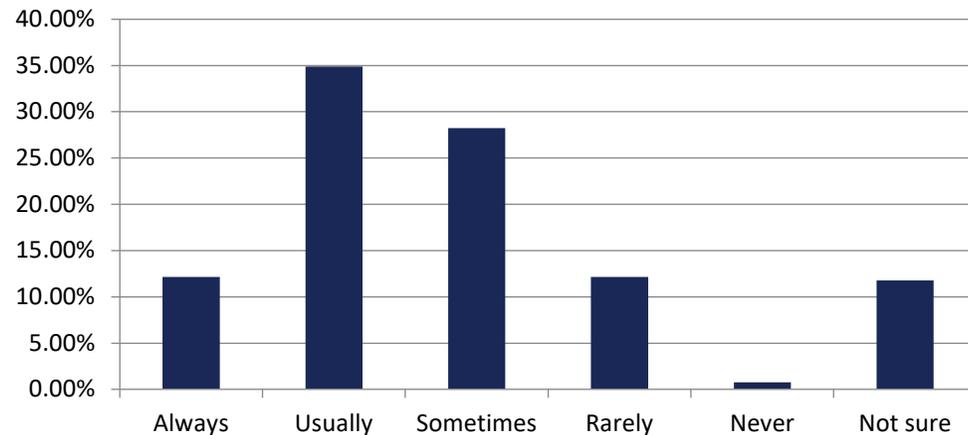
## Juvenile Arrest Rate for Violent Crimes in PA



# Perceptions of Juvenile Justice Involvement...

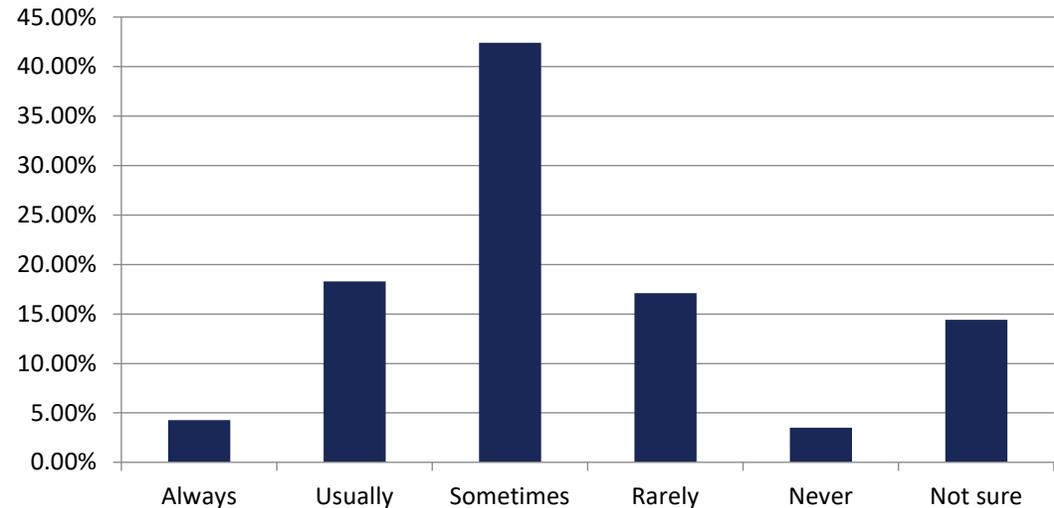
## Treatment of Youth with First-Time Offenses

*How frequently do you think a young person who is arrested or referred to the juvenile justice system for the first time is provided services in the community instead of placement or confinement?*



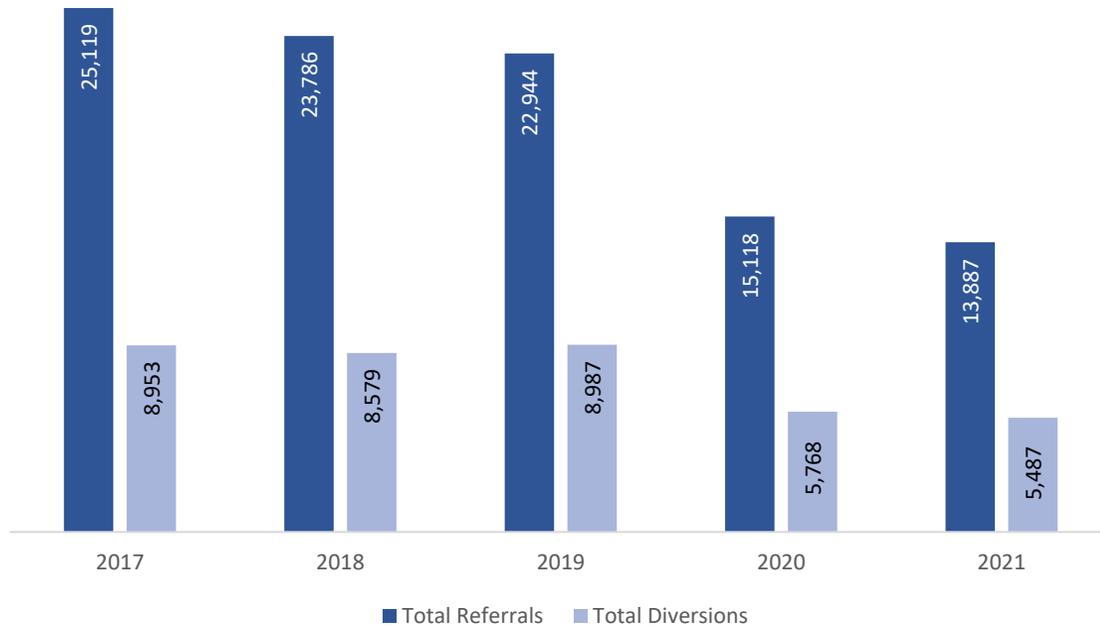
## Arrests/Detention for Technical Violations

*How often do you think youth are arrested or detained due to technical violations of probation (examples of technical violations include drinking, skipping school, breaking curfew, etc.)?*

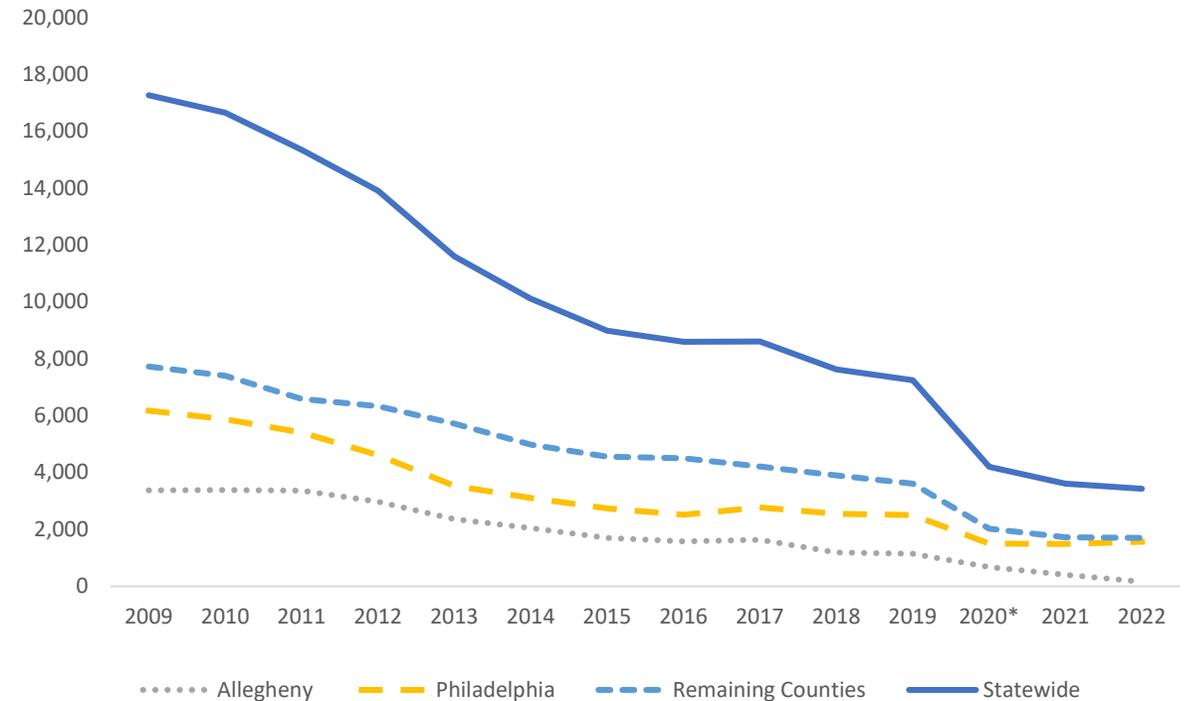


# ...vs. Statewide Data Trends

PA 5-Year Referrals & Diversions (2017-2021)



Secure Detention Admissions (2009-2022)

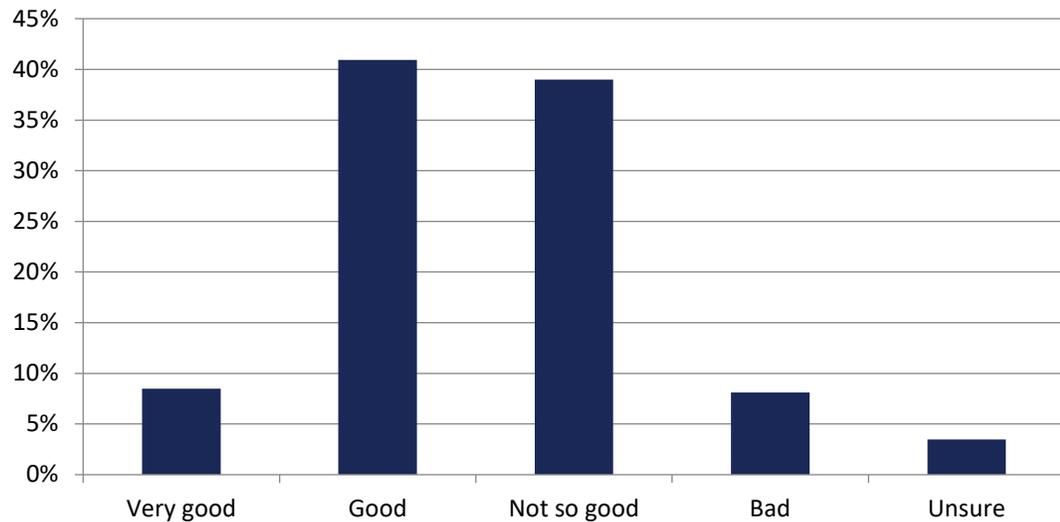


# Community-based Options + Resources

*PCCD asked all respondents to rate available resources and supports for youth in their communities.*

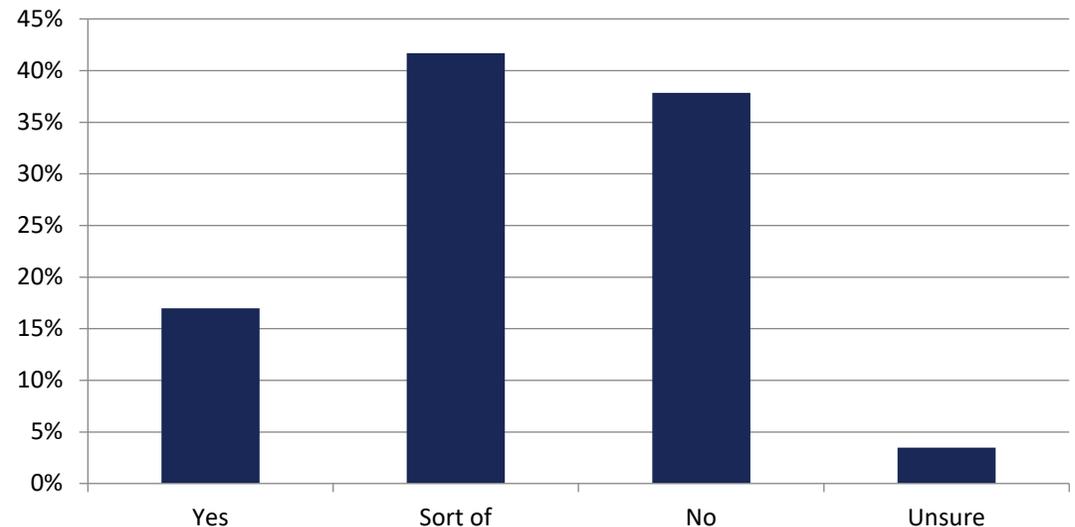
## Meeting Youth Needs

*Overall, how would you rate your community at meeting the needs of youth (e.g., education, health, safety, mental/behavioral health, positive activities, etc.)?*



## Availability of Safe Places for Youth

*Do you feel like your community has safe places for youth to gather and 'hang out', interact with trusted adults and peers, etc.?*



# Biggest Issues Facing Young People + Communities



54%

**Alcohol, substance misuse, and drug use** (e.g., marijuana, vaping, opioids, etc.)



61%

Need for **mental/behavioral health services, suicide prevention, and crisis response**



50%

**Poverty** (*hunger, food insecurity, homelessness, and housing insecurity also identified as top issues*)



48%

**School-based incidents** (classroom disruption, fights, bullying) and **truancy + school attendance**



37%

Availability of **community-based resources** & programs



27%

**Gun violence**/youth access to guns



25%

Other **violent crime**

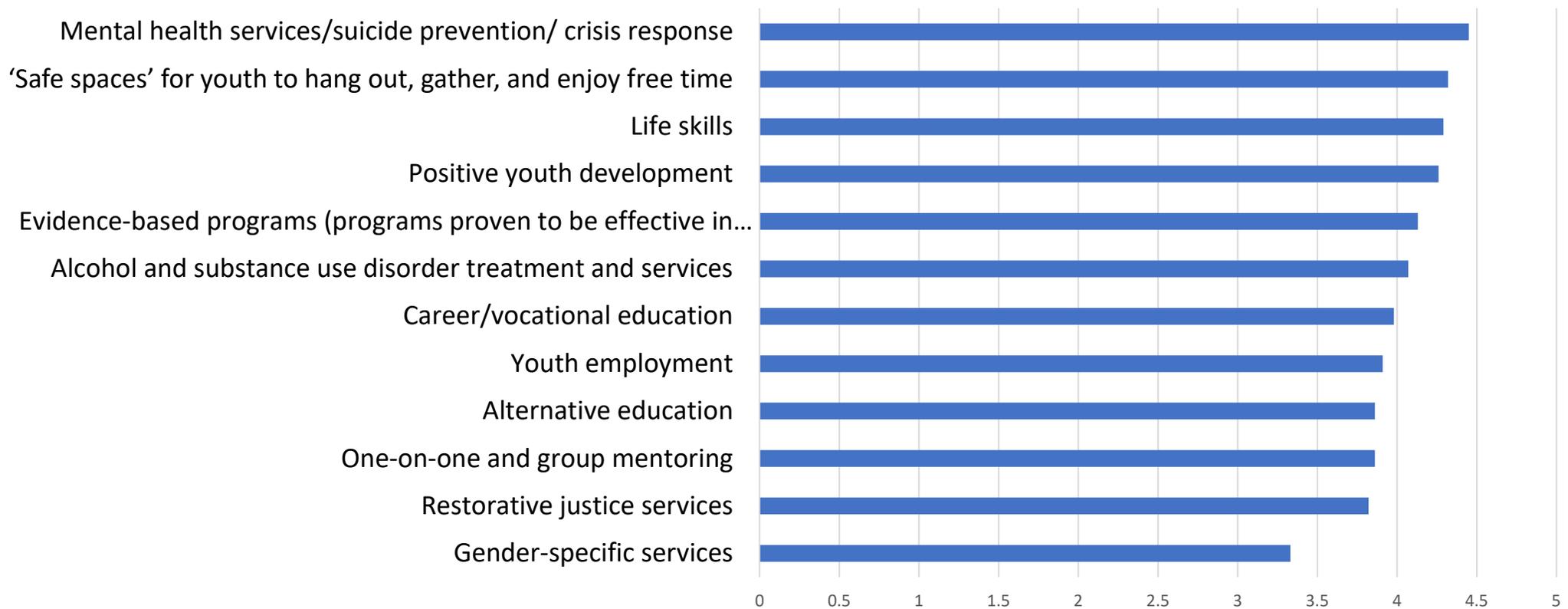


~20%

**Vandalism, running away, sexual violence, and breaking into houses/cars**

# Top Areas of Need

*“Please indicate what services are most needed in your community to address crime and other behaviors involving youth.”*



# Comparing Top Needs

## Youth, Family & Community Members

- Mental health/suicide prevention and intervention (60%)
- 'Safe spaces' for youth to hang out, gather, and enjoy free time (53%)
- Life skills (51%)
- Positive youth development (49%)
- Evidence-based programs (programs proven to be effective in reducing or preventing unhealthy behaviors in youth) (43%)
- Career/vocational education (36%)
- Alcohol and substance use disorder treatment and services (34%)

## System Practitioners

- Secure detention/residential treatment facility bed availability (57%)
- Adequate staffing (33%)
- Managing/referring youth with mental health needs (30%)
- Gun violence prevention/reduction (18%)
- Access to/availability of community services (17%)
- Mental health/suicide prevention and intervention (16%)
- Diversion programs (including school-based) (15%)
- Violent crime reduction (12%)

***“Is there anything else you think would be important for state leaders to understand about your experience with the juvenile justice system or ways to make the system better?”***

““

*I'm 33 now, so my experience has long since passed but left a lasting negative impression and the State needs to do better, these children have traumatic histories and are making decisions with a brain that hasn't finished developing. All children are not provided with the life skills at home to succeed in the world, so these youth imitate what they see in their environment and survive the ways they know how and have available to them.*

””

““

*Adolescents make mistakes as part of the normal maturation process. Studies showing the bell curve of juvenile justice crimes show that aging out of behaviors is normal and should be expected and knowing that we can not saddle our youth and young adults with all that comes with being system involved.*

””

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Data Source: PA Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC).
- <sup>2</sup> Data Source: JCJC.
- <sup>3</sup> [2021 Juvenile Court Annual Report](#), JCJC.
- <sup>4</sup> [At A Glance: Overview and Trends Fact Sheet](#), JCJC, July 2023.
- <sup>5</sup> Data Source: JCJC.
- <sup>6</sup> [The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Recidivism Report: Juveniles Closed 2007-2019](#), JCJC, February 2023.
- <sup>7</sup> [The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Recidivism Report: Juveniles Closed 2007-2019](#), JCJC, February 2023.
- <sup>8</sup> [At A Glance: Overview and Trends Fact Sheet](#), JCJC, July 2023.
- <sup>9</sup> Calculated using data from a variety of sources including the United States Census Bureau, the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission's Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research (CJJT&R) and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).
- <sup>10</sup> [Systems in Crisis: Rethinking the Juvenile Justice Workforce and Foundational Strategies for Improving Public Safety and Youth Outcomes](#), Council of State Governments Justice Center, October 2023.
- <sup>11</sup> ["House committee told Pa.'s shortage of juvenile detention beds is a 'public crisis,'" Patriot-News](#), April 21, 2023.
- <sup>12</sup> Peter Hall, ["Pa.'s juvenile detention centers are overcrowded, but building more isn't the answer, advocates say," Pennsylvania Capital-Star](#), April 20, 2023.
- <sup>13</sup> [Philadelphia's Shifting Juvenile Justice Paradigm: An Economic Analysis](#), ESI, May 2023.
- <sup>14</sup> Calculated using data from a variety of sources including the United States Census Bureau, JCJC's Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research (CJJT&R) and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).
- <sup>15</sup> Calculated using data from a variety of sources including the United States Census Bureau, JCJC's Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research (CJJT&R) and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).
- <sup>16</sup> Rice, S.M., et al (2023) Unmet mental health and criminogenic needs among justice-involved young people: a role for clinicians in the community, *Clinical Psychologist*, 27:2, 259-268.
- <sup>17</sup> Dierkhising, C. B., Ko, S. J., Woods-Jaeger, B., Briggs, E. C., Lee, R., & Pynoos, R. S. (2013). Trauma histories among justice-involved youth: findings from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. *European journal of psychotraumatology*, 4, 10.3402/ejpt.v4i0.20274.
- <sup>18</sup> Robert Gebeloff, et al., ["Childhood's Greatest Danger: The Data on Kids and Gun Violence," The New York Times Magazine](#), December 14, 2022.
- <sup>19</sup> [Cost of Non-fatal Firearm Injuries in Pennsylvania, 2016-2021](#), Research and Training Institute, Indiana University of PA, and PCCD, August 2022.
- <sup>20</sup> Jake Miller, ["The Health and Economic Toll of Gun Violence in Youth," Harvard Medical School](#), November 6, 2023.
- <sup>21</sup> Zheng N, Abram KM, Welty LJ, Aaby DA, Meyerson NS, Teplin LA. Nonfatal Firearm Injury and Firearm Mortality in High-risk Youths and Young Adults 25 Years After Detention. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2023;6(4):e238902. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.8902
- <sup>22</sup> Kirk Heilbrun, et al. "The Sequential Intercept Model and Juvenile Justice: Review and Prospectus." *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 35: 319-336 (2017). DOI: 10.1002/bsl.2291.
- <sup>23</sup> Folk, J. B., Kemp, K., Yurasek, A., Barr-Walker, J., & Tolou-Shams, M. (2021). Adverse childhood experiences among justice-involved youth: Data-driven recommendations for action using the sequential intercept model. *The American Psychologist*, 76(2), 268-283. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000769>.
- <sup>24</sup> Karen M. Kolvoski, Jeffrey J. Shook, Sara Goodkind, and Kevin H. Kim. [Developmental Trajectories and Predictors of Juvenile Detention, Placement, and Jail Among Youth with Out-of-Home Child Welfare Placement](#). *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research* 2014 5:2, 137-160
- <sup>25</sup> [Safety, Fairness, Stability: Repositioning Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare to Engage Families and Communities](#), Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University, 2011.
- <sup>26</sup> Cauffman, E., Beardslee, J., Fine, A., Frick, P.J., & Steinberg, L. (in press). Crossroads in juvenile justice: The impact of initial processing decision on youth five years after first arrest. *Development and Psychopathology*. 2021.
- <sup>27</sup> [The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Task Force Report & Recommendations](#), June 2021.
- <sup>28</sup> ["Reducing Youth Arrests Promotes Community Well-Being,"](#) Annie E. Casey Foundation, September 19, 2023; Marc Hyden and Steven Greenhut, [How Juvenile Justice "Deflection" Programs Reduce Crime and Save Money](#), R Street, September 2022.
- <sup>29</sup> Adapted from Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2020 [What Is Diversion in Juvenile Justice?](#) report.
- <sup>30</sup> [2022 Juvenile Court Annual Report](#), JCJC.
- <sup>31</sup> [School Policing in Pennsylvania: Prevalence and Disparities](#), Research for Action (RFA); [The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Task Force Report & Recommendations](#), June 2021.

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- <sup>32</sup> [Diversion Programs](#), Youth.gov; Naomi E S Goldstein et al, "Preventing school-based arrest and recidivism through prearrest diversion: Outcomes of the Philadelphia police school diversion program," *Law and Human Behavior* 45, no. 2 (April 2021): 165-178, doi: 10.1037/lhb0000440. Jessica Liu, et al, "An Urgent Need for School-Based Diversion Programs for Adolescent Substance Use: A Statewide Survey of School Personnel," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 73, no. 3 (September 2023): <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2023.04.006>.
- <sup>33</sup> [The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Task Force Report & Recommendations](#), June 2021; [2021 Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan](#), PCCD.
- <sup>34</sup> [Cost-Benefit Analysis for PCCD's Evidence-based Initiatives – Full Report](#), PCCD and Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative, 2021
- <sup>35</sup> [Victimization and Juvenile Offending](#), The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2016.
- <sup>36</sup> Caitlin Delong and Jessica Reichart, [The Victim-Offender Overlap: Examining the Relationship Between Victimization and Offending](#), Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, January 2019.
- <sup>37</sup> Robert Gebeloff, Danielle Ivory, Bill Marsh, Allison McCann, and Albert Sun, "[Childhood's Greatest Danger: The Data on Kids and Gun Violence](#)," *The New York Times Magazine*, December 14, 2022.
- <sup>38</sup> Data Source: [WISQARS Fatal Injury Data Visualization Tool](#), accessed 3/3/2023.
- <sup>39</sup> Data Source: Pennsylvania Healthcare Cost Containment Council (PHC4)
- <sup>40</sup> Garbarino, James, et al., "Mitigating the effects of gun violence on children and youth." *The Future of children* vol. 12,2 (2002): 72-85.
- <sup>41</sup> Pardini, D. A., & Mulvey, E. (2021). Special Section Introduction: Revitalizing Developmental Research on Adolescent Gun Involvement. *Journal of clinical child and adolescent psychology : the official journal for the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, American Psychological Association, Division 53*, 50(3), 301-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2021.1913742>
- <sup>42</sup> See "[Casey Supports National Effort to Grow Credible Messenger Mentoring](#)," Annie E. Casey Foundation, September 12, 2021; [Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement \(CM3\)](#); [Research Report: Arches Transformative Mentoring Program](#), Urban Institute, February 20, 2018; Lesnick, J., Abrams, L.S., Angel, K., Barnert, E.S. (2023). Credible messenger mentoring to promote the health of youth involved in the juvenile legal system. *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care*, 53(6). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cppeds.2023.101435>.
- <sup>43</sup> [Systems in Crisis: Rethinking the Juvenile Justice Workforce and Foundational Strategies for Improving Public Safety and Youth Outcomes](#), Council of State Governments Justice Center, October 2023.
- <sup>44</sup> [Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: A Roadmap to Credible Messenger Recruitment](#), Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs, May 2022.
- <sup>45</sup> [Continuous Quality Improvement \(CQI\) Sustainability Planning Guide](#), JCJC. March 2019.
- <sup>46</sup> [Pennsylvania Secure Detention Bed Gap Analysis](#), JCJC, May 2023.
- <sup>47</sup> Teplin, L. A., Meyerson, N. S., Jakubowski, J. A., Aaby, D. A., Zheng, N., Abram, K. M., & Welty, L. J. (2021). Association of Firearm Access, Use, and Victimization During Adolescence With Firearm Perpetration During Adulthood in a 16-Year Longitudinal Study of Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System. *JAMA network open*, 4(2), e2034208. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.34208>
- <sup>48</sup> [Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program](#), Juvenile Justice Research & Reform Lab, accessed 9/21/2023. Goldstein, N. E. S., NeMoyer, A., Le, T., Guo, S., Cole, L. M., Pollard, A., Kreimer, R., & Zhang, F. (2021). Keeping kids in school through prearrest diversion: School disciplinary outcomes of the Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program. *Law and Human Behavior*, 45(6), 497-511. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000453>. Goldstein, N. E. S., Kreimer, R., Guo, S., Le, T., Cole, L. M., NeMoyer, A., Burke, S., Kikuchi, G., Thomas, K., & Zhang, F. (2021). Preventing school-based arrest and recidivism through prearrest diversion: Outcomes of the Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program. *Law and Human Behavior*, 45(2), 165-178. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000440>.
- <sup>49</sup> [Bridging Research and Practice in Juvenile Probation: Rethinking Strategies to Promote Long-Term Change](#), Urban Institute, October 2018.
- <sup>50</sup> [Age Boundaries In Juvenile Justice Systems](#), National Governors Association, August 12, 2021.
- <sup>51</sup> [Raise the Age: Shifting to a Safer and More Effective Juvenile Justice System](#), Justice Policy Institute, 2022.
- <sup>52</sup> Vermont, Michigan, and New York have raised the maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 19 years old. Three states (California, Massachusetts, and Utah) have minimum ages of prosecution set at 12 years old. See [Age Boundaries In Juvenile Justice Systems](#), National Governors Association, August 12, 2021.
- <sup>53</sup> [A Family Guide to Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System](#), Family Involvement Committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers and JCJC.
- <sup>54</sup> [Who is in a State Correctional Institution \(SCI\)? – Prisons – Pennsylvania – Spotlight by Recidivism](#), PA Department of Corrections, October 25, 2023.