



COLORADO
Division of Youth Services
Office of Children, Youth & Families



ANNUAL REPORT DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

Colorado Department of
Human Services

November 21, 2019

FISCAL YEAR **18
19**

*“You can’t go back and
change the beginning, but
you can start where you are
and change the ending.”*

- C.S. Lewis



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

“No organization improves by resting with the status-quo. It takes everyone within the organizational team to envision, lead, and advance how we do business together. Creating a brighter future, supporting lasting change in young peoples’ lives, and building a stronger community is an endeavor I am proud to take on with the DYS team.”

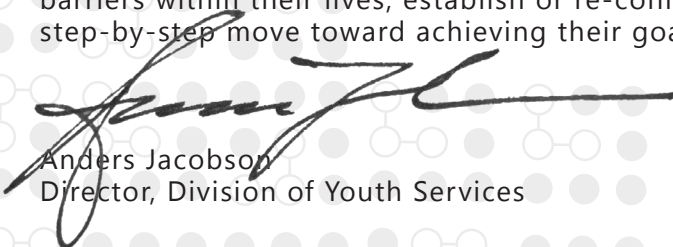
Greetings,

I am excited to share with you the Division of Youth Services (DYS) annual report. The information provided throughout the report will highlight examples of the accomplishments and success youth achieve while in the Division’s care and the care of our community partners throughout Colorado.

During the course of this year, we witnessed growth and change as we challenged ourselves to provide the highest quality and comprehensive care to the youth we serve. We can look back at our accomplishments and celebrate the many successes we achieved together this year. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that we also experienced difficult challenges that tested our resolve to do better by the youth we serve. In some instances, we made changes and implemented policies that were recognized nationally for their proven success. In other areas, we have not reached the level of success we desire, but each day we push forward, and get a little bit better.

All of this would not be possible without the high character, quality, and dedication of our DYS team, whether in direct care or support roles. Whether you are a parent, a DYS team member, community partner or a mentor, thank you for your service and commitment to the development and personal growth of each youth in our care.

Together, youth are demonstrating resilience, the ability to work past trauma and barriers within their lives, establish or re-connect with support systems and resources, and step-by-step move toward achieving their goals.



Anders Jacobson
Director, Division of Youth Services

About DYS

What is the role of the Division of Youth Services?

The Division of Youth Services (DYS) provides for the care and supervision of youth committed by the District Court to the custody of the Colorado Department of Human Services. DYS operates 10 secure facilities that serve youth between the ages of 10-21 who are pre-adjudicated or committed. In addition to residential programming and treatment services, DYS administers juvenile parole services throughout Colorado.

Juvenile Detention:

DYS is responsible for the operation of Colorado's juvenile detention "continuum." The continuum consists of community-based screening to determine detention needs, community supervision strategies, and secure detention in youth centers operated by or contracting with DYS.

Commitment & Parole Services:

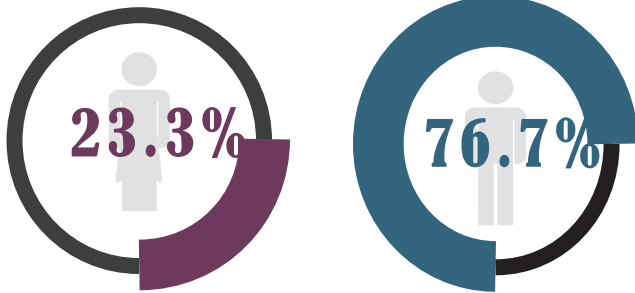
DYS operates a full continuum of services for committed youth through a Continuum of Care model. The Continuum of Care guides the activities of the Division throughout the commitment process from the initial assessment, to residential placement, transition, parole supervision and services.

Vision: Achieving youth success and safer Colorado communities.

Mission: To protect, restore, and improve public safety utilizing a continuum of care that provides effective supervision, promotes accountability to victims and communities, and helps youth lead constructive lives through positive youth development.

Our Youth

Detention Population

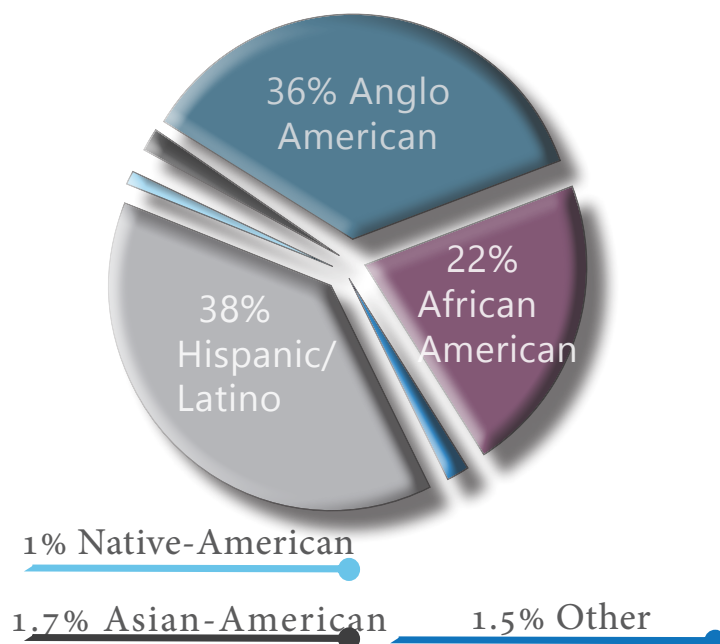


Gender Distribution: Secure Detention

↓ 382 to 327

July 2019: Bed capacity
statutorily decreased by 55 beds.

Ethnicity Distribution
(Detention)



5,145

New detention
admissions

295.3

Average count of
youth served each
day

28.2

Average # of
admissions/releases
per day

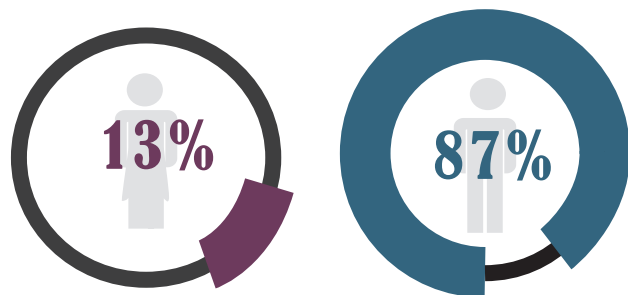
17.8

Days--Average
length

274

Daily maximum
bed count average

Commitment Population



Gender Distribution: Commitment

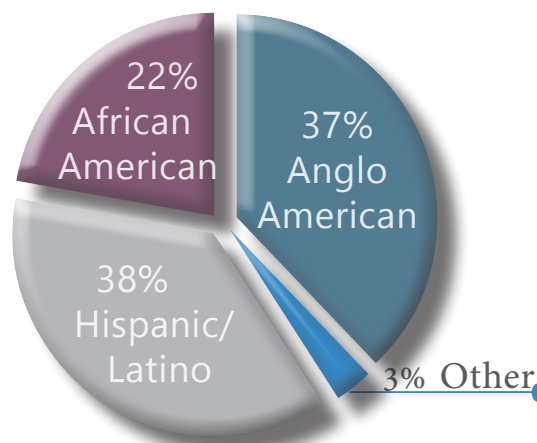
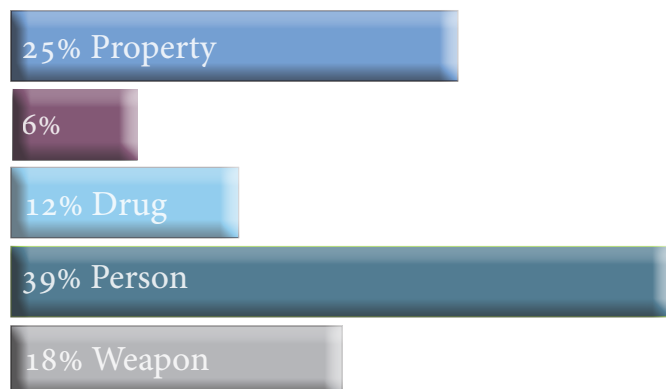
577.6

Average Daily
Population

19.6

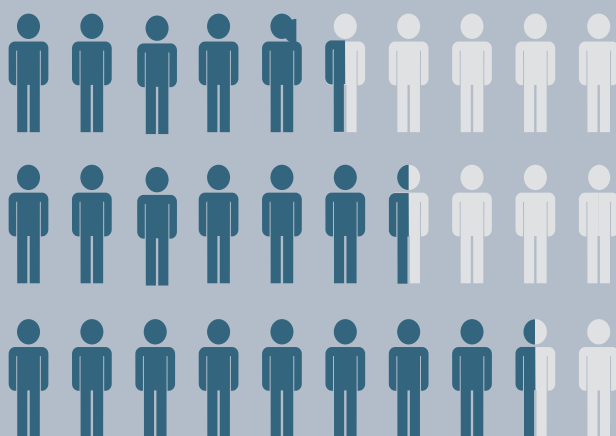
Average Length of
all Residential
Placements

Commitment Distribution (by offense type)



Ethnicity Distribution
(Committed)

Treatment Needs of Newly Committed Youth



56%

Have co-occurring treatment needs (both mental health and substance abuse treatment needs).

64%

Require formal mental health intervention services. This is an increase of 17% since FY15/16.

83%

Require treatment level services for substance abuse.



Parole Population

Every committed youth exiting DYS must serve six months of mandatory parole. Cases may be extended by 15 months. The Colorado Juvenile Parole Board hears the cases of each youth preparing for parole, sets terms and conditions and has the authority to modify, suspend or revoke parole.

594

**Number of Youth
Served**

7 Months

**Average Length
of Service**

215

**Average Daily
Population**

DYS is responsible for the operation of the juvenile parole system. This includes providing parole supervision to each committed youth. A youth's parole officer is also their "client manager" and is assigned to the youth upon commitment. The client manager guides the youth throughout their commitment, ensuring the youth receives the services that meet their specific needs.

National Recognition: Seclusion

“Overall, DYS has done a remarkable job of reducing the use of isolation in a relatively short period of time. The strategies it found effective should be useful to other jurisdictions making similar efforts.”¹



93.5%

Below the
National
average for
seclusion
length:
commitment



8.8%

% of DYS youth
involved in a
seclusion inci-
dent, a 3.8 per-
centage point
decrease from
the prior FY



80.2%

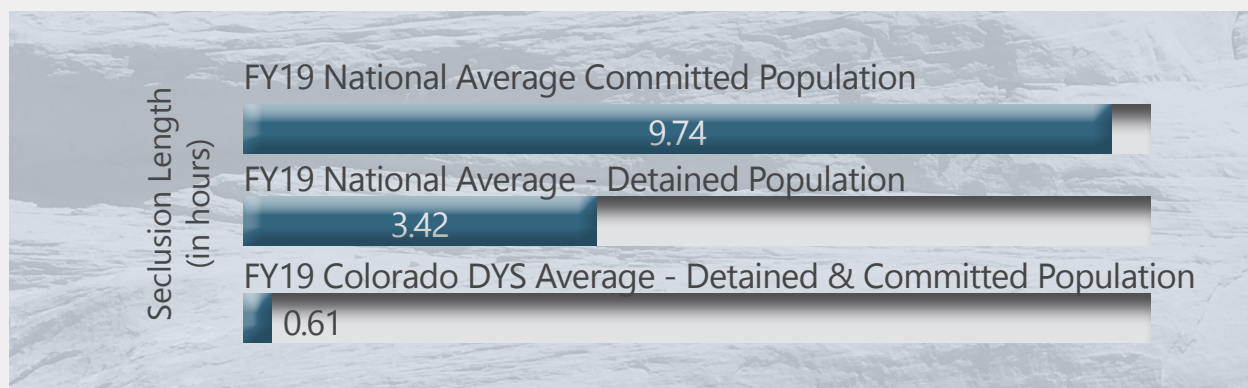
Below the
National
average for
seclusion
length:
detention



**Colorado DYS highlighted
as a transformational
leader in seclusion rate
reform in FY19**

25.4%

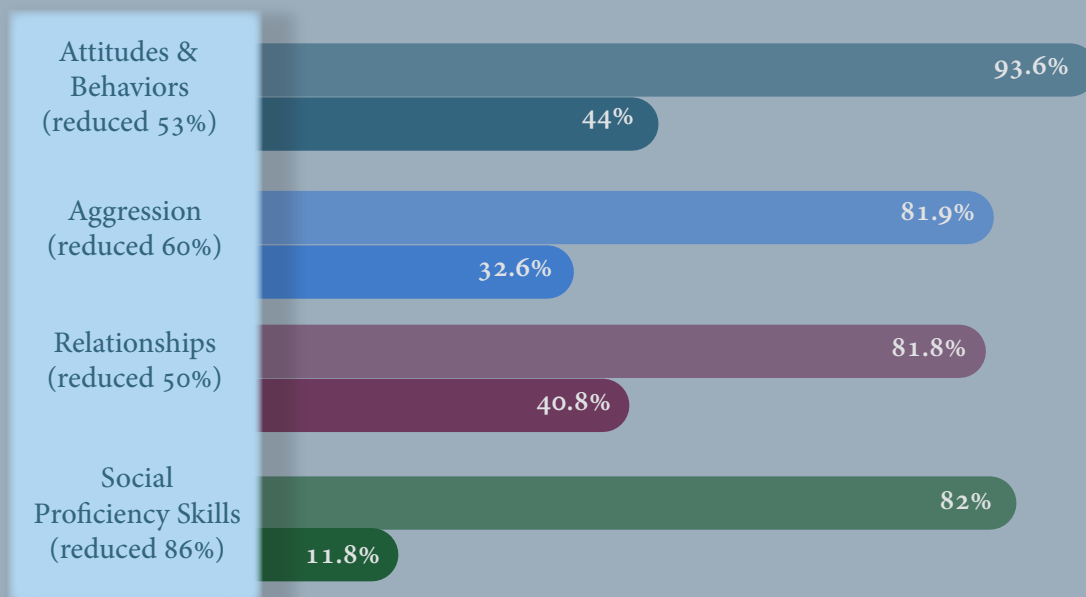
Drop in seclusion
rates in second
half of FY19



Impact in Numbers

When studying the overall scope of services offered to youth by DYS, the potential for long-term impact and positive change is evident. Mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, education, special education services, vocational training, and transition services are all a part of the transformational support provided to the youth within DYS.

Changes in Risk Scores from Assessment to Discharge (for Committed Youth)



20,708

Youth Contacts
with Family

3,882

Youth Transition
Passes Completed

37,263

Hours of Community
Transition



343

Career and Technical
Education Certifications
Achieved in FY19



243

High School Diplomas and
G.E.D.'s Awarded²



34.4%

One Year
Recidivism Rate*



*Includes all youth that are convicted
or adjudicated of new crimes, not just
those that return to the system.

Youth Success

Marcus was one of six children removed from his home as a young child. He learned to cope with early childhood trauma and the sudden loss of the only father he knew by using drugs and hanging out with negative peers. Upon his commitment to DYS, he was respectful but there was never any trust and he would not open up to anyone about who he was or what he'd been through. After confiding in his Client Manager Shawn Robinson about abuse he had sustained, he was able to shed the weight he was carrying. Since then, there has been no stopping him. Marcus completed the program at Ridge View Youth Services Center, obtained his G.E.D., and stepped down to a community residential program called Dale House where he made connections that will last forever. Marcus has worked hard in therapy and uses his biking skills and yoga to help him with trauma and stress. He also has a primary staff member that has been by his side throughout all of his hard work.



He is currently working in the community, and recently passed all three of the written tests for his CDL license (he will soon complete the driving tests). Marcus is preparing himself for independent living in January.



Jason was only sixteen when he obtained his G.E.D. through DYS, receiving remarkably high scores on his first try. He continued to work diligently on his treatment goals of rebuilding family relationships and developing strong communication skills. With the support of his parents and Client Manager, he studies engineering at a local community college. He was paroled more than a year early due to his progress in treatment and continues to receive individual and family therapy as he begins his transition back into the community. Jason is finding continued success balancing his rigorous and full-time class schedule, a job at a local store, and full-time programming through DYS.



Dylan has been involved in the County Department of Human Services system since the age of five. When he was committed to the Division of Youth Services he was placed at Ridge View Youth Services Center and transitioned to a community program called Dale House where he did quite well. Since his transition to a Denver suburb, where he lives with his grandmother, he began attending High School. He recently lettered on the cross country team and will graduate in May of 2020. He is now off parole, working nearly full time and has paid hundreds of dollars in restitution as he acknowledges the importance of healing the wounds created by his offenses. Dylan is viewed as a kind, intelligent, and compassionate young man who is excited for his future.

Hannah

When Hannah was admitted into the Division of Youth Services, she was angry, withdrawn, and did not care about her education. Today, Hannah is engaged in treatment, she has earned the highest level within the program, she no longer engages with negative peers--even when one may challenge her, and she is excited about her future. While in DYS, Hannah achieved her high school diploma and recently went on a tour to a local college where she played with a few members of the college basketball team. Since the tour, a few girls on the team have practiced with Hannah and are encouraging her to attend college and earn a spot on the team. When Hannah was asked what she would want to share in her story, she stated she is grateful for her team at DYS and the lessons she has learned. She noted that her team has helped her gain insight and taught her ways to think about her life and her future. Hannah will soon begin transition back into the community.





NEW BEGINNINGS

Imagine having to walk to school with holes in your shoes, tired and cold from sleeping in a car, hungry from not eating, and relying on safety and security in a world that requires unquestioning loyalty. That was the everyday reality for Khamal. It wasn't long before school didn't feel right to him, he lost his focus and began to feel like he had to take things he wanted. This combination of circumstances ultimately led to Khamal's commitment into the Division of Youth Services.

Throughout his treatment, Khamal has faced the darkest parts of himself, his past, and his crimes. He has come out on the other side with the deepest level of honor for himself and his now 10 month old son. "The steps I have taken have been accepting the therapy, and accepting what is wrong with me and really just looking for the help and taking the help. One thing that changed me was Third Way, and honestly, DYS because they helped me through a lot of the stuff I was going through. They helped me take the steps to becoming who I am today."

Khamal said his biggest regret in life is what he did in his past. He wishes he could go back and change his path but he knows he can't. Instead, he focuses on treatment and hopes he will have an opportunity to tell those he hurt how sorry he is.

Khamal has difficulty speaking about his charges. He used to feel that he was not any better than what was written on paper about him. He paused, looking up from the table to say, "I want you to see me for me. I am not that person anymore."

When Khamal found out the gender of his child, he was in secure placement in DYS. He spoke about how hearing he was going to be a father changed things for him. "If I didn't change, I know I wasn't going to be there for my son as my dad was not there for me." His DYS Client Manager, Jeremy Hall, set goals with Khamal so he could be present for the once in a lifetime opportunity to be at the hospital for the birth of his son. "When I first saw him I

honestly cried. It was a very special thing. That was my first time watching it so it was kinda crazy." While speaking with Khamal, his face lights up each time he speaks about his number one priority—his son. "My son comes first over everything. That is why I am doing so good, so I can get out and be with him."

Khamal has a desire to attend college and is looking into applying for one of the DYS Second Chance Scholarships, he is working full time, will soon move into his own apartment, and is learning skills to live independently and raise his son. When asked what he wishes for in the future, he says, "I wish my son will have everything I didn't have. I don't want him to want for anything so he doesn't feel like he needs to do what I did." He also wants people to see him for who he is today.

In the end, Khamal says he loves his mother and is thankful for all of the support she provided him. He also discussed how important his Client Manager, Jeremy was to his success. Khamal states, "Like that is the one thing that I need in life is support and he has really been there to help me." Jeremy smiles and replies with a, "I will be there for him until the end too, I am not going anywhere."



Community Involvement

All across the State, there are community programs that benefit tremendously from the volunteer hours provided by youth from DYS. These experiences give the youth new opportunities to interact with their communities while giving back their time and effort.

Seventeen youth from DYS centers took part in creating a vibrant mural on the side of a school in Curtis Park in July. Their efforts drew the attention of local news, as well as community members. One of DYS's goals is to provide opportunities for youth to make things as right as possible for those who were impacted by their crime. The mural project provided a way for youth to gain skills, give back to the community, and help repair the harm they may have caused. Projects, such as the mural, involve groups, team-building activities, and a clear vision of how each youth is contributing to a larger effort to improve the greater community.



Zebulon Pike Youth Service Center was awarded the 2019 Outstanding Volunteer Group Award from the Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI), an "organization of stewards and guardians, passionate about caring for the public land we all love and engaging our community to protect it." RMFI had this to say about working closely with Zeb Pike:

"We highly value our partnership with you over the years and have thoroughly enjoyed spending many workdays on various project sites with you and the many youth you serve. We are honored that you and your group choose to spend some of your time stewarding local public lands with RMFI."

Zebulon Pike youth and staff serve meals to hungry men and women every week at the Springs Rescue Mission homeless shelter. Youth apply the skills learned in their culinary program to assist in cooking the meals.



Lookout Mountain Eagles routinely work with Habitat 4 Humanity in their ReStore configuration and organization. A worker mentioned how much they enjoy seeing our youth show up to help and how much they are able to accomplish with the youth on site.

Platte Valley's vocational culinary program partners with many local Colorado organizations for catering services, including Free Our Girls and the Weld County judges. The youth involved in this program are exposed to many experiences, job skills, and opportunities.



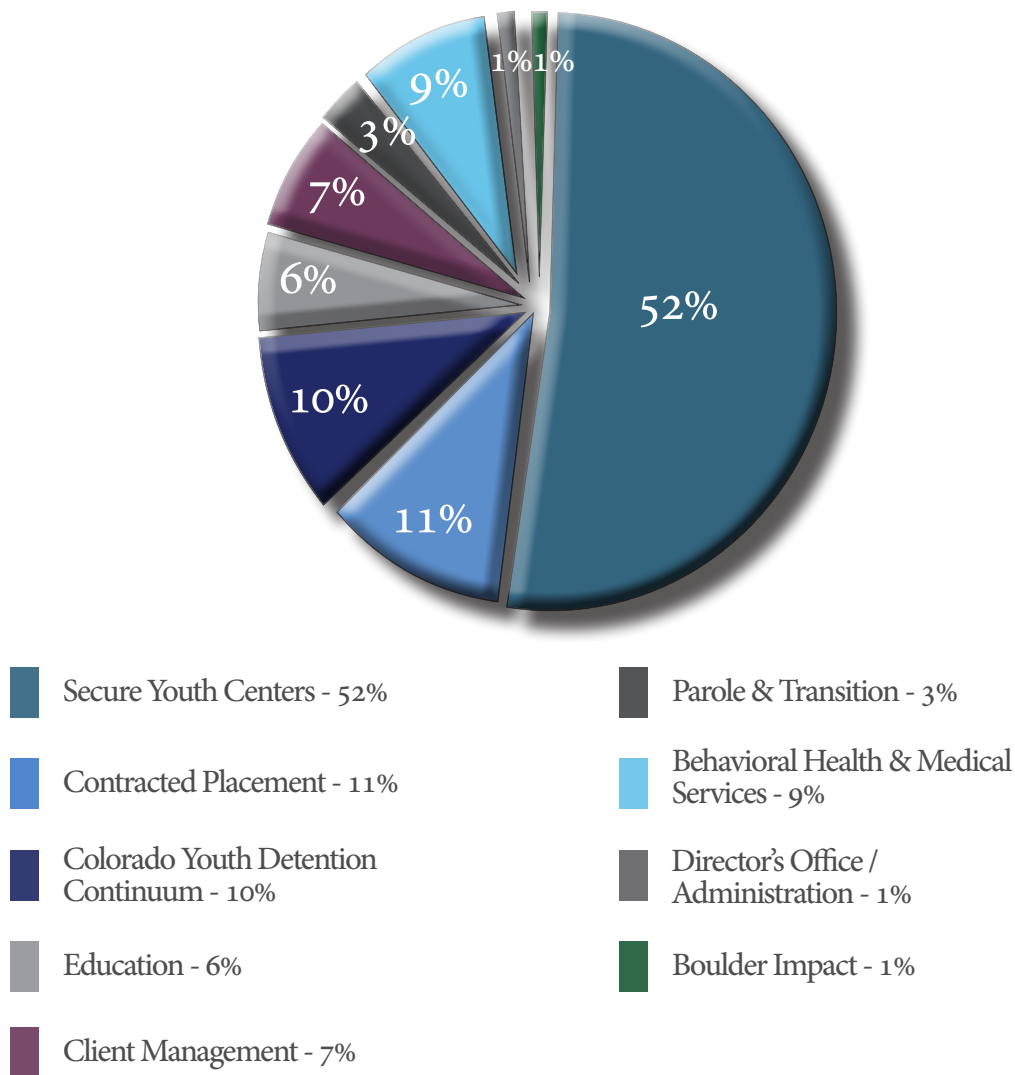
The Division of Youth Services is excited to highlight a few of the wonderful community partnerships that support youth growth:

- Habitat 4 Humanity
- Second Wind Fund
- Urban Peaks
- Straight Ahead Ministries
- Denver Urban Gardens
- Project Angel Heart
- Free Our Girls Ministries
- Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI)
- and many more!

In addition to assisting the organizations, community involvement is helping many youth step out of their comfort zones and discover that they enjoy giving back. "I can make a difference, too. I'm not just a random cog in the wheel," observed one youth. Another young man said "It makes you feel really good about yourself to have an impact."

Expenditures

DYS Fiscal Year 2019 Expenditures (by Category)



**A special “Thank You” to the Colorado Legislature
for their support in 2018/19 for:**

Funding additional direct-care positions to further promote
safe environments within DYS.

Providing additional funding to support DYS education services to address the
needs of special education youth across the State.

THANK YOU

DYS would like to recognize the following individuals for their time and assistance in making this report possible.

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Report Citations

- (1) Lutz, J., Soler, M., & Kittredge, J. (June, 2019). *Not In Isolation: How to Reduce Room Confinement While Increasing Safety in Youth Facilities*. Washington, D.C. : Center for Children's Law and Policy and the Justice Policy Institute.
- (2) Colorado Department of Human Services. (2018-2019). *C-Stat Quarterly Reports 2018-2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/c-stat>
- (3) Colorado Department of Human Services. (2019). *DYS Publication and Reports: Monthly Management Report, Monthly Population Report, and Recidivism Evaluation*. Retrieved from <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/publications-reports>



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