



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

2021/2022

ANNUAL REPORT



Division of Youth Services

Colorado Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth & Families

January 4, 2023

cdhs.colorado.gov/dys

Welcome to the Division of Youth Services

Annual Report 2021/2022

The report highlights DYS youth population and achievements, stories of success youth achieve while in the Division's care and the care of community partners throughout Colorado.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings,

I am proud to share with our colleagues, families, and stakeholders the division's annual report covering fiscal year 2022. As we close out another year, it is an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and achievements we have walked through together. We have much to be thankful for over this past year in DYS.

The National Commission on Correctional Health Care awarded DYS the Program of the Year for Correctional Health Care. This award focused on our medical, behavioral, and direct care services provided to the youth in our care. With over 500 facilities across the nation certified by NCCHC, it is a tremendous accomplishment and honor that DYS walked away with this year's award.

We saw our last two recidivism reports show a reduction in the 1-year recidivism of nearly 20 percentage points. We went from a rate of 41.1% in FY 2017/18 to 22.1% in FY 2019/20 (published in July 2022).


We worked diligently to finalize and release a comprehensive Strategic Plan that paves the way for the division over the next five years. The plan has a laser focus on staff retention and well-being. It also focuses on services to youth in our care, furthering our division to establish and maintain a trauma-responsive culture that focuses on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Lastly, the plan focuses on safety and security inside and outside our youth centers.

We established a DYS treatment model, trained staff, and moved toward implementation across the state. This program touches on every aspect of best practices and will benefit our youth for years to come. In addition, we saw our number of Sanctuary-certified sites increase to six with others on deck and a level of dedication and excitement we haven't seen before.

Our population began to stabilize in numbers, with a gradual increase in the detention population beginning to emerge. We continue to experience an increase in the percentage of youth committed for person crimes, with many youth admitted with complex needs and violent charges. Despite this, we have continued to see the dedication from our teams that have allowed our youth to excel in the classroom, work through the issues that brought them to DYS, and receive exceptional care and transitional services.

There are countless examples in this annual report of the successes achieved this year by our DYS team members, community partners, youth, and families.

Let's keep doing great work!


Anders Jacobson
Director, Division of Youth Services





Division of Youth Services

Mission & Vision

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.

Vision: Achieving youth success and safer Colorado communities

Spotlight Feature: DYS Named NCCHC Program of the Year

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services (DYS) Behavioral Health Services and Programming was named the 2022 Program of the Year by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC). This prestigious award is presented each year to only one facility program among the 500 jails, prisons, and juvenile confinement facilities participating in NCCHC's nationwide accreditation program.



The award was presented at a ceremony on October 24, 2022, in Las Vegas, during the 36th National Conference on Correctional Health Care. Nearly 1,500 people from across the country were in attendance. The award includes all 10 Colorado accredited sites encompassing 15 secure state-operated youth centers. All Colorado DYS youth centers are accredited by NCCHC, which puts Colorado at the forefront of integrated and comprehensive healthcare services for the youth in care.

"We are honored to receive this prestigious award which shows our dedication to the care of youth, and the expertise our DYS team possesses to assist youth in getting their lives back on the right track to reduce the chance of future recidivism," said Anders Jacobson, Director of the Division of Youth Services. *"Our partnership with NCCHC has allowed us to grow and develop our medical and behavioral health services to an impressive level. This partnership has brought a high level of professionalism and enhanced services to the youth we serve."*

NCCHC correctional health care standards and its accreditation program are considered to be the most rigorous in the United States. Colorado's Division of Youth Services is among an elite group in the U.S. that have earned NCCHC accreditation. NCCHC accreditation means that a facility meets nationally established and accepted standards for providing medical, mental health, behavioral health, line staff services, and administrative services; in addition, DYS focuses on an integrated and collaborative healthcare approach.

Within DYS, 60% of youth have co-occurring treatment needs; 67% require formal mental health intervention, and 89% require treatment-level services for substance use.

"NCCHC has been an amazing partner to the Colorado Division of Youth Services since the first contact. They care about our success and have helped connect us to resources and the network of youth-serving systems committed to excellence," said Ashley Tunstall, DYS Director of Behavioral Health and Medical Services, who accepted the award on behalf of the DYS staff.

[photo of the award along with Ashley Tunstall, MPA, MA, LPC, DYS Director of Behavioral Health and Medical Services]





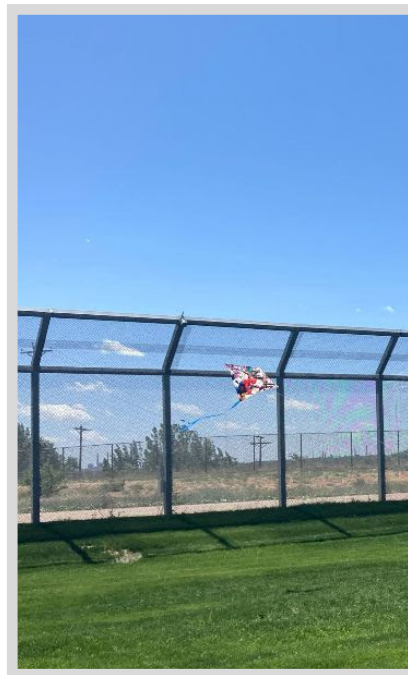
Population Review

Detained Youth Services

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 DYS. In Colorado, detention serves two purposes:

1. To ensure that a youth accused of a delinquent act appears for hearings ordered by the court
2. To sentence adjudicated youth for a period of up to 45 days as a sanction by the court

The detention continuum begins with screening and assessment services for any youth referred for detention admission. The detention model has advanced significantly in the last few decades. In 1991, the legislature expanded beyond the facility programming with the provision of community-based detention services through the Colorado Youth Detention Continuum (CYDC) program.



Increase in Juvenile
Delinquency Filings
in FY22

3,402



Number of Youth
Screened for Secure
Detention



Increase in Youth
Screened for Secure
Detention from FY21

16.1
Average Age of
Detained Youth

22.3
Average Length
of Stay (in days)

181
Daily Bed Count
Maximum

158.5
Average Number of
Youth Served Daily



Ethnicity Distribution

(across detained population)

37.7% Anglo-American

23.8% African-American

34.9% Hispanic/Latinx

3.6% Other

41%

Percentage of detention
admissions that were for a
violent charge
(this is an increase from 35% last year)



Gender Distribution

Detained

86%

14%

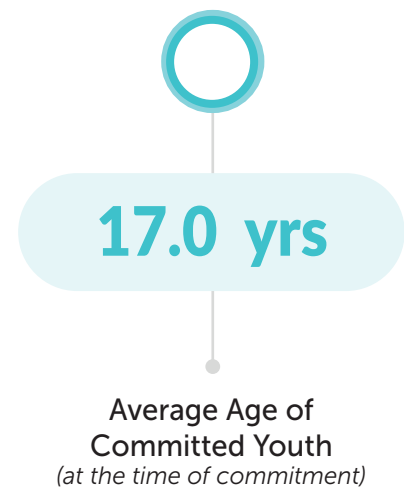
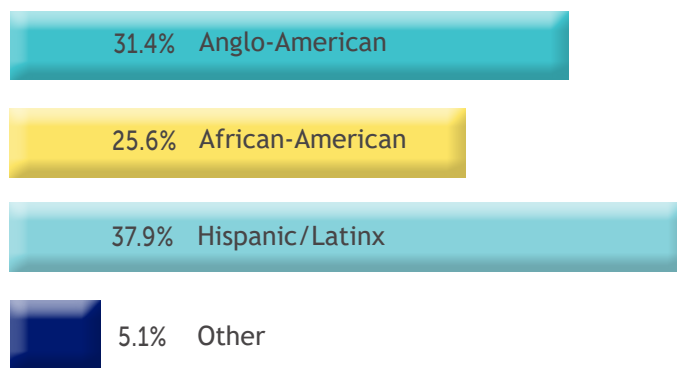
Population Review

Committed Youth 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 and through transition and parole supervision and services.

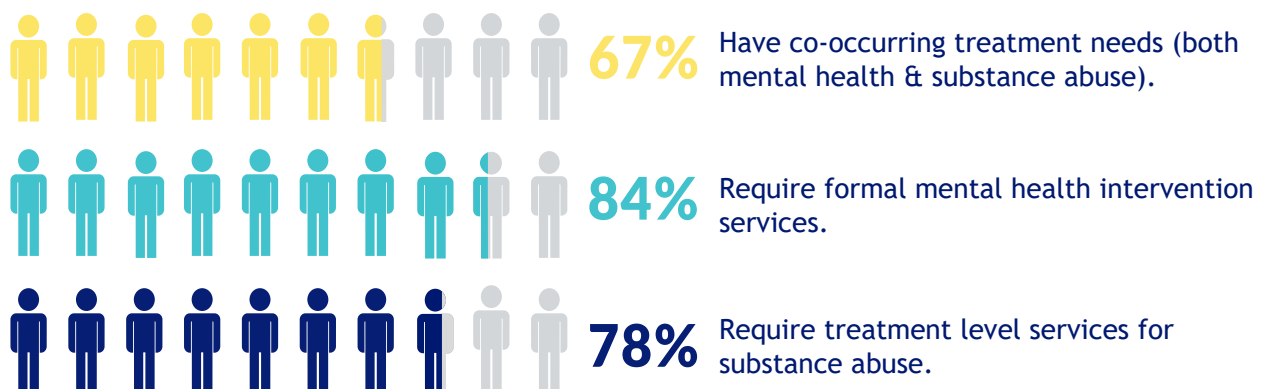
Ethnicity Distribution

(across committed population)



Treatment Needs of Newly Committed Youth

The treatment needs of newly committed youth throughout the Division of Youth Services continues to increase in complexity. Youth committed to DYS with co-occurring treatment needs for both mental health and substance abuse increased by seven percentage points between FY 21 and FY 22, and by 12 percentage points in the last three years. Youth requiring formal mental health intervention services increased by 17 percentage points in the last year, and by 19 percentage points in the last three years.



167

New
Commitments

622

Number of
Clients Served
(individual youth)

18.5

Average Length
of Service
(in months)

284.4

Average Daily
Population

Commitment Offense Type



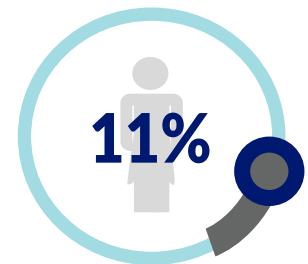
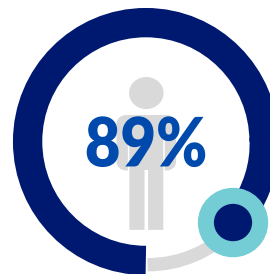
DYS Data Spotlight:

60.3%

Percentage of new
commitments that were
for a person offense

The total DYS population experienced the third year of growth in person crime population, resulting in a 21% overall increase in two fiscal years.

**Gender
Distribution**
Committed



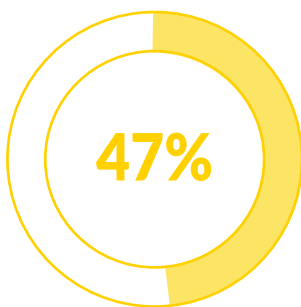
Impact in Numbers

The Division of Youth Services offers youth a comprehensive level of services that positively impact a youth's risk to reoffend following discharge from care. The support includes trauma-informed behavioral health treatment, substance use treatment, education and special education, vocational training and transitional services.

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

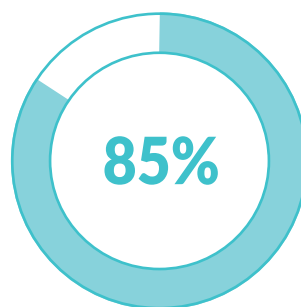
Attitudes & Behaviors

Assessment: 94%
Discharge: 50%



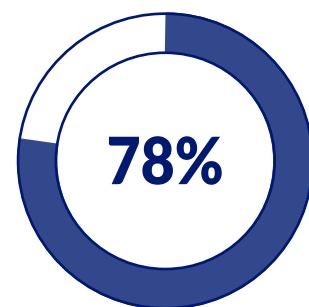
Alcohol & Drugs

Assessment: 71%
Discharge: 11%



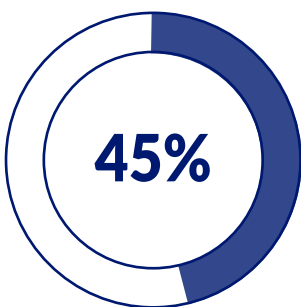
Social Proficiency Skills

Assessment: 79%
Discharge: 17%



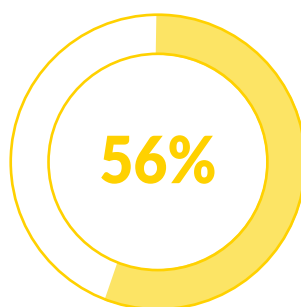
Relationships

Assessment: 89%
Discharge: 49%



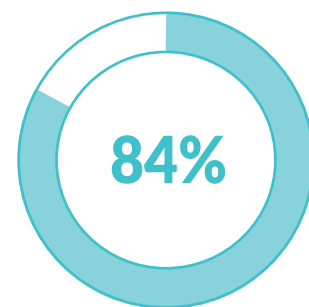
Aggression

Assessment: 81%
Discharge: 36%



School

Assessment: 38%
Discharge: 6%





Restorative Community Justice (RCJ) & Community Volunteering

Restorative Community Justice (RCJ) provides an opportunity for youth to repair the harm to victims and their community. RCJ focuses on positive youth outcomes, promotes accountability, and works to restore individuals and relationships impacted by crime to the extent possible.

[Pictured at the top of the page] Youth from the Campus at Lookout Mountain (CALM) participated in an RCJ project at Valdez Elementary School in Denver. The mural is along the sidewalk next to the school's playground and field. Youth worked with artist JOLT from Guerilla Garden LLC to bring this design to life (the artist has worked with DYS on other mural projects in the past). The youth were able to work on various elements of this project, participate in group time, and assist with elementary student participation. Everyone was very committed to the project and took great care to create something beautiful and lasting.



Youth and staff recently assisted with the event Step Up for Down Syndrome. The Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk supports the Rocky Mountain Down Syndrome Association (RMDSA). They offer direct support, resources, and education for those with Down syndrome throughout Colorado. The walk is their largest fundraiser each year, and this year was the 25th year! The youth and staff assisted in breaking down the event, including chairs, tables, tents, etc. The representative from RMDSA shared their experience working with the youth: *"They were absolutely amazing. They were polite, worked hard and listened to directions. They all had a 'can do' attitude, and made such a difference in our breakdown time. Please extend our thanks for their work."*

950
Hours of
community
volunteering

40
RCJ based
structured
community
projects

27
The number
of community
partnership
collaborations

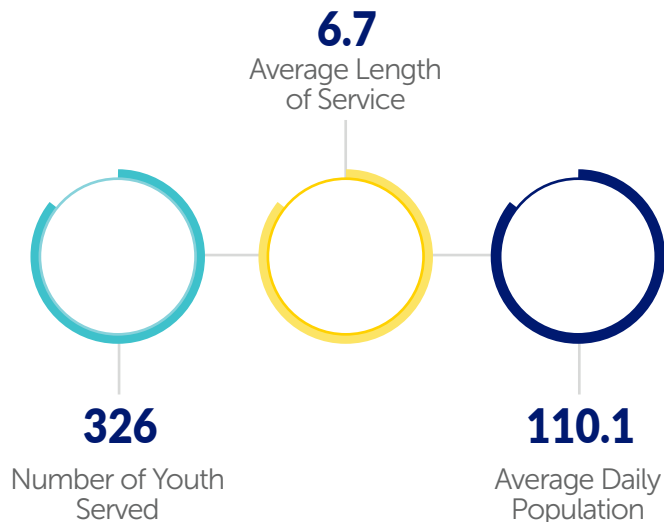
2,886
Hours of RCJ
related activities

Population Review

Parole Youth Services

The Juvenile Parole Board is made up of nine members appointed by the Governor. The members, made up of representatives from Human Services, Education, Public Safety, Labor & Employment, a local elected official, and four members of the public at large have the authority to grant, deny, defer, suspend, revoke or modify conditions of parole. State statute requires every committed youth to serve a six-month period of parole. Based on the criteria, some cases may be extended an additional 15 months.

Each youth committed to the Department of Human Services is assigned a client manager who becomes their parole officer. The client manager partners with the youth, their family, treatment providers and community supports to provide individualized case management to each youth in their care.



New DYS Campus Highlight:

On May 4, Mount View Youth Services Center officially became The Campus at Mount View with three youth centers: Rocky Mountain Youth Services Center, Betty K. Marler Youth Services Center, and Willow Point Youth Services Center. This change further supports the smaller-is-better approach to care. The youth centers kicked off the official split with an all-staff meeting, reviewing plans and schedules developed by supervisors, and celebratory cakes. All youth transitioned to their new youth center on the same day. We look forward to hearing the success stories of youth growth and development from these three youth centers.



DYS Youth Center Highlight:

There are new outdoor family meeting spaces for the youth at Clear Creek YSC, Golden Peak YSC, and Summit YSC! These spaces are also utilized for staff and youth meetings and processing areas. These structures are located around the campus (three pictured) and give youth and families a beautiful space to enjoy the outdoors and views of the mountains.



Recidivism

The Division of Youth Services defines recidivism as the adjudication or conviction of a new misdemeanor or felony offense within a specific time period. The Annual Recidivism Study helps DYS see if the programming and services provided to youth results in a reduction of youth reoffending once they leave the Division's care. The current one-year post-discharge rate of 22.1% falls below the 10-year average rate of 30.9%. For over a decade, the one-year post-discharge recidivism rate has consistently averaged around 31%. This is a remarkable improvement that points to implemented changes across DYS showing results through new strategies, systems, and training models.

22.1%

FY 22 Report

1 year recidivism
2019-20 discharge

30.6%

FY 21 Report

1 year recidivism
2018-19 discharge

41.1%

FY 20 Report

1 year recidivism
2017-18 discharge

"One-Year Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates are showing results through new strategies, systems, and training models"



- The last two recidivism annual reports show a considerable decline in recidivism rates in all three categories (one-year through three-year post-discharge).
- The FY22 Recidivism Report marks the lowest one-year rate observed since FY 2013/14 (28.1%)



Treatment Model & Service Delivery

The DYS Treatment Model continues to shape the services and care provided to youth on a daily basis. As a part of a continued effort to create a trauma-responsive environment, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) has been implemented in therapy groups. DBT is a type of talk therapy that helps people understand how thoughts affect emotions and behaviors and is specially adapted for people who experience intense emotions. DBT skills groups have begun at all committed youth centers within the last 12 months, after a successful and encouraging pilot program at Golden Peak Youth Services Center.

All behavioral health, education, direct care, and administrative staff are trained in the model. Currently, all committed youth are receiving two DBT skills groups per week. These group sessions are supported by direct care engagement that connects the youth's treatment plan and specific skills practice to the youth's risk, need, and responsivity factors.



41,309
Treatment Hours



(individual, group & family sessions)



Average Treatment
Hours per month for
each youth

**Increased Sanctuary
Certification**



sanctuary
INSTITUTE®

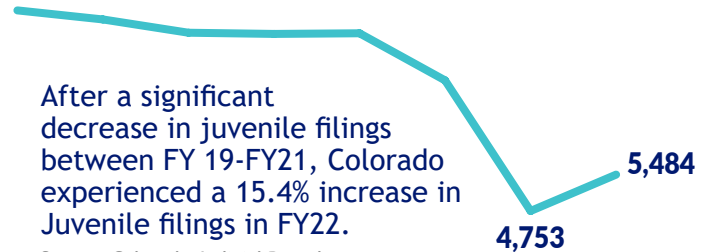
*DYS has 6 locations
certified with a goal of
3 additional sites a year
through 2027*

Observations:

Colorado Juvenile Trends

In 1997, juvenile arrests reached a high of 70,710. Since this time, juvenile arrest trends continue to decline. Between calendar year 2018 and 2021, Colorado experienced a 60% reduction in juvenile arrests.

Source: Colorado Bureau of Investigation



Source: Colorado Judicial Branch

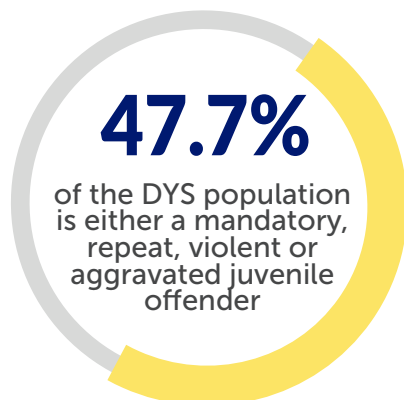
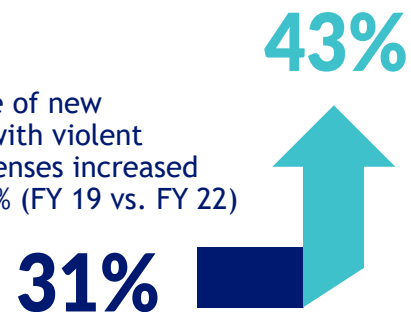
13% Increase in the number of detention youth served from FY 21 to FY 22

Trending Upward ↑
Detention trending upward results in commitment and parole increase

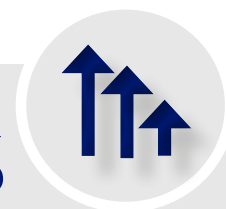
15.4% Percentage increase in juvenile delinquency filings in FY 22

Although the mental health and co-occurring percentages continue to swing upward, in FY22, we experienced a significant drop in newly committed youth requiring treatment-level services for substance abuse. Although still very high at 78%, the Division saw a decrease of 11 percentage points from FY21 (89%).

The percentage of new commitments with violent committing offenses increased from 31% to 43% (FY 19 vs. FY 22)



13.4%
Percentage increase (+402 youth) in secure detention **screenings**
(from FY21)



10%
Percentage increase in secure detention **admissions**
(from FY21)

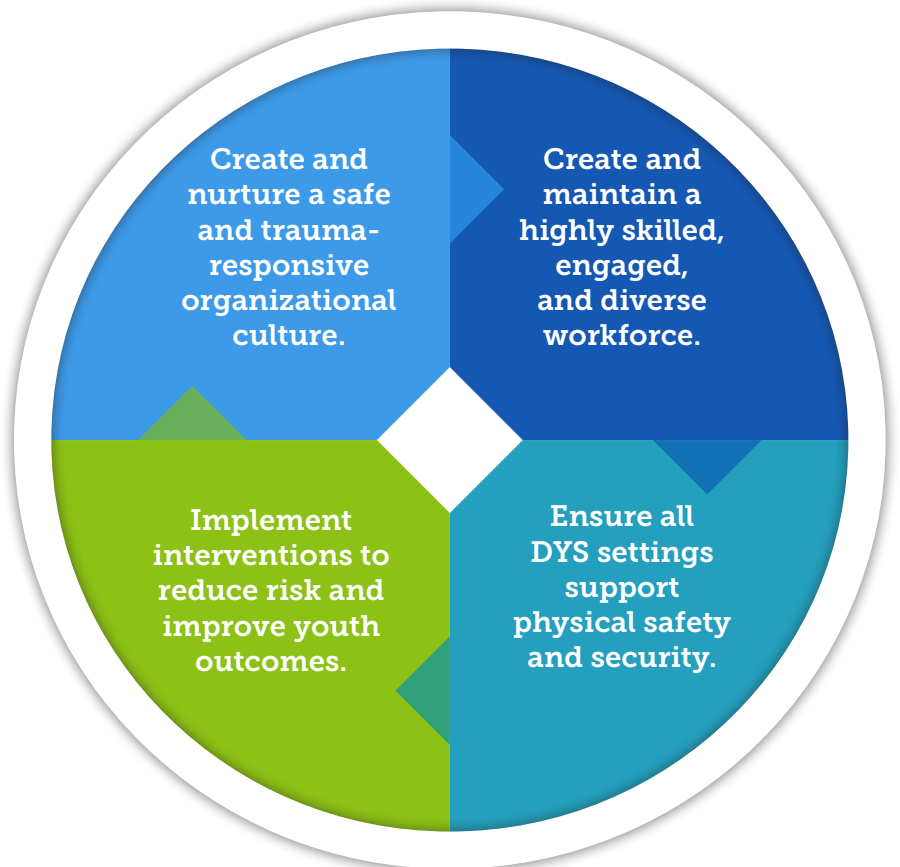
DYS Strategic Plan

FY 2022-2025

The Division of Youth Services' updated Strategic Plan will continue to build upon elements and efforts that have been started and will allow DYS to enhance the overall service delivery.

A few areas of focus for the Strategic Plan include:

- Increasing communication and senior leadership presence,
- Moving secure facilities to a more home-like atmosphere,
- Shifting and consolidating populations to optimize the use of residential state-operated and contract capacity,
- Growing the behavioral health framework by developing the DYS treatment approach, and
- We focused on trauma-responsive principles and practices and the integration into all elements of the DYS organization.



Education Services

DYS provides educational services to youth committed to the Department of Human Services in six state-operated secure commitment youth centers. The educational programs in place meet the complex needs of a diverse student population and include both general and special education services. The programs are varied and comprehensive with a focus on leading a youth to achieve a diploma, obtain a G.E.D., or access career/technical education and training.



Sanctuary Leadership Activity at Pueblo YSC

In light of democracy being the sanctuary topic of the month, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) staff decided to have a leadership activity. Youth were placed into teams and each team was given an item to draw. There were three teams: one team had a car, one a boat, and one a train. One member of each team was blindfolded while the other team members guided them as to where to draw the lines, what color to use, and how to create their item. There was music playing in the background and when the music would stop they had to switch to a new person drawing. The goal was to help youth recognize different leadership styles while taking their own personal "viewpoint" both figuratively and literally out of the equation. This allowed each youth an opportunity to be a leader and use democracy in helping their peers in accomplishing a task. Everyone enjoyed this activity and the youth did a great job creating a beautiful work of art.



High School
Diplomas
Awarded:

66

GED's Awarded:

49

CTE Certifications
Awarded:

438



Post-Secondary and
Higher Education
opportunities for youth

Number of new books
added to DYS libraries
by Colorado State
Library and DYS from
July 21-Feb. 2

1,318



New launchpad tablets
were purchased for
eight youth centers

Pilot Program Highlight:

FY22 was the pilot year for the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP). SWAP is a collaborative initiative between the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Youth Services (DYS), and is supported by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).



SWAP
School to Work
Alliance Program

The program is designed to supplement the educational transition of students with disabilities, or suspected of having a disability, and is in addition to the supports and services that are outlined in the Individualized Education Program.

Some examples of pre-employment services include:

- Post-secondary exploration and application
- Career exploration and application
- Career development
- Employment-related instruction
- Job development

SWAP Specialists, as part of the education team, provide opportunities for young adults with disabilities to practice and improve workplace skills, consider their career interests, and obtain real-world work experience. In FY22 the program supported a total of 35 youth within youth centers in the education setting with pre-employment transition services. Together with regional workforce centers, the focus is on competitive, integrated employment for youth through thoughtful career pathway development.

In FY 23, the program will expand to provide one SWAP specialist for each region of the state.



Zebulon Pike YSC & Platte Valley Academy Science Classes Take on Dissections

At Zebulon Pike YSC, the students in Ms. Osborne's science class had the opportunity to observe and dissect California Pacific squid, as part of a Marine Biology/Biospheres unit. Working in small groups, students used soap carving knives, blunted scissors, and wooden skewers to complete the dissection. Students identified and removed an eye, tentacle, arm, skin, pen ink sac, siphon, gonads and beak, and placed them on an identification sheet. Students were able to write their names with the pen and ink sac. All youth were engaged in the activity and are eager to explore the endless opportunities in Marine Biology.

The youth at Platte Valley YSC started their dissection experiences last spring when they dissected a sheep brain, in a lab led by science teacher Catherine Gray. The youth also dissected a pig heart and a fetal pig! The youth who participated in the dissection worked hard to earn the opportunity by demonstrating personal and social responsibility, trust, commitment to safety, and emotional intelligence throughout the trimester. It was a huge success and the youth greatly enjoyed the opportunity to apply all they had learned with this very hands-on activity.

Academic Achievement

64.5% of youth discharged with a HSD or GED in hand (the majority who did not attain one were either too young, had re-enrolled, were working towards GED, or had been discharged to adult corrections).

Career Technical Education

One-third (124 youth) of students obtained certification or participated in various CTE opportunities while committed.



Academic Growth

Student growth results indicate that students meet or exceed typical growth (the pace in public school settings).

College Opportunities

Fifteen students participated in collegiate opportunities, enrolling in college courses and credit attainment.

Second chance scholarships are now available to youth in FY 22/23 through the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative.



Youth Success During Job Fair

Grand Mesa YSC, along with the Western Region Office, implemented a Transition Unit for youth to prepare for life after commitment. The unit's goal is to help youth to be better prepared to reintegrate back into the community by giving them the tools they need to be successful while providing them with ongoing support, guidance and assistance.

The Transition Taskforce sent eight youth to a School-to-Work Alliance Program Job Fair. The youth prepared résumés and cover letters and met with over 50 employers. The youth represented Grand Mesa YSC extremely well, completed on-the-spot interviews, and all eight youth received at least one job offer by the end of the day. The youth returned to the facility with a great sense of accomplishment and pride.



Virtual Career Fair at CALM

Lookout Academy and Teens Inc hosted the 2nd Annual Virtual Career Fair this year after a successful experience last year. Youth had the opportunity to hear from professionals from a variety of different industries as well as engage in hands-on activities. Over 20 students participated in the event. Students and staff look forward to more opportunities to explore future careers. More than 50% of the campus population at CALM attended these sessions.

"These kids were beaming with excitement and pride when they returned. We are very proud of them."

- Western Region Director David Lee noted after the School-to-Work Job Fair

DYS Culture in Action

Minute Stories

Teen Health Week

Prairie Vista Youth Services Center (PRVYSC) celebrated the annual Teen Health Week during the first week of August. Teen Health Week is a global initiative to raise awareness of the unique health issues facing teens worldwide. Through a wide variety of local, state, national, and international programs and activities, Teen Health Week encourages teens to take charge of their physical and mental health to facilitate healthy habits they will carry with them throughout their lives.

Activities at PRVYSC throughout the week consisted of health passports, what teen health means to me collages, decorating sugar cookies, a virtual mental health webinar, health information jeopardy, field day, health fair day in the gymnasium, and capped it all off with a pizza party at the end of the week. The youth actively participated in all events and activities and enjoyed this unique and educational experience.



Grand Mesa Adventure Club

Staff members from Grand Mesa Youth Services Center were able to take several youth out of the building for an Adventure Club hike.

The youth had a great time exploring the outdoors, looking at all of the beautiful formations and searching for the mica stone embedded in the rock.

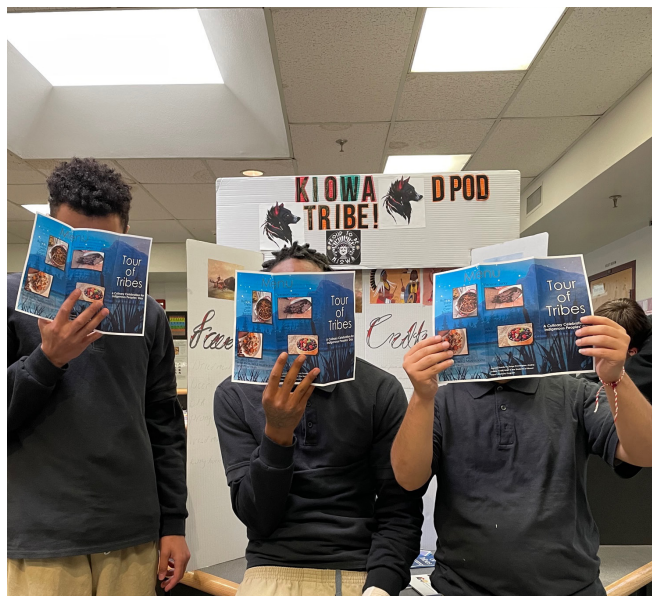
Two of the youth took the information they learned back to the youth center to share with their science teacher for an assignment. It was a beautiful Colorado day and both youth and staff are excited to enjoy more outdoor activities together.



Indigenous Peoples' Day

Mount View Youth Services Center youth worked hard to complete research projects during school and Behavioral Health Staff (BHS) groups on assigned tribes during the week. Later that week, youth and staff participated in a Tour of Tribes throughout the buildings. The goal was to provide youth with an immersive cultural experience, utilizing RCJ Principles to help develop respect for different cultures.

The completed research projects were displayed in the control centers. Each unit came by to view the posters created by their peers and learn about the different tribes while listening to native music. The youth were provided with a pamphlet that was created by the graphic design program that summarized facts about each tribe.



Juneteenth Celebrations

Across DYS youth centers, youth and staff participated in Juneteenth celebration activities. The Campus at Lookout Mountain held a field day for youth. The field day consisted of multiple inflatables [pictured on the right], carnival foods, a BBQ, and a live DJ.

The youth at Prairie Vista YSC had each unit design a Juneteenth poster for display and after a brief discussion followed by an educational video, the youth were able to enjoy a few food traditions associated with Juneteenth.

Many youth centers celebrated with special meals that highlighted food traditions and flavors associated with Juneteenth.



CrossFit Welcomes Youth

Youth from Grand Mesa YSC have been attending classes at a local Crossfit gym that partners with The Phoenix Program. These specialized classes are held once a month to help community members participate in pro-social activities to battle addiction. The mission of the Phoenix program "is to build a sober active community that fuels resilience and harness the transformational power of connection so that together we rise, recover, and live." Sobriety is such an important component of the healing process of many of the youth in DYS, and programs like this can play a key role in maintaining that sobriety.

"We are lucky that we live in an area where we have local gyms like Crossfit Vex that invest in programs to better our community and the lives of those who live in it," shared Vanessa Glasoe-Triplett.





DYS Culinary Excellence

This past year proved once again that the dining services and culinary teams at the Division of Youth Services cannot be beaten! The range of programs, activities, and celebrations that are made complete through creative and delicious meals is unmatched. DYS has seen continued growth in youth engagement in the food and culinary opportunities in the youth centers, from gaining culinary certificates to researching library books to learning new ways to grow and prepare food.

Many special meals are made that way due to the time and care that has gone into creating them. Time and time again "made-from-scratch" items and family recipes shared by staff are the cornerstones of these meals. Often these family recipes are honoring traditions and heritages from all over the world, opening the youth to new cultures and flavors.

The "Passport to the World" meals at Platte Valley YSC have continued to be a delight of the youth and educational as they learn about the featured county each month. Brazil, Greece, Africa, Germany, and Korea are just a few locations highlighted from this past year's successful program.

Thank you to all the dining and culinary staff for your contribution to excellent meals, for sharing your passion and knowledge with youth and for helping form meaningful professional relationships between youth and staff.



DYS Garden Programs

All across DYS, youth are getting the opportunity to cultivate, nurture, and grow plants, flowers, and vegetables in youth center gardens. This educational and sometimes therapeutic activity has been rapidly growing in popularity over the past several years.

The youth that engage in these activities and programs learn the skills needed to grow herbs and vegetables from seed. This process has taught many how to be more self-sufficient, the learned patience of growing, and the self-confidence to know they can provide this for themselves and their families once they leave DYS.

Culinary classes in many youth centers have used





Learning to Tie a Tie

At Marvin W. Foote YSC, the male youth participate in a "Boys to Men" group once a week. One week's activity was learning how to tie a tie. The youth were all provided with a tie and step-by-step instructions on how to tie a tie. As a challenge, they were also given the opportunity to tie a bow tie. It was great to see youth helping other youth to learn a new skill. It was amazing to see how the youths' confidence and demeanor changed once they had their tie on. The youth felt distinguished and noticeable, so much so that they wanted to continue wearing their ties. The youth were allowed to wear their ties to lunch and all staff came to the dining hall to acknowledge and support their confidence. What a sharp-looking crew!



Native American Heritage Month

November is Native American Heritage Month, which allows "recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the U.S."

The youth at Spring Creek Youth Services Center learned about Native American Culture and made their own dreamcatchers! Traditionally, a dreamcatcher "is a handmade willow hoop, on which is woven a net or web. It may also be decorated with sacred items such as certain feathers or beads."

The youth really enjoyed creating their own dreamcatchers and learning about the history and cultural significance in the process!



the harvest from the gardens to teach youth how to prepare meals with the fruits of their labor.

Tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, peppers, squash, lettuce, beets, herbs and flowers are just a few of the items that were grown last year.

At Gilliam YSC, they started a fun and exciting new program called Gilliam Garden Club. This has been a great way to foster youth and staff relationships, teach valuable life skills and lessons, and enjoy the beautiful outdoors. The youth have loved being involved.

Other classes are also getting involved in the fun, including construction classes across several youth centers that created weather-treated raised beds for the gardens. There was also a photography class that used the beautiful gardens as its focus.

DYS Culture in Action

Staff Stories

Northeast Region Team Takes Part in Community Outreach

The Northeast Region Team engaged in a Restorative Community Justice (RCJ) outreach activity at the local nonprofit Showers for All. The Denver-based nonprofit is an initiative of The Dignity Project and focuses on outreach to the most vulnerable and threatened. They provide a mobile trailer with two full-service bathrooms, showers and multiple washers and dryers at Civic Center Park in downtown Denver. The organization's mission is to empower the journey away from homelessness by restoring dignity and hope. The NE Region team members volunteered their time to staff the mobile showers, wash laundry and clean the restrooms for clients accessing the facilities. They found the event rewarding and humbling and look forward to continuing to find ways to give back to the community.



Western Region Staff Give Back

Client Manager Ruben Sandoval has been setting up regular community service projects that Western Region Office staff can participate in. Recently, three staff members put together food baskets for the Food Bank of the Rockies in Grand Junction. The Western Region staff have been helping to build a stronger community and are having fun doing it!





Spring Community Pride Day at CALM

On a Wednesday, at the end of March, over 150 youth and staff volunteers joined together in a Community Pride Day full of restorative projects that improved the campus grounds and fostered team building and community. Teams spread out across the Campus at Lookout Mountain to tackle projects and restore spaces across the grounds and youth centers.

As volunteers arrived on site, the weather was snowy and chilly, but as the day went on the sun came out and brought warmth and reinvigorated efforts. Teams worked to dismantle and clear three old sheds, paint and refresh the intake area, remove winter build-up along the fence line footer, refurbish youth center entrances, build and level foundations for picnic tables, declutter spaces and remove old furniture, organize the landscape tool shed, paint touch-ups, sidewalk edging and grounds raking, prepped and cleared the garden beds for summer planting, and updated classrooms.

The focus for the day was to practice relationship-building skills and demonstrate the 5 R's of restorative justice, including respect, responsibility, repair, and reintegration. DYS Director Anders Jacobson said, "Our day will be filled with opportunities for building and strengthening relationships, having fun, becoming successful together, getting the job done, and collective celebration," and it truly was!



Youth Success Stories

Brodie

During his time within the Division of Youth Services, Brodie displayed positive behaviors and was motivated to be successful, including earning his GED. His determination to learn, grow and move forward in a positive way allowed Brodie to be placed into a step-down program quickly.

Brodie has suffered a lot of personal loss in his life including his father's death, his close friend's death, and another close friend's suicide which resulted in unhealthy choices. He worked hard in his individual therapy sessions to process these losses. While at his step-down program, Brodie worked closely with his mentor, had a job at a car dealership, and achieved his Gold Level before he was paroled.

Once on parole, Brodie continued to work hard and obtained a better-paying job at an iron works company, while continuing part-time at a car dealership. Brodie paid his entire restitution amount and purchased a car during his parole period.

Brodie engaged in numerous pro-social activities on parole including being a groomsman at a friend's wedding (he had to wear suspenders much to his dismay), attending several friends' graduation ceremonies and going to movies and the lake with his girlfriend and friends. "It was a pleasure to work with him," shared his Client Manager, Colleen Schott. Brodie continues to have a positive outlook on his life and is excited about his future.



Laureano

Laureano came to the Division of Youth Services in August 2020. He left significant poverty in Guatemala and had been in the United States for only a few years when he committed a crime. His family was devastated and disappointed about what had happened, and Laureano experienced remorse and unbearable sadness over what he did.

Laureano did not speak English and struggled to navigate the DYS system. He felt lonely and lost attempting to understand cultural nuances. There were times when Laureano did not know where to turn, but he didn't give up.

During his time in DYS, he participated in various treatment groups offered through the Division of Youth Services. He learned to speak English, earned a spot on the Honor



Treasure

We all face challenges. When we do, it's easy to give up and say, "I can't do this," or "What difference will it make?" This may be especially true when you grow up surrounded by neglect and homelessness.

After placement into multiple group homes early on in her life and having to care for herself often, Treasure developed not only survival skills, but also a tremendous amount of anger. The choices she made during this time of her life resulted in her being committed to the care of the Division of Youth Services (DYS). During most of her time with DHS, Treasure found herself placed on a safety plan to help her find new tools to control her anger. The team working with her remembers her (quite well) as a very challenging youth; but that did not stop them from putting everything they had into helping Treasure turn the

corner -- they all knew she had the potential to be amazing.

Prior to parole, Treasure's mother made it clear that she could not live with her. Sadly, on the day of her release, her friend also backed out with a place to stay while a Foster Youth in Transition program was working on locating an apartment. Treasure ultimately ended up at Urban Peak, a nonprofit shelter for young people. With a new launching point, Treasure was offered a job at a local restaurant. As time passed, she transitioned to her own apartment and a great job working at a large e-commerce company.

Treasure is focusing on her future. But, as part of her past, she wants to recognize Ta'Shana Sanders, Champagne Phillips, and Miriam Medina at Mount View for helping her along the way. "When I was transitioning, I was between a little girl and a young lady. I was going through a lot emotionally, and I didn't know what to do with my emotions. I was dealt a tough place in life. I was in a dark place, and these Mount View staff helped keep me focused on the light." Right now, she wants to learn more about the skills she has. "I have really big dreams. There is so much I want to do to give back to my community. I want to inspire youth in the juvenile or foster care system, and I want to be an example and have them look at my story and see that they can do that too, and nothing can stop them."

"Mount View Youth Services made me want to do better. I had to find myself there. I had to have that experience to get to where I am today."

Treasure is setting her sights high and has more dreams to achieve. Right now, she is pushing herself to grow and hopes to enroll in college where she can achieve a degree--possibly in business or nursing.

Roll, and obtained his high school diploma and OSHA certifications. Laureano has been Resident of the Month many times, but most importantly, Laureano learned empathy for others. He carries the burden of how his offenses impacted others.

He participates in volunteer activities to give back to his community, including Restorative Justice practices, community trash pickup, and environmental initiatives. He has also spent time helping at a local agency serving people experiencing housing/financial hardship.

Laureano is getting ready to be released back to the community. He has enough confidence to walk into a job interview and will soon be able to work and provide for his family in Guatemala. His dream is to build his parents a home. He has also appreciated the opportunities and education offered to him through DHS. Laureano is grateful for the people of the State of Colorado, the DHS professionals, and the youth with whom he met along the way. He is looking forward to this new chapter in his life and hoping to achieve his dreams.

Shawn

When Shawn was committed to the Division of Youth Services in August of 2018, he was 16 and facing a long 3 to 4 years in custody as an Aggravated Juvenile Offender. He spent more than his first year of commitment refusing to follow rules, acting out, and being an active part of a negative culture. For a long time, it seemed like Shawn wasn't going to turn a corner.

Shortly after Shawn turned 18 in January 2020, he realized he was going in the wrong direction and made an active decision to do better. He began to work in treatment and refrained from acting out with peers and breaking rules. He enrolled in the culinary arts program and excelled there, finding a niche for himself that gave him a focus for parole and for his future. He was doing so well that his Multi-Disciplinary Team agreed to step him down and his Client

Manager, Kristen Brooks, presented his case to the Attorney General's office to get the permission he needed to step down. The request was approved and in June 2021, Shawn moved to the Dale House in Colorado Springs.

As an independent living program focused on helping older teens and young adults to transition into adult life, the Dale House required that Shawn obtain a job as soon as possible so that he could save money and work on job skills in the community before he went on parole. With his culinary training and skill, Shawn naturally sought to find employment in the restaurant industry. His Client Manager decided to contact Brother Luck, a local celebrity chef whose own backstory and struggles with mental health were overcome with perseverance and hard work.

Brother Luck sat down with Shawn and his Client Manager for more than an hour, talking with Shawn about his own life story and getting to know Shawn's story and his hopes and goals for his future. Brother Luck hired Shawn on the spot, giving him a spot in the kitchen at one of his well-known local restaurants, the Lucky Dumpling. For more than a year, Shawn worked there as Brother Luck mentored him both personally and professionally. Today, Shawn has been promoted and moved on to another local hot spot, but Brother Luck remains a friend and mentor. Shawn lives successfully in his own apartment with a roommate and is scheduled to successfully finish his parole and time with the Division of Youth Services in January 2023. Shawn has made incredible strides and has turned what once looked like an impossible and far away goal into a successful and positive reality that is in the here and now.



Sydney

Sydney came to the Division of Youth Services at the age of 14. She always wanted to be a "normal kid," live with a parent who would provide her the stability and structure she needed while encouraging her to pursue her interests. Even though Sydney had this desire, she knew it would take a lot of hard work for her and her family.

After a rocky first few months at Grand Mesa, Sydney realized that being at the bottom wasn't

where she wanted to be. She stated, "Christa Daskam at Grand Mesa helped me through a lot of my struggles. I deeply appreciate her for seeing my potential and encouraging me to make the changes I needed to make." With much support from Grand Mesa staff, her therapist, and her family, Sydney began doing the work she had to accomplish to make it to where she is today.

Sydney now has the structure she needs and that is provided by her mom, sister, and

Robert

Robert began his Division of Youth Services journey in 2019. Throughout his time in DYS, Robert made significant progress in his individualized treatment areas. He engaged with his therapist to address treatment goals, understand family relationships, and acquire a deeper understanding of his feelings and their impact on his behavior. He successfully completed the youth center groups that included moral reasoning, healthy relationships, communications, ethics, seeking safety, victim impact, and many more. Robert was extremely proud of himself for being on the honor roll and earning his high school diploma while in DYS. He shared this success with his family and friends and saw how many supportive people he has in his circle.

When Robert initially applied to a step-down program, he received a "not ready yet" response. Still, he applied the feedback, continued his engagement and positive behavior, and was accepted two months later. Robert demonstrated maturity and consistency in this placement. He has and continues to demonstrate the ability to avoid temptation and negative influences. He often displays a positive and light-hearted attitude, and he earned the highest status in less than six months in his step-down program.

Robert recently completed his restorative justice project, where he collected coats for the upcoming winter season. He was able to take the coats he collected and disperse them throughout the community, ensuring those less fortunate would have proper winter attire.

When asking Robert what he attributes to his success, he will tell you, "My mother and auntie are my biggest motivations for life. They have shown me unconditional love and are reliable and have always been at my side." Robert continues to be a positive role model for other youth at his step-down placement. Due to his continued positive behaviors, he is now working towards early parole. "With his hard work and dedication and his desire to make amends with his community in the future, if Robert keeps on this path, there is no stopping him," shared his Client Manager, Jessica Borunda.



her sister's husband, who she considers a father figure. She is attending high school full-time and passing all of her classes. Sydney has a driver's license and a car. She hopes to participate in professional dance, and this requires attending dance classes five times a week. She holds a weekend job and fits weekly counseling and tutoring into her week. Sydney shared that having an amazing family and support system is all she needs, and she does not know what she would do without them. She would also like to thank her Client Manager, Ladonna, "for having her back and helping her keep her head high." She has a lot of love for her and doesn't know where she would be without her support.

DYS Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Financial Review

Expenditures by Category



The percentage of the budget spent on direct care and services to youth (education, residential placement, behavioral health, and medical services)

DYS would like to thank the Colorado State Legislature for its support in 2021-2022. The funding backed DYS in the efforts to continue the movement towards the expansion of career, technical education and vocational training programs within youth centers.

10%

Colorado Youth
Detention
Continuum

6.5%

Client
Management

2%

Parole &
Transition

1%

Boulder
Impact

1.5%

Director's
Office/
Administration



THANK YOU

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Data Resources

[1]Colorado Department of Human Services. (2022). *DYS Publication and Reports: Monthly Population Report, DYS Statistical Report, Education Outcome Evaluation, and Recidivism Report*. Retrieved from <https://cdhs.colorado.gov/about-cdhs/news/cdhs-publications-and-reports>



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