



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

2022/2023



ANNUAL REPORT

Division of Youth Services

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

January 9, 2024

cdhs.colorado.gov/dys

Welcome to the Division of Youth Services

Annual Report

2022/2023

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

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings,

With great pride, we present the annual report for Fiscal Year 2023, highlighting the incredible work, notable achievements, and challenges we face in the Division of Youth Services (DYS). As you review this year's report, you will see an overview of the populations we serve, treatment services, restorative justice, education and vocational information, as well as a glimpse into youth center activities and the success of youth in DHS.

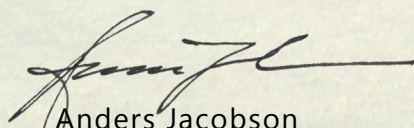
DYS recognizes the progression of the treatment needs of newly committed youth and remains responsive by augmenting treatment hours and services. This year we incorporated additional Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) skill groups across all youth centers, including detention, further strengthening our approach to youth care. All DHS youth centers are accredited by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCHC). During this fiscal year, we were nationally recognized as the Program of the Year for behavioral health services and programming.

In addition, DHS successfully helped 157 youth earn their high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED). This achievement is particularly noteworthy, with 29% of the youth requiring an Individualized Education Program (IEP), more than double the national average.

We also recognize the challenges inherent in our work. We've observed a concerning rise in youth entering our care due to significant person crimes. This difficult reality will continue pushing us harder to intensify our efforts to provide the best treatment and transition services possible.

Amidst these challenges, we are honored to have received the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) President's Award, a testament to every individual's dedication and tireless efforts within DHS. This recognition underscores our commitment to nurturing youth development statewide.

At DHS, our commitment remains strong in guiding, encouraging, and supporting the youth in our care. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated staff, community partners, and supporters whose unwavering support helps us consistently deliver high-level care to our Colorado youth.


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

DYS Director Receives CJJA Juvenile Justice President's Award

Congratulations to DYS Director, Anders Jacobson, for being awarded the 2023 Juvenile Justice President's Award from The Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA). The CJJA President's Award is a recognition of Jacobson's unwavering commitment to juvenile justice reform and his extraordinary leadership within the organization. Jacobson has actively engaged with the CJJA and shown a deep understanding of the challenges today's youth face. He has worked closely with his team to develop innovative solutions that prioritize trauma-responsive care and treatment, education, and reintegration.



"CJJA is incredibly grateful for Anders' dedication and commitment to the organization and, more importantly, to improving the lives and outcomes for all youth through building positive youth development outcomes."

- CJJA Executive Director Mike Dempsey

"I am thankful for this opportunity to highlight the greater DYS. This award is a way to showcase what we ALL do statewide within DYS and brings that information to the reader... we should be really proud of all of our DYS team members!" shared Director Jacobson. "Our collaborative work across all states and local jurisdictions is a testament to our ongoing commitment to youth development."

KARE 11 Investigates: How one state changed its practices and ended juvenile solitary

If Minnesota is looking for solutions on ending juvenile solitary confinement, it might look to Colorado, which ended the practice and made the state safer.

Brandon Stahl (KARE11), Lauren Leamanczyk, Steve Eckert

Spotlight Features:

DYS Nationally Recognized for Seculsion Reduction

The Division of Youth Services has dedicated itself to operating healthy, trauma-responsive environments by promoting positive, pro-social, safe, and non-violent interactions. This transformative culture has been nearly a decade in the making, garnering recognition throughout the country for its impact.

Since fiscal year 2019, Colorado DYS has been recognized as a transformational leader in seclusion reform. This year, an investigative series on KARE 11, (NBC) Minneapolis, Minnesota highlighted Colorado DYS as a leader in ending solitary confinement [2]. The articles highlight the growing pains of implementing new strategies, but also the lasting and positive impact these changes have shown in recent years. *“The public saw a benefit to Colorado’s solitary ban. The number of youths who re-offended within a year has been cut almost in half to the lowest level in nearly a decade, according to the state’s data.”*



5 New Bills

Passed in less than 4 months

Less than 4 months after and as a direct result of the investigative series highlighting Colorado, Minnesota unanimously passed a bill in May 2023 that “will prohibit juvenile detention facilities from putting youth into solitary confinement.”



DYS averages

28 minutes

per seclusion, verses

the recent national averages which are between **5-9 hours**

NCCHC Program of the Year



In October, 2022, the 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.

Population Review

Detained Youth Services

The division is responsible for providing short-term secure and community-based detention services for pre-adjudicated and sentenced youth. There are two avenues a youth may first enter DYS once they are brought into physical custody by law enforcement and screened using the JDSAG (Juvenile Detention Screening and Assessment Guide). Either:

- community-based detention services and supervision,
OR
- secure detention in a state-operated youth center. Secure detention is limited to youth who pose a substantial risk of serious harm to others or youth who are a flight risk from prosecution.

The screener makes the detention decision based on the results of the JDSAG, statutory guidelines, and the Chief Judge's screening order. Youth who are detained are then assessed for services that will mitigate substantial risk or flight risk, and recommendations are made to the court for supervised release.

Youth detained or sent home to serve home detention (with parent/guardian/kin) attend a juvenile detention hearing within 48 hours. Youth sent home without services are given a summons to appear at a future hearing.

15.9

**Average Age
at the Time of Detention**

13%

**Increase in Detention
Average Daily Population
in FY23 (+21 per day)**

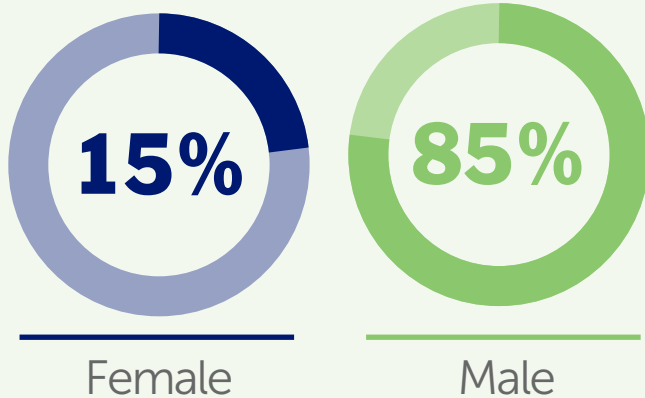
3,613

Detention Screens

The Colorado Youth Detention Continuum has increased screenings by 20.4% since FY21, from 3,000 to 3,613.

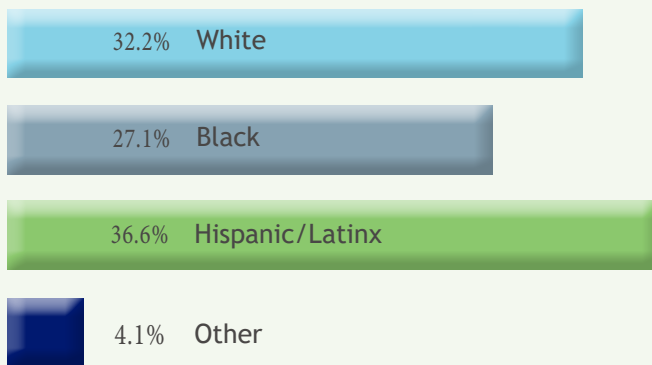


Gender Distribution



Ethnicity Distribution

(across detained population)



1,973

**Detained
Youth Served
in FY 23**

179.2

**Detention
Average Daily
Population**

22.3

**Average
Length of Stay
(in days)**

23%



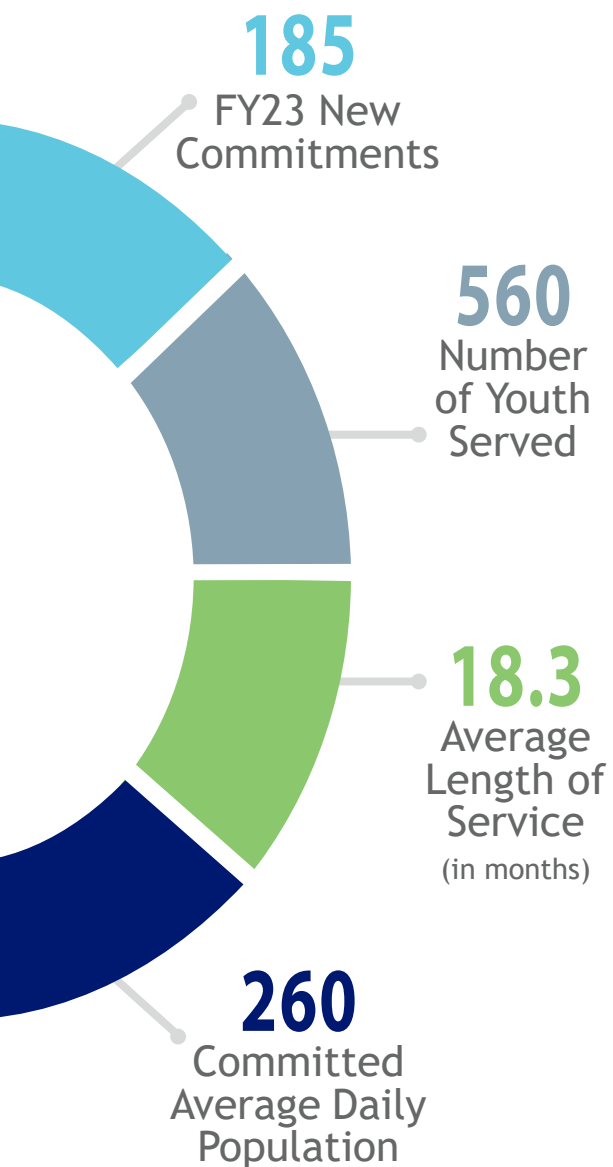
There were 2,828 new detention admissions in FY23. This is an increase of 23% since FY21 (2,299).



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.



11%
Increase in Commitments during FY23
(167 in FY22 to 185 in FY23)



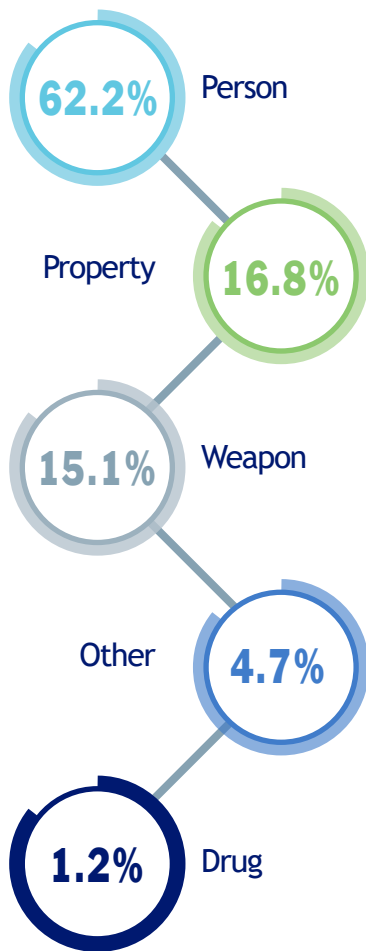
16.8
Average Age
(at the time of commitment)



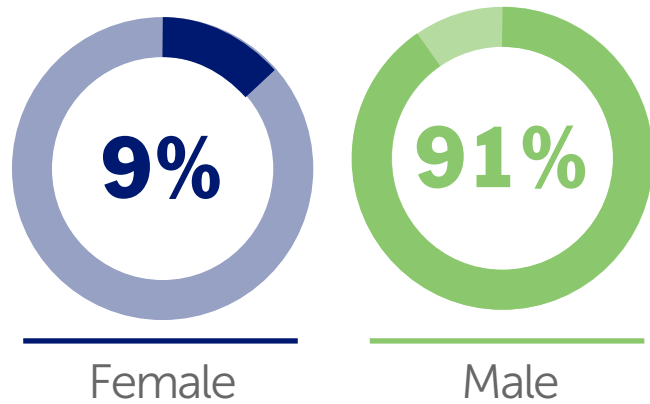
47%
New Commitments with Violent Offenses
(up from 31% in FY19)



Commitment Offense Type

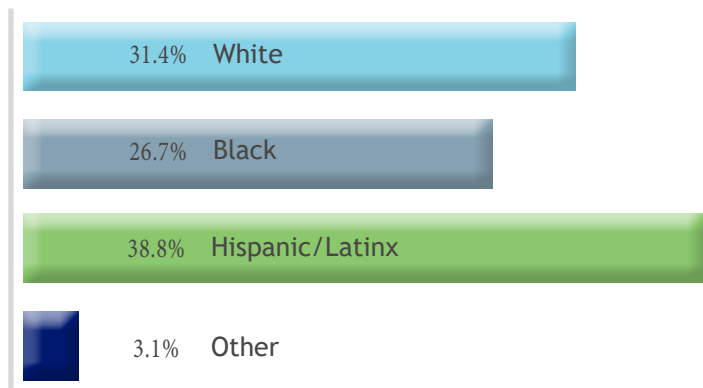


Gender Distribution



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. The last two fiscal years have the highest percentage of youth requiring mental health and substance use treatment (co-occurring treatment needs) when comparing the previous 16 years of data.



67% Have co-occurring treatment needs (both mental health & substance abuse). This is a 7 percentage point increase since FY21.



80% Require formal mental health intervention services. This is a 13 percentage point increase since FY21 and a 23 percentage point increase since FY16.



81% Require treatment level services for substance abuse. Although it is a 3 percentage point increase over FY22, it remains an 8 percentage point decrease since FY21.



Population Review

Parole Youth Services

The Juvenile Parole Board is comprised of nine members appointed by the Governor. These members represent various sectors, including Human Services, Education, Public Safety, Labor and Employment, alongside a local elected official and four members from the public. They possess the authority to grant, deny, defer, suspend, revoke, or modify parole conditions. As per state statute, each committed youth must serve a mandatory six-month parole period. Depending on specific criteria, certain cases might be eligible for an extension of up to 15 months.

Every youth committed to the Department of Human Services is assigned a client manager who also serves as 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 under their supervision.

293

**Number of
Youth Served**



**Average Length of
Parole Services**
(in months)

105.7

**Parole Average Daily
Population**

Restorative Community Justice & 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.

Restorative Practice Sessions/Events include: accountability/apology letters, circles, conferencing, psych ed classes, restorative accountability practices, restorative dialogue/mediation practices, structured community restorative projects, structured individual restorative projects, victim impact panel, victim impact/awareness, and youth panels.

Grand Mesa Youth Volunteer at Bike Race

Grand Mesa YSC staff and youth engaged in a RCJ initiative benefiting the local mountain biking community. They started the day by distributing packets and T-shirts to riders, later assembling medals and preparing cooking equipment to feed returning racers. The youth excelled in directing traffic and awarding finishers as part of the Gemini Adventures volunteer crew.

Platte Valley Youth Donates Homemade Afghan

A proud youth at Platte Valley YSC crafted a large crocheted afghan, showcasing dedication to completing the project. The beautiful afghan was donated to the Guadalupe Center, which offers emergency shelter, transitional housing, and case management for individuals experiencing homelessness.

CAMV Youth Charity Drive

A youth at the Campus at Mount View made burritos for staff as part of an RCJ project, aiming to raise funds for Hope Connection International. This non-profit organization offers support to survivors of abuse and addiction through free support groups, education, sponsorships, and long-term housing. The youth chose to support Hope Connection International due to its relevance to his personal journey in treatment and experiences that led him to DYS.

4,718

Hours of Restorative
Practice Service
Delivery

565

Restorative
Practice Sessions
and Events

4,880

Youth Experiences
Involving Multiple
Restorative
Practices/Events





Treatment Model & Service Delivery

DYS focuses on the care of the whole person, looking at both personal and organizational aspects to help youth recover and succeed. The division's trauma-focused approach involves using skills like mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness. This helps create a safe and empowering environment. All of the division's sites are accredited by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, and eight of the sites are certified in the Sanctuary Model with a goal of three additional sites reaching certification in fiscal year 2024.

During the 2023 fiscal year, every youth received direct behavioral health services from Monday to Friday each week. In addition, all youth received weekly milieu-based Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) services. 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.

Youth receive robust full-time daily programming that consists of a minimum of 12-14 hours per day. The division's treatment model and service delivery spans from detention through commitment. In detention, the focus is on skill-building, providing mental health screening and services, and specialized care when needed. The division also offers individual sessions in detention focusing on distress tolerance.

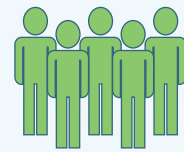


100%
of youth centers are
NCCHC Accredited



12-14
hours

Youth receive a
minimum of 12 to 14 hours of
daily programming.



38,578

Treatment
Hours*

*individual, group &
family sessions*



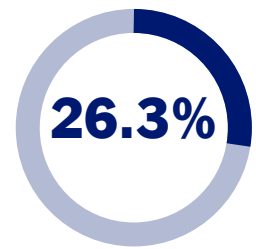
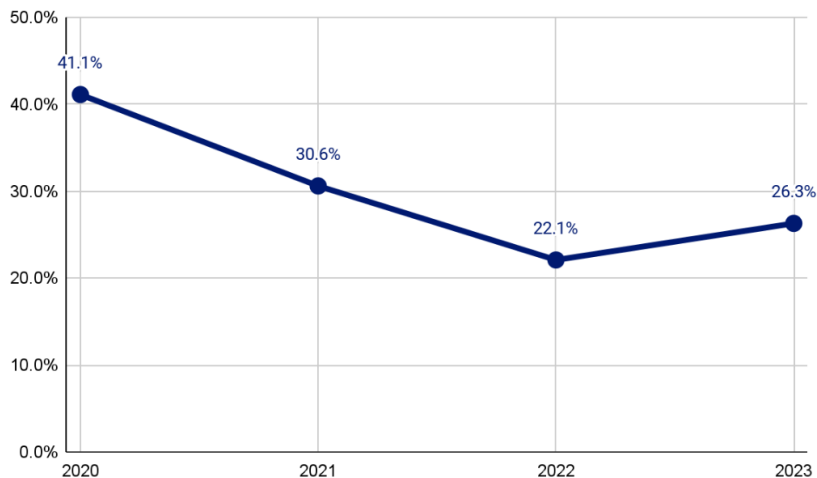
Increased
Sanctuary
Certification

DYS has 8 locations certified
with a goal of three additional
sites in 2024

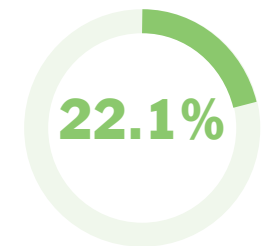
**Beginning in October 2023, DYS acquired the ability to track and report on the additional DBT hours youth receive. These additional treatment hours, thus far demonstrating 800+ hours per month, will be reflected in the FY 2024 report.*

Recidivism

The Division defines recidivism as a new adjudication or conviction resulting from a misdemeanor or felony offense at any point within the prescribed follow-up time period(s). This definition allows for a limited between-states comparison of recidivism data and conforms to the definition endorsed and recommended by the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA). The annual recidivism study evaluates whether the programs and services offered to youth lead to a decrease in reoffending once they exit the Division's care. The last two years of recidivism reporting, which is for youth who were discharged between fiscal years 2020-21, have had the lowest rates of one-year recidivism when compared to the prior 15 years of reporting. This is a remarkable improvement that points to implemented changes across DYS showing results.



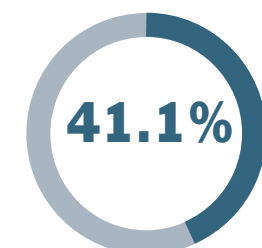
FY 23 Report
1 year recidivism
2020-21 discharge



FY 22 Report
1 year recidivism
2019-20 discharge



FY 21 Report
1 year recidivism
2018-19 discharge



FY 20 Report
1 year recidivism
2017-18 discharge

Observations:

Colorado Juvenile Trends

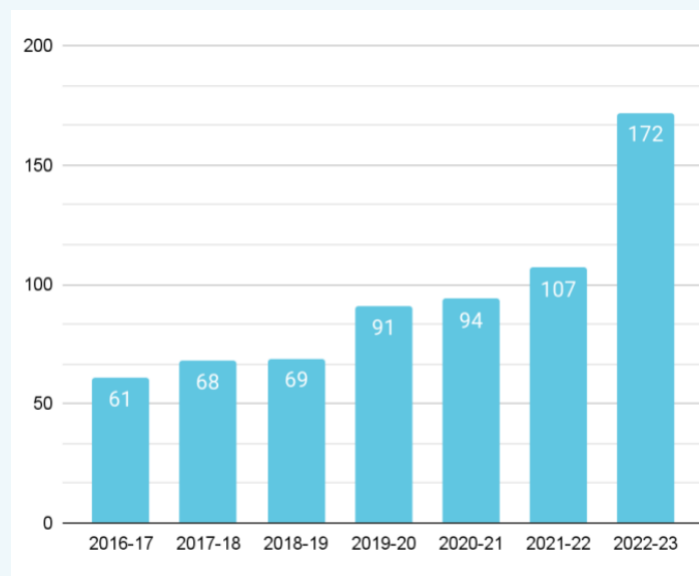
After compiling the data for this year's report, certain data points emerged as significant. This section summarizes these points in one place to provide a comprehensive overview of the collective shift in trends.

Detention Statistics*

15 → 50

On the average day in FY 17, 15 youth were detained for homicide or manslaughter related charges (14.6 ADP). Fast forward to FY 23 and nearly 50 youth are detained on the average day for the same charges (48.7 ADP).

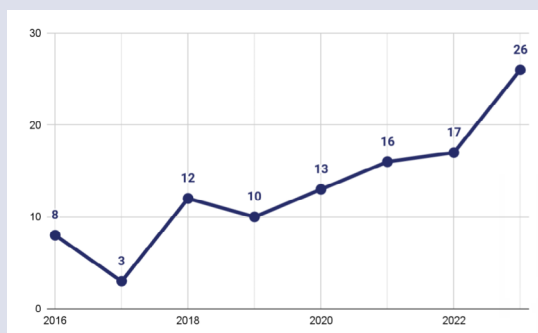
Number of Unique Clients Admitted to Detention for Homicide/Manslaughter Related Charges



**Detention figures exclude criminally negligent homicide and vehicular homicide*

Commitment Statistics

Number of New Commitments for Homicide/Manslaughter by FY



The number of new commitments for homicide and manslaughter related charges increased by 53% (17 to 26) from last fiscal year. This is the highest number of new commitments in one fiscal year when comparing the last eight fiscal years of DYS data.

The number and percentage of youth detained and newly committed for a violent crime continues to increase.

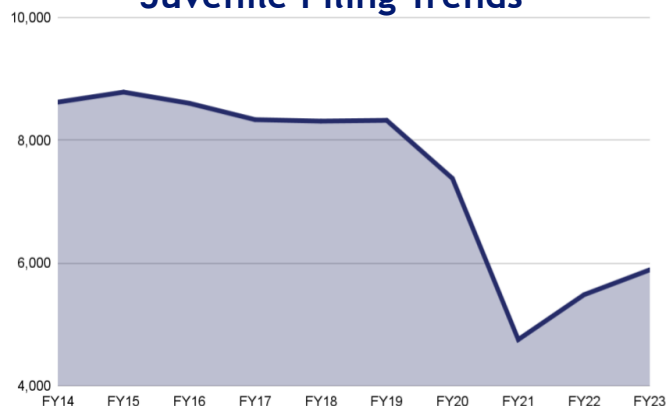
The percentage of new detention admissions with a violent charge is at 42.4% (1,199 admissions).

42.4%

47%

New commitments with a violent committing offense: 47% (87 new commitments)

Juvenile Filing Trends



After a significant decrease in juvenile filings between FY19-FY21, juvenile delinquency filings have increased 24% since FY 21 (4,753 to 5,890). Source: Colorado Judicial Branch

20%

Secure detention screenings have increased by 20% in the last two fiscal years (3,000 to 3,613)

47.2%

of the DYS population is either a mandatory, repeat, violent or aggravated juvenile offender

17%



The number of juvenile arrests increased by 17% (1,552, Calendar Year 2021 to Calendar Year 2022). This is the first year there was a recorded increase in juvenile arrests since calendar year 2017.

Education Services

DYS delivers year-round educational services to youth committed to the Department of Human Services within seven state-operated secure commitment youth centers. These programs meet the diverse needs of students, encompassing both general and special education services. The offerings are diverse and comprehensive, aiming to guide youth toward earning diplomas, securing GEDs, or accessing career/technical education and training tailored to support their individual paths to success.



77.7%

**CTE
Certifications**

77.7% of youth obtained certification or participated in various Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes.

17



Youth pursued post-secondary education opportunities while in DYS, specifically enrolling in college courses.

71

**The Number of
CTE Classes or
Certifications
Available to Youth**

157

**High School Diplomas
& General Education
Diplomas (GED)
Awarded**

28.9%

**Of Youth Required
an Individualized
Education Program
(IEP). *Over twice the
national average of 13.7%***

65%



65% of youth discharged from DYS with a High School Diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) in hand. 84.7% of the remaining youth had common and valid reasons for non-attainment (i.e. young age, continued school enrollment).



Second Chance Scholarships

Two youth from the Division of Youth Services (DYS) were awarded college scholarships through the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative's Second Chance Scholarship Program, providing up to \$5,000 annually for educational advancement. These scholarships support youth with a history of commitment to DYS. The youth who received these scholarships are pursuing Associate's Degrees at Red Rocks Community College and Community College of Aurora.



Music Therapy at Gilliam

Gilliam Youth Services Center maintains its ongoing partnership with Colorado Music Bridge, offering piano lessons every Wednesday and Friday to youth. The sessions provide a diverse learning experience, fostering piano skills, collaborative music-making, and peer teaching. These enjoyable and skill-building activities align with Colorado Music Bridge's mission to provide inclusive modern music education, mentorship, professional development, and creative content. The youth have loved these sessions and exploring this new creative outlet.



CAMV Graduation with Director Barnes

Colorado Department of Human Services Executive Director, Michelle Barnes had the honor of delivering the commencement speech at the Willow Point Youth Services Center on the Campus at Mount View (CAMV) graduation ceremony. Amidst the presence of peers, staff, and the graduates' families, Director Barnes warmly extended her congratulations and shared inspiring words to celebrate the achievements of the new high school graduates. Her address not only recognized their accomplishments but also offered encouragement for the promising journey that lies ahead in their futures.



Community College Course at PVYSC

Pueblo Community College partnered with Platte Valley Youth Services Center (PVYSC) to engage eight youth in a 72-hour heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) training program. The college facilitated the training by sending an instructor and classroom materials. The course covered various HVAC types, including small appliances, commercial refrigeration or residential AC units, low-pressure systems, along with universal skills applicable to any listed system.

DYS Culture in Action

Minute Stories

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Gilliam YSC

Gilliam Youth Services Center (GYSC) orchestrated several culturally enriching experiences for youth by hosting performances from the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble and Folklorico Dancers from Las Adelitas Living the Arts, and learning about and celebrating the history of Kwanzaa.

The Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, a Denver institution with a 50-year legacy, presented two contemporary dance pieces that focused on resilience and overcoming challenges. The event not only showcased the beauty, fun, and healing power of dance but also highlighted the importance of community engagement and supporting activities that may not be part of the youth's usual choices.

The Folklorico Dancers from Las Adelitas Living the Arts is a grassroots nonprofit, founded in May 2017, that aims to support women who have endured violence and trauma, providing passionate personal support for Latinas and promoting their gifted talents in an artistically creative atmosphere. The interactive session allowed the youth to not only witness but actively engage in the celebration of cultural diversity through dance, fostering a deeper understanding of Latin American traditions.

In another cultural exploration, the youth had the opportunity to learn about the tradition of Kwanzaa, facilitated by staff and volunteers representing Brotherhood Haven. This 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, committed to the full spectrum education, protection, and mentorship of black youth, shared the overview and background of Kwanzaa. The youth participated in the celebration, learning and asking questions, contributing to their understanding of this significant cultural observance.

The youth and staff relished these unique and special events that broadened their perspectives on different cultures, provided new experiences, and deepened their understanding of others.





Prairie Vista Outreach

The Prairie Vista Youth Services Center (PRVYSC) introduced the Youth Outreach Program, featuring weekly guest speakers who share inspirational success stories of transforming negative life experiences into positive and productive paths. The program resonated well with the youth, prompting some to seek individual conversations for guidance on taking the right steps toward a positive life. This inaugural Youth Outreach Program was enthusiastically received, promising the continuation of similar initiatives in the future.



Women's Day at Grand Mesa YSC

Grand Mesa Youth Services Center celebrated International Women's Day by creating a 3D art exhibit in the hallway. The female unit made beautiful 3D flowers that highlighted positive qualities women have on each of the petals, along with butterflies identifying who they look up to. The male units created butterflies that identify a woman they respect and the qualities they possess. Everyone enjoyed these beautiful representations of important women in their lives!

Family Nights at Willow Point YSC and Summit YSC

Willow Point Youth Services Center (WPYSC) and Summit Youth Services Center (SYSC) recently held successful Family Engagement and Parent Nights. WPYSC, located on the Campus at Mount View, hosted their lively quarterly event, fostering strong bonds and trust through games, food, and fun for staff, youth, and families. Meanwhile, SYSC, situated on the Campus at Lookout Mountain, organized its first family night, bringing together 47 family members and loved ones for an evening of pizza, pickleball, arts and crafts, and memorable family photos. The events were well received and demonstrated the division's commitment to family connection and involvement.



Juneteeth at CALM

TEENS, Inc. hosted the second annual Juneteenth Celebration and Field Day at the Campus at Lookout Mountain (CALM). The day was filled with laughter, fun activities, and a palpable sense of togetherness as volunteers, staff, and students from across the campus and central office joined together in the spirit of unity and celebration. One of the day's highlights was the wide array of inflatable attractions that transformed the campus lawn. From the exhilarating mechanical bull ride to the refreshing water slides and challenging obstacle courses, the inflatables brought joy and excitement to everyone.

Beyond the fun, the field day also served as a platform to recognize and honor Juneteenth, a significant milestone in American history. Students engaged in an educational poster contest, using creative artwork to delve into the history and significance of Juneteenth, expressing themes of freedom, resilience, and the ongoing pursuit of justice. "It reminded us that when we come together, we can create lasting connections, inspire positive change, and build a future filled with hope and equality," shared TEENS, Inc. Principal, Julie Porter.



Health Fair at Spring Creek

The Medical Clinic organized 12 providers to come to Spring Creek Youth Services Center and speak about various topics regarding youth health. The Spring Creek Youth Council helped to promote and produce the event. This was a way for youth to connect to resources in the community they will be transitioning to.



Inside Out, The Place, PPCC Nursing Program, TESSA, Colorado Sexual Health Initiative (CoSHI), Peak Vista, Security Fire Department, a fitness trainer, a dietician, a nutrition expert, and the Health Network all attended. Youth were given a "passport to success" which was a card that had boxes so that each vendor could stamp their name. The more vendors the youth went to and spoke with, they would be entered into a drawing for a prize. Each unit had two prizes at the end to offer. All of the youth attended and participated in the event. Thank you to Robyn Suiter and the rest of the Spring Creek Medical Team for putting this together!



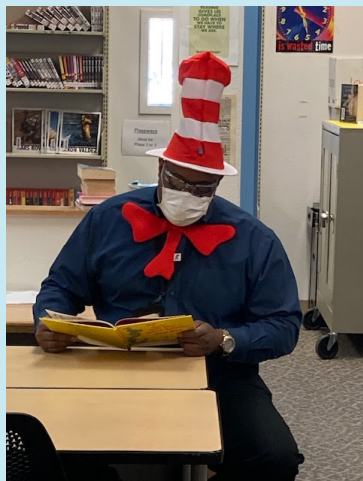
Tim Patrick showcases MWFYSC artists in the My Cause My Cleats campaign

Denver Broncos receiver Tim Patrick has chosen the Marvin W. Foote Youth Services Center as his “My Cause My Cleats” cause for the current NFL season. This initiative allows NFL players to showcase causes they are passionate about and celebrate their positive impact in communities. Patrick organized an art contest for the youth at MWFYSC, selecting a design from the Condor Pod to feature on his cleats. MWFYSC Director Eugene Forbes commended Patrick as more than just a professional athlete, highlighting his caring and compassionate nature in supporting and motivating the youth at the center. Patrick and fellow Broncos offensive tackle, Garrett Bolles, have been connecting with the youth at MWFYSC since 2020.



Pueblo YSC EDI: Hispanic Heritage

Pueblo Youth Services Center marked National Hispanic Heritage Month uniquely by engaging youth in crafting sugar skull dolls. Sugar skulls, a significant cultural practice in Mexican culture, symbolize departed loved ones and are often placed on altars or gravestones as offerings to their spirits. The youth embraced and enjoyed this project, showcasing their creations with pride at the end of the day.



Dr. Seuss Day at Zeb

Staff and students at Zebulon Pike YSC participated in Dr. Seuss Day. Dr. Seuss’s Birthday is a nationwide reading celebration that takes place annually on March 2. The Dining Services staff made green eggs shaped sugar cookies, the weekly trivia question was Seuss-focused, the art class made various drawings relating to characters from the books of Dr. Seuss and the staff got into the spirit by wearing hats and bow ties. Zebulon Pike staff support the habit of reading by posting book recommendations around the school. Both staff and youth posted their favorite books throughout the month in honor of Read Across America.

Youth Success Stories

Tylar

Tylar faced a challenging upbringing marked by the tragic loss of his father at just six months old. His family, including his mother and siblings, constantly moved, contributing to Tylar's struggles. As a teenager, he began skipping school, looking for belonging with the wrong crowd, and started using substances and engaging in criminal behavior.

Despite his troubled past, Tylar transformed his life during his commitment, seizing every opportunity for growth. Engaging in therapy, student council, parenting classes, tutoring, and kitchen work, he demonstrated a commitment to change. Tylar expressed a strong desire to be a responsible father to his daughter, the motivation behind his focus on self-improvement. Progressing through therapy, couples counseling with his fiancée, and fathering classes, Tylar achieved Platinum-level status and actively participated in Restorative Community Justice (RCJ) projects, including the opening of a new transition pod within the youth center.

Tylar's dedication extended beyond his own development. He contributed to the Southern Region Sanctuary Certification process, sharing insights into how to utilize Sanctuary tools and commitments. His involvement in the Student Council showcased his commitment to positive change within the youth center.

Throughout his commitment, Tylar stands out as a shining example of resilience and determination. He earned his high school diploma in October and participated in a paid internship at a Colorado Springs non-profit. Reflecting on his journey, Tylar expressed pride in the man he has become and his role as a father. His family is his top priority, underscoring his newfound commitment to building a positive future for himself and those he loves. When asked what he is most proud of, Tylar states, "I'm proud of the man I have become and the father I am to my daughter. My family is the most important thing in the world to me."



"I'm proud of the man I have become and the father I am to my daughter. My family is the most important thing in the world to me."

Shawn

Shawn's journey reflects a remarkable transformation from a troubled youth who was committed to the Division of Youth Services on multiple charges to a responsible and ambitious individual. Despite the challenges, he saw his commitment as an opportunity for positive change, forcing him to be sober and focus on personal development.

Shawn experienced ups and downs throughout his commitment but learned valuable lessons in building relationships and practicing self-awareness. He became well-liked by peers and staff, showcasing a positive and entertaining demeanor, often dancing to uplift the spirits of those around him.

As Shawn progressed, he emerged as a leader in the unit where he lived. His commitment extended beyond the secure youth center, as he actively participated in community projects, including distributing food at a local food bank and assisting at a veterans hospital on Flag Day.

Despite owing over \$3,000 in restitution, Shawn demonstrated remarkable determination by paying it off through participation in restitution projects while at the youth center and working during his parole. Shawn attributed his positive transformation to forced sobriety, which led him to make a commitment to maintaining sobriety and clear thinking.

Shawn attributed the turning point in his journey to achieving his GED a year into his commitment, boosting his confidence and inspiring continued growth and change. His achievement was recognized at the Celebration of Excellence, where he was commended for overcoming barriers to earning his GED. His leadership on the unit, successful completion of treatment goals, and active participation in community transition activities allowed him to parole directly from a secure facility.

Looking towards the future, Shawn aspires to join the military. In the meantime, he found fulfillment working at a local restaurant and at a siding business. He also stays engaged in regular gym sessions, playing basketball, and spending quality time with his family. Paroling four months early, Shawn swiftly achieved goals such as paying off restitution, obtaining a driver's license, and purchasing a car within the first three months of parole.

Shawn's story serves as an inspiring example of a young man who, through determination and a positive mindset, overcame adversity, transformed his life, and achieved his goals. His advice to other youth emphasizes the power of setting a positive mindset and making it happen.



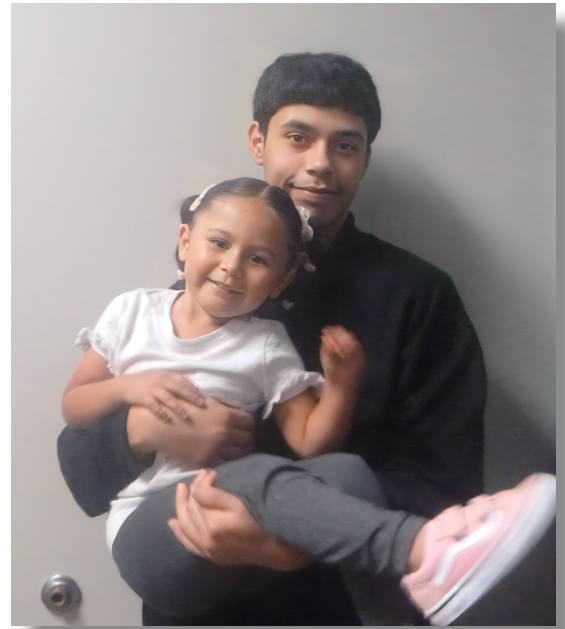
Ismael

Ismael's journey began with significant challenges, including the deportation of his father, his parents' divorce, and difficulties at home. Living with his grandparents provided stability for a brief period, but housing issues led him back to an unstable environment with his mother. Ismael struggled with depression, turned to negative influences, and engaged in problematic behaviors, resulting in probation and eventual commitment to the Division of Youth Services (DYS).

Upon entering DHS, Ismael embraced a positive attitude, open-mindedness, and a readiness to face challenges. Engaging in various treatment programs, he attended sessions on healthy relationships and individual treatment. Ismael's initiative led to the creation of a Victims Garden at the youth center, illustrating his commitment to reflection, healing, and contemplation for those impacted by crime.

Throughout his journey, Ismael demonstrated resilience by earning his High School Diploma and excelling in vocational programs, particularly the culinary arts. He emerged as a leader in the culinary arts program, training new participants and eventually becoming the sous chef. Additionally, he completed the HVAC certification program, showcasing his dedication to skill development.

Looking ahead, Ismael aspires to enroll in a culinary program to pursue his passion while also considering employment opportunities utilizing his HVAC certification. His overarching goal is financial security and stability, driven by the motivation to provide a better future for his three-year-old daughter. Ismael envisions obtaining joint custody and building a meaningful father-daughter relationship in the community.



Sam

Sam was committed to the Division of Youth Services (DYS) for serious charges that nearly landed him in the adult system. His troubled past led to anger and substance use, and he struggled to define himself outside of illegal activities.

During his detention and subsequent commitment to DHS, Sam exhibited problematic behavior, including bullying peers, engaging in arguments, disrespecting staff, and even being charged with assault for seriously injuring another youth. However, a turning point occurred as Sam engaged in individual therapy, where he learned coping strategies to manage his anger,

Brandon

Brandon found himself caught in a community of poor choices despite the love and support of his parents. Engaging in high-risk behaviors and skipping school, he found himself committed to the Division of Youth Services.

Since his commitment, Brandon has worked hard to transform his life. He jumped headfirst into his studies and became the first in his family to earn a High School Diploma. During his time in treatment, Brandon gained insights into the cycle of violence he was a part of and actively worked with his brothers and parents to support each other and contribute positively to the community. Brandon's mother expressed pride in the positive changes she observes in him. Brandon contributes to his home's expenses and gives back to the community by volunteering at a local church.

Looking forward, Brandon, who has been home for three months, aspires to achieve financial stability, obtain his commercial driver's license (CDL), and continue being a positive member of the community. His commitment experience has instilled in him the value of peace of mind, knowing that he can make good choices and contribute positively to his community.



identified triggers, and committed to stop bullying. With the support of his family, he worked through a Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) book, acquiring skills to manage his emotions.

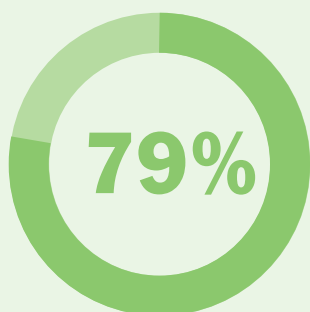
A significant milestone in Sam's progress was completing a Restorative Community Justice project, earning his highest level. This project focused on the harm he caused to the youth he had assaulted. Through this process, Sam expressed what he had learned from the situation and how he could prevent more victims in the future. Maintaining his

sobriety became a source of pride for Sam, who attributed it to gaining a deeper understanding of himself.

Looking ahead, Sam is looking forward to completing his DYS commitment and aspires to join the Army. Sam's journey reflects a positive shift from a troubled past to a more hopeful future, marked by self-discovery, personal growth, and a determination to pursue a meaningful life beyond the challenges he has faced.

DYS Fiscal Year 2023 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 2022-2023. The funding backed DYS in the efforts to continue fostering a trauma-responsive environment within youth centers and provide a continuum of care that supports youth success and safer Colorado communities.

10%

Colorado Youth
Detention
Continuum

6%

Client
Management

2%

Parole &
Transition

1%

Boulder
Impact

2%

Director's
Office/
Administration



THANK YOU

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

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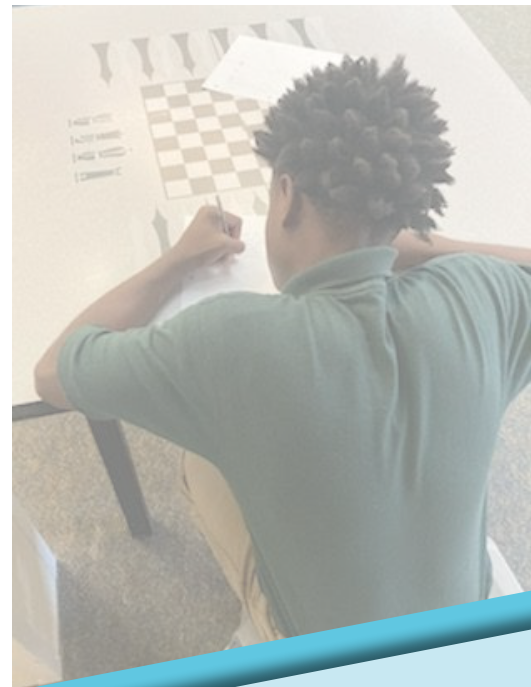
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Data Resources

[1]Colorado Department of Human Services. (2023). *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>

[2]Stahl, Brandon (KARE11), Lauren Leamanczyk, Steve Eckert. "KARE 11 Investigates: How one state changed its practices and ended juvenile solitary." KARE 11, 23 Feb. 2023, <https://www.kare11.com/article/news/investigations/kare-investigates-how-one-state-ended-jvenile-solitary/89-4d41b790-ef38-46e9-9da4-1f55c1779b58>.



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