

Section 1:

Overview of DYRS





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The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) is the District of Columbia’s cabinet-level juvenile justice agency responsible for overseeing those court-involved youth who are most in need of intense supervision and treatment services.

This section presents an overview of the agency’s history, structure, services, and population, and includes the following information:

- ▲ The agency’s mission, goals, history, and approach
- ▲ A description of the juvenile justice process in the District of Columbia
- ▲ An overview of the programs and services provided by DYRS
- ▲ Fact sheets on the agency’s two secure detention facilities, Youth Services Center and New Beginnings Youth Development Center
- ▲ An overview of the progress made toward fulfilling the requirements of the *Jerry M. Work Plan*
- ▲ DYRS population facts and figures

About DYRS

DYRS Mission

To improve public safety and give court-involved youth the opportunity to become more productive citizens by building on the strengths of youth and their families in the least restrictive, most homelike environment consistent with public safety.

—D.C. Code § 2-1515.04(6).

DYRS Vision

To provide the nation's best continuum of care for court-involved youth and their families through a wide range of programs that emphasize individual strengths, personal accountability, skill development, family involvement, and community support.

—D.C. Code § 2-1515.04.

DYRS is responsible for the supervision, custody, and care of youth charged with a delinquent act in the District who are detained while awaiting adjudication or committed to DYRS following adjudication. The agency provides comprehensive support services to youth placed in its care, both in DYRS facilities and within the community. DYRS actively partners across the District and the community, as well as with locally and nationally recognized juvenile justice organizations, to implement innovative, evidence-based programming models that are in line with industry best practices.

DYRS is assigned to the Health and Human Services cluster, reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Beatriz Otero. Because the agency has a dual mission of youth development and public safety, DYRS also participates in many Public Safety and Justice cluster activities and initiatives under the leadership of Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Paul Quander.

The History of DYRS

DYRS was created in 2004 in the wake of legislative reforms to the District's juvenile justice system. Prior to this time, juvenile detention and placements were overseen by the Youth Services Administration (YSA), a division of the DC Department of Human Services. Following years of scrutiny surrounding YSA, particularly with respect to the conditions at Oak Hill Youth Center, the city's former secure detention facility, the District undertook a series of reforms aimed at improving the facilities and programming serving the city's delinquent youth.

In 2000, then District Mayor Anthony Williams created the Blue Ribbon Commission on Youth Safety and Juvenile Justice Reform to investigate the city's juvenile justice system and make recommendations for change.¹ The Omnibus Juvenile Justice Act of 2004² enacted several of these recommendations, including mandating the closure of Oak Hill by 2009, reducing the overreliance on secure detention and placement, developing a continuum of community-based services and placement alternatives, and increasing the emphasis on rehabilitation.

The Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services Establishment Act of 2004³ established DYRS as the cabinet-level agency charged with overseeing young offenders and outlined goals for the new agency in line with those set forth in the Omnibus Juvenile Justice Act. Since its inception, DYRS has enacted a number of reforms aimed at achieving these goals.

Oak Hill was closed in May 2009, when DYRS opened the New Beginnings Youth Development Center, a 60-bed secure facility to house committed youth. New Beginnings provides youth with 24-hour supervision and comprehensive social services grounded in the principles of Positive Youth Justice, including physical and mental health care, behavioral modification programming, vocational and life-skills training, structured recreational activities, and educational services.

DYRS has also developed a continuum of community-based placements that allow youth to remain in the community and receive support services in a supervised, home-like environment. For committed youth, DYRS provides community-based residential facilities such as group homes, therapeutic group homes, and independent living programs. For youth awaiting adjudication or disposition, DYRS offers shelter homes that provide support and supervision. By providing alternatives to secure detention and placement, DYRS expanded the menu of placement options available.



DYRS Guiding Principles

DYRS believes:

1. A safe environment is the foundation for a flourishing community.
2. Youth prefer the joy of accomplishment to failure and each youth is unique and can learn, re-learn, and unlearn.
3. All youth should be connected to caring adults, services, supports, and opportunities that enable them to contribute to the community and successfully transition into adulthood.
4. In honoring diversity.
5. All youth, families, staff, and community should be valued, respected, and have opportunities for growth and change.
6. Youth, families, and staff at all levels must be at the table and involved in decision making, from Youth Family Team Meetings to agency policies.
7. In a robust continuum of care that is flexible, strengths-based, family-focused, and results in youth being safely served in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety.
8. In creating environments that are safe, structured, stable, and supportive for youth and staff.
9. Staff at all levels should be responsive, respectful, and work collaboratively with internal and external customers.
10. Decisions should be informed by valid and reliable data.
11. Everyone's job is to help youth develop to their fullest potential.

In FY2010, the agency launched DC YouthLink (formerly known as the Lead Entities/Service Coalition), an initiative aimed at linking youth with the necessary services and resources for successful transition back into the community. Additionally, to better protect public safety, DYRS has partnered with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to reduce abscondence rates and jointly supervise the highest-risk youth in the community. DYRS has also implemented a number of data-driven evaluation processes, such as YouthStat and Performance-based Standards (PbS), to improve agency performance and accountability.

The DYRS Approach

DYRS' approach to its work is based on three core concepts: protecting public safety, promoting Positive Youth Justice (PYJ), and practicing effective management. These three principles must work in concert if the agency is to truly meet its mission.

As the cabinet-level agency primarily responsible for steering court-involved young people away from previous delinquent behavior and onto the right track, DYRS is at its core focused on protecting public safety. For the population of young people DYRS serves, research shows that the best long-term strategy for enhancing public safety is to follow the principles of PYJ. Engaging young people in productive ways, linking them with caring adults, and helping them meet their developmental needs is the most effective method for directing youth away from criminal behavior and toward a positive adulthood.⁴ Public safety and PYJ are, in a fundamental sense, complimentary, mutually reinforcing outcomes.

As DYRS pursues these interconnected goals, the agency takes seriously its role as a steward of District resources. For this reason, the agency works diligently to encourage effective management with respect to operations, finances, service delivery and performance. Through strategic and thoughtful spending of resources, the agency seeks to maximize its positive impact on young people's lives and the overall well-being of the larger community.

The District of Columbia Juvenile Justice System

In the District of Columbia, a juvenile is defined as an individual under the age of 18. The following steps outline the typical journey through the District's juvenile justice system.

1) Arrest and Processing

After an arrest, a youth can be processed by MPD at the Youth Services Center (YSC). In some cases, MPD may choose to dismiss or divert the youth to a program outside of the juvenile justice system. Otherwise, Court Social Services (CSS) conducts a screening to determine whether the youth should be held at YSC or released to a guardian until the next court action.

2) Pre-Adjudication Stage

If the DC Office of the Attorney General (OAG) petitions the case in the juvenile system, an initial hearing is held to determine whether the case will move forward and, if so, where the youth will be placed prior to adjudication. There are three options for pre-adjudication placement: (1) community release, in which the youth resides with an approved guardian and is monitored by CSS; (2) a detention alternative, such as a shelter home; or (3) secure detention at YSC. If a youth is aged 15 to 17 and charged with certain violent crimes, OAG may transfer the case to the adult system.

3) Adjudication and Disposition

If a youth is found involved in a delinquent act, either through a plea or Court ruling, there is a hearing to determine the youth's disposition. For the period between adjudication and disposition, the Court can place the youth on community release, in a shelter facility, or at YSC. At the dispositional hearing, the Court will determine whether the youth should be placed on probation with CSS or committed to DYRS custody. This decision is informed by a pre-disposition report prepared by CSS, which includes an assessment of the youth's emotional, social, educational, and delinquency history and recommends a plan for treatment and disposition. If CSS plans to recommend the youth for commitment with DYRS, then DYRS will also submit a pre-disposition report that outlines the youth's supervision and treatment needs.

A DYRS commitment can be for a specific or indeterminate period of time, so long as the commitment does not exceed the youth's twenty-first birthday. The Court can require that DYRS obtain approval prior to ending the youth's commitment, or it can grant DYRS authority to end the commitment when the agency deems appropriate.

Nationwide Trends in Risk Assessment

According to the National Council on Crime & Delinquency, all but four states in the U.S. report at least some use of risk and/or treatment needs assessment instruments to assist with detention, supervision level, services, and/or placement decisions.¹ Thirty-two states have standardized statewide implementation while 14 others have local juvenile justice systems which use an assessment instrument. This represents a remarkable change from 1990, when jurisdictions in only one-third of all states used these tools.²

It is the position of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice of Delinquency Prevention that one of the mainstays of a systematic response to serious, violent, and chronic offenders is risk assessment and classification in order to reduce criminality and increase public safety.³

1 National Center for Juvenile Justice. (2001). Topic: Risk and Needs Assessments. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjj.org/Topic/Risk-and-Needs-Assessments.aspx>.

2 Towberman, D. B. (1992). A national survey of juvenile risk assessment. *Family & Juvenile Court Journal*, 43, 61-67.

3 Wilson, J. J., & Howell, J. C. (1993). *A comprehensive strategy for serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

4) DYRS Placement Process

Once a youth is committed to DYRS, the agency is responsible for all decisions regarding the youth's placement and rehabilitation plans. This determination involves the following process:

- **Review of Court Recommendations:** When making placement decisions, DYRS gives great weight to the Court's recommended plans for treatment and supervision.
- **Review of Reports and Assessments:** DYRS staff reviews disposition reports, social studies prepared by CSS, psychological and psychiatric evaluations, psycho-educational evaluations, and discharge summaries from other programs and placements.
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Needs Assessments:** For youth placed at YSC and New Beginnings, DYRS staff, including licensed clinicians and behavioral health specialists, conduct mental health and substance abuse needs assessments such as the Child and Adolescent Service Intensity Instrument (CASII), the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI), the Trauma Symptom Checklist (TSC), and the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI).
- **Risk Assessments:** DYRS conducts risk assessments using the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool. SDM takes into

account various factors, including offense severity, number and type of prior adjudications, number of out-of-home placements, school discipline/attendance, substance abuse issues, and peer relationships. The outcome of the SDM risk assessment guides the level of restrictiveness in which the youth will receive services.

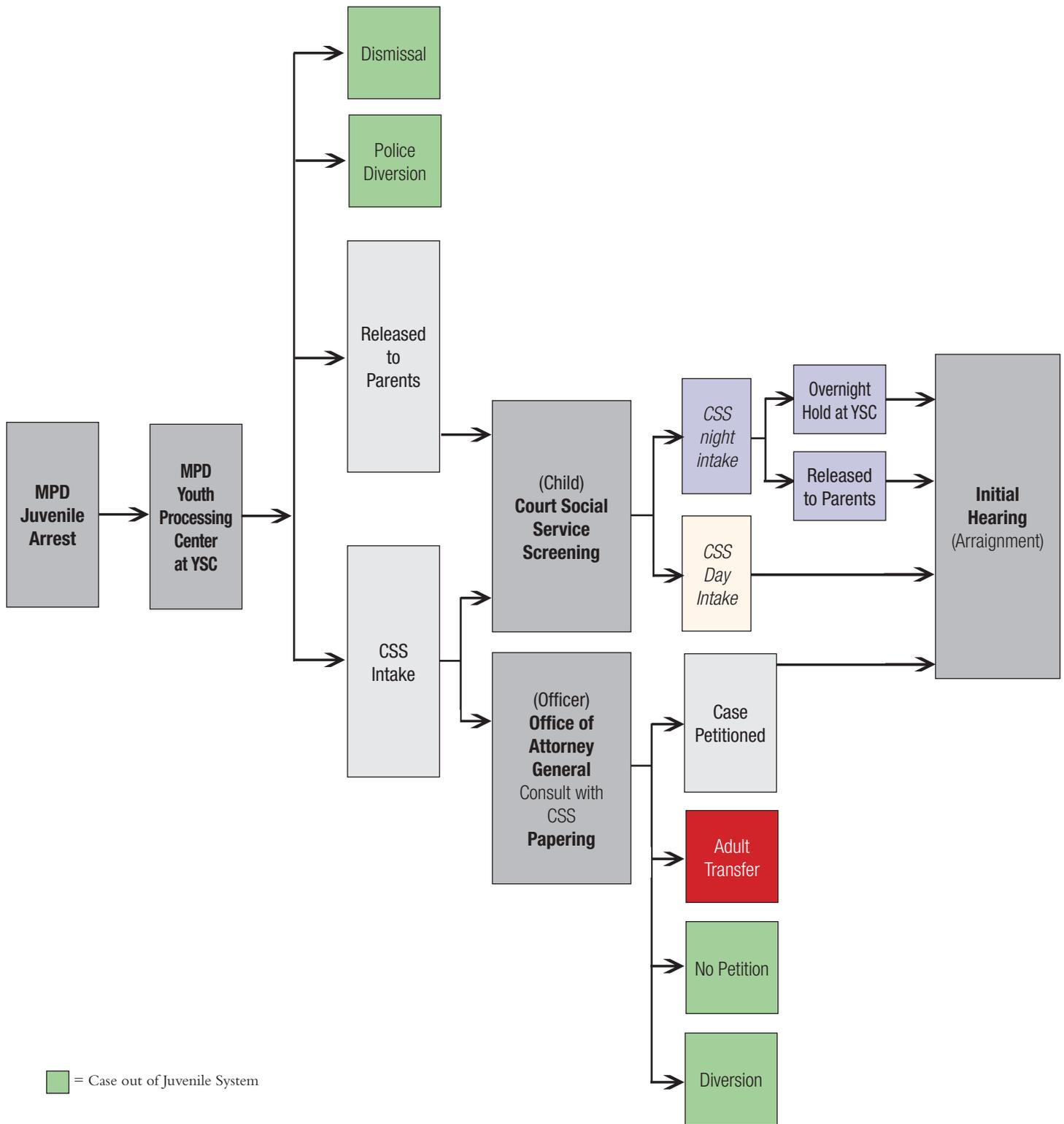
- **Youth Family Team Meetings:** DYRS convenes Youth Family Team Meetings (YFTMs) to help develop placement and service plans tailored to each youth's strengths and needs. In addition to DYRS staff and providers, participants in the YFTMs may include parents, family members, mentors, teachers, and other individuals who are involved in the youth's life.

5) Reentry Process

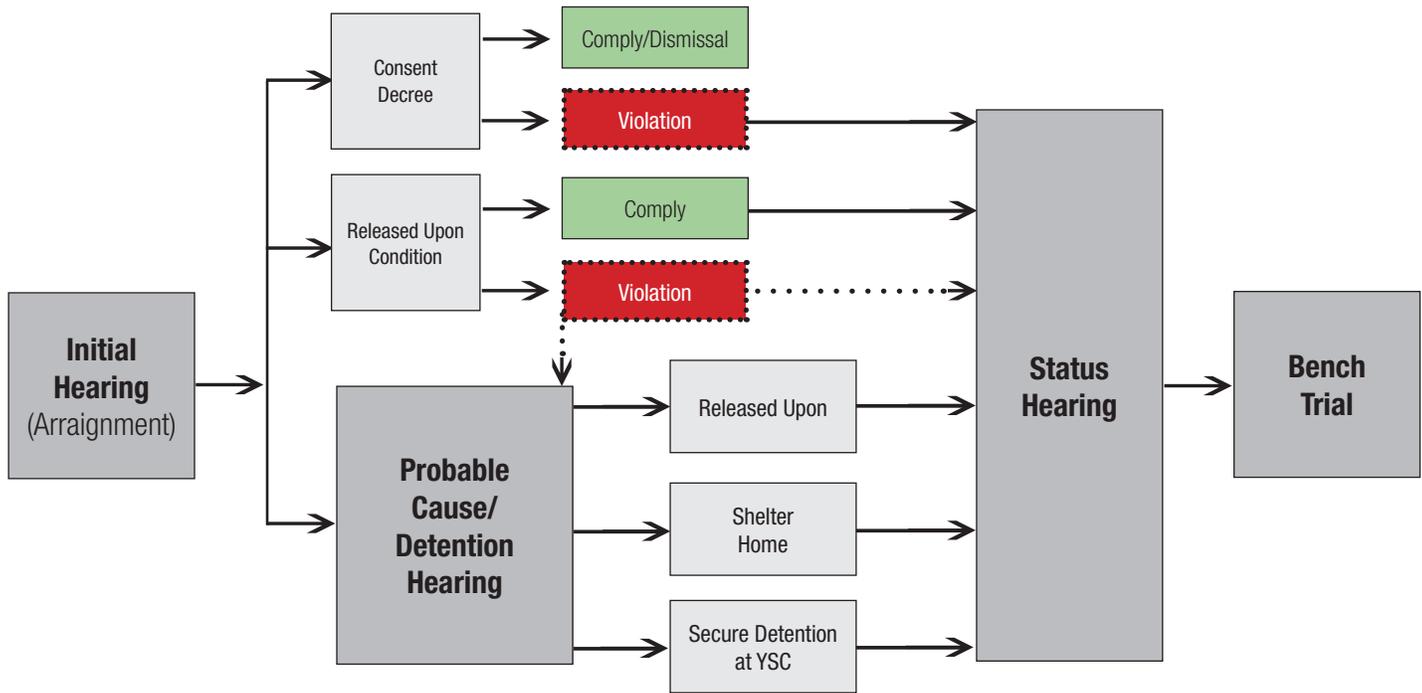
While committed to DYRS, youth who have been removed from the community receive services aimed at preparing them for successful community reentry. These services can include individual and family counseling, educational programs, vocational and employment training, substance abuse monitoring and counseling, independent living-skills training, home assessments, tutoring, mentoring, recreational activities, job placements, and ongoing YFTMs. When placed in the community, committed youth are monitored by DYRS staff and service providers, and some youth also wear electronic Global Positioning System (GPS) devices.



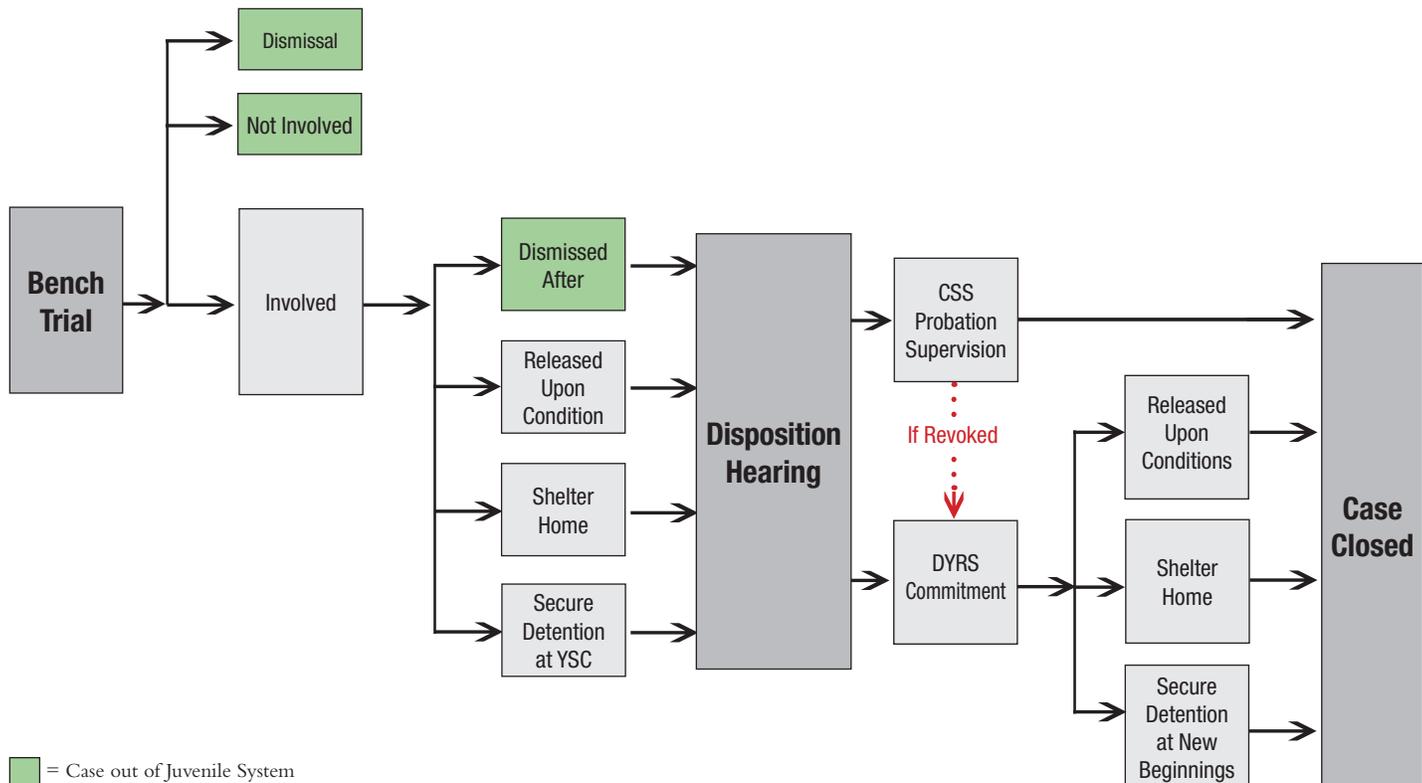
Juvenile Arrest Process



Pre-Adjudication Process



Post-Adjudication Process



= Case out of Juvenile System

DYRS Programs and Services

Placements for Detained Youth

DYRS serves detained youth who have been charged with a delinquent act and are awaiting adjudication or disposition. Depending on their supervision and treatment needs, detained youth are housed at either YSC or are placed in a detention alternative program.

- **Youth Services Center (YSC):** YSC is an 88-bed secure detention facility that provides youth with 24-hour supervision, care, and custody. Services include diagnostic screenings, onsite medical care, individual and group counseling, education provided by the DC Public Schools (DCPS), structured recreational activities, and family visits.
- **Community-Based Shelter Homes:** DYRS contracts with providers to run community-based shelter homes. While residing at the shelter home, youth receive supervision and support services and attend school within the community.
- **Intensive Third-Party Monitoring (ITPM):** Youth remain in the family home but are monitored up to three times per day to help ensure that the youth attends school, appointments, and all scheduled court dates.

Committed Case Management

Case management is provided to every committed youth for the duration of his or her commitment to DYRS. Each youth is assigned to a DYRS Case Manager, who works with youth, their families, teachers, and other individuals involved in the youth's life to develop and implement an Individual Development Plan (IDP) based on the youth's strengths, risks, and needs. The IDP outlines the ongoing supervision, services, supports, and opportunities required to foster a youth's successful transition to adulthood and reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

Placements for Committed Youth

Based on their supervision and treatment needs, youth who have been adjudicated and committed to DYRS custody may be placed in either a secure facility or within a continuum of community-based programs.

Secure Placements

- **New Beginnings Youth Development Center:** New Beginnings is a 60-bed secure detention facility that provides youth with 24-hour supervision, care, and custody. Youth may be placed at New Beginnings while awaiting placement in another secure facility or as part of the Model Unit program, which lasts an average of nine to 12 months. Services include diagnostic screening, onsite medical and dental care, trauma-based behavioral health care, individual and group counseling, substance abuse counseling, education at the onsite Maya

Angelou Academy, structured recreational activities, workforce and employment training, life-skills training, family visits, and transition services.

- **Residential Treatment Centers (RTCs):** RTCs are secure treatment facilities for youth with specific mental health, behavioral, or substance abuse needs. RTCs provide specialized educational and behavioral modification programs in a structured, supervised environment. Depending on the treatment progress of the individual youth, RTC placements typically last from six to 12 months. Most RTCs are located outside the Washington D.C. metropolitan area.
- **Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs):** A PRTF is any non-hospital facility with a provider agreement with a State Medicaid Agency to provide the in-patient services benefit to Medicaid-eligible individuals under the age of 21. Placements at PRTFs are approved through the DC Department of Mental Health and funded through the DC Department of Health Care Finance/Federal Medicaid program.
- **Residential Drug Treatment:** Youth requiring substance abuse detoxification and stabilization receive short-term treatment at a variety of placements. Extended residential substance abuse treatment is available through contracted providers.

Community-Based Placements

- **Community-Based Residential Facilities (CBRFs):** DYRS contracts with providers to house youth in a structured, residential setting. These programs, which are staffed 24-hours per day, are single sex and typically house six to 10 youth. Although youth reside full-time in the program, they attend local schools, can hold outside jobs, and receive support services within the community. These homes provide supervision, counseling services, structured recreational activities, and programs designed to promote positive development.
- **Independent Living Programs:** Youth reside independently within a structured living program and receive monitoring by a DYRS provider. The program provides basic living expenses, and youth are required to attend school and/or have full-time employment.
- **Therapeutic Foster Care/Extended Family Homes:** Youth reside with a foster family in a private home, with their activity monitored. Youth receive individual, group, and family counseling and attend school and jobs within the community.
- **Home Placement:** Youth reside at home with a parent or guardian, or within the community with a third-party guardian. Activities are monitored by a DYRS Case Manager, and youth are required to attend school and/or have

full-time employment. Youth receive support services within the community.

Community-Based Support Services

Committed youth who have been placed within the community receive comprehensive support services designed to promote positive development, protect public safety, and help guide successful reintegration into the community. These programs and services include:

- **DC YouthLink (formerly the Lead Entities/Service Coalition Initiative):** Two community-based organizations, known as the Lead Entities, create and manage a coalition youth programming experts that together provide a community-based continuum of services for youth and families within a specific geographic area. The two Lead Entities are the Progressive Life Center (serving District youth in Wards 1-6 and Montgomery County) and the East of the River Clergy-Police Community Partnership (serving District youth in Wards 7 and 8 and Prince George's County).
- **Workforce Training and Job Placement:** DYRS' Office of Education and Workforce Development (OEWD) works with community and government partners to provide workforce readiness training, job coaching, and assistance with placement in internships, long-term employment, occupational training and certification, post-secondary education, and enrollment in the military.
- **Educational Support:** DYRS partners with community organizations to provide academic tutoring, after-school men-

toring, educational assessment and placement, and programs aimed at promoting school retention and academic achievement. The Maya Angelou Young Adult Learning Center (YALC) provides GED preparation combined with workforce development training.

- **Physical, Mental, and Behavioral Health:** Youth are linked with clinicians and behavioral health specialists to receive a variety of mental and behavioral health services based on their individual needs. These services include individual counseling, anger management programs, Functional Family Therapy, multi-systemic therapy, and out-patient substance abuse counseling. Youth in the community are also connected with structured physical recreation activities to support physical well-being.
- **Creativity, Relationships, and Community Engagement:** Youth are connected to a number of programs aimed at channeling their creativity toward positive, productive outlets. To help youth build relationships with caring adults, DYRS works to include families in the case planning and implementation process and links youth to after-school mentoring programs. Youth also participate in community service activities and leadership development training to help foster a sense of civic engagement.
- **Electronic Monitoring:** At any given time, approximately 150 to 175 DYRS youth residing in the community wear electronic GPS devices, which track their movements and alert officials when the youth is not where he or she is supposed to be.



Youth Services Center: Fact Sheet



YSC is a secure detention facility that provides residents with 24-hour supervision and a variety of programs and services aimed at meeting their basic needs. The services at YSC include:

- **Diagnostic Assessments and Placement Services:** YSC conducts diagnostic assessments that are used to inform court processing and dispositional plans. YSC also helps coordinate and facilitate YFTMs for detained youth likely to be committed and encourages family involvement in all aspects of the youth's case planning process.
- **Physical Health Care:** YSC has an onsite medical facility that provides basic medical and dental care. Youth are required to engage in structured physical recreation activities that promote physical well-being.
- **Mental and Behavioral Health Screenings and Care:** To help identify youth in crises, youth receive an initial behavioral health screening within four hours of admission. Further mental health screenings are conducted within 24 hours to determine the treatment needed. YSC provides direct mental health services that include individual and group counseling. A substance abuse program is presently

Capacity: 88 beds
FY2011 average daily youth population: 76
Number of direct care staff: 137
Serves detained male and female youth awaiting adjudication and/or disposition, and committed females

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under development. Youth identified as a suicide risk are monitored by qualified mental health professionals.

- **Educational Services:** Onsite education is provided by DCPS, which offers a variety of academic and experiential programs for all YSC residents. Detained youth are required to attend school five hours per day, five days per week.
- **Security:** Youth are monitored 24-hours per day and are supervised as they move around the facility, participate in onsite activities, and travel offsite. YSC is an 'eyes-on' facility.

New Beginnings Youth Development Center: Fact Sheet



New Beginnings is a secure residential treatment facility where youth are placed as part of the long-term Model Unit program or while awaiting placement in another secure facility. The Model Unit program is a six-level program that provides behavioral modification and community reintegration planning for the District's most serious and chronic offenders. In FY2011, the average daily population of the Model Unit program was 43 youth and the average length of stay was 275 days. The average daily population for youth awaiting placement was 20 and the average length of stay was eight days.

New Beginnings provides residents with 24-hour supervision and coordinated social services. The services offered at New Beginnings include:

- **Mental and Behavioral Health Care:** New Beginnings applies a comprehensive, trauma-based approach to its mental and behavioral health services. Staff are trained in trauma-informed care, and clinicians or behavioral health staff travel with youth throughout the day to provide monitoring and support. New Beginnings also provides individual psychological counseling, group counseling, and substance abuse programs. To identify youth in crisis, youth receive an initial behavioral health screening within four hours of admission.

Capacity: 60 beds
FY2011 average daily youth population: 62
Number of direct care staff: 155
Serves males committed to DYRS custody

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Further mental health screenings are conducted within 24 hours to determine the type of treatment the youth will receive. Youth identified as a suicide risk are monitored by qualified mental health professionals.

- **Physical Health Care:** New Beginnings has an onsite medical facility that provides comprehensive medical and dental care. Youth are also required to engage in structured physical recreation activities that promote physical well-being.
- **Educational Services:** Educational services are provided onsite at the Maya Angelou Academy, which is operated by the See Forever Foundation in partnership with DYRS. Courses are aligned with educational standards set forth by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education, and youth may take GED and SAT prep courses. Youth receive educational placement assistance upon release.

“New Beginnings demonstrates what can be done. It’s a very successful program.”

—Hon. Eugene Hamilton
Chief Judge, D.C. Superior Court (1993-2000)
Chair, Blue Ribbon Commission on Youth Safety and
Juvenile Justice Reform

- **Vocational Training and Workforce Development:** To help prepare youth for reintegration into the community, New Beginnings provides programs aimed at employment readiness, vocational training, and the development of life skills.
- **Creativity and Community:** In an effort to encourage family participation in the youth’s rehabilitation process, New Beginnings invites families to events such as Awards Nights and holiday dinners. The facility also has several programs aimed at directing youth creativity toward positive, productive outlets. Examples include The Beat Within program, which provides youth the chance to share their ideas and experiences in a safe space, and the Theatre Lab Group, which trains youth in acting, storytelling, screen writing, and directing works based on their own life experiences.
- **Security:** There is 24-hour monitoring of the facility’s campus and perimeter, and youth are supervised as they move around campus, participate in onsite activities, and travel offsite.

The DC Model Program

The DC Model Program is based on the belief that in order for a youth to truly change and not re-offend, the youth must go through a process of self-exploration that addresses his history, family issues, and challenges, and how these experiences have influenced his present situation. This approach works with a young person’s perceptions (cognitions) and feelings/emotions, and how this has an impact on his behavioral choices and decisions. A program based on student/family needs offers the best chance for students to learn, grow and change. Included in this therapeutic/rehabilitative process are individual and group work, family involvement, individual treatment planning, and experiential learning activities. In addition, youth participate in highly structured daily and weekly schedules that include educational, recreational, and treatment oriented activities, daily group meetings with a focus on building positive, healthy peer-to-peer relationships, youth to adult interactions, successful coping and decision-making skills, self-awareness/insight, and behavioral change.

The treatment model is buttressed by a structured accountability system that responds with quick sanctions at the time of a youth’s inappropriate behavior, and with long term behavioral expectations that each youth must meet to progress through the programmatic levels. The DC Model Program includes components of behavioral modification (encouraging and reinforcing positive behavior with structured techniques and feedback) and cognitive therapy (addressing unhelpful patterns of thinking). Youth and staff safety is the foundation of the treatment program and compliance is viewed as only the first step in the change process.

Jerry M. Consent Decree & Work Plan

History

In 1986, the *Jerry M.* lawsuit was filed in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia alleging violations of basic health and safety standards at the District's Oak Hill facility. The result of the lawsuit was the *Jerry M.* Consent Decree, which set general standards regarding services provided at District juvenile detention facilities.

After 22 years under the *Jerry M.* Consent Decree and with little success in achieving its requirements, DYRS negotiated a Final Work Plan in 2008. The Work Plan established concrete indicators and requirements that, once fulfilled, would release the agency from *Jerry M.*⁵

Structure

The Work Plan is subdivided into Twelve Goals:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I. Secure Facilities | VIII. Health Services |
| II. Discrete Populations* | IX. Construction of a New Facility |
| III. Committed Case Planning† | X. Disabling Oak Hill |
| IV. Education† | XI. Staff Training |
| V. Behavioral Health | XII. Continuous Quality Improvement |
| VI. Structured Activities & Grievance Process† | |
| VII. Environmental Health & Safety | |

* Fully vacated

† Partially vacated

Process

Each goal consists of specific performance standards to be met by the District. A court-appointed Special Arbiter is charged with evaluating the agency's performance against the performance standards established in the Work Plan. If DYRS' performance is deemed to have met the standards laid out in the Work Plan, a motion is filed to vacate that indicator — releasing the agency from that portion of the Work Plan.

Jerry M. Progress

Vacated in 2011

- Only hold detained youth at YSC (Goal II.A)
- Education programming for DC Model youth at New Beginnings (Goal IV.A)
- Daily large-muscle exercise requirements for youth at YSC and New Beginnings (Goal VI.A.1)

Previously Vacated

- Creation of a sustainable detention alternatives program for pre-trial youth (Goal III.B)
- Only hold committed youth at Oak Hill/New Beginnings (Goal II.B)

DYRS Population Statistics and Trends

FY2011 Population Highlights

1,269	Total committed youth served
1,003	Average daily committed population
954	Total detained youth served
146	Average daily detained population (56 at YSC; 90 in detention alternatives)

In FY2011, the average daily population of DYRS committed youth was 1,003. This figure includes committed youth placed in secure facilities, community-based residential facilities, and within the family home. The average daily population of detained youth was 146. Of the 146, the average daily population of detained youth at detention alternatives was 90, and the average daily population of detained youth at YSC (excluding overnighters) was 56. Throughout FY2011, DYRS served a total of 1,269 committed youth and 954 detained youth. In FY2011, there were 243 total new commitments to DYRS.

Population by Demographics and Offense Type

Similar to recent years, in FY2011 newly committed youth were predominately male (86%) and African-American (96%). The demographic characteristics of new commitments has remained relatively stable since FY2004, though there was a slight increase in the percentage of committed females between FY2010 and FY2011.

New Commitments: Demographic Breakdown FY2004-FY2011

	Male	Female	African-American	Latino	White
FY2004	87%	13%	93%	7%	0%
FY2005	88%	12%	97%	3%	0%
FY2006	91%	9%	96%	3%	0%
FY2007	87%	13%	98%	2%	0%
FY2008	92%	8%	99%	1%	0.3%
FY2009	90%	10%	96%	4%	0.3%
FY2010	91%	9%	98%	2%	0.3%
FY2011	86%	14%	96%	4%	0%

New Commitments by Age FY2004-FY2011

	14 and Under	15	16	17	18 and Older
FY2004	15%	17%	22%	32%	15%
FY2005	19%	21%	21%	17%	22%
FY2006	15%	21%	27%	27%	11%
FY2007	11%	20%	27%	27%	15%
FY2008	16%	20%	30%	26%	9%
FY2009	15%	21%	25%	26%	14%
FY2010	14%	20%	31%	25%	11%
FY2011	18%	20%	25%	24%	14%

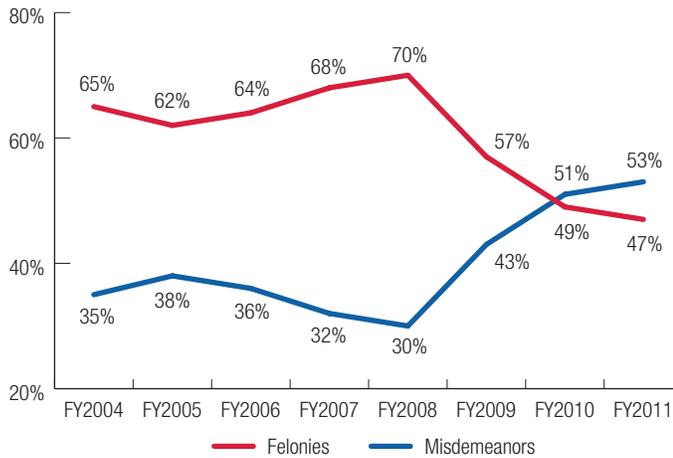
The committed and detained populations are demographically similar, though the committed population has a higher percentage of males and African-Americans than the detained population.

Demographics of Detained vs. Committed Youth 2011

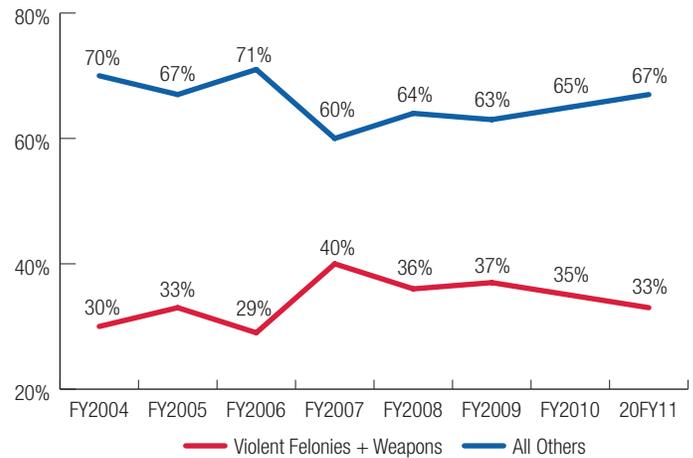
	Committed Youth	Detained Youth
Male	90%	82%
Female	10%	18%
African-American	98%	95%
Latino	2%	4%
Total Youth	1,269	954

More youth were committed for misdemeanor offenses than for felonies in both FY2010 and FY2011, representing the first time this has occurred in the eight years of data studied. The drop in the portion of youth committed on felony charges is driven largely by decreases in commitments from property felonies, such as burglary, which fell from 9% of commitments in FY2008 to 3% in FY2011, and drug felony commitments, such as possession with intent to distribute, which went from 8% of commitments in FY2008 to 2% in FY2011. By contrast, the portion of

New Commitments: Committing Offense Breakdown FY2004-FY2011



New Commitments: Committing Offense Breakdown FY2004-FY2011



Committing Offense Types in Three-Year Snapshots, FY2005-FY2011

FY2005		FY2008		FY2011	
Violent Felony	22%	Violent Felony	30%	Violent Felony	28%
Unauthorized Use of Vehicle	22%	Unauthorized Use of Vehicle	20%	Violent Misdemeanor	18%
Weapons	11%	Property Felony	9%	Property Misdemeanor	13%
Violent Misdemeanor	9%	Drug Felony	8%	Unauthorized Use of Vehicle	12%
Drug Felony	9%	Property Misdemeanor	8%	Drug Misdemeanor	8%
Property Felony	8%	Violent Misdemeanor	7%	Person in Need of Supervision	6%
Drug Misdemeanor	6%	Weapons	6%	Weapons	5%
Other	5%	Drug Misdemeanor	5%	Property Felony	3%
Property Misdemeanor	4%	Threats Felony	3%	Threats Felony	3%
Threats Felony	2%	Other	2%	Threats Misdemeanor	2%
Threats Misdemeanor	2%	Person in Need of Supervision	1%	Drug Felony	2%
Person in Need of Supervision	1%	Threats Misdemeanor	1%	Other	1%

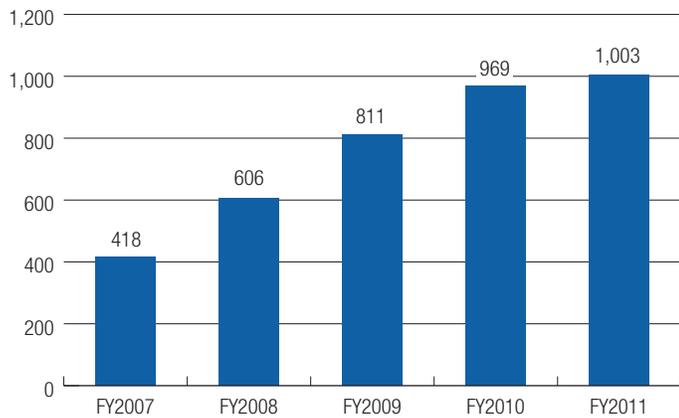
commitments resulting from violent misdemeanors, including simple assault, rose from 7% to 18% in that period, while the portion of youth committed for property misdemeanors, such as shoplifting, increased from 8% to 13% of commitments.

Another way to view the committing offense data is to compare commitments from violent felonies and weapons offenses with the commitments resulting from all other offense categories. The percentage of youth committed for these two charge types has also declined, moving from a high of 40% in FY2007 steadily downward to 33% in FY2011.

Population Trends

The DYRS committed population has increased significantly since FY2007. The high point of the committed population was in 2010 at 1,045 youth. The average daily committed population for each year has also increased significantly over time, from 418 in FY2007 to 1,003 in FY2011.

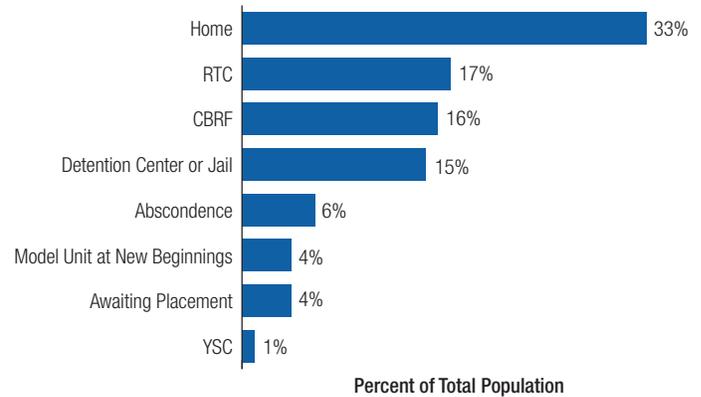
DYRS Average Daily Committed Population FY2007-FY2011



Population by Placement Type

The breakdown of the average daily committed population by placement type in FY2011 was as follows:

FY2011 Average Daily Committed Population by Placement Type



Average Daily Number of Youth Awaiting Placement 2011

Month	Average Daily Number of Youth Awaiting Placement (Overall)
January	27.1
February	26.9
March	29.5
April	25.9
May	25.1
June	36.3
July	43.6
August	49.1
September	51.9
October	44.5
November	42.6
December	44.6

The Nationwide Trend **Away from Incarceration**

Research indicates that placing lower-risk youth in community-based alternatives to secure placement can help lower costs and reduce the likelihood that a youth will re-offend. A 2011 report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation states: “The evidence . . . makes clear that, except in cases where juvenile offenders have committed serious crimes and pose a clear and present danger to society, removing troubled and delinquent young people from their homes and families is expensive and often unnecessary—with results no better (and often far worse) on average than community-based supervision and treatment. Likewise, the evidence makes clear that throwing even serious youth offenders together in large, prison-like, and often-abusive institutions provides no public safety benefit, wastes taxpayers’ money, and reduces the odds that the young people will mature out of their delinquency and become productive law-abiding citizens.”¹

Studies in several states have shown that lower-risk juvenile offenders who are placed within the community are less likely to re-offend than lower-risk youth placed in secure custody. For example, a 2007 Florida study involving more than 40,000 youthful offenders found that those assessed as low risk who were placed into secure residential facilities not only re-offended at a higher rate than similar youth who remained in the community, they also re-offended at a higher rate than high-risk youth placed into correctional facilities.² In addition to its public safety benefits, placing youth in community-based alternatives can be a cost-effective approach. Community-based placements typically have a lower average daily cost than secure facilities; furthermore, some estimate that incarcerating a single youth can cost as much as \$1.7 million in missed employment opportunities, poorer life outcomes, and increased chances of future offending.³

Many jurisdictions have been decreasing their reliance on custody while continuing to achieve positive public safety outcomes. Texas, for example, began reducing its incarcerated juvenile population in 2006. The Texas Youth Commission’s daily confined population fell from 4,800 at the end of August 2006 to 2,250 in August 2009 and 1,800 by August 2010. Contrary to the theories of incapacitation and general deterrence, neither the state’s crime rate nor its juvenile arrest totals have increased since 2006. In fact, violent juvenile felony arrests in Texas fell by 10% from 2006 to 2009, and total juvenile arrests fell by 9%. Similarly, between 1996 and 2010, California reduced its average daily population of youth in state correctional facilities by 85%. Even including the substantial number of California youth housed in county-run correctional camps, the state’s incarcerated juvenile population declined 50% from 1999 through 2008. Contrary to the common presumption that more incarceration breeds less crime, California’s juvenile crime rates have declined substantially during this period of rapid de-incarceration. The arrest rate for property index offenses fell steadily from 1995 through 2009. The juvenile arrest rate for violent index crimes also declined substantially, falling in 2009 to its lowest level since 1970.⁴

1 Mendel, D. (2011). *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*. Baltimore, Maryland: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

2 Baglivio, M.T. (2007). *The Prediction of Risk to Recidivate Among a Juvenile Offending Population*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Florida. Retrieved from www.djj.state.fl.us/OPA/ptassistance/documents/Dissertation.pdf.

3 Cohen, M.A. (1998). The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth, *The Journal of Qualitative Criminology*, 14(1), 5-33.

4 Mendel, D. (2011). *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*. Baltimore, Maryland: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Placement Types by Average Daily Population, Average Length of Stay, and Demographics FY2011

	Average Daily Population	Average Length of Stay (days)	Male	Female	African-American	Latino	White
Home	337.4	220.3	91%	9%	97%	3%	0%
RTC	175.1	191.1	82%	18%	96%	4%	0%
CBRF	164.9	87.8	91%	9%	98%	2%	0%
Detention Center or Jail	146.4	155.1	97%	3%	97%	3%	0%
Abscondence	61.4	31	86%	14%	96%	3%	0%
Model Unit at New Beginnings	42.9	274.8	100%	0%	97%	3%	0%
Awaiting Placement	37.4	10.1	99%	1%	98%	2%	0%
YSC	14.4	20.9	78%	22%	98%	1%	1%

Population at YSC and New Beginnings

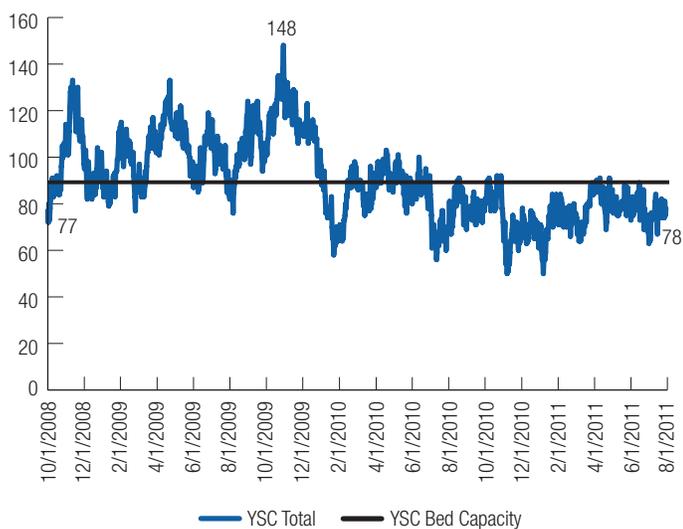
YSC

During FY2011, YSC's average daily population was 76 youth. This represents a reversal from recent years, when YSC's daily population was consistently above capacity and often exceeded 100 youth. In FY2011, YSC operated above the 88-bed capacity during 4% of the year and had zero days during which the

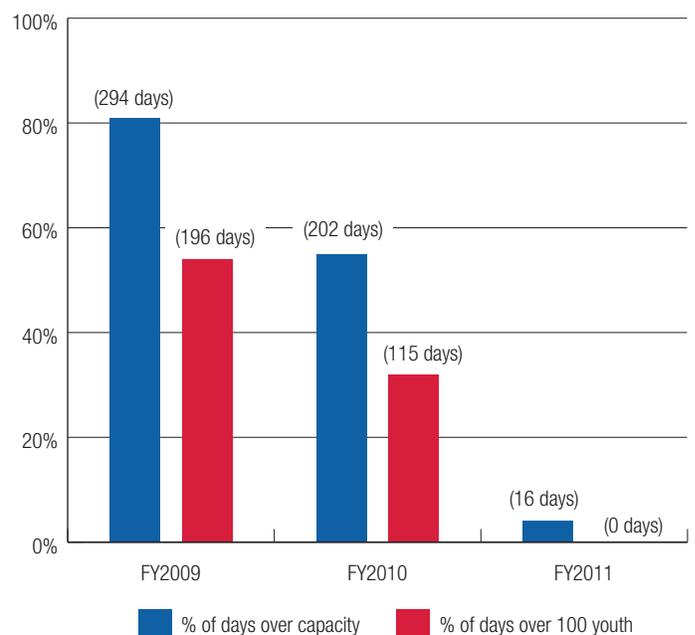
population exceeded 100 youth. This is a marked turnaround since FY2009, when YSC operated above capacity during 81% of the year and had populations exceeding 100 youth during 54% of the year.

The recent decline in YSC's population reflects a concerted effort by DYRS, CSS, OAG, and the DC Superior Court to address overpopulation issues. In early 2010, DYRS began sharing data

YSC Population FY2009-FY2011



YSC Population Levels FY2009-2011



regarding YSC's population size, the reasons for admission to YSC, youth arrest history, and the length of time that youth remained at YSC with stakeholders on a weekly basis, allowing the agency to work with partners including MPD, OAG, and the courts to find solutions to overpopulation problems.

Similar to the overall DYRS committed population, in FY2011 the YSC population was comprised predominately of African-American males. Over the past three fiscal years, the percentage of female YSC residents has risen from 13% to 21%. The percentage of YSC residents aged 18 or older has risen from 7% to 10%, with the other age groups remaining relatively stable. The average length of time that a youth stays at YSC has remained stable since FY2009, hovering between 22.6 and 22.9 days for all three fiscal years.

New Beginnings

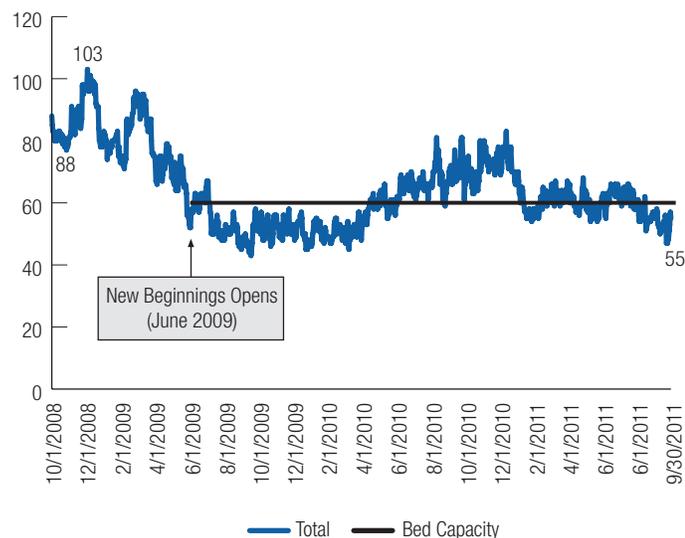
The population size at New Beginnings has fluctuated since the facility's opening in FY2009. In FY2011, the average daily population of the Model Unit was 43 youth, while the average daily population for youth awaiting placement was close to 20.

Like the overall committed population, in FY2011 the New Beginnings population was predominately African-American. Since FY2009, the percentage of the population aged 18 and older rose from 21% to 35%. For residents in the Model Unit, the average length of stay in FY2011 was 275 days, or approximately nine months. For youth awaiting placement, the average length of stay was eight days.

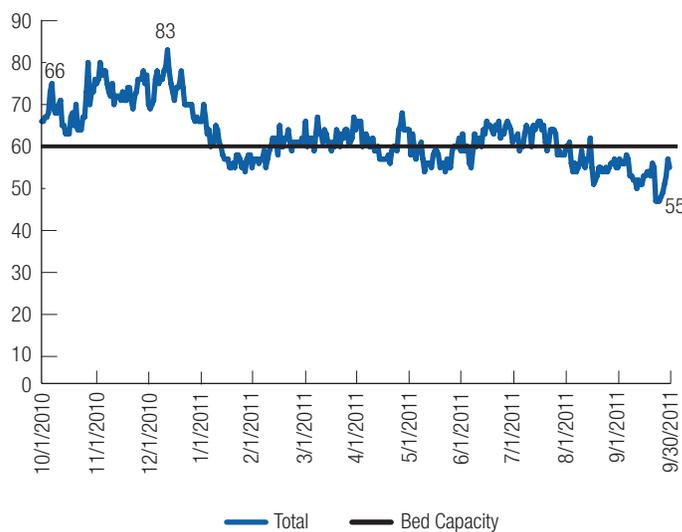
YSC Population by Demographics FY2009-FY2011

	Average Length of Stay (days)	Male	Female	African-American	Latino	White	Age 14 and Under	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18 and older	# of Youth
FY2009	22.6	87%	13%	96%	3%	1%	18%	21%	27%	27%	7%	1573
FY2010	22.9	86%	14%	96%	3%	0%	17%	22%	27%	27%	6%	1367
FY2011	22.6	79%	21%	96%	4%	1%	17%	22%	27%	24%	10%	1149

New Beginnings Daily Population FY2009-FY2011



New Beginnings Daily Population FY2011



New Beginnings Population by Demographics FY2009-FY2011

		Average Length of Stay (days)	African-American	Latino	Age 14 and Under	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18 and older	# of Youth
Model Unit	FY2009	252.0	96%	4%	8%	16%	27%	41%	8%	51
	FY2010	229.8	95%	5%	3%	10%	33%	46%	8%	63
	FY2011	274.8	98%	2%	2%	13%	24%	39%	22%	54
Awaiting Placement	FY2009	16.9	97%	3%	9%	16%	23%	29%	22%	675
	FY2010	8.4	98%	2%	7%	13%	25%	26%	29%	878
	FY2011	7.4	97%	3%	7%	12%	19%	26%	35%	957
TOTAL	FY2009	41.2	97%	3%	9%	16%	24%	30%	21%	726
	FY2010	20.6	98%	2%	7%	13%	25%	27%	28%	941
	FY2011	24.0	98%	2%	6%	12%	19%	27%	35%	1011

Endnotes

- 1 Oak Hill Archive Project. Retrieved from <https://blogs.commonsgororgetown.edu/oakhill/documents-and-resources/blue-ribbon-commission/>.
- 2 D.C. Law 15-261.
- 3 D.C. Law 15-335. This law took effect in early 2005.
- 4 Butts, J.A., Bazemore, G., & Meroe, A.S. (2010). *Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice.
- 5 Description of *Jerry M.* history drawn from: Mostaghimi, B. (2010). *Measuring and Managing Performance: A YouthStat Optimization Study*. Policy Analysis Exercise, Harvard Kennedy School of Government.