

## Progress Report: Juvenile Justice Facilities

### Summary

The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) has made progress on a number of recommendations from a 2016 LFC program evaluation and is improving the outcomes of youth released into the community, including lower rates of recidivism. However, reintegration centers and secure facilities appear to remain overstaffed, and reintegration centers remain underutilized.

The youth population in New Mexico and the proportion of that population who interact with juvenile justice facilities are both declining. CYFD has been implementing its Cambiar model since FY08, shifting away from punitive modes of justice toward more rehabilitative, evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism and otherwise improve outcomes. These and other factors have contributed to a long-term decrease in the number of youth coming into contact with the juvenile justice system and the number housed in secure facilities. However, despite CYFD's closure of two secure facilities and two reintegration centers, facility staffing levels are not keeping pace with decreasing workloads. Per-client costs continue to rise even as the number of juveniles in the system declines. Between FY19 and FY22, the per-client per-year cost of secure facilities rose from \$266.5 thousand to \$383.3 thousand, a 44 percent increase, and the per-referral per-year cost of field supervision rose from \$1,600 to \$2,900, an 81 percent increase.

Reflecting recommendations in the original report, CYFD needs to continue to evaluate the Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) budget and identify opportunities to achieve staffing efficiencies when closing facilities. Considering projections of continued declines in incarcerated youth, CYFD should replace its facilities master plan with one that is consistent with the principles and goals of the Cambiar model and is also practically realizable. This plan could redistribute funds and staff away from facilities towards upstream services.

### The Evaluation:

The evaluation *Effectiveness of Juvenile Justice Facilities and Community-Based Services* (August 2016) provided an overview of the costs, capacity, and needs of the juvenile justice system in New Mexico and identified opportunities to improve outcomes and efficiencies, including the potential to save up to \$2.7 million. While several of the 2016 program evaluation's recommendations have been implemented or are progressing toward implementation, per-client costs are at all-time highs and continue to rise.

**Progress Reports** foster accountability by assessing the implementation status of previous program evaluation reports, recommendations and need for further changes.



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## Juvenile Delinquency and Recidivism are Declining

Juvenile justice referrals to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) have declined to about a quarter of what they were 13 years ago, with a drop in the youth population and a change in approach to juvenile justice both likely contributors. Those factors may not be the only reasons for the decline, however. For example, youth use of drugs and alcohol is also down. The decline could indicate fewer offenses, better interventions, reduced enforcement, or a combination of factors.

Consistent with previous LFC evaluation recommendations, the department has ceased operation of two reintegration centers and two secure facilities since FY17, as detailed in Table 1. Currently, The Juvenile Justice Services Division (JJS), responsible for administering a system of correction, supervision, and rehabilitation for youth, operates two secure facilities and two reintegration centers to facilitate the successful return of committed youth to society at large.

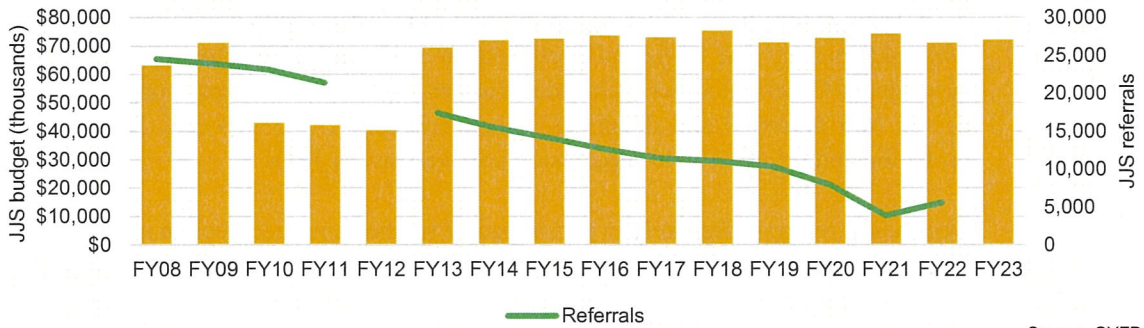
**Table 1. Facility Population and Status**

Facility	Type	Capacity	FY22 Avg. Daily Population	Status
John Paul Taylor Center	Secure Facility	48	23.3	Operational
Youth Diagnostic and Development Center	Secure Facility	108	49.2	Operational
Camino Nuevo Youth Center	Secure Facility	96	12.6	Closed in FY22, but still houses administrative staff
San Juan Detention Center	Secure Facility	10		Contract terminated in FY20
Albuquerque Boys Reintegration Center	Reintegration Center	12	2.7	Operational
Albuquerque Girls Reintegration Center	Reintegration Center	12	0.6	Closed in FY22
Eagle Nest Reintegration Center	Reintegration Center	12	3.7	Operational
Carlsbad Reintegration Center	Reintegration Center	12		Closed in FY17

Source: CYFD

CYFD began implementing its Cambiar model in FY08. In broad terms, the Cambiar model is a move toward rehabilitation through community-based services, delinquency prevention programs, education, and evidence-based practices. Since FY08, the number of referrals to JJS has decreased significantly but the budget has not seen a matching decrease.

**Chart 1. The Juvenile Justice budget and Referrals FY08 to FY23**



Source: CYFD

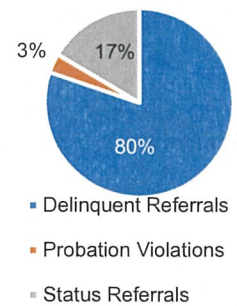
**JJS has seen a downward trend in all types of referrals.**

Between FY09 and FY22, juvenile justice referrals to CYFD declined from 23.9 thousand to 5,600, a drop of 76.4 percent. The pandemic saw the number fluctuate, falling sharply from nearly 8,000 in FY20 to below 4,000 in FY21, then increasing to 5,600 in FY22, the first rise in referrals in more than 10 years.

Referral to CYFD is the entry point into the juvenile justice system. While a youth does not have to be arrested to be referred to CYFD, virtually all delinquent referrals are made by police (98 percent in FY22). Youth can also be referred to JJS by school staff, parents or family, or other government or community sources, including juvenile probation officers (JPOs). Once referred, a youth is assigned to a JPO responsible for handling the case. The JPO meets with the youth and family members to discuss the case, and then decides either to refer the case to a children’s court attorney for court proceedings or to handle the case informally. Court proceedings can lead to commitment or probation; cases handled informally can lead to field supervision, diversion programs, and behavioral health services offered through third parties.

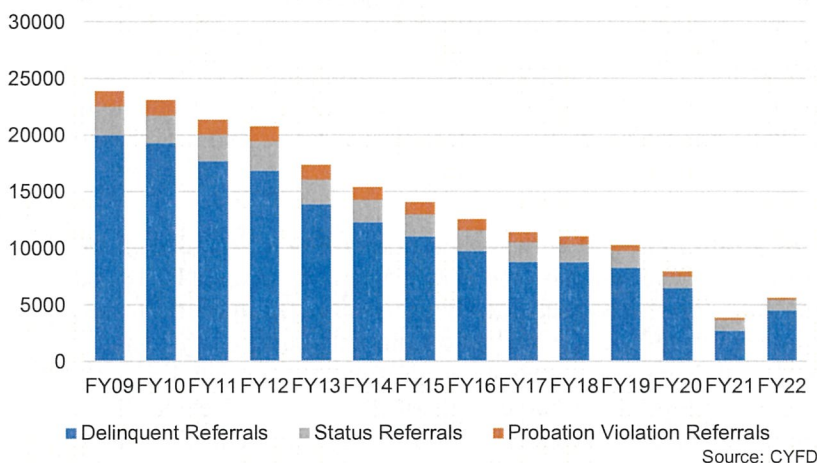
- **Delinquent referrals** are acts committed by children that would be a crime if committed by an adult.
- **Status referrals** are acts that are violations only if committed by a juvenile (e.g. runaway, truancy).
- **Probation violations** are any violation of terms of probation.

**Chart 2. FY22 Referrals by Type**



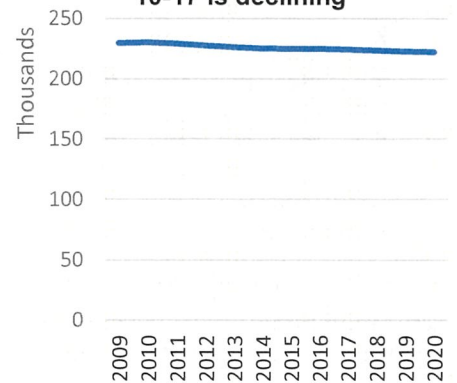
Source: CYFD

**Chart 3. Referrals to CYFD declined by 76.4 percent between FY09 and FY22**



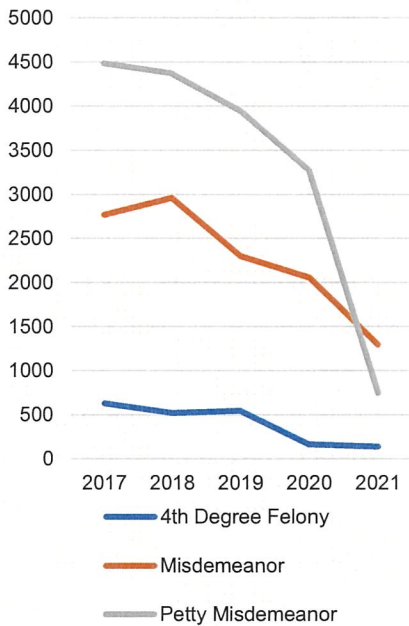
Source: CYFD

**Chart 4. New Mexico's Population of Youth ages 10-17 is declining**



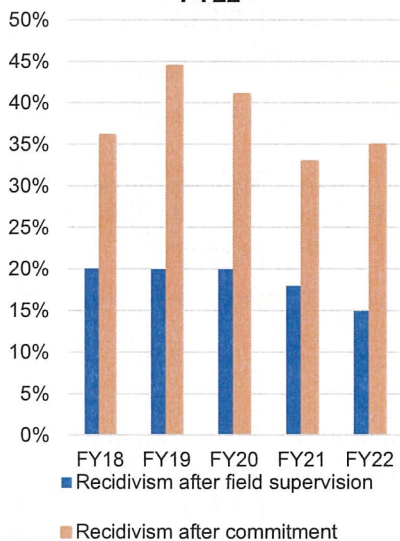
Note: 2020 is the most recent year for which NCHS Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Chart 5. Among the 15 Most Common Offenses, Petty Misdemeanors Declined Most Acutely**



Note: FY22 is excluded due to data limitations. Source: CYFD

**Chart 6. Recidivism Fell Slightly Between FY18 and FY22**



Note: FY18 is the first year for which CYFD reported recidivism by this measure. Source: CYFD

The vast majority of JJS clients are not committed and instead receive formal or informal dispositions. In FY22, 0.9 percent of referrals led to commitment, while 4.9 percent led to formal probation, and 47 percent led to informal supervision. Other outcomes included no further action (23.1 percent), consent decree (6.6 percent), and dismissal or nonprosecution (6.2 percent). Both probation and informal field supervision are overseen by JPOs.

Declines in referrals are likely in part impacted by the continued decline in the youth population in New Mexico, although the population decline may only account for a small part of a larger trend in declining referrals: according to Census data, the number of New Mexico youth aged 10-17 declined by 7,263 (3.2 percent) between 2009 and 2020. The long-term decline in referrals may also be indicative of fewer offenses, or less interaction with reporting officials, or both, as FBI crime reporting data show a 14 percent decline in the number of juvenile arrests in the last four years. Likely related, between 2011 and 2021, youth reporting currently using alcohol declined from 37 percent to 20 percent, surveyed youth reporting ever using methamphetamines declined from 6 percent to 2 percent, and those reporting ever using heroin declined from 5 percent to 1 percent. The decline in referrals is likely also due in part to CYFD’s implementation of the Cambiar model, which posits that the shift away from the harsher aspects of the juvenile justice system in favor of constructive and evidence-based approaches should decrease delinquency and recidivism. Looking only at the 15 most common delinquent offenses each year, the steepest decline has been in petty misdemeanors, which fell by 83 percent between FY17 and FY21, with fourth degree felony offenses falling by 78 percent and non-petty misdemeanors by 53 percent over the same period.

Delinquent referrals make up the majority of referrals to CYFD, followed by status referrals and then by probation referrals. Between FY09 and FY22, delinquent referrals declined by 77 percent, status referrals by 63 percent, and probation violations by 86 percent. The relatively larger drop in probation violation referrals is partially attributable to CYFD’s implementation of a statewide standardized probation violation agreement that went into effect in January 2019. Earlier probation agreements allowed counties to automatically include numerous actions as grounds to revoke probation, such as curfew violations, getting married, or pregnancy. The new agreement allows probation conditions to be added on a case-by-case basis but by default includes only five standard terms relating to: obeying all laws; maintaining contact with JPOs; residency; weapons, alcohol and drugs; and search and seizure rules.

**Recidivism for youth declined between FY18 and FY22.** Recidivism for youth discharged from field supervision declined 5 percent between FY18 and FY22 and the rate for those discharged from secure facilities decreased slightly. Recidivism is defined as an adjudication in the juvenile system or a conviction in the adult justice system for a delinquent or criminal act that occurred within two years of discharge from JJS supervision. Recidivism is measured separately for individuals released from secure facilities and for

those released from field supervision, which includes post-commitment probation and the less formal supervision involved in cases handled informally. A chart of the client referral and outcomes pathway is available in Appendix A.

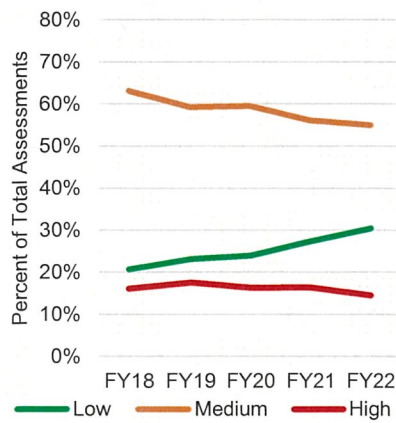
Recidivism among clients discharged from field supervision held steady at 20 percent from FY18 to FY20, then fell to 15 percent between FY20 and FY22. Recidivism among clients discharged from secure facilities was 35 percent in FY22, down 1 percent from FY18.

**Risk assessments suggest the potential for continued decreased recidivism in the coming years.** In 1998, CYFD implemented the structured decision making (SDM) system to assess the risks and needs of justice-involved youth, as well as risk of recidivism. The system uses a standardized matrix to identify areas of concern related to a client’s offense history, education, family relationships, and emotional stability. An internal validation study in 2010 confirmed clients whose risk levels were assessed as high, medium, and low ended up recidivating at correspondingly high, medium, and low rates.

CYFD completes initial SDM assessments for all juvenile offenders whose cases are adjudicated and follow-up reassessments for clients in secure facilities and under post-commitment field supervision. The department uses the assessments to guide disposition recommendations, classify youths committed to secure facilities, set appropriate levels of JPO contact with juveniles on field supervision, track clients’ progress, and modify treatment plans where appropriate.

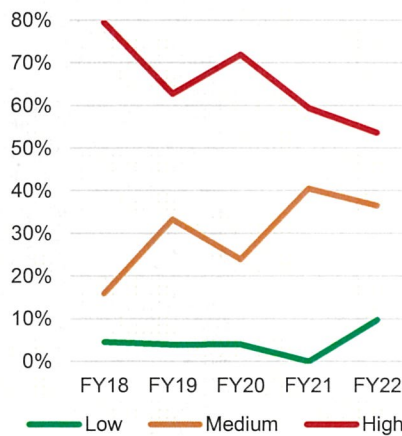
Risk assessments of field supervision clients show consistent increases in the proportion of youth assessed as low risk, decreases in the proportion assessed at medium risk, and little change in the high-risk proportion. Assuming the CYFD SDM remains a valid predictor of recidivism, the metric should continue to decline in the future. For youth in secure facilities, the high-risk

**Chart 7. Field Supervision Risk Assessments**



Note: CYFD began reporting these figures in FY18. Source: CYFD

**Chart 8. Secure Facilities Risk Assessments**



Note: CYFD began reporting these figures in FY18. Source: CYFD

proportion fell from 80 percent in FY18 to 54 percent in FY22 while the low-risk proportion doubled from 5 percent to 10 percent over the same period.

CYFD’s risk assessments may need to be revalidated as populations, rules, and laws shift. Minnesota revalidated their juvenile risk assessment tool after 11 years. New Mexico may want to consider revalidating the SDM because it has been 13 years since it was validated.

## Falling Client Levels are Outpacing Reductions to Staffing Levels, Driving Per-Client Supervision Costs to All-Time Highs

Most JJS referrals do not result in facility commitments, and declining referrals and recidivism have led to downstream effects of fewer youth on supervision, lower caseloads, and, absent similar cuts in staffing, higher costs. Both for clients committed to secure facilities and for those whose cases are handled informally, per-client costs are driven by department staffing levels, particularly juvenile probation officers (JPOs) and juvenile corrections officers (JCOs). Although CYFD JJS has reduced the number of active JPOs by 22 percent since FY17, the decline in clients supervised has outpaced the staffing declines.

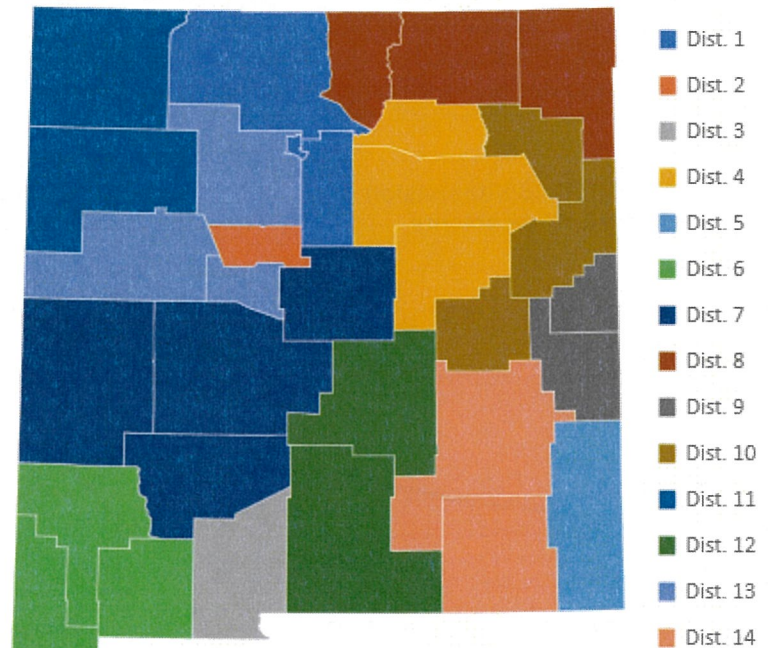
JPOs perform a multifaceted role as a youth’s main point of contact with the juvenile justice system. Every youth referred to JJS interacts with a JPO regardless of whether or not that youth is eventually committed to a facility. The vast majority of JJS clients, roughly 99 percent in FY22, are not

**Table 2. New Mexico Juvenile Probation Districts**

District	Counties	District	Counties
1	Los Alamos Rio Arriba Santa Fe	8	Colfax Taos Union
2	Bernalillo	9	Curry Roosevelt
3	Dona Ana	10	De Baca Harding Quay
4	Guadalupe Mora San Miguel	11	McKinley San Juan
5	Lea	12	Lincoln Otero
6	Grant Hidalgo Luna	13	Cibola Sandoval Valencia
7	Catron Sierra Socorro Torrance	14	Chaves Eddy

Source: CYFD

**Figure 1. JPO Districts**



Source: CYFD

committed and instead receive formal or informal dispositions whereby they have varying levels of interaction with JPOs, CYFD field behavioral health therapists, and community providers, such as continuum sites or juvenile community corrections (JCC).

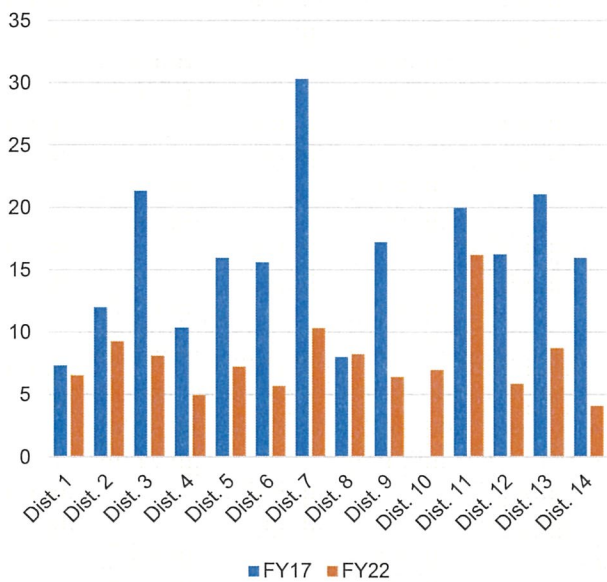
JPOs are based in 29 juvenile probation field offices statewide, spread throughout 14 districts that closely approximate the state’s judicial districts. They oversee youth receiving behavioral health services through a network of community-based continuum sites and other prevention and diversion programs designed to rehabilitate youth within their home communities.

**Decreasing referrals are driving down JPO caseloads in nearly all districts, and JPO staffing levels have not dropped proportionally.**

LFC’s December 2016 evaluation of juvenile justice facilities found that the structure of juvenile probation field offices contributed to inefficiencies in the system. That evaluation found the statewide average caseload was 15 cases per JPO, but there was significant variation among districts: the lowest caseload was six per JPO in District 1 (Los Alamos, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe counties), whereas District 3 (Doña Ana County) had nearly four times that caseload with 23 cases per JPO.

CYFD has improved the balance of relative caseloads across districts, but overall staffing levels do not reflect falling referrals and caseloads. In FY22, the highest caseload of 16 clients per JPO in District 11 was four times the lowest caseload of four clients per JPO in District 14. All remaining districts had per-JPO caseloads ranging from five to 10, whereas in FY17 they ranged from seven to 30.

**Chart 9. In FY22, per-JPO caseloads are more even across districts but also much lower than in FY17**



Source: CYFD

**Table 3. Change in JPO Staffing and Caseload from FY17 to FY22**

	Staffing	Caseload
District 1	-25%	-33%
District 2	-49%	-60%
District 3	-12%	-66%
District 4	-20%	-62%
District 5	-33%	-70%
District 6	-13%	-68%
District 7	0.0%	-66%
District 8	-33%	-31%
District 9	-11%	-71%
District 10		-13%
District 11	11%	-10%
District 12	0%	-64%
District 13	-15%	-65%
District 14	0%	-74%
Total	-28%	-59%

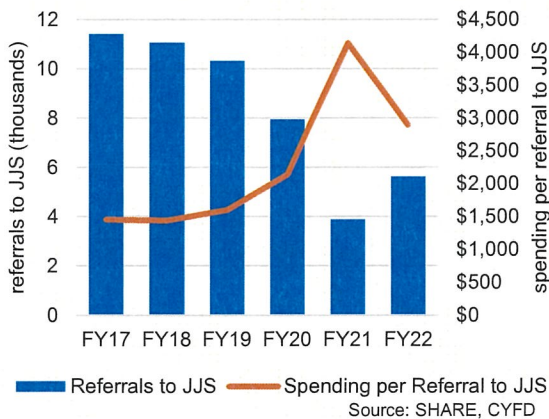
Source: CYFD

**JPO caseloads fell by 59 percent between FY17 and FY22 while cost per client increased by 81 percent.** The number of active cases overseen by JPOs fell from 2,300 in the last week of FY17 to 940 in the last week of FY22, a 59.1 percent drop. This drop is, in part, related to the 50.8 percent decline in referrals from FY17 to FY22. CYFD reduced the number of active JPOs over that period, but not at the same rate. Consequently, JPOs in every district saw a decline in caseloads.

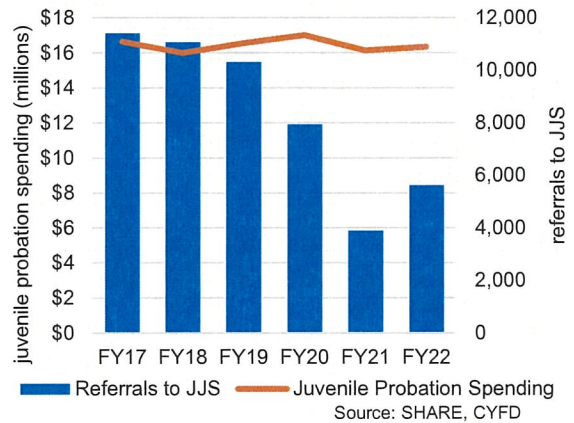
In absolute terms, the largest JPO staff reduction was in Bernalillo County (District 2), where the number of active JPOs fell from 43 in FY17 to 22 in FY22, a 49 percent decrease. But because the number of cases fell faster than the staffing level, the number of cases per JPO in District 2 fell from an average of 12 in FY17 to an average of nine in FY22.

Between FY17 and FY22, the statewide JPO caseload declined by 59 percent, while the number of active JPOs declined at a slower pace of 28.2 percent. As a result, the average JPO caseload has fallen substantially: statewide, there was a JPO for every 15 cases in FY17, but in FY22 there was a JPO for every eight cases.

**Chart 10. Juvenile Probation and Supervision Spending per Referral**



**Chart 11. Total Juvenile Probation and Supervision Spending and Referrals**



Spending on juvenile probation and supervision services fell from \$16.6 million in FY17 to \$16.4 million in FY22, a 1.7 percent reduction. However, with declining referrals, per-client costs for those services nearly doubled, from \$1,500 in FY17 to more than \$2,900 in FY22.

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) recommends a maximum of 15 cases per JPO for cases requiring intensive supervision, a maximum of 30 cases per JPO for moderate to high-risk cases, and a maximum of 100 cases per JPO for low-risk cases. The FY22 JPO staffing levels of 8:1 would be well within the suggested 15:1 case to JPO ratio even if all clients on probation and other field supervision fell into the most intensive supervision category. But CYFD’s SDM risk assessments from FY22 show that 15 percent of post-commitment field services clients were high-risk, and more than 30



percent were low-risk. Assuming the risk levels of all field services clients are no higher than those of post-commitment field services clients, the APPA-recommended maximum exceeded FY22 staffing levels by a factor of eight, and bringing JPO staffing levels to half the APPA-recommended maximum would allow the agency to redirect up to \$12.3 million toward other client services.

**JJS should consider assigning caseloads based on assessed risk, and adjusting staffing levels accordingly.** CYFD’s Protective Services (PS) division completed a workforce development plan in the summer of 2022 that sets caseload targets for four types of field services workers in five regions across the state, taking into account the different geographical features of the regions and different services available in each. A definite and explicit plan like the one PS completed could help JJS to realize savings in connection with the declining numbers of referrals and commitments.

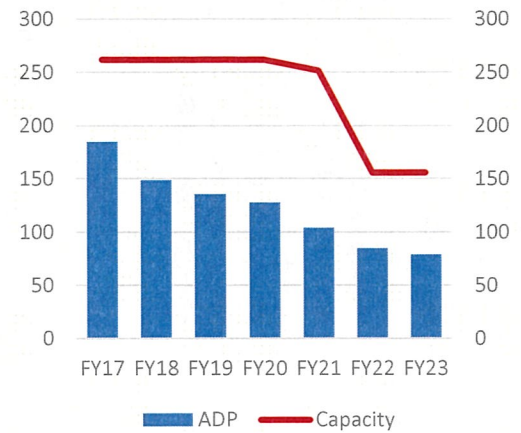
## Falling Client Levels are Outpacing Reductions to Staffing Levels, Driving Per-Client Secure Facility Costs to All-Time Highs

Similar to supervision trends, between FY17 and FY22 the number of youth in CYFD secure facilities fell by 54 percent and the number in reintegration centers fell by 58.8 percent. These reductions are due in part to fewer referrals, a shift away from detention in favor of community services, and consistently low recidivism rates. However, the reductions have resulted in excess capacity in CYFD facilities. Following recommendations from the original 2016 LFC report and subsequent 2018 progress report, CYFD has reduced capacity in both types of facilities. The department terminated its 10-bed contract with the San Juan Detention Center in FY20 and closed the 96-bed Camino Nuevo Youth Center in January 2022, reducing secure facility bed capacity by 40.5 percent. The department closed the 12-bed Albuquerque Girls Reintegration Center in FY22, reducing reintegration center capacity by one-third. Nevertheless, secure facilities still have 45.4 percent excess capacity and reintegration centers have 70.8 percent excess capacity as of FY22. Despite facility closures, cost savings have not been fully realized due to workforce and capital issues.

**CYFD has been closing facilities but has not fully realized savings due in part to retaining staff from closed facilities.**

Juvenile corrections officers (JCOs) are the staff members with primary responsibility for monitoring and caring for clients committed to secure CYFD facilities. JCOs perform a critical security function in CYFD facilities, but they also perform mentoring and case management functions alongside behavioral health and education staff and JPOs to ensure clients are adhering to and making progress with their plans of

**Chart 12. Secure Facilities Have Excess Capacity Despite Closures**



Source: CYFD

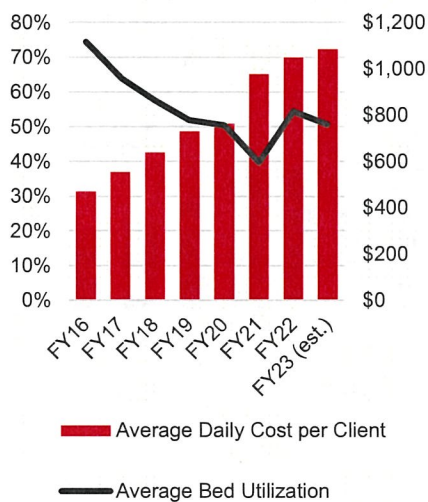


**Closure of the Camino Nuevo Youth Center and the Albuquerque Girls Reintegration Center did not result in lower staffing levels.**

Camino Nuevo emulates a correctional institution that is incompatible with New Mexico’s approach to rehabilitation of youth committed to secure facilities. CYFD moved the last clients out of the facility in January 2022. Its closure was an opportunity to realize cost savings. CYFD made some cost reductions, mainly through reductions in office equipment and services, but there was no reduction in staff.

The reintegration center underwent several changes over the past few years. During the pandemic, the facility was used for COVID-infected youth from other areas of the Albuquerque campus. Then CYFD used it to house children in Protective Services. In January 2022, CYFD moved all remaining youth to other locations. The department is currently in talks with third-party service providers that might use the building to provide integration services to committed youth at the Albuquerque campus.

**Chart 13. Cost per Client in Secure Facilities Increased by More Than 37% Between FY20 and FY22**



Note: FY23 cost per client assumes Q4 facility spending equals the average of Q1 through Q3  
Source: CYFD, SHARE

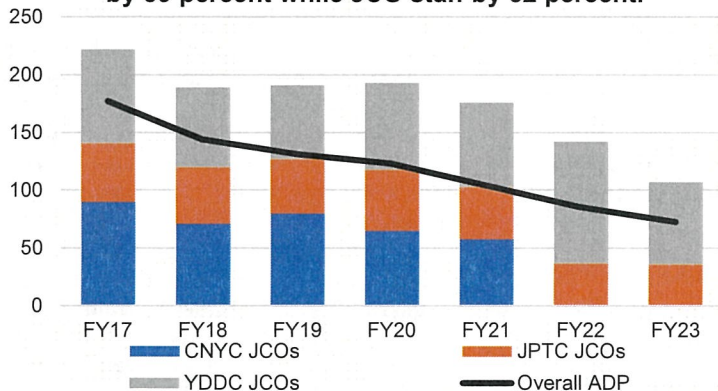
care. Under CYFD policy, each housing unit in a facility is assigned a JCO unit supervisor as well as one or more line staff, depending on the number of youth housed in the unit. A JCO supervisor may oversee multiple units.

**Client-to-JCO ratios are below levels reported by LFC in 2016 and 2018 and continue to fall.** From FY17 through FY21, the growth of per-client costs of secure facilities tracked decreasing bed utilization. When the Camino Nuevo Youth Center in Albuquerque closed, YDDC, also in Albuquerque, had approximately 41 percent bed utilization. With YDDC staff operating at such low caseloads compared with earlier years, and with overall bed utilization continuing to drop due to fewer commitments, it might have been reasonable to expect YDDC to absorb the clients from Camino Nuevo without needing many additional staff or other related expenses. However, per-client costs grew from \$970 in FY21 to \$1,050 in FY22, an 8.2 percent increase even though excess capacity fell from 60 percent to 45 percent over the same period.

Declines in the number of referrals and the number of commitments have led to declining bed utilization in secure facilities and rising per-client costs. To address the issue, CYFD terminated its contract with the San Juan Detention Center in September 2020 and transferred all clients out of Camino Nuevo in January 2022, reducing total secure facility bed capacity by 40.4 percent. Even so, bed utilization remained at 55 percent in FY22 and dipped to 51 percent in FY23. The closure of Camino Nuevo decreased the number of unused beds, but it increased per-client costs because most of its staff was transferred to YDDC (see Appendix B).

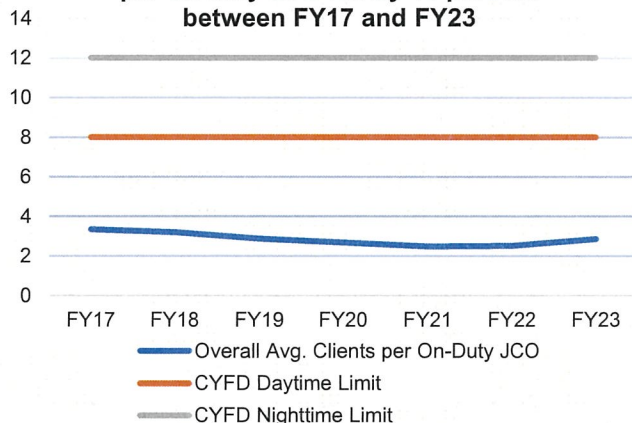
Under federal Prison Rape Elimination Act regulations, facilities must maintain a minimum staff-to-client ratio of 1:8 during waking hours and 1:16 during sleeping hours (28 C.F.R. 115.313). These regulations specify that the ratio pertains to security staff, defined as “employees primarily responsible for the supervision and control of inmates, detainees, or residents in housing units... or other areas of the facility.” This primarily includes JCOs.

**Chart 14. Between FY17 and FY23, Average Daily Population (ADP) in secure facilities fell by 59 percent while JCO staff by 52 percent.**



Note: Due to data availability, JCO staffing levels are not based on the same month from each fiscal year.  
Source: CYFD

**Chart 15. The average number of clients per on-duty JCO fell by 15 percent between FY17 and FY23**



Note: Due to data availability, JCO staffing levels are not based on the same month from each fiscal year.  
Source: CYFD

While there is no standard in New Mexico statute or rule specifying staffing ratios for the state’s secure commitment facilities, CYFD policy is to ensure a maximum ratio of 8 clients per on-duty JCO during waking hours and 12 clients per on-duty JCO at night. Assuming each JCO works one shift five days per week, the average ratio of secure facility clients per on-duty JCO fell from 3.1 in FY17 to 2.8 in FY23, a 15 percent drop. The ratio of 2.8 clients per on-duty JCO is well under the maximum ratios, constituting 24 percent of CYFD’s daytime maximum ratio and 36 percent of CYFD’s maximum nighttime ratio.

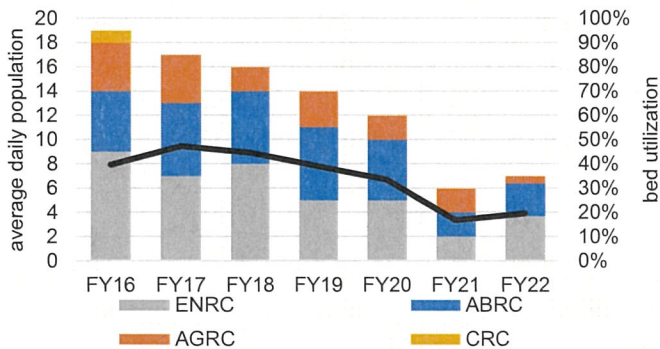
The turnover rate among JCOs increased significantly in FY22 and continues to rise. The turnover rate was 18.1 percent in FY20 and 18.5 percent in FY21, then climbed to 38.7 percent in FY22. It has climbed each quarter since, and stands at 45.7 percent as of the third quarter of FY23.

**Reintegration Centers remain underutilized and potentially overstaffed.** Reintegration centers are used primarily as a transition space for youth coming out of commitment. They are small facilities, with 12 beds each. They also have offices for JPOs and other service providers. Clients often leave during the day to attend school or other activities. CYFD emphasizes that they are a crucial tool for reconnecting youth with their communities, thereby reducing recidivism. LFC analysis in 2016 examined several cohorts of clients and found it likely that participating in the reintegration center process does lead to a lower chance of recidivism.

Despite closing the Carlsbad Reintegration Center (CRC) in FY16 and the Albuquerque Girls Reintegration Center (AGRC) in FY22, utilization of reintegration centers peaked in FY17 at 47 percent and fell to 33 percent in FY20. The pandemic made it more difficult to use the centers, but utilization in FY22 had not appreciably rebounded from its mid-pandemic low of 17 percent in FY21. However, CYFD reports that in FY23 there have been 49 supervised release clients and 8 probation clients accepted to reintegration centers.

In addition to low utilization, staffing at the reintegration centers also appears to have followed the pattern discussed above in regard to the closures of secure facilities. Though CYFD closed AGRC in FY22, the ten JCO staff from that

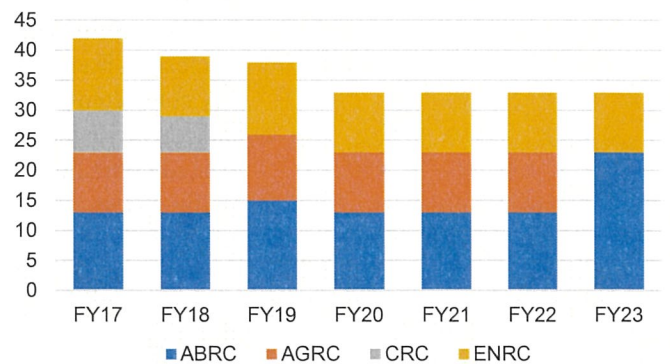
**Chart 16. Reintegration Centers Have Low Bed Utilization.**



Note: Population data for FY23 are not yet available

Source: CYFD

**Chart 17. When AGRC closed, its JCOs transferred to ABRC.**



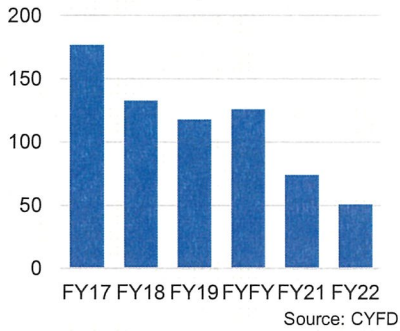
Note: Due to data availability, JCO staffing levels are not based on the same month from each fiscal year.

Source: CYFD

facility transferred to ABRC, driving per client costs up instead of leveraging economies of scale.

**CYFD should update its facilities plan to reflect projected future declines.**

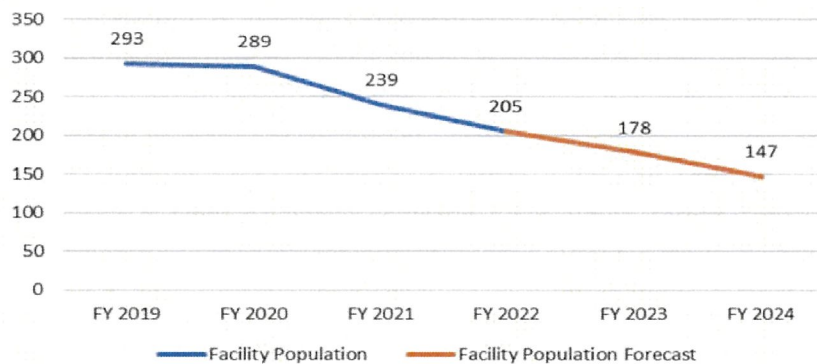
**Chart 18. Number of Youth Committed by Fiscal Year, FY17-FY22**



CYFD’s most recent secure facilities plan, last updated in 2014, is based on projected increases in the number of bed spaces needed for youth committed to secure facilities. Full implementation of the updated plan would have cost over \$100 million. CYFD noted in its response to LFC’s 2018 progress report that, at such a price, the plan was not feasible. The longstanding trend in the population of youth committed to secure facilities has been downward, not upward, in part because the Cambiar model aim to move away from incarceration and toward evidence-based practices and treatment. However, the master plan has not been updated to account for this trend.

**CYFD projects future declines in youth committed to secure facilities.** As of December 2022, CYFD projects continued declines in the number of youth in secure facilities, from 205 unique clients in FY22 to 147 unique clients in FY24, a 28.2 percent drop over two years. The assessment was based on the number of unique youth who were present in secure facilities from FY19 to FY22.

**Chart 19. Facility Population Projection for FY23 and FY24**



**CYFD needs to balance capacity with location in a plan for future secure facility needs.** The Cambiar Model emphasizes that secure facilities should be close to home, in part because that makes it easier for committed youth to stay connected with their families and communities, which reduces recidivism and otherwise improves outcomes. For committed youth whose homes are not located in the Las Cruces or Albuquerque areas, the existing system of secure facilities does not comport with the Cambiar Model.

Both YDDC and JPTC have averaged less than 60 percent utilization every year since FY18. In FY22, the average daily population in all secure facilities was slightly over 85, well below YDDC’s capacity of 108. Preliminary data show a 24.7 percent increase in violent charges filed against youth between

calendar years 2021 and 2023. CYFD should be mindful of such upstream metrics and could consider using these as a data point in their internal projections.

## CYFD is Taking Steps to Improve Monitoring of Other Services and Outcomes

A 2017 LFC Results First Children’s Behavioral health report found that for youth within the juvenile system, the state should shift spending to prevention and early intervention services and away from acute intervention. In 2015, for children, the state spent 46 percent on acute intervention and only 15 percent on prevention services. When thinking about early intervention services for youth who have come into contact with JJS, the report recommended increasing use of evidence-based services such as Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Wraparound.

CYFD has developed a Grant Management Portal (GMP) to collect data from third party service providers associated with clients’ personal identifiable information. This should allow JJS to track the rates of recidivism or other future juvenile justice involvement by client, service, and service provider. Though the system came online in FY22, it is not yet fully operational because providers are still being trained on proper reporting procedures.

### **JJS could leverage cost savings to expand proven programs such as MST and FFT.**

According to CYFD, JCC service providers are encouraged to use evidence-based programs in the contract cycle spanning 2015 to 2023. Nine of the current 11 JCC service providers are providing evidence-based programs, but are not using some of the more studied programs such as FFT. Within the 2017 report, FFT had an expected return on investment of \$11 for every dollar spent on youth in state institutions and \$8 for every dollar spent on youth on probation. However, the state did not have any Medicaid spending for FFT in 2021 or 2022 for the CYFD/TANF subpopulation. When thinking about how to expand further evidence-based services, CYFD reported that the new RFP released in January 2023 for JCC service providers requires use of evidence-based programs, and this evidence-based requirement will be part contract scopes of work for new providers.

**CYFD could provide direct services and leverage Medicaid funds to do so.** While CYFD contracts for a variety of evidence-based services for youth, it could also be helpful for the agency to provide direct services. With the aforementioned high turnover of JCOs, potentially providing training for these individuals to become licensed social workers may lead to reduced turnover as well as an opportunity for these individuals to provide direct preventative care to youth in either supervision or commitment. Currently JJS has approximately 30 FTE to provide behavioral health therapy in facilities. This unit could be expanded to also provide therapy to youth on supervision. Additionally, if CYFD staff provide direct behavioral health services to youth, these services

### **List of Reported Evidence-Based Programs Currently Used by JCC Service Providers (Number of JCC service providers using intervention)**

- Forward Thinking (2);
- Girls Circle (9);
- Restorative Justice Circles (1);
- Botvin Life Skills (2);
- Nurturing Parenting – It’s All About Being a Teen (3).
- Nurtured Heart Approach (2); and
- The Counsel for Young Men (9).

Source: JJS

could be Medicaid reimbursable, allowing the state to leverage federal funds and realize some cost savings that could then be reinvested into additional prevention activities.

**Multisystemic Therapy (MST) provides effective treatment for its target population, but issues with access remain.** MST is an intensive treatment model focusing on youth with serious antisocial behaviors by involving stakeholders including their families, schools, peers, and other members of the community. MST is typically provided in a client’s home, school, or other community locations, using support networks to facilitate positive behavioral change.

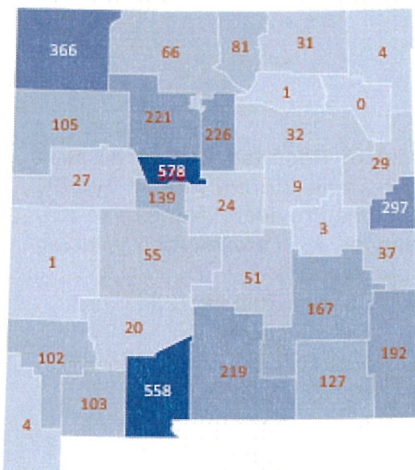
MST has been shown to reduce the youth’s criminal offending, out-of-home placements, and behavioral health issues, and to improve family functioning.

**MST providers are generally located in areas with the most need, but some areas are underserved.** LFC’s 2018 progress report recommended that CYFD work with HSD to identify providers, build MST teams in high-risk areas, and collaborate on tracking referrals, utilization, and spending as part of a strategy to prioritize evidence-based behavioral health services. The number of providers and the number of counties in which they operate has grown since then, and the agency reports that it is working with HSD to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for the services to draw additional providers. However, some areas remain underserved. There are 19 full-time MST clinicians operating in Bernalillo County, but only four in Doña Ana County, though both counties had approximately the same number of referrals to CYFD in FY22 (578 and 558, respectively). Meanwhile, San Juan County had more than half as many referrals (366) but has only one full time MST clinician. A single full-time MST clinician can have a maximum of 8 families on their caseload at a time.

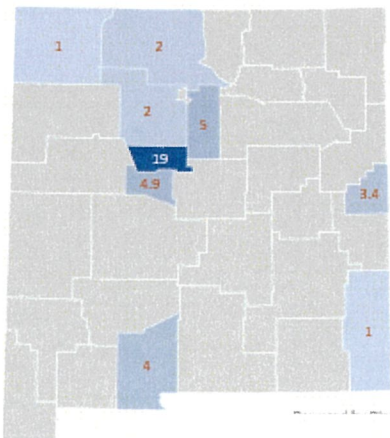
Between 2005 and 2017, roughly one out of 32 referrals to JJS led to a client receiving MST; the rate was 60.5 percent greater between 2017 and 2022, when MST treatment was used in one out of 19 referrals.

The 2018 progress report also recommended that CYFD should expand the data reported annually on outcomes and compare New Mexico outcomes to national benchmarks. CYFD has yet to implement the recommendation, but indicates that its behavioral health services division will re-engage with the data team within JJS as well as the University of New Mexico and the Rocky Mountain MST Network to accomplish this.

**Figure 2. FY22 Referrals to CYFD**




**Figure 3. Number of Active MST Therapists**



## Finding

CYFD should better align resources to the changing demands on the juvenile justice facilities.




Recommendation	Status			Comments
	No Action	Progressing	Complete	
As part of the annual appropriations process, evaluate the JJS budget and identify opportunities to achieve efficiencies and cost reductions by reallocating resources and optimizing unused space, and shifting funds from facilities to evidence-based field programming that better aligns with the proportion of the juvenile justice population receiving these services				<p>In FY19, Staff were moved from San Mateo Bank of the West Building to Pine Tree Complex, with the building lease savings JJS also saw a corresponding budget cut. In FY22 Lincoln Pines Facility was turned over to GSD. ABRC and AGRC buildings have been donated by the Landlord, however JJS has incurred additional maintenance costs including and additional FTE to provide maintenance.</p> <p>CNYC clients were moved to YDDC, though JJS staff still occupy administrative offices in CNYC. There was no reduction in force nor has there been any cost savings due to building maintenance and related expenditures.</p> <p>During FY22, CYFD eliminated almost all mail postage machine leases, some leased copy machines, and 434 landlines, fax lines and corresponding voicemail accounts. Changes to revenue included using JCC and JJAC Fund Balances to supplement previous years' general fund budget cuts. FY24 budget request included an additional 2 million for increased JJAC initiatives.</p>
Re-evaluate criteria for reintegration center admission to ensure they are operating at capacity, or consider consolidating these facilities				<p>Reintegration centers serve a vital role as transition opportunities for JJS clients exiting long term commitment facilities. With the continuing decline in JJS referrals and commitments statewide, reintegration center utilization continues to be a challenge. Between 2015 and 2019, the three reintegration centers averaged 111 clients per year. Between 2021 and 2022, that average dropped to an average of 54.5 clients utilizing ENRC and ABRC. Since 2018, the reintegration centers have gone through significant changes to try meet the changing demands.</p> <p>During the COVID pandemic AGRC was transitioned to serve Protective Services clients for a period, but the change was not sustainable due to systemic differences between PS clients and JJS clients. All PS clients were transitioned out of the facility in late 2021 and AGRC has remained without clients since that time.</p> <p>JJS leadership is currently working with CYFD Behavioral Health Services to bring in a provider to operate community-based services out of the AGRC facility. Negotiations are ongoing regarding staff and facility usage but there are multiple providers in line.</p> <p>With the decline in committed clients, JJS staff has worked to adjust acceptance criteria to expand the pool of potential clients. Reintegration leadership has started a process to screen</p>

			<p>probation referrals with JPO leadership in an attempt to increase field referrals to the centers. ABRC and ENRC leadership has also adjusted acceptance criteria to allow for serving higher needs clients. With this change in population, there has been an increase in the demands on the staff, but it has been sustainable due to the lower caseloads at the centers. Work will continue as adjustments are needed in policy to meet the needs of a potentially changing population. However, results of the changes over the past few years have led to increased successful completion percentages for the clients exiting the facilities. Between 2015 and 2019 the average successful completion percentage was 57%. Between 2021 and 2022, that numbers have risen to 66%. JJS leadership is committed to exploring all options and making any adjustments necessary to keep the reintegration centers relevant and viable resources for our JJS population.</p>
<p>Continually assess juvenile probation officer (JPO) staffing needs relative to referral and caseload patterns and consider reorganizing the existing regional and district structure to flatten disparities in management span of control</p>			<p>As delinquent referrals have continued the declining trend, JJS leadership has made a concerted effort to move positions to other areas of the state to better meet needs. Due to the large geographic area that districts around the state cover, staffing needs by district will continue to vary. In many cases, district staff cover multiple cities/towns/counties. Travel to and from these remote locations becomes a factor in JJS case distribution. While some staff may have a lower caseload than other staff statewide, travel to and from coverage areas must be considered in case and employee distribution and is not easily definable as staff client ratio reports are reviewed. As previously stated, monitoring formal caseloads does not always represent an accurate picture of caseload size and staffing needs. As delinquent referrals have declined, JJS field staff have increased efforts to front end prevention services. This work looks different from county to county depending on the services available to youth in each community. Consequently, the role that JJS field services provides in each of the communities is determined by the types of services available in those communities. Another consideration to consider regarding the structure of JPO field offices and case distribution is the reassignment of several JJS field positions statewide to support BH and PS. As requests have been made to move positions from within JJS to other divisions, JJS leadership has been able to provide available positions at the time of the requests. However, these moves have left some districts with less staff as their previously vacant positions are no longer available to fill. According to the last vacancy report there are currently 17 JPO positions vacant statewide and 10 are in the process of being filled. JJS leadership will continue to monitor staffing needs statewide and will adjust staffing as needed.</p>



## Finding

Community-Based programs require better oversight and data collection to ensure outcomes are met.

Recommendation	Status			Comments
	No Action	Progressing	Complete	
Align the recidivism performance measure for continuum grant recipients to be consistent with CYFD's existing performance measures for tracking recidivism within two years rather than 90 days				<p>The JJS Grant Management Portal (JJS GMP) was created on the web-based platform, Salesforce, in SFY22. Participant profiles on the new system now collect personally identifiable information (PII). JJS Special Programs worked with CYFD General Counsel on the legality of collecting PII for "at-risk youth" for those youth who have yet to meet CYFD and/or law enforcement or other referral sources. All federal and state data security requirements are being met in the design and management of the secure web-based grant management system.</p> <p>The JJS GMP allows JJS Special Programs to examine "recidivism" or "later juvenile justice system involvement" without any burden on service providers by extracting information from the JJS GMP system and leveraging it with FACTS data to examine subsequent juvenile justice system involvement. With specific direction and agreement on recidivism or later juvenile justice system involvement and how it should be assessed, Special Programs can address this tracking.</p> <p>With the system coming online in SFY22, the priority has been working with service providers to learn the system and enter complete and accurate participant demographic/profile information upon enrollment, and program/service participation data at least monthly, to generate accurate program demographics and invoices. Satisfaction Surveys were put in place on the system and have started to be used.</p>
Work with LFC and DFA staff to create a common set of Accountability in Government Act (AGA) performance measures for continuum sites and juvenile community corrections to allow for the tracking of youth success in these community-based interventions				<p>In developing the new system (JJS GMP) a matrix of Survey Questions for Performance Measures was developed, looking at past program outcome questions used, as well as relevant federal questions from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Plans are in place to update and refine current surveys from the matrix questions for uniformity and customization as needed. The updated surveys will be made mandatory for program completion. Information will be available for extraction from the JJS GMP system and leveraged with FACTS data as relevant.</p>
Strengthen requirements for evidence-based programming in JCC contracts and consider promulgating rules containing requirements similar to those for continuum programs				<p>JCC service providers have been encouraged to use evidence-based programs during the current contract cycle (2015-2023). Nine of the current 11 JCC service providers are providing evidence-based programs, specifically: Forward Thinking (2); Girls Circle (9); Restorative Justice Circles (1); Botvin Life Skills (2); Nurturing Parenting – It's All About Being a Teen (3).</p>

			<p>Additionally, two of those providing evidence-based programs are also providing promising programs, specifically: Nurtured Heart Approach (2); and The Counsel for Young Men (9).</p> <p>The new RFP currently being prepared for release (January, 2023) requires use of evidence-based programs, similar to continuum programs, and it will be part of the JJC contract scopes of work for new JJC contracts projected for SFY24-SFY27.</p>
Increase the emphasis on provider performance, including rates of successful JCC completion, when soliciting, extending, and renewing JCC provider contracts			<p>The JJS GMP allows JJS Special Programs real time reporting to monitor provider performance, including a better means of identifying and tracking a youth's successful completion of contracted programming. The accessibility to more accurate and detailed data ensures that JJS Special Programs can make data driven decisions in programming, funding, and service providers.</p> <p>Administrative completions (e.g. transfer to another program, early release from probation, absconder) have continued to decrease as the JJS Special Programs Grant Manager works with service providers to minimize administrative releases from the program. Data shows that Administrative Releases have gone from 49.7% of programs completions in FY15 to 16.8% in FY18, and 15.6% in SFY22.</p> <p>JJS Special Programs is currently working to modify the JJS GMP to require Program Manager approval of any administrative completions, to continue to lower the number of administrative releases from the program, and ensure they are only used in exceptional cases.</p>

### Finding

Multi-Systemic Therapy provides effective treatment for its target population, but issues with access have impacted outcomes.


Recommendation	Status			Comments
	No Action	Progressing	Complete	
Work with the Human Services Department (HSD) to identify providers, build MST teams in high-risk areas, and collaborate on tracking referrals, utilization, and spending as part of a strategy to prioritize evidence-based behavioral health services				<p>CYFD-BHS is actively working with, HSD, UNM and Rocky Mountain Colorado on data collection and reporting on outcomes of MST completion. They produce reports related to youth and families enrolled in the Medicaid service by tracking the functioning in key life areas of participants in MST services. CYFD-BHS also has the funding in place to support the growth of MST services. Counties that provide MST service have brought in new providers and past providers have expanded with new teams. Currently MST teams are located in the following counties. Dona Ana, Bernalillo, San Juan, Santa Fe, Sandoval, Valencia, Lea, Curry, Roosevelt, and Rio Arriba Counties. The CYFD BHS team continues to work on partnering with new providers to expand MST to additional Counties. CYFD-BHS will engage with CYFD-JJS data</p>

				team to develop a process to ensure accurate data collection and reporting with UNM and Rocky Mountain regarding MST services provided.
In collaboration with the MST Tracking Project, expand the data reported annually on outcomes to include key performance measures tracked by the MST Institute, comparing New Mexico results to national benchmarks.				CYFD-BHS will need to re-engage with CYFD-JJS data team to develop a process to ensure accurate data collection and reporting with UNM and Rocky Mountain regarding MST services. CYFD BHS is also able to work with UNM to pull ad hoc reports when needed to identify any additional request regarding outcomes related to MST services.

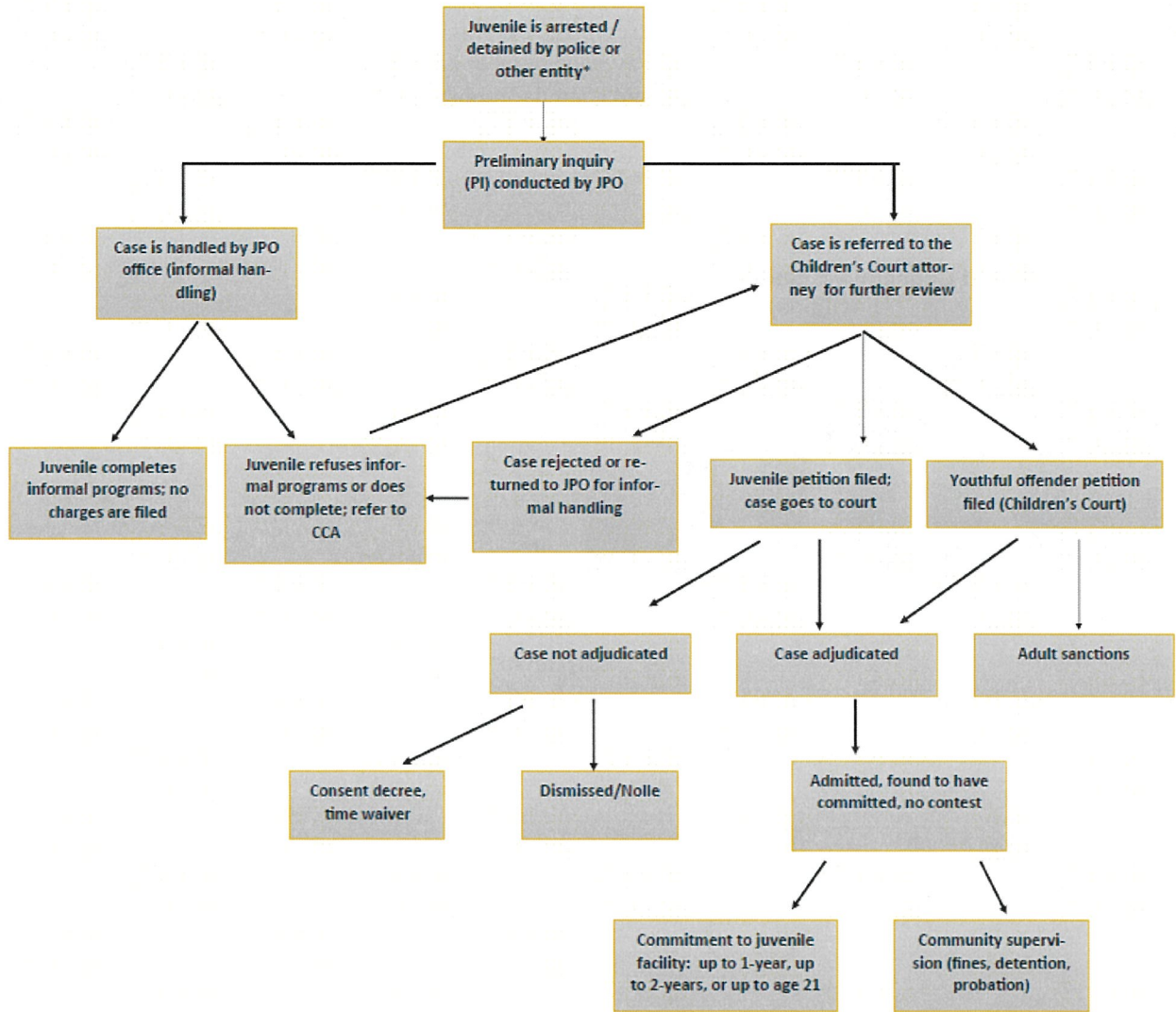
**Finding**

Understanding the drivers of juvenile justice involvement is imperative to designing effective programs to reduce recidivism.

Recommendation	Status			Comments
	No Action	Progressing	Complete	
Further study the causes for high commitment rates for juvenile probation violations				JJS continues to collaborate with partners such as Bernalillo County, Annie E Casey Foundation, and Child Trends to examine data surrounding the Juvenile Justice System within New Mexico. These collaborative efforts have kept NM at the forefront of Juvenile Justice work nationally. NM is one of the only states in the nation with a standardized Juvenile Probation Order. This order that was introduced in 2019 has dramatically impacted the use of Probation/Technical violations as a referral reason to Juvenile Probation. There has been a marked decline in probation violation referrals over the past 3 years. Between 2016 and 2018 there were a total of 2678 referrals to JPO for probation violations, that is an average of 892 per year. After the standard probation agreement was implemented statewide during 2019, there were a total of 903 referrals to probation between 2020 and 2022. That is an average of 301 per year. There has also been a decline in commitments for probation violations since the implementation of the state standard probation agreement. Between 2016 and 2018, there was a total of 240 commitments for probation violation or an average of 80 per year. Between 2020 and 2022 there were a total of 103 commitments for probation violations, or an average of 34.3 per year. Work continues in assessing the effectiveness of the standard probation agreement.
Formalize policy coordination between Child Protective Services (CPS) and Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) for dually-involved youth				Until November 1, 2022, CYFD didn't have a centralized policy office or agency-wide process for policy document development, review, or approval. As a result, separate program divisions and offices, by necessity, have drafted independent documents without collaboration or consistency in service provision, formatting, language, review, approval, or promulgation processes. Recognizing this organizational deficiency, CYFD has established a nascent policy office and hired a new policy director. The office is charged with establishing policy development as part of the agency's strategic plan and fostering collaboration with

			<p>interdivisional creation and review of policies.</p> <p>As part of Juvenile Justice Services policy implemented in March of 2021, JJS field staff utilize case Teamings and Triages for JJS clients. The primary goals of these meetings are to reduce unnecessary clinical assessment and over-assessment, improve the quality of discharge planning, and encourage family engagement. These team and triage meetings include all parties involved in the youth's case, including the youth and family as well as our Protective Services partners if they have been involved with the family.</p> <p>Additionally, JJS clients with tribal affiliations who are committed to secure facilities and are dual-involved and/or a crossover PS have Out of Preferred Placement meetings every 30 days as required by IPFA. Those meetings are facilitated by PSD employees.</p> <p>CYFD BHS is the gate keepers to the NM CANS which was updated in 2020 to an in-depth comprehensive CANS to develop a better picture of each child and care giver throughout. The Community Behavioral Health Clinicians complete a CANS for each child referred to them by Juvenile Justice Services field staff. The CBHC works closely with the team to address that the identified needs are met through least restrictive and appropriate interventions. When any Juvenile Justice involved youth is adjudicated to our secure facilities, the facility behavioral health team ensures an updated CANS is completed and available. If a recent update is not available, diagnostic staff ensure a CANS is completed at intake. During the youth's commitment period, CANS are updated every six months. When a youth is released from a secure facility to one of the JJS Reintegration Centers, the CBHC's located at that center updates the CANS if it has not been updated in 6 months and completes a discharge CANS upon release from the Reintegration Centers.</p>
<p>Identify data reporting needs for working with crossover youth and design services to address the needs of this population</p>			<p>The CYFD data unit continues to work to identify crossover clients. Reports are generated monthly in which crossover and joint Protective Services/Juvenile Justice clients are identified, and these reports are now shared with Juvenile Justice and Protective Services leadership. Crossover case staffing's are occurring regularly (in some cases daily) between Juvenile Justice, Protective Services, and Behavioral Health leadership.</p>

# Appendix A. New Mexico Juvenile Justice Client Referral Pathway



\*Other entities include County, State, Municipality, University/College, Public School Police Department, Fire Department, Correctional/Detention Facility, Border Patrol, Federal Agency, Parent/Guardian, and Citizens. Referrals for Probation Violations are handled similarly.

\*\*The CCA is in the Office of the District Attorney specializing in juvenile cases. Cases referred to the CCA will be evaluated, and if enough evidence is present, will be remanded to juvenile court (petition will be filed).

Youthful Offender petition may be filed after a juvenile petition was filed.

Serious Youthful Offender is not within the juvenile system and excluded from this pathway.

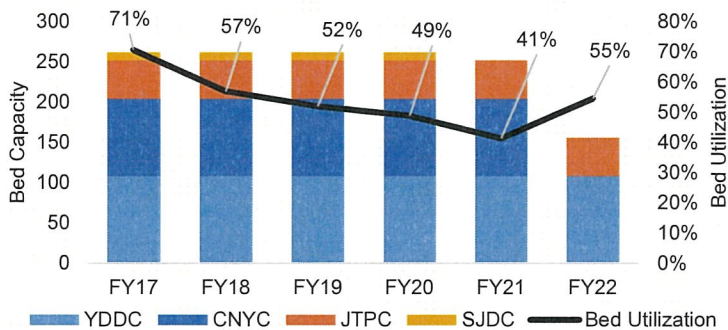
Source: CYFD

## Appendix B. Additional Details of Staffing at Facilities

In FY17, CYFD operated four secure facilities for incarcerated youth: The Youth Development and Diagnostic Center (YDDC) and the Camino Nuevo Youth Center (CNYC) in Albuquerque, the John Paul Taylor Center (JPTC) in Las Cruces, and ten beds available at the San Juan Detention Center (SJDC) in Farmington.

The closure of CNYC decreased the number of unused beds, but it increased per-client costs because most of the CNYC staff was transferred to YDDC, lowering the average number of clients per on-duty JCO at YDDC from 3.1 in FY21 to 2.1 in FY22. LFC's 2016 evaluation found a similar thing with the closure of the Lincoln Pines secure facility in FY15: as clients were moved to other facilities, so were the Lincoln Pines staff, preventing the department from fully realizing savings from the closure.

**Chart X. Bed Capacity vs. Bed Utilization (Secure Facilities)**



Source: CYFD