

Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System

# STATEWIDE OUTCOME MEASURES



Pennsylvania Juvenile Courts  
Pennsylvania Juvenile Probation Departments

Report Period  
January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024



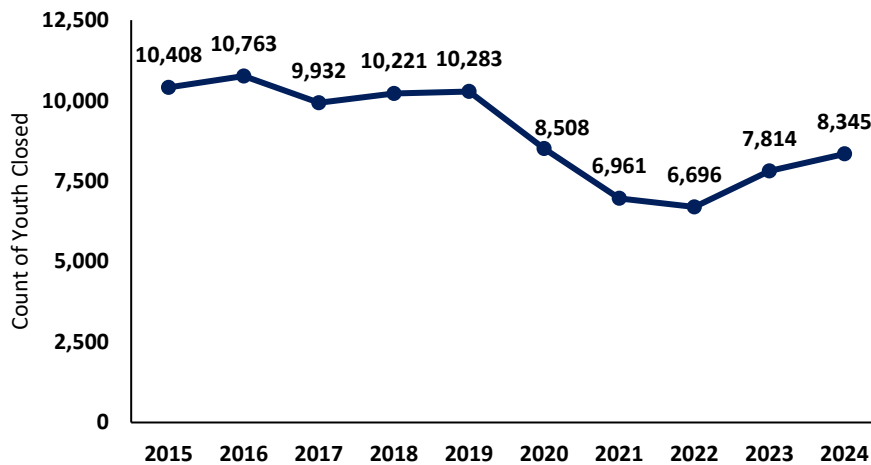
## Introduction

Annually, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) examines the outcomes of youth whose supervision by Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system concluded in the prior year. This initiative tracks youth accomplishments during their involvement with the system, ultimately determining Pennsylvania's progress toward achieving its Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) goals of community protection, accountability, and competency development. In 2019, the report was significantly updated to incorporate measures from Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES). As a result of this change, some of the data points only reflect 2019 forward.

## Trends

**After reaching a post-COVID low in 2022, the youth closed count increased 25% from 2022 to 2024.**

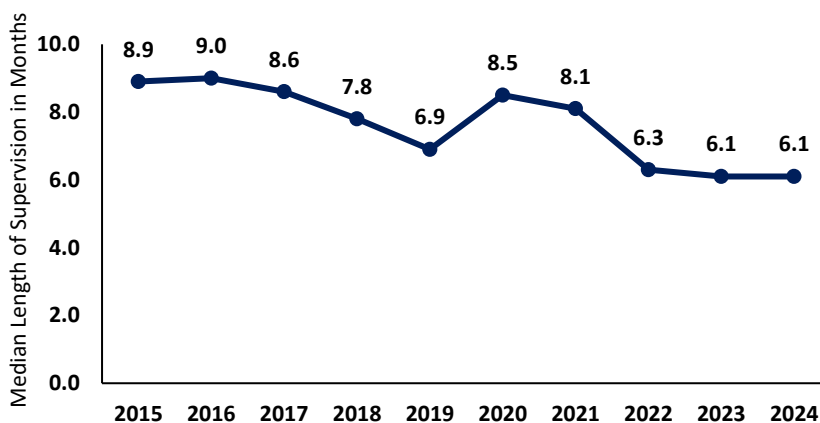
**Chart 1: Youth Ending Juvenile Justice Supervision by Year Closed**



## Median Length of Supervision

**The amount of time that youth spend under supervision continues to decline.**

**Chart 2: Median Length of Supervision (in Months)<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> The median length of supervision was calculated using data extracted from youth-specific supervision dates in the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (PaJCMS).

## Report Definitions

### Population:

Youth with a delinquency allegation who ended (i.e., "closed") an episode of supervision from a county juvenile probation department during the report period.

### Supervision:

The result of a youth being placed on disposition(s) of informal adjustment, consent decree, probation, and/or placement.

## Demographic Categories

The demographic distribution of youth closed in 2024, when analyzed by race, ethnicity, and gender, closely mirrors the distribution of allegations received as reported in the *2023 Juvenile Court Annual Report*. Of youth closed in 2024, 35% of youth were White non-Hispanic male youth, 24% were Black non-Hispanic male youth, 11% were Hispanic male youth, 12% were White non-Hispanic female youth, 10% were Black non-Hispanic female youth, and 4% were Hispanic female youth. The remaining 4% were youth of other or unknown demographic categories. This order aligns with the distribution of allegations received, as the youth closed population represents a subset of the allegations data. However, the percentages do not match exactly due to the exclusion of certain dispositions from the youth closed population and the difference between entering and exiting populations.

The greatest demographic discrepancy between the two reports arises in age group classification. While the allegation data reflects age at the time of the offense, outcome measures are based on age at youth closure. A notable difference is that individuals who commit offenses at age 18 or older fall outside of juvenile court jurisdiction and would be excluded from the allegation data. Additionally, the median length of supervision impacts the age distribution observed in the youth closure data. Of youth closed in 2024, 1% were age 11 or younger, 17% were 12 to 14, 53% were 15 to 17, and 29% were 18 and older.

## Balanced and Restorative Justice

Since 1995, BARJ has been the mission of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. Act 33 states that Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system must: "provide for children committing delinquent acts programs of supervision, care and rehabilitation which provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed and the development of competencies to enable children to become responsible and productive members of the community."<sup>2</sup> BARJ established community protection, accountability, and competency development as the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system's goals.

## Community Protection

Community protection is the process of contributing to safe communities—with particular emphasis on known juvenile offenders—through prevention, supervision, and control.<sup>3</sup> Since 2015, county juvenile probation departments have supervised and closed 89,931 youths, with 87% having no new offense, 84% having no technical violations of probation, 92% having no technical violations of probation with a disposition change (from 2019 onward), 95% having no new criminal offense, and 99% having no direct file offense while under supervision.

### Community Protection Success Measures

**No New Delinquent Offense:** Youth closed without a new misdemeanor or felony offense resulting in a consent decree or adjudication of delinquency.

**No Technical Violations of Probation:** Youth closed with no technical violations of probation petition filed or a dispositional review hearing held specific to violations of probation.

**No Technical Violations of Probation with Disposition Change:** Youth closed with no technical violation of probation resulting in a more severe change in probation status.

**No Criminal Offense:** Youth closed with no criminal offense pending in criminal court or for which the youth subsequently entered Alternative Rehabilitative Disposition or a Nolo Contendere plea or was found guilty in criminal court.

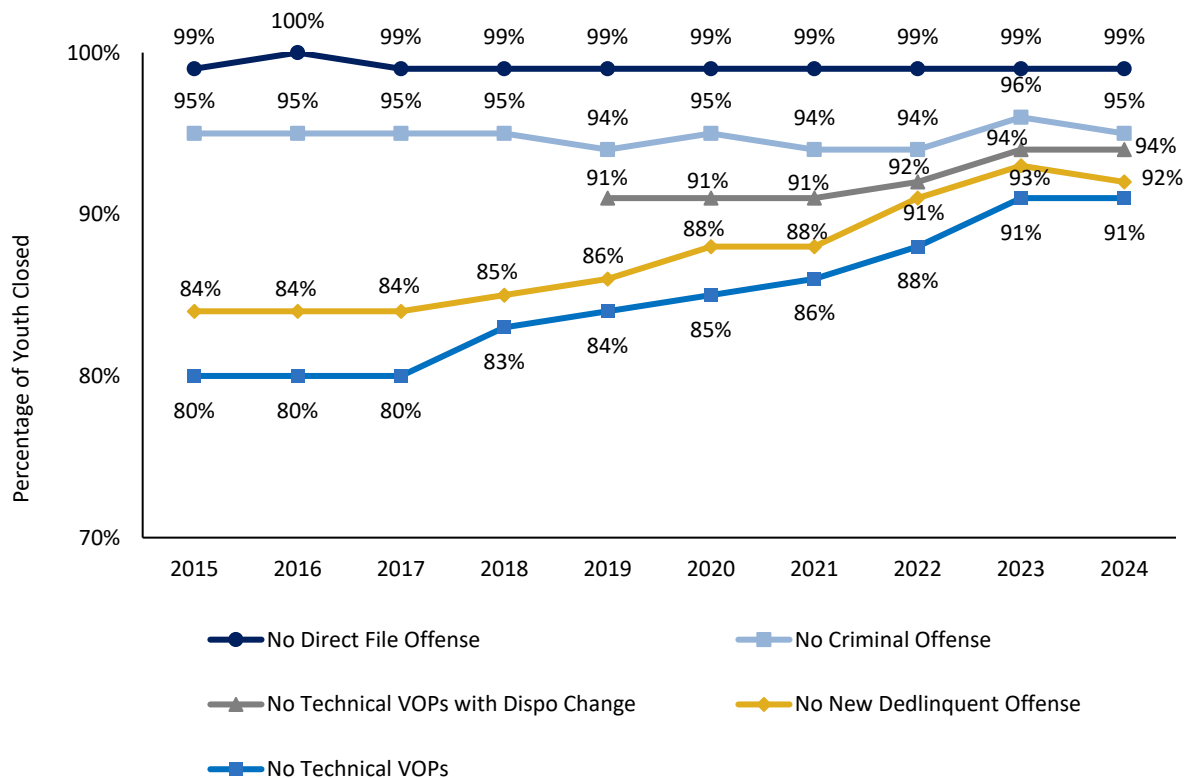
<sup>2</sup> Act 33 of Sp. Sess. No. 1 of 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Torbet, P. (2008). *Advancing Community Protection: A White Paper for Pennsylvania*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

**Table 1: Youth Successfully Closed**

Count	2015 N= 10,408	2016 N= 10,763	2017 N= 9,932	2018 N= 10,221	2019 N= 10,283	2020 N= 8,508	2021 N= 6,961	2022 N= 6,696	2023 N= 7,814	2024 N= 8,345
No New Delinquent Offense	8,718	9,021	8,328	8,731	8,883	7,484	6,135	6,075	7,246	7,698
No VOPs	8,296	8,580	7,985	8,511	8,681	7,199	6,001	5,886	7,114	7,582
No Technical VOPs with Dispo Change	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,329	7,746	6,340	6,190	7,369	7,850
No Criminal Offense	9,859	10,185	9,391	9,744	9,715	8,056	6,540	6,310	7,516	7,969
No Direct File Offense	10,332	10,713	9,873	10,158	10,229	8,452	6,907	6,639	7,762	8,244

**Pennsylvania continues to meet its community protection goal, with the overwhelming majority of youth remaining crime free and without technical violations of probation while under supervision.**

**Chart 3: Youth Closed Who Successfully Met Community Protection Measures While Under Supervision**


**Community Protection Success Measures Continued**

**No Direct File Offense:** Youth closed with no direct file offense pending in criminal court or for which the youth subsequently entered Alternative Rehabilitative Disposition or a Nolo Contendere plea or was found guilty in criminal court. A direct file is a statutory mechanism that allows youth to be charged as adults for murder and other offenses that meet certain criteria.

**Alternative Rehabilitative Disposition:** A pretrial intervention program for non-violent criminal offenders with no prior record or a limited record.

**Nolo Contendere:** A plea in criminal court that means “no contest.”

## Out-of-Home Placement Summary

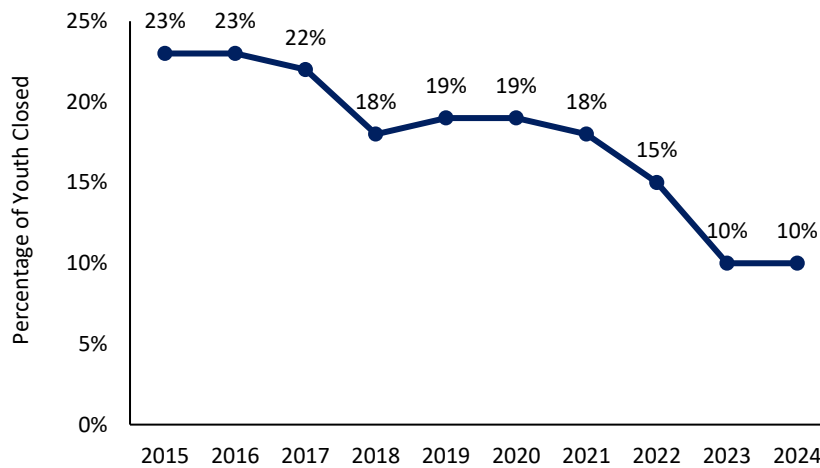
The following information pertains to youth closed who, while under juvenile court jurisdiction, were committed to out-of-home placement for a period longer than 28 days at least once in conjunction with a juvenile delinquency disposition. Out-of-home-placements exclude detention, shelter care, and diagnostic placements.

**Table 2: Youth Closed Committed to an Out-of-Home Placement for 28 or More Consecutive Days**

	2015 N= 10,408	2016 N= 10,763	2017 N= 9,932	2018 N= 10,221	2019 N= 10,283	2020 N= 8,508	2021 N= 6,961	2022 N= 6,696	2023 N= 7,814	2024 N= 8,345
Count	2,379	2,465	2,221	1,870	1,954	1,617	1,236	989	820	876

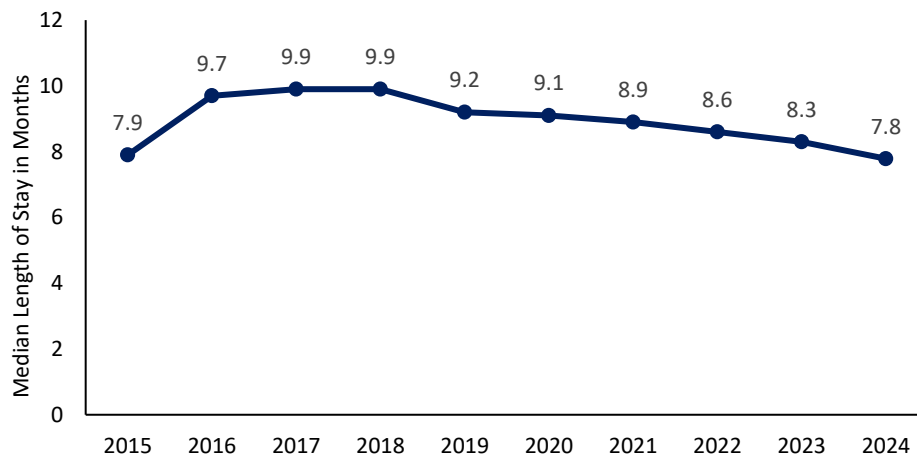
**The percentage of youth closed being placed outside the home continues to decrease.**

**Chart 4: Youth Closed Committed to an Out-of-Home Placement for 28 or More Consecutive Days**



**Youth who are placed are spending less time out of the home.**

**Chart 5: Median Length of Stay of Youth Closed Committed to an Out-of-Home Placement for 28 or More Consecutive Days**



## Fingerprints, Photographs, and DNA Collection

Table 3: Youth Closed by Requirement and Compliance Rate

Count	2019 N= 10,283	2020 N= 8,508	2021 N= 6,961	2022 N= 6,696	2023 N= 7,814	2024 N= 8,345
Fingerprints and Photographs Required	4,305	3,969	3,171	2,558	2,608	2,900
Completed	4,024	3,453	2,971	2,172	2,403 <sup>4</sup>	2,543
DNA Sample Required	1,642	1,621	1,955	1,770 <sup>5</sup>	1,899	2,170
Completed	1,413	1,407	1,714	1,714	1,861	2,130

**The compliance rate for fingerprints, photographs, and DNA requirements continues to remain high.**

Chart 6: Youth Closed Required to Submit Fingerprints and Photos or DNA

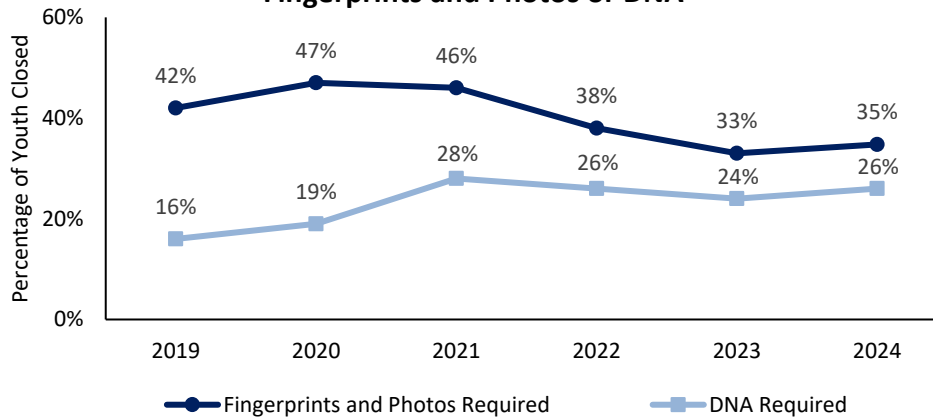
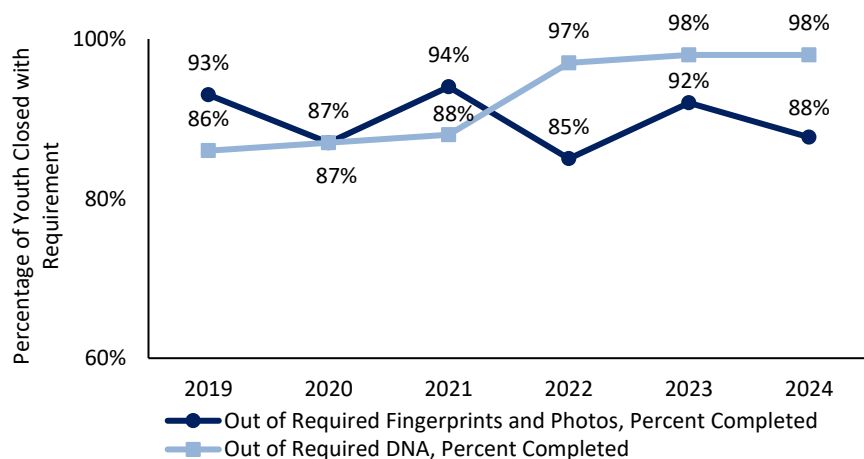


Chart 7: Of Youth Closed Required to Submit Fingerprints and Photos or DNA, Percent Completed



<sup>4</sup> This figure changed due to data cleanup completed since the 2023 report's release.

<sup>5</sup> The DNA questions were changed in PaJCMS in September 2021. Because of the late year modification, the PaJCMS DNA required calculation continued to be used for 2021. From 2022 onward, the data is based on the county juvenile probation department's responses to this question in PaJCMS.

## Accountability

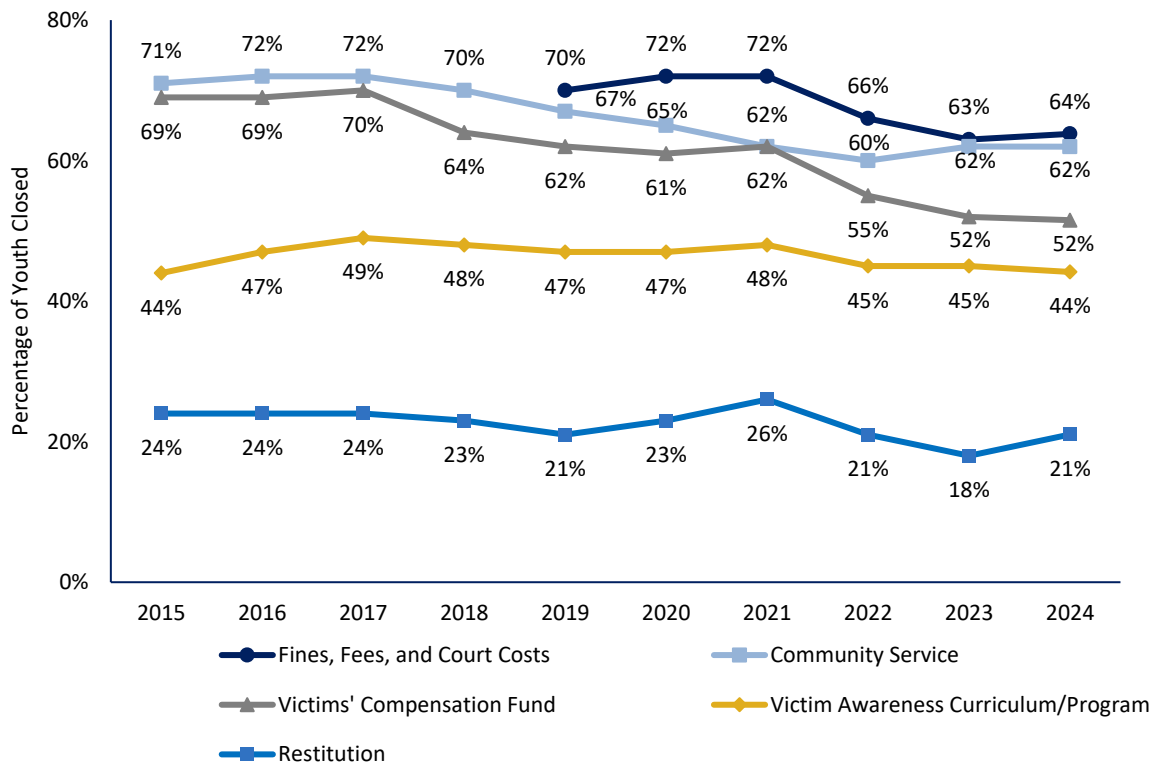
In Pennsylvania, when a youth commits a crime, they incur an obligation to the victim and the community. The juvenile justice system has a responsibility to ensure that youth meet their obligations to repair the harm caused by their crimes. Since 2015, victims have received \$16,124,448 in restitution. Youth have paid \$5,321,161 in fines, fees, and costs and \$1,679,528 to the Victims' Compensation Fund. Additionally, youth have completed 2,457,613 hours of community service, which equates to services worth approximately \$17,817,694 based upon a minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour.

**Table 4: Youth Closed with Accountability Obligations**

Count	2015 N= 10,408	2016 N= 10,763	2017 N= 9,932	2018 N= 10,221	2019 N= 10,283	2020 N= 8,508	2021 N= 6,961	2022 N= 6,696	2023 N= 7,814	2024 N= 8,345
Fines, Fees, and Court Costs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,216	6,123	4,978	4,423	4,929	5,325
Community Service	7,422	7,767	7,190	7,114	6,873	5,558	4,331	4,031	4,824	5,172
Victims' Comp. Fund	7,142	7,449	6,972	6,581	6,348	5,164	4,298	3,695	4,051	4,300
Victim Awareness Curriculum/ Program	4,548	5,105	4,818	4,955	4,791	4,017	3,342	3,011	3,501	3,685
Restitution	2,481	2,555	2,427	2,379	2,155	1,953	1,825	1,432	1,440	1,755

Over the past few years, a decreasing percentage of youth are being assigned fines, fees, and court costs.

**Chart 8: Youth Closed with Accountability Obligations Required**



### Accountability Obligation Definitions

**Fines:** Monetary penalties intended as punishment for a youth's offense.

**Fees:** Charges that may cover administrative expenses, supervision, or program participation.

**Court Costs:** Expenses associated with court proceedings, including filing fees, service charges, and related expenditures.

### Community Service:

Community service is an opportunity for youth to perform work in the community, either on an unpaid basis or paid to help youth pay restitution.

### Victims' Compensation Fund:

In Pennsylvania, all youth adjudicated or placed on consent decrees must pay a minimum \$25 fee to a fund that pays victims for eligible expenses.

**Table 5: Youth Closed Who Fulfilled Required Accountability Obligations**

Count <sup>6</sup>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Fines, Fees, and Court Costs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,516	5,429	4,376	3,887	4,469	4,831
Community Service	7,027	7,381	6,803	6,770	6,688	5,353	4,146	3,888	4,710	5,025
Victims' Comp. Fund	6,444	6,532	6,166	5,900	5,816	4,648	3,828	3,283	3,670	3,919
Victim Awareness Curriculum/Program	4,375	4,922	4,611	4,737	4,680	3,895	3,231	2,929	3,418	3,601
Restitution	2,065	2,117	2,000	2,006	1,922	1,723	1,611	1,231	1,265	1,568

### Accountability Obligation Definitions Cont'd

#### Victim Awareness Curriculum/Program:

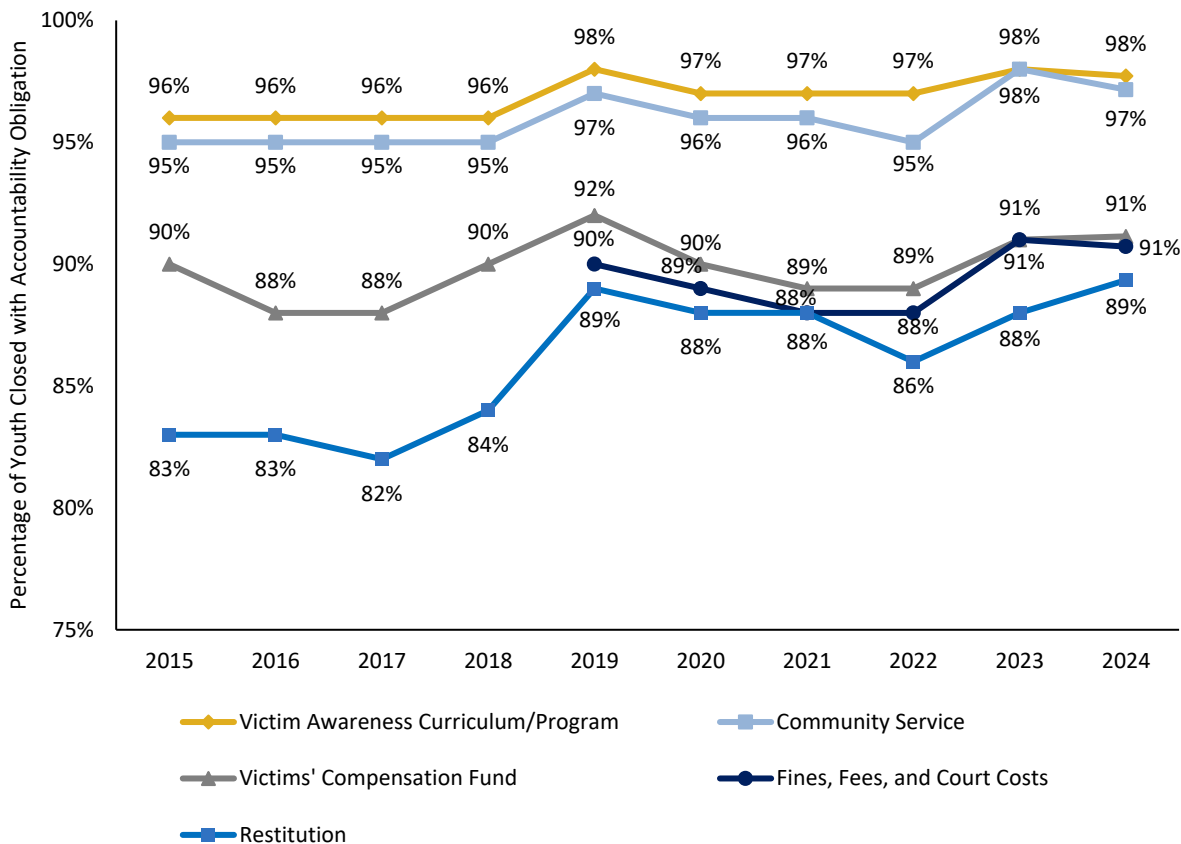
A curriculum/program designed to help youth understand and acknowledge the impact of their crimes on victims and communities.

#### Restitution:

Crime victims are entitled to be restored, to the extent possible, to their pre-crime economic status.

Under 42 Pa.C.S. § 6352(a)(5), courts may order youth to pay reasonable amounts as fines, fees, or restitution as part of their rehabilitation plans.

The percentage of youth completely fulfilling accountability obligations remains high.

**Chart 9: Youth Closed Who Fulfilled Required Accountability Obligations**


<sup>6</sup> The denominators for this table are the counts of youth ordered (see Table 5).



**Table 6: Youth Closed by Reason Restitution or Fines, Fees, or Court Costs Were Not Fully Paid**

Count <sup>7</sup>	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Rest N=233	Fi, Fe, CC N=700	Rest N=230	Fi, Fe, CC N=694	Rest N=214	Fi, Fe, CC N=602	Rest N=201	Fi, Fe, CC N=549	Rest N=175	Fi, Fe, CC N=460	Rest N=187	Fi, Fe, CC N=494
<b>Aged Out</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>77</b>
Judgment Was Entered	74	60	89	78	89	81	77	67	67	57	60	58
No Judgment Was Entered	11	26	0	17	11	36	15	38	11	27	15	19
<b>Case Closed Prior to Age 21</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>413</b>
Judgment Was Entered	93	192	78	173	73	164	84	166	56	135	76	168
No Judgment Entered	51	413	58	418	56	315	22	272	37	233	34	245
<b>Deceased</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

## Competency Development

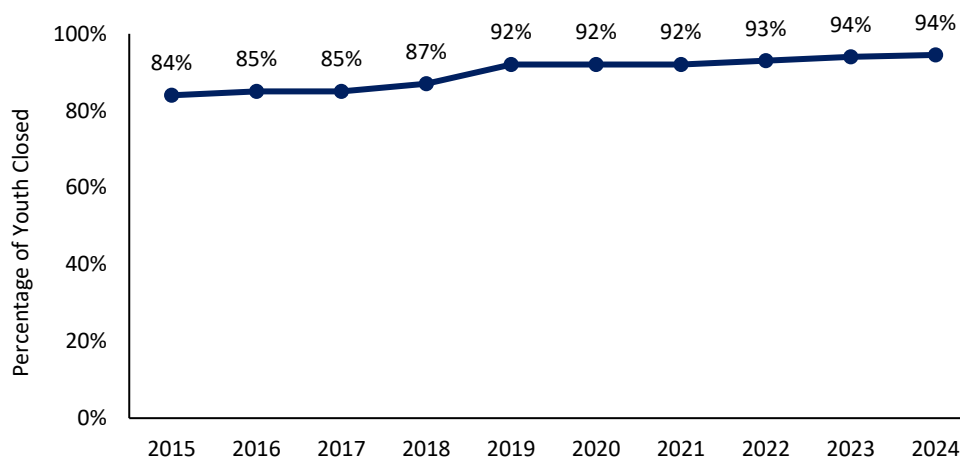
Competency development is the process by which juvenile offenders acquire the knowledge and skills that make it possible for them to become productive, connected, and law-abiding members of their communities. The following five core competency domains—areas in which one could reasonably expect young people in trouble with the law to build and demonstrate competencies depending on their age and stage of development—are: Pro-Social Skills, Moral Reasoning Skills, Academic Skills, Workforce Development Skills, and Independent Living Skills.<sup>8</sup>

**The percentage of youth closed actively involved in an educational or vocational activity has increased significantly over the last decade, with nearly all youth engaged in such activities.**

## Education and Employment

**Table 7: Youth Closed Involved in an Educational or Vocational Activity at Closing**

	2015 N=10,408	2016 N=10,763	2017 N=9,932	2018 N=10,221	2019 N=10,283	2020 N=8,508	2021 N=6,961	2022 N=6,696	2023 N=7,814	2024 N=8,345
<b>Count</b>	8,788	9,095	8,434	8,922	9,473	7,790	6,422	6,214	7,364	7,886

**Chart 10: Youth Closed Involved in an Educational or Vocational Activity at Closing**

<sup>7</sup> The Ns are the counts of closed youth who did not make full restitution or pay full fines, fees, or court costs.

<sup>8</sup> Torbet, P. and Thomas, D. (2005). *Advancing Competency Development: A White Paper for Pennsylvania*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

## Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy

In November 2010, the JCJC unanimously endorsed a comprehensive strategy, known as the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES), to enhance the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its BARJ mission. JJSES is rooted in data-driven decision-making, professional development, and evidence-based practices. It employs tools like actuarial assessments, cognitive behavioral strategies, and performance evaluations to drive gradual improvements. For more information regarding the JJSES, please refer to the [Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy Monograph](#). In 2019, this report was revised to incorporate JJSES measures. As part of this enhancement, new data points were introduced, including Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory™ (YLS) risk assessments, case plan information, improved metrics on educational and competency development information, and insights into why supervision conditions were not satisfied. Some of these data points are available only from 2019 onward due to the timing of these updates.

### Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory™ (YLS) Trends

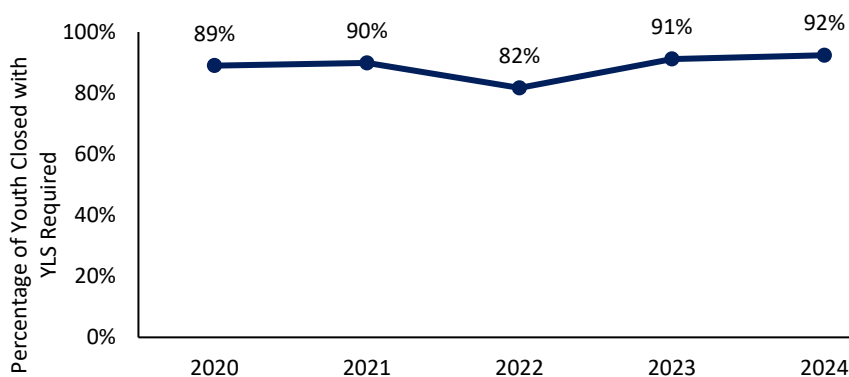
The YLS serves as the cornerstone of JJSES. The YLS is an actuarial risk assessment tool designed for use with youth alleged to have committed delinquent offenses. It evaluates 42 static and dynamic risk factors, organized into eight domains that research literature identifies as the most predictive of youth reoffending. Generally, youth are assessed using the YLS at the time they enter the juvenile justice system. Upon completion of the YLS, each youth receives a numeric score and risk level (i.e., Low, Moderate, High, or Very High<sup>9</sup>). The assessment also identifies the youth's top criminogenic needs (those factors recognized as driving their delinquent behavior). These results assist juvenile probation officers in tailoring treatment, interventions, and services to address the specific needs of each youth. Best practices recommends reassessing youth at regular intervals throughout their supervision period and again at the time the youth ends supervision.

**Table 8: Youth Closed with Initial and Closing YLS Assessments**

	2020 N=8,508	2021 N=6,961	2022 N=6,696	2023 N=7,814	2024 N=8,345
Count Required to Have YLS	7,532	6,248	5,985	7,113	7,626
Count Closed With Initial and Closing YLS	6,702	5,615	4,889	6,483	7,045

**Percentage of youth closed with both initial and closing YLS assessments remains high.**

**Chart 11: Youth Closed with Both Initial and Closing YLS Assessments Completed**



<sup>9</sup> Due to a small number of Very High risk levels, this report combines High and Very High risk levels.

## Changes in YLS Risk Score<sup>10</sup>

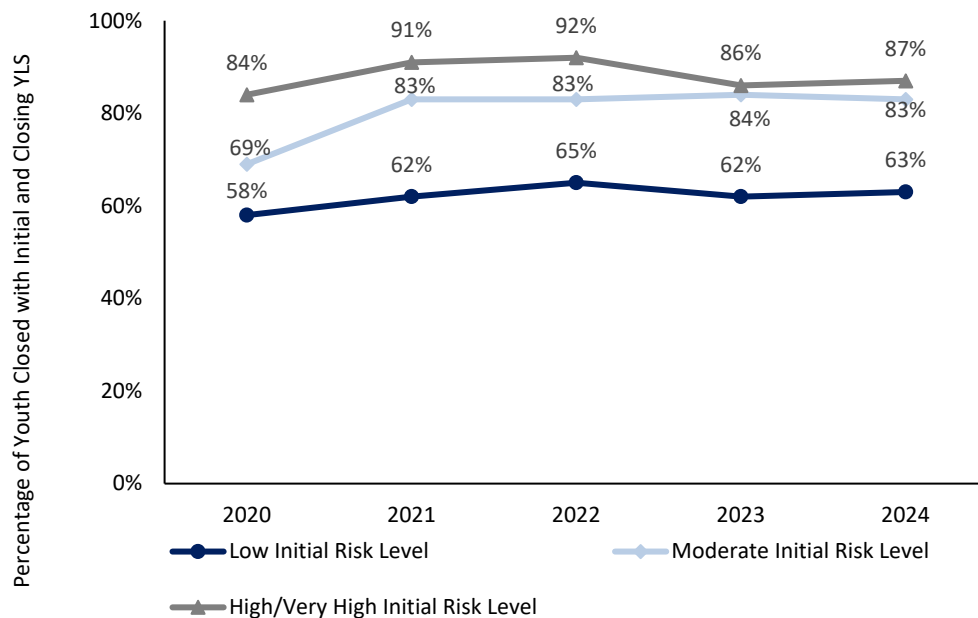
Changes in YLS risk score between the youth's initial YLS and the youth's closing YLS indicate the impact of a youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system. Decreases in risk scores are a positive outcome for the youth. The following charts reflect the change in numerical risk score from initial YLS to closing YLS.

**Table 9: Youth Closed with Lower Score at Close by Initial YLS Risk Level**

	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
Initial YLS Risk Level	Youth Closed	Youth Closed with Lower Score	Youth Closed	Youth Closed with Lower Score	Youth Closed	Youth Closed with Lower Score	Youth Closed	Youth Closed with Lower Score	Youth Closed	Youth Closed with Lower Score
Low	3,133	1,815	2,689	1,663	2,623	1,709	3,599	2,245	3,834	2,409
Moderate	2,953	2,029	2,380	1,986	1,871	1,545	2,391	2,006	2,714	2,260
High and Very High	616	516	546	497	395	362	493	424	497	430
Total	6,702	4,360	5,615	4,146	4,889	3,616	6,483	4,675	7,045	5,099

**Youth identified as Moderate and High/Very High risk are the groups most likely to experience risk reductions.**

**Chart 12: Youth with Lower Score at Close by Initial YLS Risk Level**



<sup>10</sup> The YLS Risk Score section reflects youth closed who had both an initial and closing YLS assessment completed.

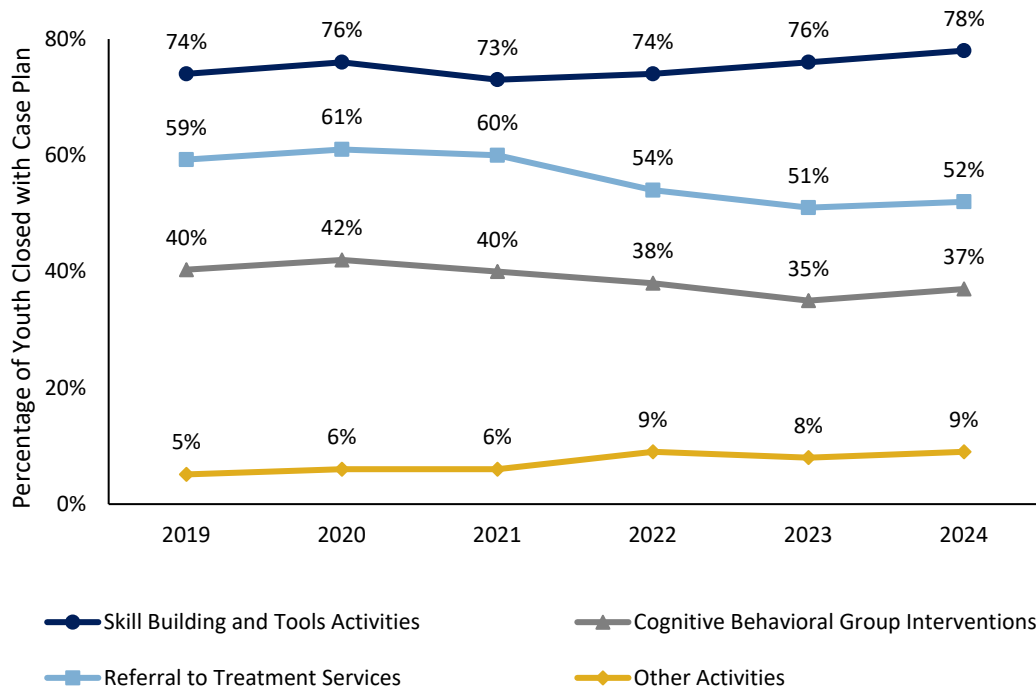
## Case Plan Activities

**Table 10: Youth Closed Who Had a Case Plan Completed That Included Goals and Risk Reduction Activities to Address the Top 2-3 Criminogenic Needs the YLS Identified**

	2019 N=10,283	2020 N=8,508	2021 N=6,961	2022 N=6,696	2023 N=7,814	2024 N=8,345
<b>Count</b>	<b>3,814</b>	<b>3,490</b>	<b>2,903</b>	<b>2,518</b>	<b>2,983</b>	<b>3,339</b>
Skill Building and Tools Activities	2,837	2,669	2,124	1,864	2,279	2,595
Cognitive Behavioral Group Interventions	1,538	1,471	1,160	955	1,039	1,226
Referral to Treatment Services	2,260	2,117	1,734	1,368	1,527	1,734
Other Activities	195	199	183	219	226	305
Updated Throughout Supervision	3,691	3,363	2,802	2,441	2,892	3,243

**Skill building and tools is the activity most frequently included in case plans.**

**Chart 13: Youth Closed with Case Plans That Included:**



Rev. 5/27/2025