

Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System

STATEWIDE OUTCOME MEASURES



2025



Pennsylvania
Juvenile Court
Judges' Commission

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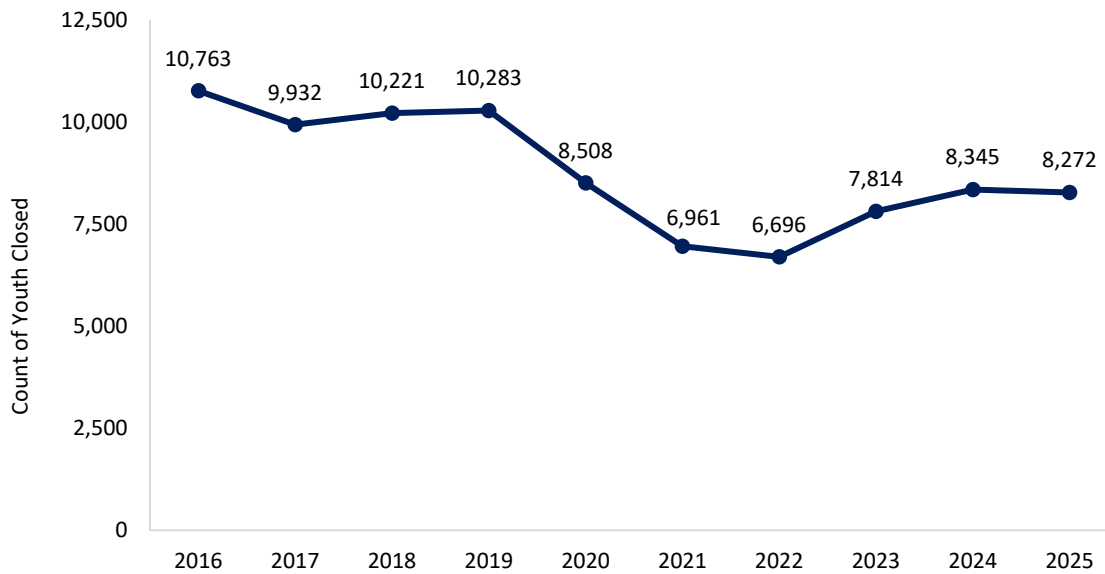
Introduction

Annually, the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission (JCJC) examines the outcomes of youth whose supervision by Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system concluded (i.e., “closed”) in the prior year. Supervision results from a youth being placed on disposition(s) of informal adjustment, consent decree, probation, and/or placement. 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. As a result of this change, some measures are only available beginning in 2019.

Trends

Chart 1: Count of Youth Closed by End Date Year

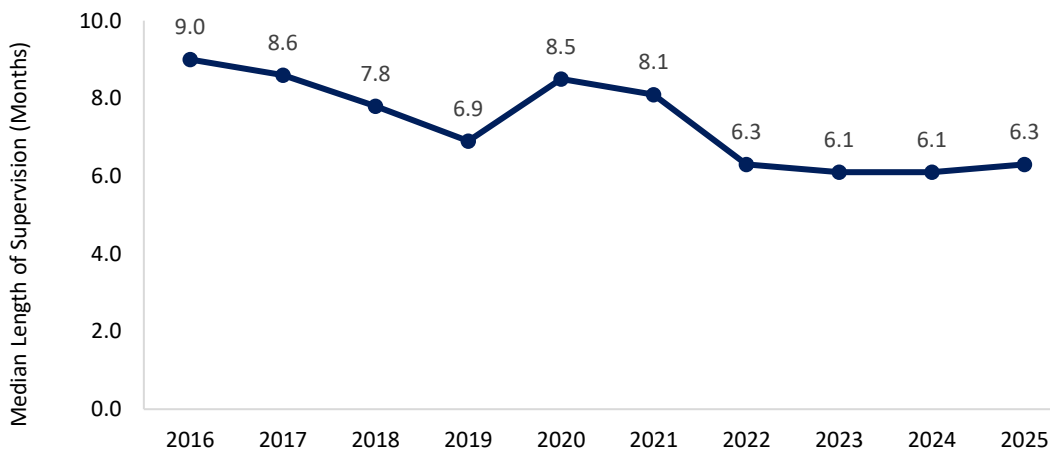
Youth closures have rebounded from their 2022 low but remain below pre-pandemic levels, with a 1% decrease from 2024 to 2025.



Median Length of Supervision¹

Chart 2: Median Length of Supervision (Months)

The median length of supervision has remained consistent for the fourth year in a row.



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

Demographic Groups

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

The demographic distribution of youth closed in 2025 closely mirrors the historical distribution of allegations received when examined by race, ethnicity, and gender. This overall alignment is expected, as the youth closed population represents a subset of the allegations data. Percentages do not match exactly due to differences in included dispositions and because allegation data reflects youth entering the system, while closure data reflects youth exiting it. Among youth closed in 2025:

- 32% were White non-Hispanic males.
- 24% were Black non-Hispanic males.
- 12% were Hispanic males.
- 12% were White non-Hispanic females.
- 10% were Black non-Hispanic females.
- 5% were Hispanic females.
- 5% were youth in other or unknown demographic groups.

Age at Youth Closure

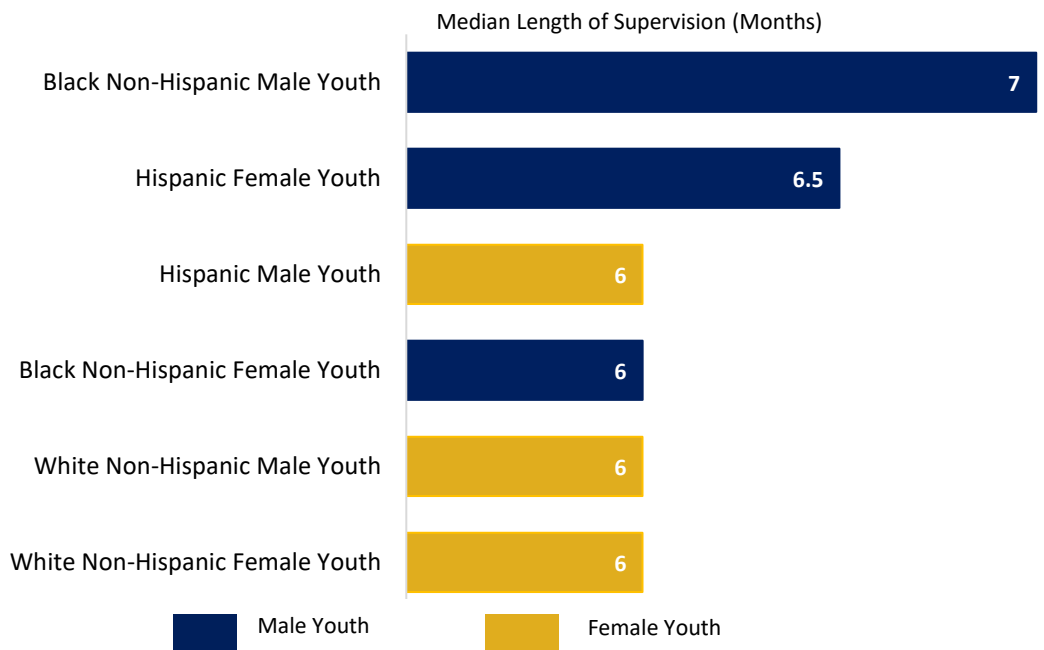
The largest demographic difference between allegations and youth closed appears in age groups. Allegation data capture age at the time of the offense, whereas outcome measures reflect age at youth closure. As a result, some youth appear older in the closure data, particularly those whose supervision extended beyond their 18th birthday. In 2025:

- 1% were 11 or younger.
- 19% were 12 to 14.
- 52% were 15 to 17.
- 28% were 18 or older.

Median Length of Supervision by Demographic Group

Chart 3: Median Length of Supervision (Months) by Demographic Category, Youth Closed 2025

Black non-Hispanic male youth had the longest median length of supervision among all demographic groups.



Balanced and Restorative Justice

Since 1995, BARJ has been the mission of Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system. Act 33 requires the system to “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.”² BARJ established community protection, accountability, and competency development as the core goals of Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system.

Community Protection

Community protection focuses on fostering safe communities, with particular emphasis on youth previously involved in the juvenile justice system, through prevention, supervision, and control.³ Since 2016, county juvenile probation departments have supervised and closed 87,795 youth. Among these youth:

- 88% had no new delinquent offense.⁴
- 85% had no technical violations of probation (VOPs).⁵
- 92% had no technical violations of probation (VOPs) resulting in a disposition change (2019 onward).⁶
- 95% had no new criminal offense.⁷
- 99% had no direct file offense while under supervision.⁸

Table 1: Youth Successfully Closed

Count	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	2025 N=8,272
No New Delinquent Offense	9,021	8,328	8,731	8,883	7,484	6,135	6,075	7,246	7,698	7,700
No Technical VOPs	8,580	7,985	8,511	8,681	7,199	6,001	5,886	7,114	7,582	7,427
No Technical VOPs with Dispo Change	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,329	7,746	6,340	6,190	7,369	7,850	7,702
No Criminal Offense	10,185	9,391	9,744	9,715	8,056	6,540	6,310	7,516	7,969	7,951
No Direct File Offense	10,713	9,873	10,158	10,229	8,452	6,907	6,639	7,762	8,244	8,215

² Act 33 of Sp. Sess. No. 1 of 1995.

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

⁴ No new misdemeanor/felony resulting in consent decree or adjudication.

⁵ No technical violations of probation petition filed, or a dispositional review hearing held for probation violations.

⁶ No violation resulting in a more severe probation status.

⁷ No pending criminal offense, or for whom the case was later resolved through an Alternative Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD), a Nolo Contendere plea, or a criminal court finding of guilt. ARD is a pretrial intervention program for non-violent offenders with no prior or a limited record. Nolo Contendere is a criminal court plea meaning “no contest.”

⁸No pending direct file offense, or for whom the case was later resolved through an ARD, a Nolo Contendere plea, or a criminal court finding of guilt. Direct file is a statutory mechanism allowing certain youth to be charged as adults for murder and other qualifying offenses.

Chart 4a: Community Protection Success Rates: Offense-Free Measures

Most youth continue to successfully avoid new offenses, demonstrating the system’s sustained success in promoting community safety.

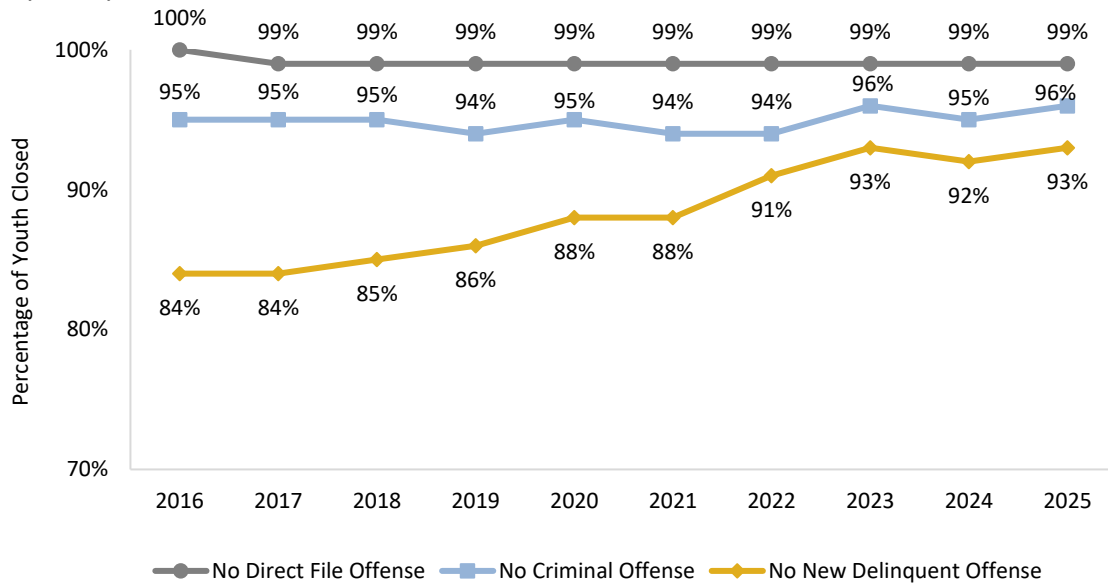
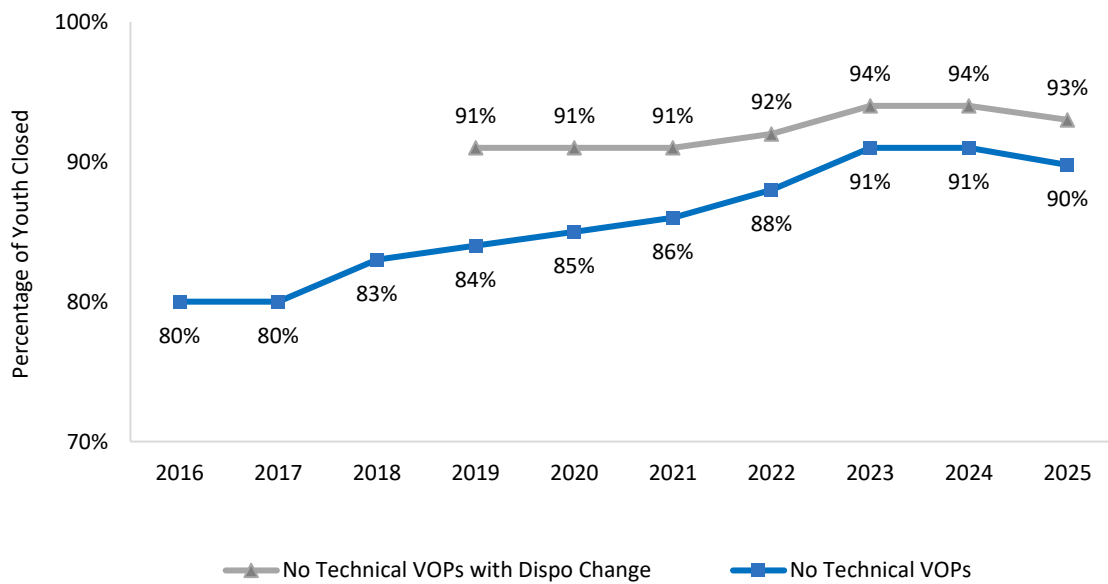


Chart 4b: Community Protection Success Rates: Technical Violations

Pennsylvania continues to meet its community protection goal, with most youth avoiding technical violations of probation while under supervision.



Out-of-Home Placement

Some youth involved in the juvenile justice system pose risks that cannot be managed effectively in a community setting. The following information covers youth closed who, while under juvenile court supervision, 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 do not include detention, shelter care, or diagnostic placements.

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

	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	2025 N=8,272
Count	2,465	2,221	1,870	1,954	1,617	1,236	989	820	876	959

Chart 5: Youth Closed Committed to an Out-of-Home Placement (28 or More Consecutive Days)

Overall, the percentage of youth closed who were placed outside the home has decreased, with a modest increase in 2025.

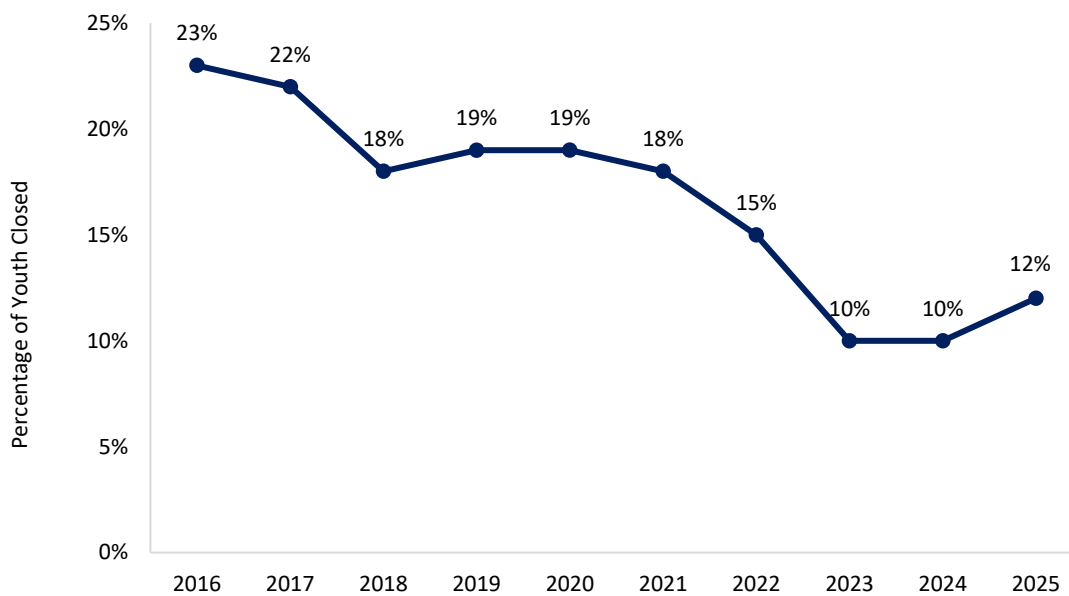
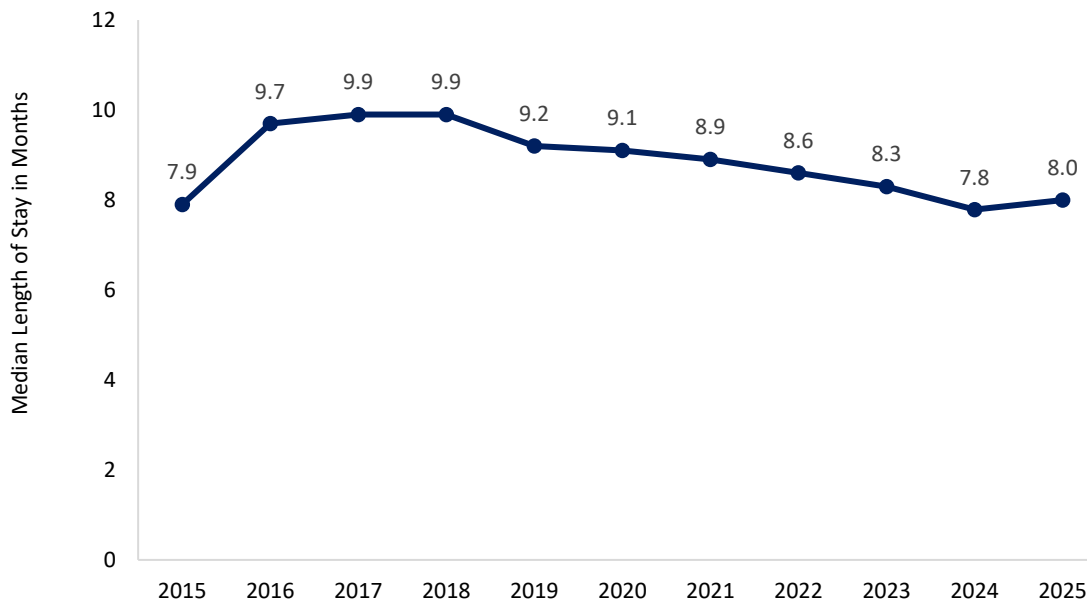


Chart 6: Median Length of Out-of-Home Placement (28 or More Consecutive Days)

Youth who were placed spent less time out of the home.



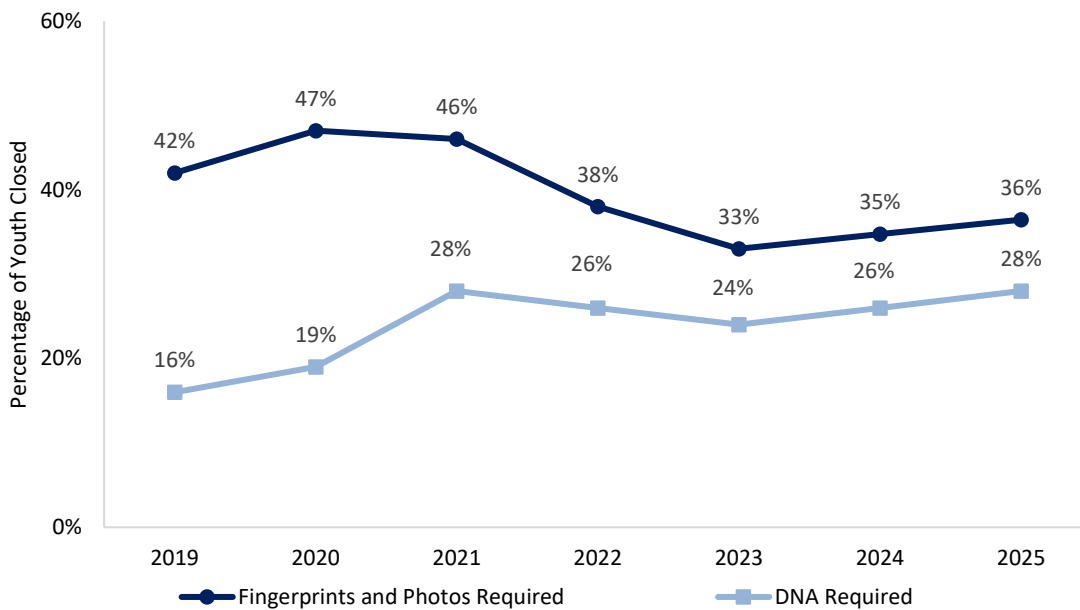
Fingerprints, Photographs, and DNA Collection

In Pennsylvania, when a youth is adjudicated delinquent for any felony or misdemeanor, a law enforcement officer must collect their fingerprints and photographs. Also, youth must submit a DNA sample when adjudicated delinquent for any felony offense or an attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit a felony offense, or “other specified offenses,” or for first-degree misdemeanors and certain second-degree misdemeanors, including attempts to commit such offenses.

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	2025 N=8,272
Fingerprints and Photographs Required	4,305	3,969	3,171	2,558	2,608	2,900	3,013
Completed	4,024	3,453	2,971	2,172	2,403 ⁹	2,543	2,847
DNA Sample Required	1,642	1,621	1,955	1,770 ¹⁰	1,899	2,170	2,307
Completed	1,413	1,407	1,714	1,714	1,861	2,130	2,274

Chart 7: Youth Closed Required to Submit Fingerprints and Photos or DNA

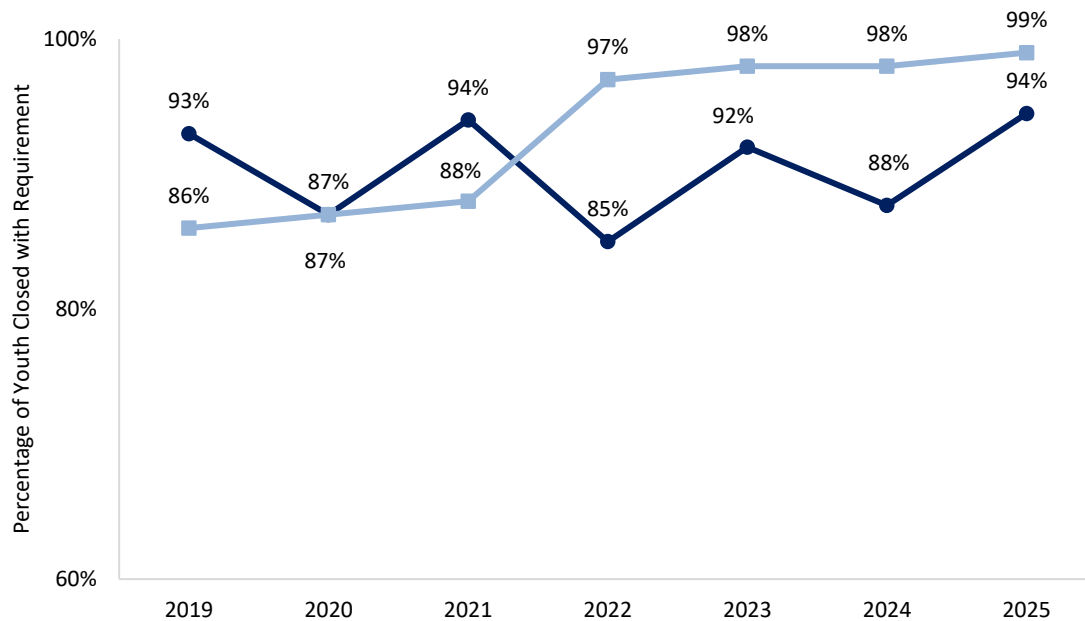
The proportion of youth closed required to provide DNA is rising to match the share of those who must submit fingerprints and photos.



⁹ This figure changed due to data cleanup completed since the 2023 report’s release.

¹⁰ The DNA questions were changed in PaJCMS in September 2021. Due to the late-year modification, the PaJCMS DNA required calculation continued to be used for 2021. Beginning in 2022, the data is based on the county juvenile probation department’s responses to this question in PaJCMS.

Chart 8: Of Youth Closed Required to Submit Fingerprints and Photos or DNA, Percent Completed
Compliance rates for these requirements remain consistently high.



● Out of Required Fingerprints and Photos, Percent Completed ■ Out of Required DNA, Percent Completed

Accountability

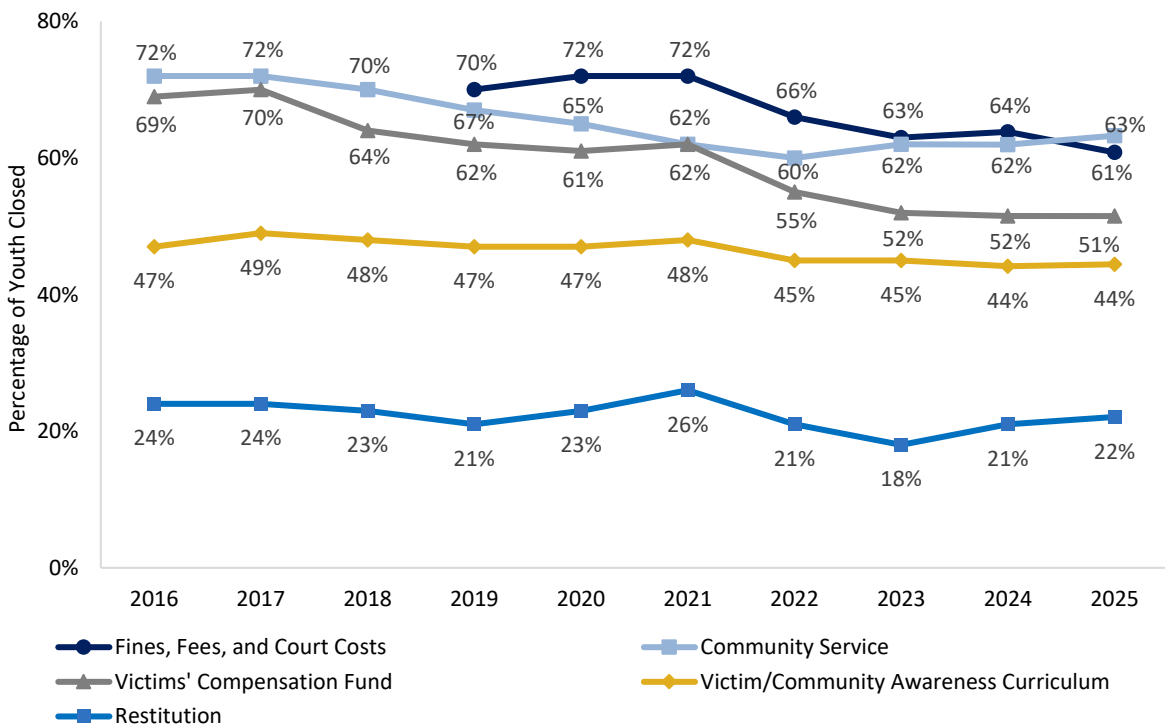
In Pennsylvania, when a youth commits a crime, they incur an obligation to the victim and the community. The juvenile justice system has a responsibility to ensure that youth meet their obligations to repair the harm caused by their crimes.¹² Since 2016:

- Victims received \$16,335,799 in restitution.
- Youth paid \$6,280,635 in fines, fees, and court costs.
- Youth paid \$1,586,599 to the Victims’ Compensation Fund.
- Youth completed 2,292,811 community service hours, representing an estimated \$16,622,877 based upon a minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour.

Table 4: Youth Closed with Accountability Obligations Required During Supervision										
Count	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	2025 N=8,272
Fines, Fees, and Court Costs ¹³	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,216	6,123	4,978	4,423	4,929	5,325	5,031
Community Service ¹⁴	7,767	7,190	7,114	6,873	5,558	4,331	4,031	4,824	5,172	5,232
Victims’ Compensation Fund ¹⁵	7,449	6,972	6,581	6,348	5,164	4,298	3,695	4,051	4,300	4,260
Victim/Community Awareness Curriculum ¹⁶	5,105	4,818	4,955	4,791	4,017	3,342	3,011	3,501	3,685	3,675
Restitution ¹⁷	2,555	2,427	2,379	2,155	1,953	1,825	1,432	1,440	1,755	1,826

Chart 9: Youth Closed with Accountability Obligations Required During Supervision

Obligations to victims, courts, and the community have generally decreased across categories.



¹² Bender, V., King, M., Torbet, P. (2006). *Advancing Accountability: Moving Toward Victim Restoration*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ A curriculum designed to help youth understand and acknowledge the impact of their crimes on victims and communities.

¹⁷ 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.

Table 5: Youth Closed Who Fulfilled Required Accountability Obligations

Count ¹⁸	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Fines, Fees, and Court Costs	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,516	5,429	4,376	3,887	4,469	4,831	4,600
Community Service	7,381	6,803	6,770	6,688	5,353	4,146	3,888	4,710	5,025	5,126
Victims' Compensation Fund	6,532	6,166	5,900	5,816	4,648	3,828	3,283	3,670	3,919	3,895
Victim/Community Awareness Curriculum	4,922	4,611	4,737	4,680	3,895	3,231	2,929	3,418	3,601	3,601
Restitution	2,117	2,000	2,006	1,922	1,723	1,611	1,231	1,265	1,568	1,636

Chart 10: Youth Closed Who Fulfilled Required Accountability Obligations

Most youth meet their accountability obligations, maintaining strong compliance rates.

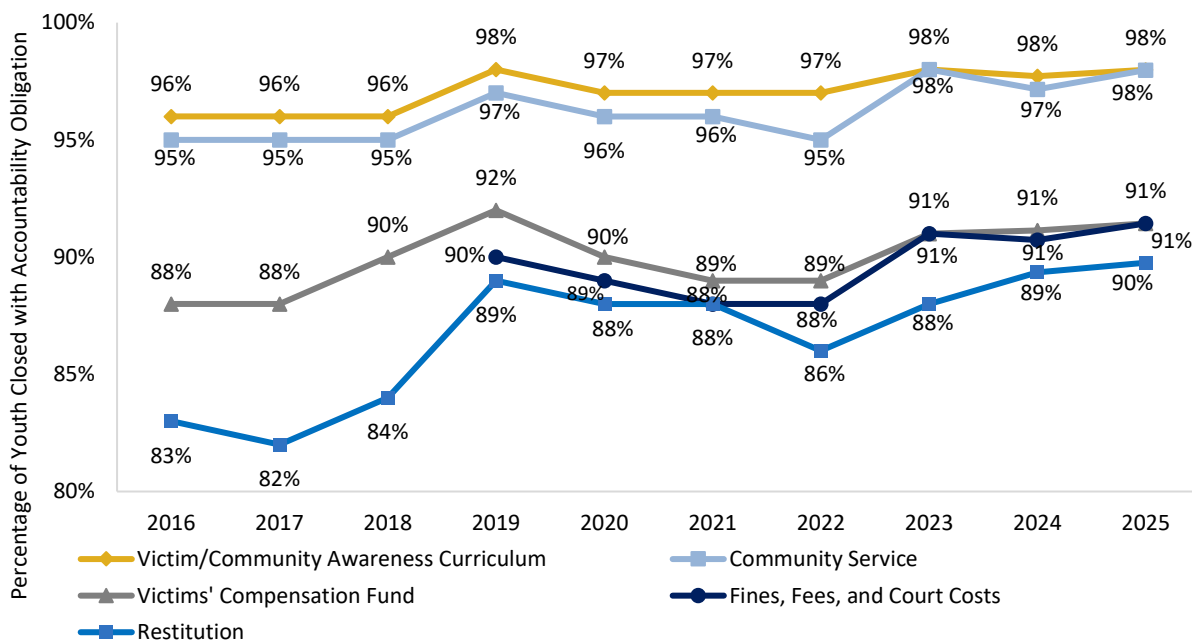


Table 6a: Youth Closed by Reason – Restitution Was Not Fully Paid

Count ¹⁹	2019 N=233	2020 N=230	2021 N=214	2022 N=201	2023 N=175	2024 N=187	2025 N=187
Aged Out	85	89	100	92	78	75	67
Judgment Entered	74	89	89	77	67	60	63
No Judgment Entered	11	0	11	15	11	15	4
Case Closed Prior to Age 21	144	136	109	106	93	110	115
Judgment Entered	93	78	73	84	56	76	80
No Judgment Entered	51	58	56	22	37	34	35
Deceased	4	5	5	3	4	2	5

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

Count ²⁰	2019 N=700	2020 N=694	2021 N=602	2022 N=549	2023 N=460	2024 N=494	2025 N=431
Aged Out	86	95	117	105	84	77	58
Judgment Entered	60	78	81	67	57	58	40
No Judgment Entered	26	17	36	38	27	19	18
Case Closed Prior to Age 21	605	591	479	438	368	413	365
Judgment Entered	192	173	164	166	135	168	147
No Judgment Entered	413	418	315	272	233	245	218
Deceased	9	8	6	6	8	4	8

¹⁸ The denominators for this table are the counts of youth ordered (see Table 4).

¹⁹ The Ns are the counts of closed youth who did not make full restitution.

²⁰ The Ns are the counts of closed youth who did not pay full fines, fees, or court costs.

Chart 11a: Youth Closed with Amount of Restitution and Fines, Fees, and Court Costs Collected

The total amounts collected have increased over time.

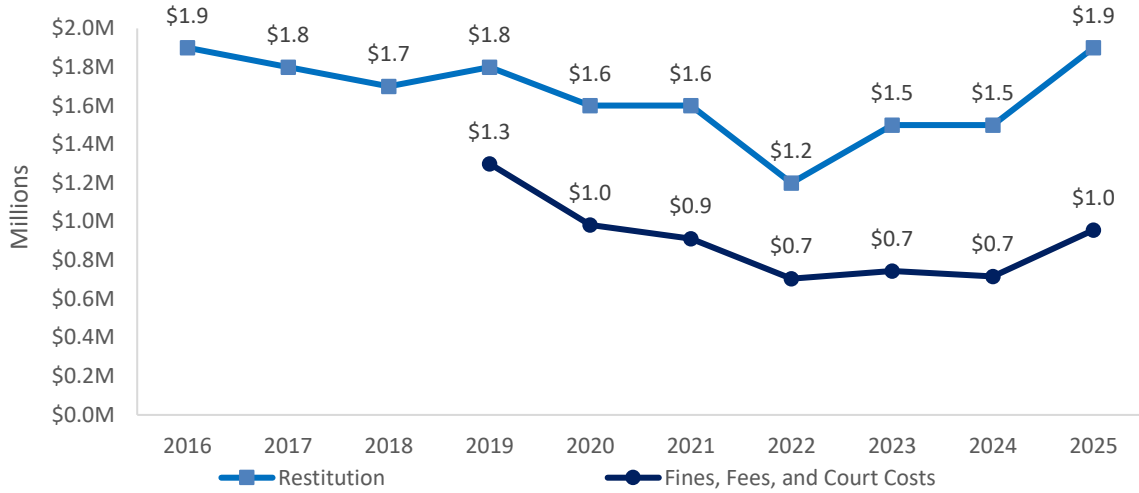


Chart 11b: Youth Closed with Amount of Victims' Compensation Fund Collected

After steep declines, victims' compensation fund payments have stabilized but remain well below prior peak levels.

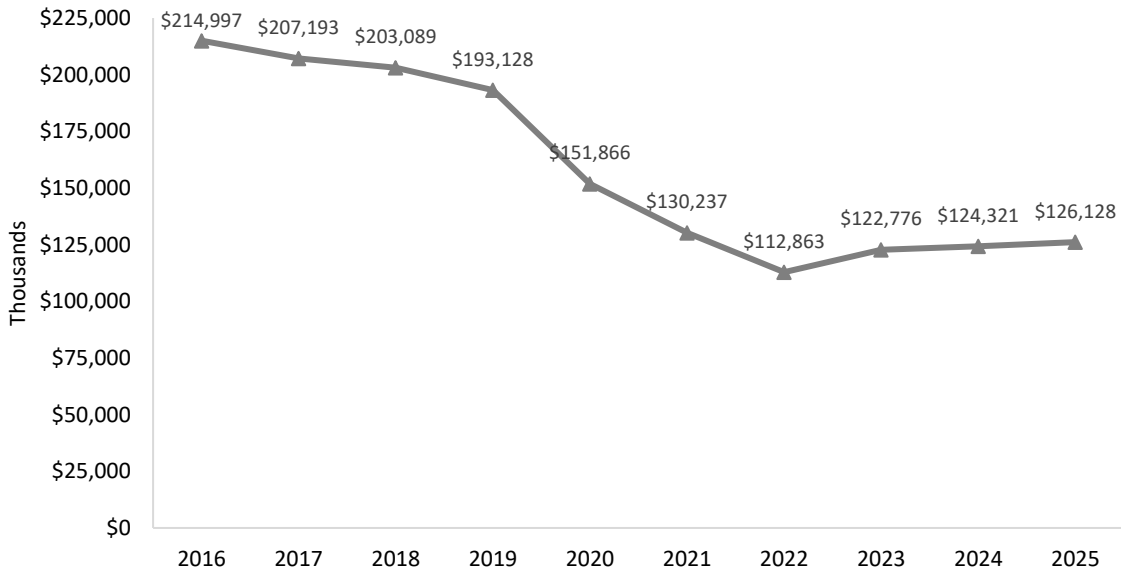
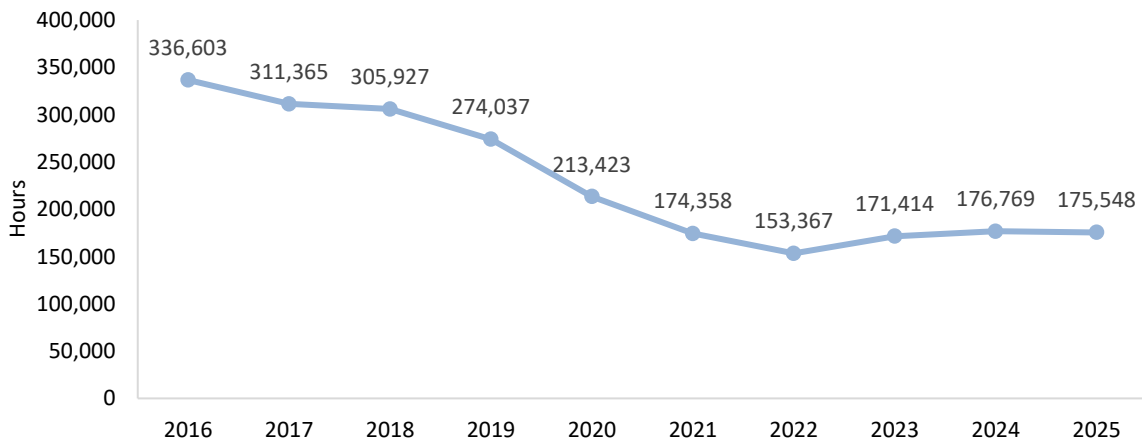


Chart 11c: Youth Closed with Community Service Hours Completed

Community service hours have leveled off following earlier declines, though totals remain below prior highs.



Competency Development

Competency development is the process by which youth involved with the juvenile justice system 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.²¹

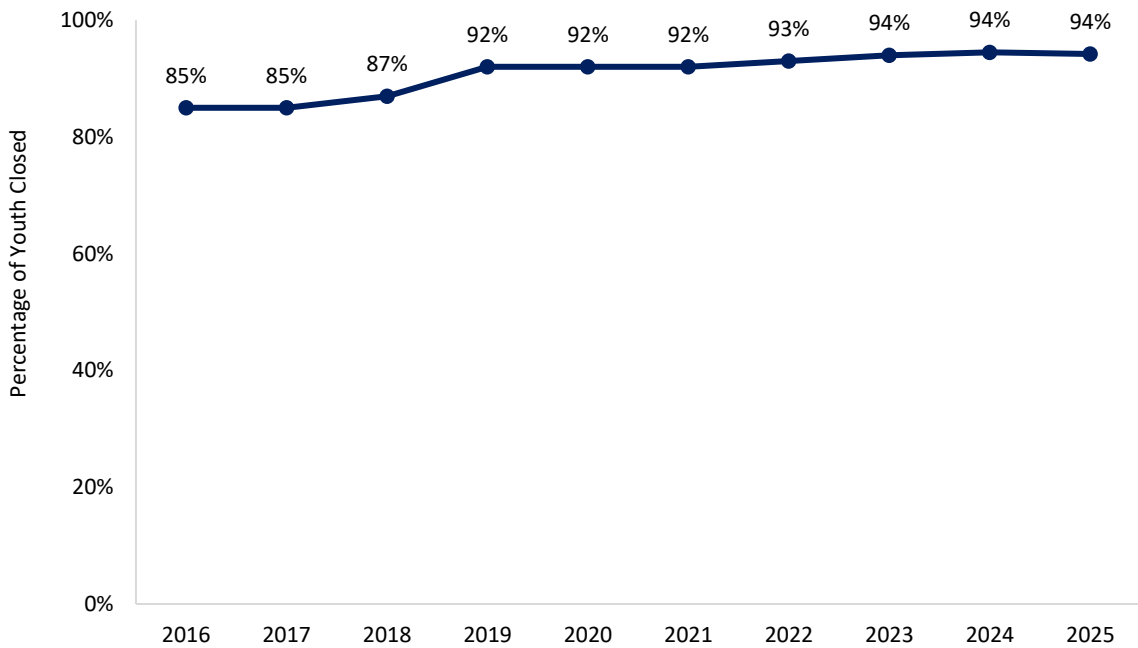
Education and Employment

Engagement in educational or vocational programming at closing is a key indicator of competency development in the academic and workforce domains.

Table 7: Youth Closed Involved in an Educational or Vocational Activity at Closing										
	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	2025 N=8,272
Count	9,095	8,434	8,922	9,473	7,790	6,422	6,214	7,364	7,886	7,796

Chart 12: Youth Closed Involved in an Educational or Vocational Activity at Closing

Participation in educational and vocational activities has grown steadily, with nearly all youth engaged in recent years.



²¹ 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 reform framework, known as the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES), to strengthen Pennsylvania’s capacity to achieve its BARJ mission. JJSES emphasizes data-driven decision-making, professional development, and evidence-based practices. It employs tools such as actuarial assessments, cognitive behavioral interventions, and performance evaluations to promote continuous system improvement. 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-aligned measures. As part of that revision, new data elements were added, including Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory™ risk assessments, case planning information, enhanced measures of education and competency development, and insights into why supervision conditions were not satisfied. Because these enhancements were implemented in 2019, some measures are only available from that year forward.

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

The YLS serves as the cornerstone of JJSES and is an actuarial risk assessment tool for youth alleged to have committed delinquent offenses. It evaluates 42 static and dynamic risk factors across eight domains that research literature identifies as the most predictive of youth reoffending.

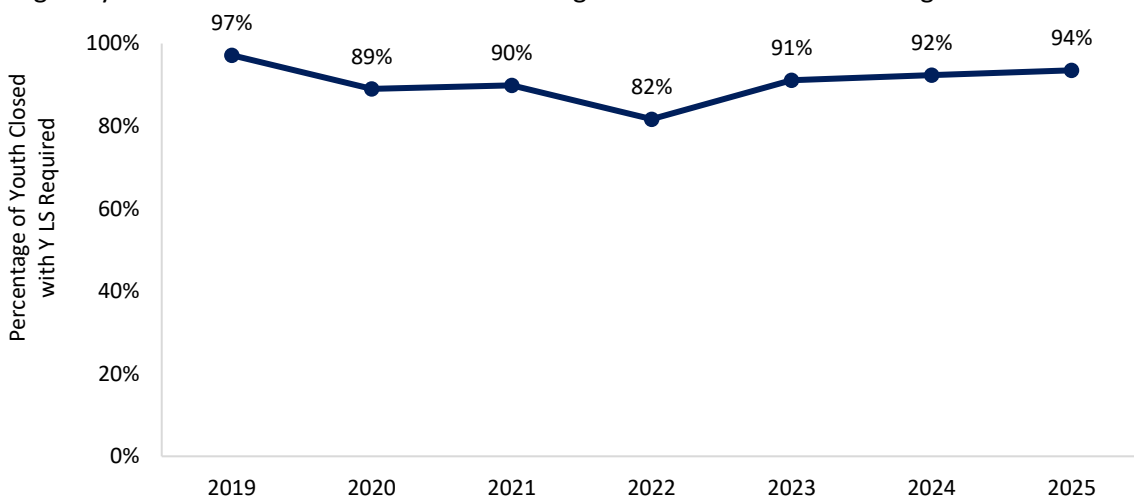
Generally, youth are assessed using the YLS at the time they enter the juvenile justice system. Upon completion of the YLS, each youth receives a numeric score and risk level (e.g., Low, Moderate, High, or Very High²²). The assessment also identifies the youth’s top criminogenic needs (those factors 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 recommend reassessing youth at regular intervals throughout their supervision period and again at the time of closing when the youth ends supervision.

Table 8: Youth Closed with Initial and Closing YLS Assessments

Count	2020 N=8,508	2021 N=6,961	2022 N=6,696	2023 N=7,814	2024 N=8,345	2025 N=8,272
Required to Have YLS	7,532	6,248	5,985	7,113	7,626	7,423
Closed with Initial and Closing YLS	6,702	5,615	4,889	6,483	7,045	6,493

Chart 13: Youth Closed with Both Initial and Closing YLS Assessments Completed

The percentage of youth closed with both initial and closing YLS assessments remains high.



²² Due to a small number of Very High risk levels, this report combines High and Very High risk levels.

Changes in YLS Risk Score²³

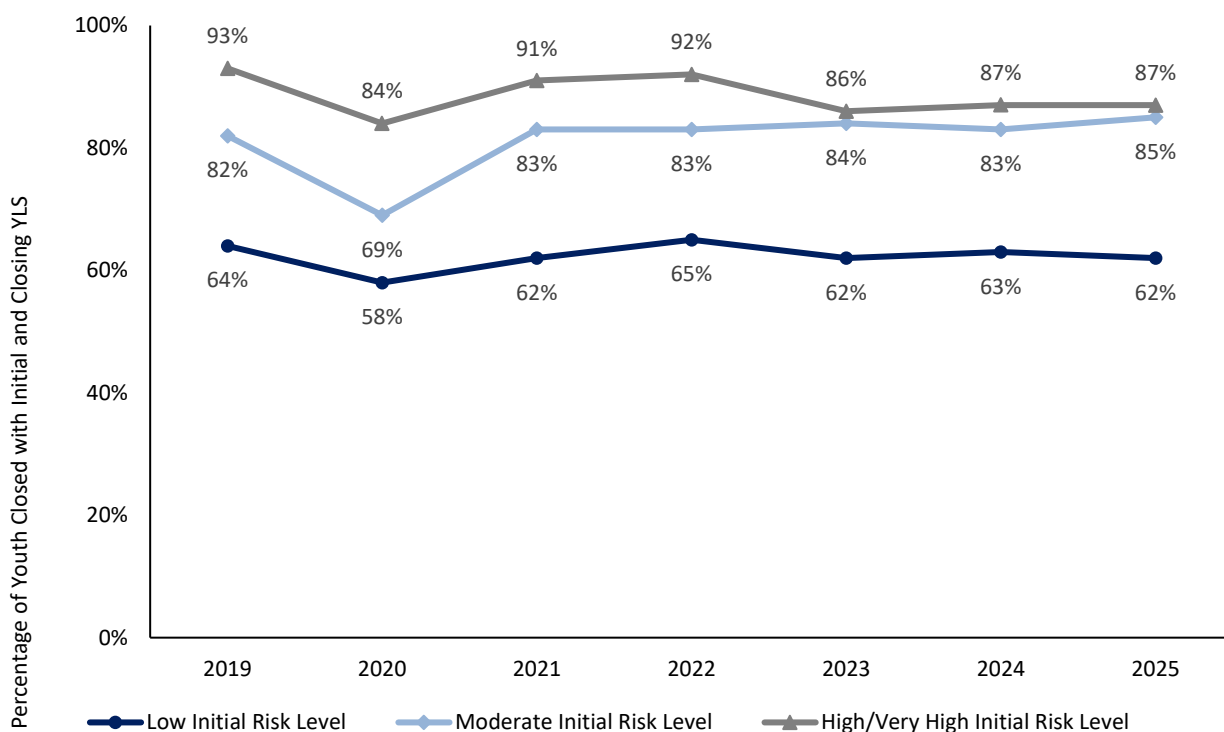
Changes in YLS risk score between the youth’s initial YLS and the youth’s closing YLS indicate the impact of a youth’s involvement in the juvenile justice system. Decreases in risk scores are a positive outcome for the youth. The following charts reflect the change in numerical risk score from initial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

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

Initial YLS Risk Level	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Youth Closed	# with Lower Score	Youth Closed	# with Lower Score	Youth Closed	# with Lower Score	Youth Closed	# with Lower Score	Youth Closed	# with Lower Score	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	3,710	2,283
Moderate	2,953	2,029	2,380	1,986	1,871	1,545	2,391	2,006	2,714	2,260	2,762	2,275
High/Very High	616	516	546	497	395	362	493	424	497	430	561	473
Total	6,702	4,360	5,615	4,146	4,889	3,616	6,483	4,675	7,045	5,099	6,943	5,031

Chart 14: Youth with Lower Score at Close by Initial YLS Risk Level

Across all initial risk levels, a substantial majority of youth closed with a lower YLS score than at intake, indicating consistent reductions in assessed risk over time.



²³ The YLS Risk Score section reflects youth closed who had both an initial and closing YLS assessment completed.

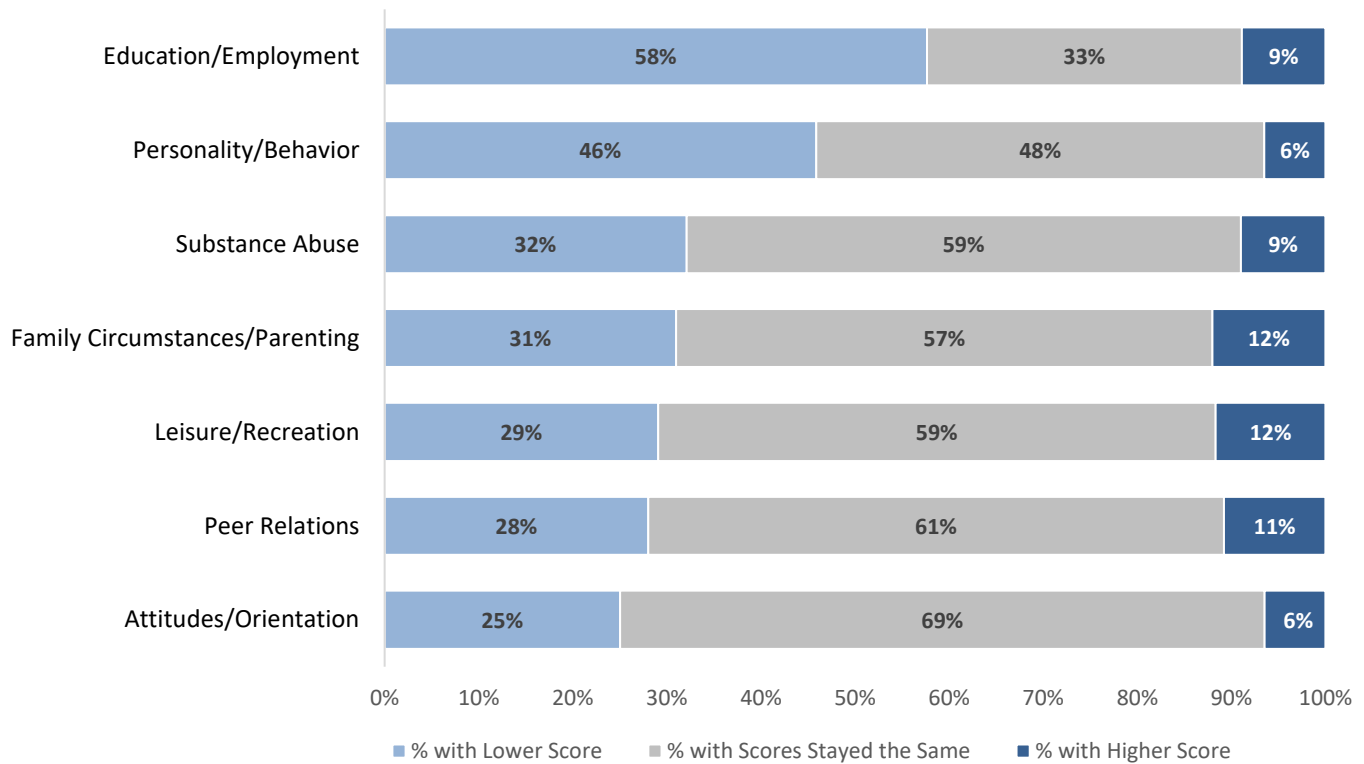
Changes in YLS Domain Risk Score

Table 10: Youth Closed by Change in Domain Risk Score at Time of Closing YLS N=6,943

Domain ²⁴	# with Lower Score	# with Scores Staying the Same	# with Higher Score
Education/Employment	4,003	2,323	617
Personality/Behavior	3,185	3,308	450
Substance Abuse	2,228	4,091	624
Family Circumstances/Parenting	2,188	3,946	809
Leisure/Recreation	2,018	4,115	810
Peer Relations	1,946	4,248	749
Attitudes/Orientation	1,737	4,758	448

Chart 15: Youth Closed by Change in Domain Risk Score at Time of Closing YLS

Most youth showed either improvement or stability across YLS domains, with the strongest gains in Education/Employment and Personality/Behavior.



²⁴ The Prior and Current Offenses domain is not reported because it is not a dynamic risk factor.

Case Plan Activities

Case plan development is a Stage Two (Initiation) activity in the JJSES framework. Case plans should address the youth’s identified risks and needs and provide targeted evidence-based interventions.

Table 11: Youth Closed with Case Plans Addressing Top YLS Criminogenic Needs							
	2019 N=10,283	2020 N=8,508	2021 N=6,961	2022 N=6,696	2023 N=7,814	2024 N=8,345	2025 N=8,272
Count	3,814	3,490	2,903	2,518	2,983	3,339	3,460
Skill Building and Tools Activities	2,837	2,669	2,124	1,864	2,279	2,595	2,684
Referral to Treatment Services	2,260	2,117	1,734	1,368	1,527	1,734	1,873
Cognitive Behavioral Group Interventions	1,538	1,471	1,160	955	1,039	1,226	1,181
Other Activities	195	199	183	219	226	305	361
Updated Throughout Supervision	3,691	3,363	2,802	2,441	2,892	3,243	3,327

Chart 16: Case Plan Activities by Type

Case plans most frequently include activities related to skill building and tools.

