YOUTH SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

State Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024



Youth Services

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Contents

Introduction	2
Establishment of the Youth Services Program	2
General Casework Flow	3
Youth Services Family Eligibility	5
Status Offenses and Youth Services	5
Youth and Families Served	6
West Virginia Rules of Juvenile Procedure	11
Truancy Diversion	11
Runaway and Homeless Youth	12
24-Hour Centralized Intake Unit Referral Line	12
Incorrigible	13
Community Services Linkage	13
Out-of-Home Placement	16
Removals from the Home	17
Foster Care Entry	19
Source – PATH Report PSS-PLA0220 - "Removal Petition Trends Report"	20
Source – Removal Petition Report; Cognos; PATH	20
Reunification	21
Safe at Home West Virginia	21
Transitioning Adults	22
Youth Services Caseworkers and Caseworker Grant Program Allocations and Vacancies	24
Appendix A: Youth Services Matrix of Socially Necessary Services	29
Appendix B: List of Juvenile Residential Facilities and Residential Emergency Crisis Support Facilities Licensed by the West Virginia Department of Human Services	33

Introduction

Youth Services is a specialized program that is part of a broader public system of services to children and families. Requirements originate from various sources including, but not limited to, social work standards of practice; Chapter 49 of the West Virginia Code; opinions entered by the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia; the Adoption and Safe Families Act; and the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Pursuant to W. Va. Code §49-2-1006(a), the West Virginia Department of Human Services (DoHS) and the Bureau of Juvenile Services (BJS) shall annually review their programs and services and submit a report by December 31 of each year to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Supreme Court of Appeals.

In order to have complete and accurate data for this report, DoHS's Bureau for Social Services (BSS) is using data analytics and information that was valid during the time frame of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

DoHS submits the Youth Services Annual Report for State Fiscal Year July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Through this mechanism, DoHS continues its commitment to "establish, maintain, and continuously refine and develop, a balanced and comprehensive state program for juveniles who are potentially delinquent or are status offenders or juvenile delinquents in the care or custody of the department." See W. Va. Code §49-2-1001.

This year's annual report includes:

- A listing of the rehabilitation facilities in West Virginia;
- Removals from the home and foster care entry by source for SFY 2024;
- A section on the "Safe at Home West Virginia" program;
- The array of in-home socially necessary services available to families in the youth services program and those that have been discontinued;
- An online catalog of programs and services available in local communities throughout the state; and
- An analysis of caseloads for youth services social workers over recent state fiscal years.

The BSS uses the Transformational Collaborative Outcomes Management (TCOM) framework that includes the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment and the Family Advocacy Support Tool (FAST). The FAST tool remains the primary assessment tool for youth services statewide.

To be certified in the FAST, caseworkers must demonstrate proficiency testing on a case vignette of 0.70 or greater after completing training. Recertification is on an annual basis to ensure reliability.

Establishment of the Youth Services Program

Youth Services is dedicated to helping families thrive by honoring its mission to provide programs and services that promote the healthy development of youth and families and help them gain the skills necessary to lead constructive lives within the community. Youth Services

may help with the challenges associated with adolescent behaviors, homelessness, substance use, or trouble with the law. DoHS coordinates with community partners to implement prevention programs, truancy diversion efforts, and in-home services to families in efforts to prevent youth from becoming involved with the court system. However, when court involvement occurs, DoHS may provide services or out-of-home placement to assist families working through problems. Reunification and permanency planning services are available to everyone in the family.

Youth Services operations consist of several basic steps. These steps can vary depending on whether there is involvement with the court. In general, the process is as follows: Intake; Youth Services Assessment (i.e., FAST) and Immediate Safety Threat Assessment; Youth Services Safety Plan, if necessary; Multidisciplinary Treatment Team recommendation for court-involved youth; a Youth Services Case Plan and Service Provision; and Case Plan Evaluation/Case Closure.

Rehabilitation, not punishment, remains the overarching aim of the juvenile justice system. The most notable difference between the original model and current juvenile law is that juveniles now have more procedural rights in court. These rights include the right to an attorney and the right to be free from self-incrimination.

In February 2018, federal legislation known as the Family First Prevention Services Act was enacted, increasing federal funding for foster care prevention services. States can be reimbursed for prevention services that the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse has listed as approved intervention strategies.

Senate Bill 562 was passed during the 2021 West Virginia Regular Session of the Legislature and became effective July 9, 2021. This bill created a procedure for determining juvenile competency. During the 2024 West Virginia Regular Session, HB5022 was also passed, which modified the original code change regarding the age of presumed competency, and the court process stays once competency is questioned. The purpose of these state and federal statutes is to establish procedures for determining juvenile competency to stand trial and to designate a disposition alternative for incompetent juveniles. Statutes prohibit placement in BJS custody for children presumed or determined to be incompetent or those whose competency has not yet been established through an evaluation. The workgroup previously formed in response to Senate Bill 562 is still in place and continues to have representation from Bureau of Social Services (BSS), Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH), and Department of Health Facilities (DHF). Various other individuals have also taken part in the work completed by this group. The workgroup meets weekly and has updated the materials used in training for BSS staff, circuit court judges, prosecutors, and public defenders, Competency Evaluators, and Attainment Services Providers in accordance with the recent change. Policies have also been updated as has the curriculum for the Attainment Services Providers to utilize which continues to be a focus of this group's efforts. Data collection has continued, and the group collectively fields inquiries and provides assistance to BSS staff, attorneys, providers, and judges.

General Casework Flow

Intake for "Received Services": Intake is a distinct step in the Youth Services decision-making process. Intake involves all the activities and functions that lead to a decision to either

complete the CANS or make a referral to appropriate community resources that are better suited to meet the families' identified needs.

Referrals come to Youth Services from a variety of sources. To better understand the entry point of families into BSS, a tracking report has been developed from the existing data in the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) (Appendix B).

<u>Youth Services Assessment</u>: The Youth Services Assessment is performed on all open Youth Services Cases with the intent of identifying and mitigating safety threats, helping the youth and family overcome barriers, and working to ensure the youth and their family no longer need intervention from BSS. This process includes the utilization of the FAST assessment, evaluation for safety threats, and creation of the Youth Services Case Plan. To assist youth services staff with process changes, DoHS partnered with Marshall University to facilitate training.

<u>Immediate Safety Threat Assessment</u>: An Immediate Safety Threat Assessment is performed on all open Youth Services cases to determine if the safety of a youth, their family, or their community is at immediate risk of severe harm. Immediate safety threats are defined as observable and presently occurring.

Youth Services Safety Plan: The safety plan is a temporary strategy to control or mitigate immediate and impending safety threats. Families should be engaged in the safety planning process so they can understand how the identified threats cause unsafe conditions, and to gain acceptance and ownership of the developed plan. If an in-home safety plan is not feasible, then an out-of-home placement may be necessary. Additionally, if a safety threat is perpetrated by the caregivers or caused by the living environment, child protective services involvement may be necessary.

Multidisciplinary Treatment Team (MDT): State statutes and federal regulations require that an MDT report must be made to the court before the hearing for all youth involved with the court. The court must also review the case plan referred to in W. Va. Code as the Individualized Service Plan (ISP) for the child and family developed by the MDT to determine if implementation of the ISP is in the child's best interests. MDT meetings must be held at least once every 90 days to review and revise, if needed, service and treatment plans until permanency has been achieved for the child.

Youth Services Case Plan/Case Closure: The Youth Services assessment process involves conducting interviews with all members of the family, which helps to evaluate either the presence or absence of safety threats and family members' needs. Working with the family to develop the Youth Services Case Plan assures that the caregiver understands DoHS's role in providing services to address issues relating to troubled youth. In facilitating the discussion of the plan, the worker assists the family to address their strengths and needs, and to prioritize goals related to the conditions that are the basis for Youth Services involvement. Services are provided to assist the family and youth achieve the goals that will lead to disengagement of Youth Services from family involvement and case closure.

Youth Services Family Eligibility

The target population for Youth Services includes juveniles under the age of 18, or between the ages of 18 and 21 if under the jurisdiction of the court beyond the age of 18.

Each of the following circumstances describes how young people may come into contact with Youth Services:

- The youth is experiencing problems in the home, at school, and/or in the community to such an extent that the resulting behavior has the potential to become the basis for status offense or delinquency proceedings, and intervention has been requested by the parent(s), guardian(s), custodian(s) or by the court to resolve the problem(s) without formal involvement in the juvenile justice system.
- The youth/juvenile is under the auspices of the juvenile justice system (e.g.., awaiting disposition or adjudication as a delinquent, adjudication as a truant status offender, on probation, etc.) and has been referred to DoHS for services.
- The youth/juvenile is an alleged delinquent who has been referred for services or placed in the temporary legal and/or physical custody of DoHS as an alternative to detention.
- The youth/juvenile has been adjudicated as a status offender before turning 18, and the court case has not been resolved and dismissed from the court's docket.

Status Offenses and Youth Services

Status offenses are acts that cannot be charged to adults, according to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. See 34 U.S.C. § 11103(42). However, at the State level, the definition is not as broad. Under W. Va. Code §49-1-202, a status offense is defined as any of the offenses listed below:

<u>Incorrigibility</u>: Habitual and continual refusal to respond to the lawful supervision by a parent, guardian, or legal custodian such that the behavior substantially endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the juvenile or any other person.

<u>Runaway</u>: Leaving the care of a parent, guardian, or custodian without consent or good cause.

Truant: Habitual absence from school without good cause.

Families often need assistance dealing with teens who do not follow the rules at home, break curfew, or run away. Truancy is often a symptom of deeper problems in the lives of children and families. Parent education and parent support groups in communities are great resources. Families may use local Family Resource Networks and the West Virginia 211 website and hotline (www.wv211.org and 2-1-1 or 1-833-848-9905) to obtain services and advocate for themselves. These resources and the services offered continue to expand statewide.

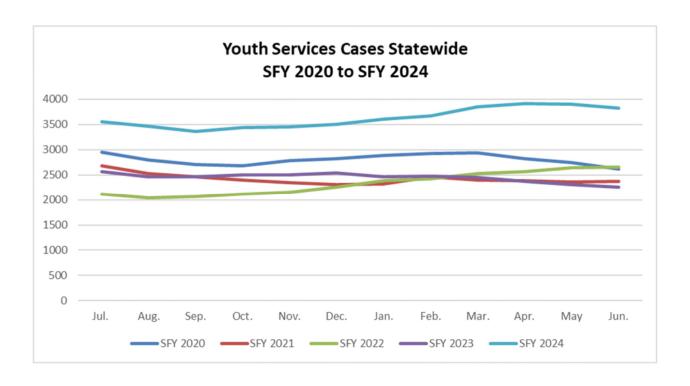
Youth and Families Served

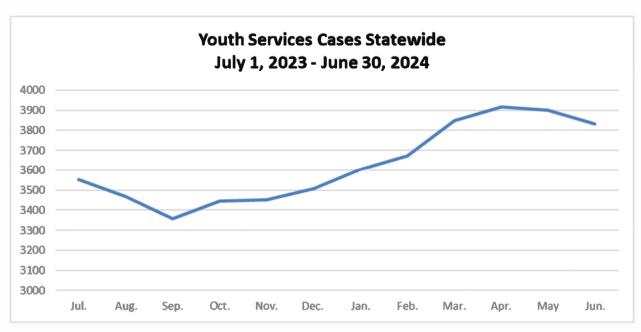
Bureau for Social Services employees directly deliver child welfare services to families and children in all 55 West Virginia counties. Families and children enter the child welfare system either through Child Protective Services (CPS) or Youth Services (YS). CPS serves families whose

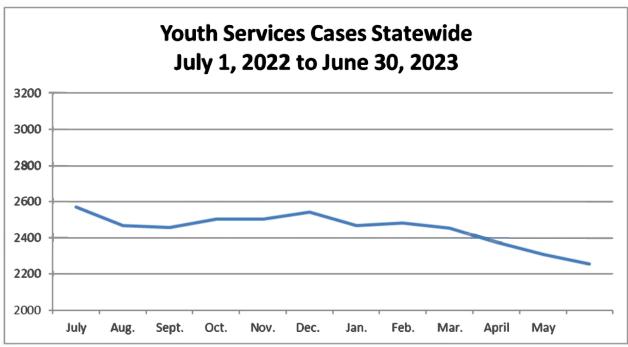
children are determined to be unsafe due to abuse or neglect or the identification of impending or immediate safety threats by their parent(s), guardian(s), or custodian(s). Youth Services serves youth who are referred by the courts for placement and services for status offenses or juvenile delinquency, or who are referred by families or schools for services to prevent delinquency.

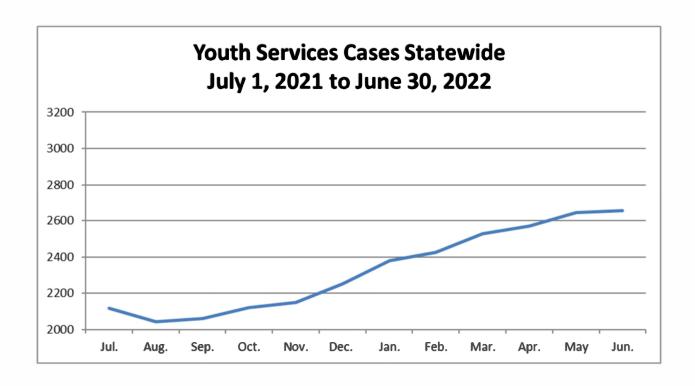
It is noteworthy that the data for the following charts has been provided by varied sources throughout the years, and the conversation between FACTS to PATH altered the manner of collection likely creating discrepancies: mainly SFY 2023 into SFY 2024, as the reports were not yet finalized in PATH at the time this report was created for 2023 creating a need to pull half of the data from Fredi with the other half from PATH: for this reason, only the first half of SFY 2023 was available at the time. The new PATH reports (PSS-CMG0040 and PSS-CMG0110) are now readily available and should provide a more consistent data pull moving forward.

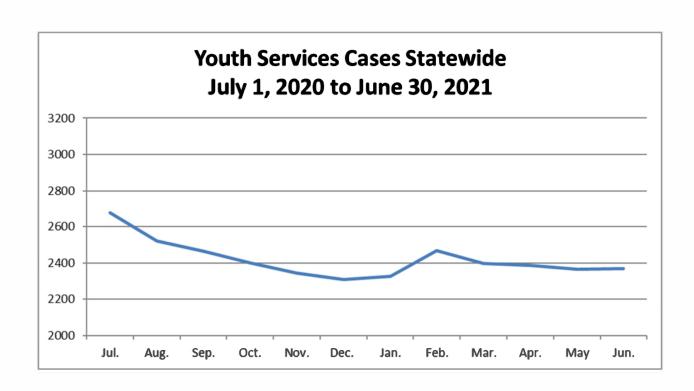
As has often been reported, YS caseloads for SFY 2024 tend to be lowest in the late summer months with a gradual increase during the school year. Referrals from school personnel and truancy issues are the most likely reason for this pattern.

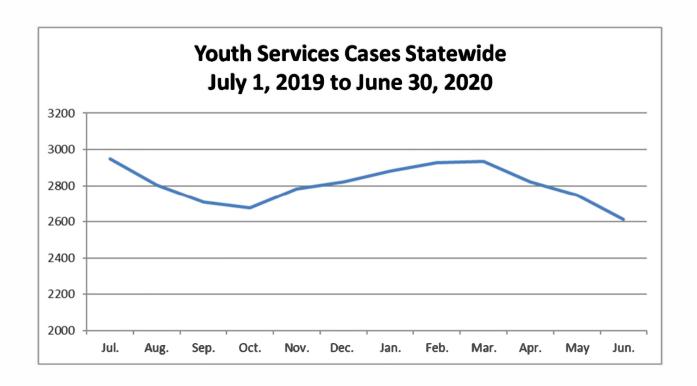


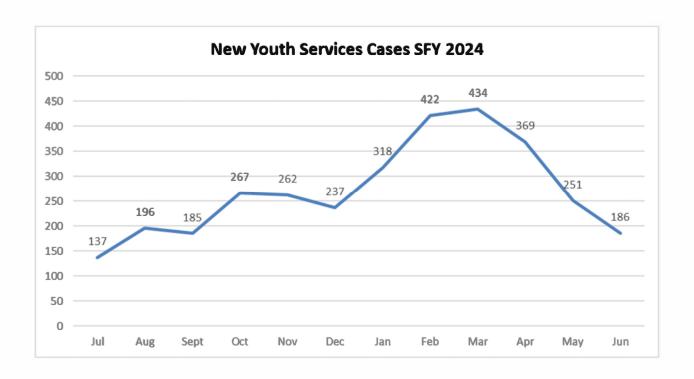


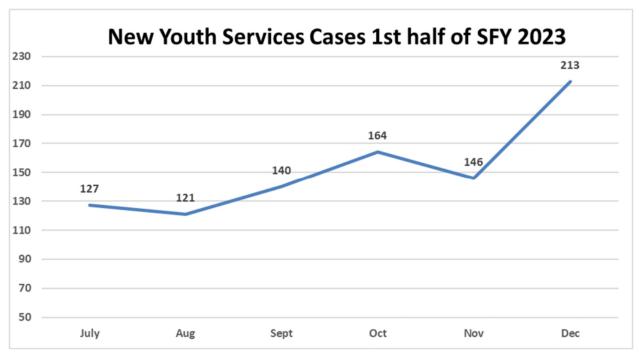


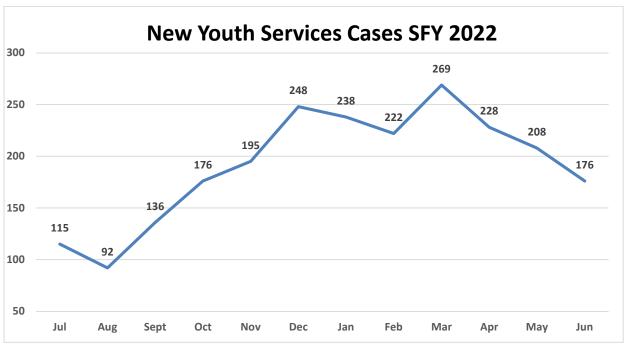














West Virginia Rules of Juvenile Procedure

DoHS's involvement in the development of the West Virginia Rules of Juvenile Procedure brought knowledge of service needs, advocacy, ethics, and best practices to the process. When a question now arises regarding how a case should be dispositioned, the court refers to these rules. The Rules of Juvenile Procedure are a standardized, fair, and consistent way of disposing of juvenile delinquency and status offense cases statewide.

Truancy Diversion

Delinquency prevention begins with truancy diversion. Truancy diversion specialists not only help keep youth in school but also prevent many adolescents from becoming formally involved with the juvenile justice system. The National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP) through Juvenile Victim Offender Mediation (JVOM) and the Juvenile Mediation Program (JMP), among other services, provide a resource to truant children within their Victim Offender Mediation Program. More information on JVOM and JMP can be found in Appendix A.

In further efforts to address adolescents' school attendance problems, DoHS and the West Virginia Department of Education have developed a collaborative relationship to share educational reporting information for children living in foster care. This collaborative effort will allow BSS to better ensure children's academic progress and provide a more accurate record of children's educational history.

Runaway and Homeless Youth

Youth Service Systems of West Virginia (YSS) and Children's Home Society (CHS) continue to provide shelters for runaway and homeless youth. Through a grant agreement, CHS provides runaway and homeless services in Parkersburg, and YSS provides services in Wheeling. Youth in the community may call or come to these shelters day or night. Two counselors are on duty 24/7 to provide crisis counseling, food, clothing, shelter, security, and individual, group and family counseling. Furthermore, youth and parents are welcome to call or stop by the program offices at any time for advice or referrals to other services in the community. DoHS does not provide any funding or oversight to these runaway and homeless youth programs.

Children's Home Society provides services through the federal Transitional Living grant to homeless youth ages 16 to 22 in the Parkersburg area. During SFY 2024, the CHS Transitional Living outreach program served a total of 72 youth/young adults with either full services or with their Gateway and Outreach services programs. Full services (which includes housing and case management rather than strictly resource and referral services) were received by 37 individuals. YSS served a total of 47 unduplicated clients: 35 strictly through their Transitional Living Program and another 12 with the grant-funded Runaway Homeless Youth Program.

The Child Locator Unit in BSS consists of three positions responsible for receiving reports of and locating missing foster youth. Child locators collect data related to the youth's history, their experiences on the run, and complete a child trafficking screen. These positions are filled, and the unit is fully operational.

• During the period of January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, a total of 450 run events were documented, involving 275 children. Of those involved runs, 96 children ran more than once during 2023. At midnight on December 31, 2023, 16 children were missing from care.

There appears to be a trend of youth returning to or being located and returned to care at a higher rate. The noted increase is not believed to be an indication of more runs but due to an upsurge in reporting and documentation of said events. This rise is due to improved efforts to ensure run events are reported and documented accurately. This is a direct result of the creation of a dedicated Runaway Social Worker to assist the DoHS Centralized Intake Unit (CI) and the Child Locator Unit to accurately track and record this data. It is also a result of a heightened awareness of the need for proper documentation to help ensure runaway youth are found and brought back into proper supervision to ensure their safety.

24-Hour Centralized Intake Unit Referral Line

The DoHS Centralized Intake Unit receives referrals via the CI 24-hour hotline, seven days a week (1-800-352-6513). The CI has enabled the streamlining of child abuse and neglect and Adult Protective Services referrals, creating consistency in how the referrals are documented and received. Though DoHS county offices continue to enter YS petition referrals directly, CI handles all after-hours emergency calls for YS and contacts the appropriate DoHS district supervisor when necessary.

Centralized Intake also accepts referrals from prosecutors for pre-petition diversion. Utilizing CI simplifies the referral process; prosecutors can fax the referral containing all necessary information that a DoHS worker needs to initiate contact with the referred youth and family. This process ensures prosecutors receive feedback regarding the acceptance of the referral and the assignment to the local office. Since its inception in August 2015, CI has received 1,752 total referrals, five occurring during SFY 2024. It is noteworthy that these referrals continue to also be called into the local offices, and are therefore not always relayed to CI for data tracking purposes. Efforts are being made to ensure reporting becomes consistent to ensure all pre-petition diversion referrals are counted.

Incorrigible

A young person who habitually and continually refuses to respond to the lawful supervision of parents, guardians, or legal custodians, especially when the young person's behavior substantially endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the young person or any other persons, meets the definition of incorrigible. YS attempts to provide families with resources and educational programs to increase family communication, set expectations of behaviors, and establish enforceable consequences. All interventions are aimed at diversion of the family from filing formal incorrigibility petitions in the court system.

Referrals to community programs are often the best resource for families. Some of these resources include:

- The Boys & Girls Clubs
- AmeriCorps
- YMCA
- Family Resource Networks

The Boys & Girls Clubs' mission is "to enable all young people, especially those who need them most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens." Through several community programs, AmeriCorps members work to meet some of the most critical needs in West Virginia, including poverty and illiteracy. YMCA centers in West Virginia provide support and opportunities to empower children, youth, and adults to learn, grow and thrive.

DoHS's Bureau for Family Assistance (BFA) Family Resource Networks bring together existing services in a single location such as a school or other neighborhood building. This comprehensive approach increases the accessibility of services, provides family support and education, and allows the centers to meet the community's needs. Family Resource Networks serve children from prenatal care through age 18. Each center offers a variety of services to reflect the diversity of the community needs.

Community Services Linkage

Youth Services strives to connect families and youth to services in their communities to maintain permanent family connections. Community services are the link families need in their neighborhoods to cope, especially with the unique situations that come with raising teens and young adults. These local services work to ensure children's optimal development by assisting

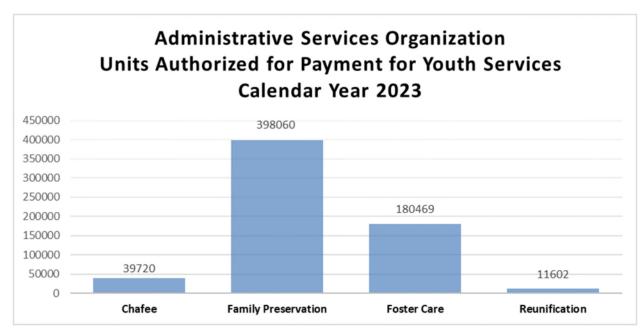
parents with support groups, enhancing the quality of relationships among family members, and helping them manage the challenges and stresses of child-rearing.

West Virginia 211 provides a descriptive catalog of juvenile and family-strengthening programs and services that are available in local communities and funded by The United Way, a member of the Service Array Workgroup. The catalog can be accessed through the West Virginia 211 website, www.wv211.org, or by calling 2-1-1. Additionally, HELP4WV, www.help4wv.com or 1-844-HELP-4WV, provides immediate assistance and referrals for West Virginians struggling with an addiction or mental health issue.

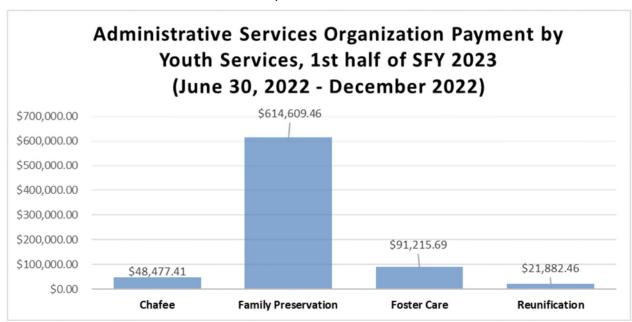
While Family Resource Networks and other collaborative efforts have created or expanded programs to serve residents, gaps still exist. Private agencies can fill gaps in services according to the Uniform Guidelines Manual established to define and regulate service delivery.

Socially Necessary Services are services necessary to achieve child welfare goals of safety, permanency, and well-being. The designation "socially necessary" is used to distinguish these services from others that have been determined to be medically necessary that can be obtained through Medicaid. These agencies provide four areas of expertise: family reunification, family preservation, Chafee (which is a federal program), and foster care in youth services cases. As with previous years, youth services cases utilized family preservation services most often, as illustrated in the following table.

Please note the chart provided last year for the first half of SFY 2023 is an approximation made from the data available at the time of report publication through Cognos. Following the transition to the new CCWIS system, the ASO services financial data could no longer be collected with the breakdowns of the four categories of services. Although the payments cannot accurately be calculated at this time, the following graph shows the total number of authorizations for services in YS cases as submitted by Acentra.



Source – Headcount of Authorizations Provided by Acentra



Source - ASO Payment Report; Cognos



Source - ASO Payment Report; Cognos

A list of services available and discontinued resources through the Youth Services Matrix of Socially Necessary Services are provided in Appendix A.

In an ongoing effort to improve outcomes for West Virginia's children and families, BSS began the process of redesigning the socially necessary services structure, including how the delivery and outcomes of those services are evaluated. BSS has moved toward a culture of greater accountability to provide the basic framework for evaluating the effectiveness of programs and services, and identifying those that should be continued, discontinued, or added to the service delivery matrices.

Out-of-Home Placement

All children need a safe environment and caring adults to thrive. YS is statutorily charged with the responsibility to make a reasonable effort to prevent the placement of youth outside the home. A thorough youth services assessment with detailed documentation is integral to that responsibility. An in-depth interview and completed assessment will help the family and social worker assess the needs and strengths of youth and the presence and level of safety threats that could affect the safety and stability of the youth, his or her family, or the community. The process assures that the caregivers understand youth services' role in providing services to address issues relating to at-risk youth. If any safety threats are present, the worker must develop a safety plan.

In some cases, the worker will identify safety threats that preclude the development of an in-home safety plan. The reasons that an in-home plan will not be feasible will vary from case to case. In some instances, either the parent(s) or the youth may not agree to cooperate with the plan. In other instances, the home may be chaotic and the level of conflict between the family members prevents the use of an in-home plan.

In some instances, it may be advisable for Youth Services to insist the family make arrangements for an adolescent to stay with friends, family, or even an emergency shelter for a

period of time until the home situation is calm enough for the implementation of an in-home Safety Plan. Removal from one's home is a traumatic event, but out-of-home care placements and social services can help ease the transition for children and families. The YS worker will discuss the arrangements with the family, the child, and the alternate caretakers so that everyone understands their responsibilities, the conditions surrounding these arrangements, including time frames, and the conditions under which the arrangement will end, and the child will return home.

Depending on the needs and behaviors of the young person, the worker may choose to discuss the filing of a petition with the parents. Under the petition, the court may place the youth in a temporary out-of-home situation either through DoHS or BJS.

A listing of juvenile rehabilitation facilities is provided in Appendix B. Additionally, current bed availability can be found through the West Virginia Child Placing Network at www.wvdhhr.org/wvcpn/.1

Removals from the Home

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BSS captured the number of removals from the home that affected YS clients during the previous five state fiscal years. Until SFY 2024, there has been a slight yet steady decrease in the number of removals.

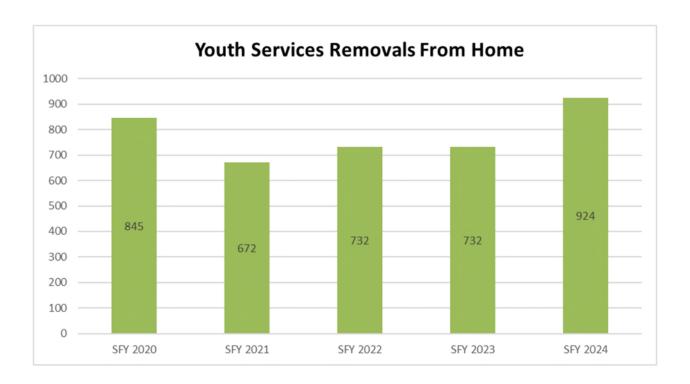
BSS historically attributed the overall reduction of removals to be due to the mandatory diversion of status offenders, the prohibition of first-time offenders being removed from the home, and the increased use of evidence-based community programs such as Victim-Offender Mediation and Functional Family Therapy. In addition to the diversion and community programs, the reduction of removals from the home has also been linked to the implementation of the Safe at Home West Virginia program. More information on the community programs can be found in Appendix A, and Safe at Home West Virginia information can be found on page 27.

As is reflected in other sections of this report, the aforementioned diversion referrals were at an all time low throughout SFY 2024. This observation is based on the specific tracking method of Diversions Referrals from Centralized Intake. Since these referrals are being called in to local offices as well as CI, the CI's data does not include the referrals entered at the local office, this could explain the decrease in referral data. Efforts are being made to remedy this and obtain a consistent count.

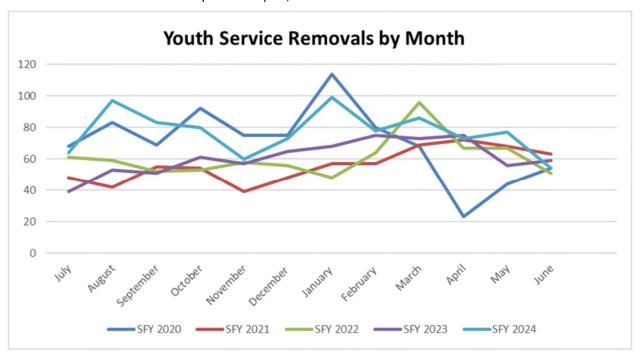
The following graphs represent the number of Youth Services' clients removed from their homes annually and monthly for the current and previous four state fiscal years. Removal from the home does not always result in foster care entry. While SFY 2024 appears to indicate the highest rate of removals in the last five years, it is noteworthy that the data collection differs

The West Virginia Child Placing Network is a cooperative website with DoHS and the WV Alliance for Children (http://www.alliance4children.org) and can be accessed at www.wvdhhr.org/wvcpn/. For assistance using the Network without internet access, contacting the West Virginia Alliance for Children at 304-342-8477.

from years past with the full collection being pulled from PATH. Accuracy will be better determined when reviewed in future years using this same data report.



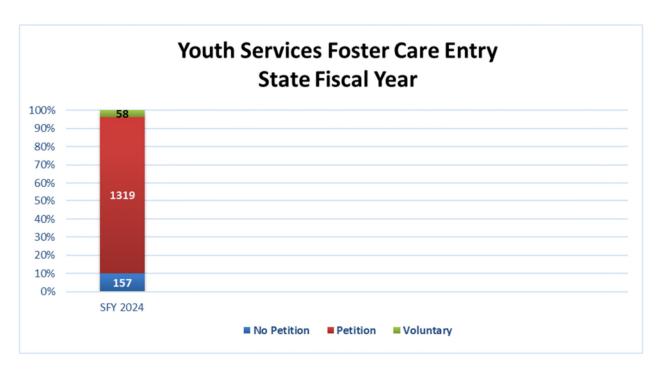
Source - Removal Petition Trends by Month Report; PATH



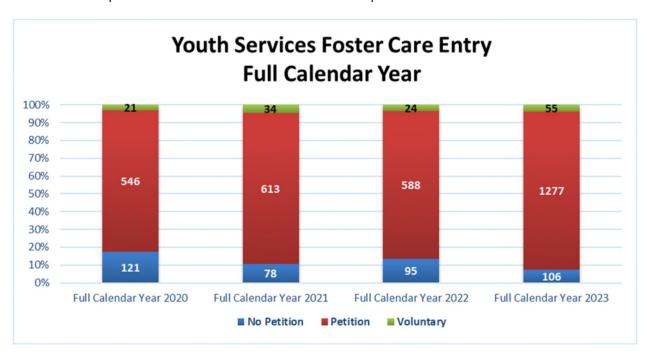
Foster Care Entry

The following graph shows foster care entry by source. The removal figures will not exactly match the entry figures because not every child removed from their home is placed in foster care. The first placement attempt is with family or friends of the family, which would not necessarily constitute a foster care entry. As with previous years, the primary source of entry for YS is through a petition to the court.

It is noteworthy to elaborate that the data in the previous years' charts is per calendar year based on the Cognos reports data pull. Following the updates to the CCWIS system, the data collection within PATH can now be pulled for SFY hence the inclusion of two charts.



Source - PATH Report PSS-PLA0220 - "Removal Petition Trends Report"



Source - Removal Petition Report; Cognos; PATH

Reunification

When an adolescent is placed in foster care, planning immediately begins with the family and a youth services worker to provide a permanent living situation, preferably back with the family. Reunification is the first plan of action.

Reunification is more than the return of a child to their family. Reconnecting a child to their community, school, and positive friends and adults is equally as important as returning to the family home. Increasing the protective factors and removing the negative behavioral influences for a child is the ongoing work of the caring adults in every child's life. Through youth services, minors are encouraged to develop interests and talents in sports, music, art, and extracurricular activities because these connections can be fundamental to the success of every young person and can provide support to deter youth from experimenting with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Coaches, teachers, spiritual leaders, and neighbors are crucial members of the support network outlined in family meetings who will aid the family as they overcome obstacles, achieve maximum potential, and improve their quality of life.

BSS has continued to work on several provisions to improve reunification efforts and family stability. One such provision is the continuation of Safe at Home West Virginia, which is detailed in the following section. A wraparound facilitator is responsible for engaging the member and family in a partnership of shared decision-making regarding the Plan of Care development and implementation throughout the youth's case. They help ensure and coordinate a comprehensive set of supports, resources, and strategies for each member and family to help the youth stay in the home or return home safely.

BSS intends to expand the served population to encompass all children served by the DoHS who are in jeopardy of being removed from the home, experiencing a placement disruption, or require extra support to be reunified with their families. Safe at Home West Virginia is a high-intensity family engagement model of service delivery that not only empowers families to find solutions to their disruptive problems but also fosters an environment of community connectedness vital to individual and family success.

Safe at Home West Virginia

Safe at Home West Virginia uses a high-fidelity wraparound model designed to serve youth ages 9 to 18 either in foster care placement or at imminent risk of foster care entry; <u>or</u>, for a child age 5 and older who is an adopted child or is in a legal guardianship arrangement that is at risk of disruption. West Virginia also plans to universalize the use of the CANS assessment across child-serving systems.

Recognizing that traditional practices may not always result in the best possible outcomes for children and families, West Virginia is engaging in a process that creates a new perspective. In partnership with youth and families, BSS is collaborating with both public and private stakeholders, including service providers, school personnel, behavioral health services, probation, and the judicial system to demonstrate that children currently in residential group care can be safely and successfully served within their communities. By providing a full continuum of support to strengthen families and fortifying community-based services, West

Virginia can demonstrate that youth currently in residential group care can achieve the same or higher outcomes for safety and well-being while remaining in their home communities.

Safe at Home West Virginia is designed to accomplish the following:

- Help improve identification of a youth's and family's strengths and needs;
- Reduce the reliance on residential group care and length of stay in group care;
- Reduce the reliance on out-of-state residential care;
- Improve the functioning of youth and families, including educational attainment goals for older youth;
- Improve timelines for family reunification; and
- Reduce re-entry into out-of-home care.

Safe at Home is a totally state-funded program. BSS continues to work on sustainability and redesign of Safe at Home with partner providers from 12 Lead Coordinating Agencies (LCAs) and through the WV Court Improvement Program (CIP) to streamline efforts, enhance practice, and improve oversight and accountability. Marshall Research Corp. now completes the referral assignments and tracking data for BSS.

BSS is also working with the Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH) and the Bureau for Medical Services (BMS) to coordinate interim wraparound and CSED. BBH wraparound is known as Children's Mental Health wraparound.

Ongoing BSS objectives for Safe at Home (SAH):

- Long-term sustainability of the SAH program;
- Support BSS staff and improve coordination;
- Strengthen alignment with the courts;
- Support a healthy LCA provider network;
- Adhere to the budget authorized for SAH; and
- Align SAH policies and procedures with statewide child welfare initiatives.

Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, 1370 youth were referred to the Safe at Home Program. Of those referred, 1302 had cases open for SAH services. Marshall collects this data and does so by county; BSS has moved away from data collection from four regions and instead segregates state data between the north and the south.

Transitioning Adults

A child who "ages out" of foster care is considered a "transitioning adult." These terms are used to describe former children in foster care who remain in the care and custody of the state upon reaching their 18th birthday who may request additional support until age 21. Generally, children who age out of foster care due to being under the auspices of the court are the population of focus for youth services. W. Va. Code §49-4-110(b) states:

For each transitioning adult who remains in foster care, the Circuit Court shall conduct a status review hearing once every three months until permanency is achieved. For each child or transitioning adult who remains in foster care, the Circuit Court shall conduct a permanency hearing no later than twelve months

after the date the child or transitioning adult is considered to have entered foster care, and at least once every twelve months thereafter until permanency is achieved. For purposes of permanency planning for transitioning adults, the Circuit Court shall make factual findings and conclusions of law as to whether DoHS made reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan to prepare a transitioning adult for emancipation or independence or another approved permanency option such as, but not limited to, adoption or legal guardianship, pursuant to the West Virginia Guardianship and Conservatorship Act.²

To help transitioning adults, their families, and agencies who provide services to them, the BSS Transitional Living and Permanency Support Unit serves as a resource and referral source to facilitate providers helping to address their needs and navigate them through the process of transitioning into adulthood. The providers can further assist transitioning youth/adults in by obtaining stable housing, post-secondary education, and/or job placement.

DoHS provides grant funding to provider agencies for the Transitioning Adult Program (TAP). These agencies provide oversight, guidance, life skill training, and other various types of assistance to young adults to help them navigate their transition into adulthood. Presently the following agencies provide TAP services in the designated Counties:

- Children's Home Society (CHS): Berkeley, Fayette, Greenbrier, Jackson, Jefferson, Marion, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Raleigh, Summers, Wood
- NECCO: Boone, Cabell, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Putnam, Wayne
- Youth Service Systems (YSS): Ohio, Wetzel

From July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, CHS served 60 total youth with 52 receiving services at present. NECCO served 40 total youth with 24 receiving services at present. YSS served 12 total youth with six receiving services at present.

Additionally, DoHS maintains a partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), their local affiliated Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), Continuums of Care (CoCs), and BJS to launch the Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) program. The FYI is a federally funded housing voucher program for individuals aged 18 to 24 who have or will leave foster care within 90 days and are at risk of homelessness. Applicants verify their eligibility status with local DoHS offices for a referral to a local PHA for rent vouchers, which are provided to participating landlords. Accepted applicants are also eligible for aftercare services such as life skill building, but do not need to accept these services to receive FYI vouchers.

During SFY 2024, two PHAs have been added to the FYI program: Southern WV Housing Authority (serving Braxton, Fayette, Greenbrier, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, and Webster Counties) and Clarksburg Harrison Housing Authority (serving Harrison

² The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia provides a guardian/conservator online training program that can be accessed at https://www.courtswv.gov/public-resources/mental-hygiene-and-guardian/mh-guardian-online-training. The Guardianship/Conservatorship What Do I Need to Know Guide can be downloaded at https://www.wvlegalservices.org/guardcon.pdf or requested by calling Appalachian Legal Services at 304-343-4481.

County). These two were added to the following already participating in the program: Charleston/Kanawha Housing Authority, Housing Authority of the City of Fairmont, Housing Authority of the City of Pt. Pleasant, and the Housing Authority of Randolph County. FYI is presently available through a total of six PHAs servicing 26 counties. During the most recent fiscal year, DoHS and WVCEH entered discussions with the Mingo County Housing Authority (MCHA) which serves Mingo, McDowell, Logan, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties. It is anticipated that FYI will go live with this agency on November 1, 2024.

Youth Services Caseworkers and Caseworker Grant Program Allocations and Vacancies

The caseload standard established for Social Service workers with on-going cases is approximately 12 cases per worker. BSS continues to utilize this standard in reviewing actual cases against allocated positions. The previous reporting chart showed the number of total youth services workers allocated against the number of cases per region for SFY 2022. For SFY 2023 and 2024, data is separated into the north and south.

SFY 2024 Total Youth Services Workers and Case Allocation

Region	Total Allocated Positions	Number of Active Cases (end of SFY 2023)	Average Number of Cases per Allocated Position
North	91	1564	17
South	130	1981	15

SFY 2023 Total Youth Services Workers and Case Allocation

Region	Total Allocated Positions	Number of Active Cases (end of SFY 2023)	Average Number of Cases per Allocated Position
North	78	1445	19
South	110	1864	17

SFY 2022 Youth Services Workers and Case Allocation by Region

Region	Total Allocated Positions	Number of Active Cases (end of SFY 2022)	Average Number of Cases per Allocated Position
1	43	799	19
П	64	1066	17
III	39	396	10
IV	34	393	12

BSS continues to break down barriers that prevent filling caseworker vacancies. BSS has implemented a rigorous training plan that requires competency testing after the completion of pre-service training for those individuals hired through the service worker registry to ensure their comprehension of the tenets of social work, as well as their readiness and ability to perform in this critical position.

BSS also created a task force that took a more in-depth look at caseworker retention to develop a strategic plan to reduce costly turnover. Not only will a reduction in turnover decrease hiring and training costs for BSS, but it will also create a social service workforce with high competency and well-developed skills in the field of professional social work.

The following graphs depict the allocated positions of contracted and DoHS direct staff, respectively, which include vacancies as of June 30, 2023.

SFY 2024 Contracted Caseworkers

Region	Allocated Positions	SFY Year-End Vacancies	Vacant Percentage of Workforce
North	13	4	31%
South	20	9	45%

SFY 2023 Contracted Caseworkers

Region	Allocated Positions	SFY Year-End Vacancies	Vacant Percentage of
			Workforce

North	28	10	36%
South	34	13	38%

SFY 2022 Contracted Caseworkers

Region	Allocated Positions	SFY Year-End Vacancies	Vacant Percentage of Workforce
1	13	5	38%
II	15	2	13%
III	10	6	60%
IV	11	6	55%

SFY 2024 DoHS Caseworkers

Region	Allocated Positions	SFY Year-End Vacancies	Vacant Percentage of Workforce
North	56	12	22%
South	69	4	6%

SFY 2023 DoHS Caseworkers

Region	Allocated Positions	SFY Year-End Vacancies	Vacant Percentage of Workforce
North	50	8	16%
South	76	15	20%

SFY 2022 DoHS Caseworkers

Region Allocated Positions SFY Year-End Vacant Percentage of Vacancies Workforce	Region	Allocated Positions		Vacant Percentage of Workforce
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1	30	12	40%
П	49	12	24%
Ш	29	12	41%
IV	23	10	43%

Appendices

Appendix A: Youth Services Matrix of Socially Necessary Services

YS FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES
ADULT LIFE SKILLS
CAPS FAMILY ASSESSMENT
CAPS CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES
SAFETY SERVICES
SUPERVISION
INDIVIDUALIZED PARENTING
ADULT LIFE SKILLS
FAMILY CRISIS RESPONSE
EMERGENCY RESPITE
INDIVIDUAL REVIEW
IN-STATE HOME STUDY
OUT-OF-STATE HOME STUDY
MDT ATTENDANCE
PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AGENCY TRANSPORTATION
INTERVENTION TRAVEL TIME
TRANSPORTATION TIME
LODGING
MEALS
HOMEMAKER SERVICES
YS FOSTER CARE SERVICES
ADULT LIFE SKILLS
CAPS FAMILY ASSESSMENT
CAPS CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES
ADULT LIFE SKILLS
INDIVIDUALIZED PARENTING

FAMILY CRISIS RESPONSE SITUATIONAL OR BEHAVIORAL RESPITE DAILY RESPITE MDT ATTENDANCE
DAILY RESPITE
MDT ATTENDANCE
INDIVIDUAL REVIEW
IN-STATE HOME STUDY
OUT-OF-STATE HOME STUDY
TUTORING
LODGING
MEALS
SUPERVISED VISITATION ONE
SUPERVISED VISITATION TWO
CONNECTION VISIT
INTENSIVE THERAPEUTIC RECREATION EXPERIENCE
PRE-REUNIFICATION SUPPORT
AGENCY TRANSPORTATION ONE
AGENCY TRANSPORTATION TWO
INTERVENTION TRAVEL TIME
TRANSPORTATION TIME
PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION ONE
PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION TWO
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ONE
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TWO
AWAY FROM SUPERVISION SUPPORT
YS CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM
CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM: TRANSITIONAL LIVING PLACEMENT- PRE-PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES
CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM: TRANSITIONAL LIVING PLACEMENT PHASE TWO – PART 1
CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM: TRANSITIONAL LIVING PLACEMENT PHASE TWO – PART 2
AGENCY TRANSPORTATION CHAFEE
YS REUNIFICATION SERVICES

SUPERVISION
ADULT LIFE SKILLS
YS REUNIFICATION SERVICES, CONT.
INDIVIDUALIZED PARENTING
FAMILY CRISIS RESPONSE
EMERGENCY RESPITE
RESPITE
LODGING
MEALS
MDT ATTENDANCE
PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AGENCY TRANSPORTATION
INTERVENTION TRAVEL TIME
TRANSPORTATION TIME
SUPERVISED VISITATION ONE-ON-ONE

In addition to the available Socially Necessary Services, BSS funded two evidence-based/evidence-informed services, including Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM).

Family Functional Therapy

The Family First Prevention Services Act identified preventive services authorized for reimbursement for children at risk of entering foster care including FFT. The FFT service is a high-intensity, short-term program that requires providers to work with the entire family to alleviate the issues of the youth. As such, the Youth Services program expects to see an increase in Functional Family Therapy availability throughout the state and the expansion of positive outcomes for Youth Services' clients and families.

During SFY 2024, FFT opened 57 new cases Referrals were made by DoHS staff, Safe at Home case managers, wraparound facilitators, probation officers, the courts, psychiatrists, the school system, and families. Of the 57 opened cases, 33 families successfully completed services thus far. Only eight of the youth receiving FFT entered an out-of-home placement, while 41 participants successfully utilized the service as a diversion mechanism and avoided court involvement. Those families who ceased services did so for various reasons (i.e. refusal to participate, MDT opting out, detention, hospitalization, etc.)

Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM)

VOM is a restorative justice program that allows victims to voluntarily come face-to-face with their juvenile offenders and discuss, through the guidance of a trained mediator, their feelings about the perpetuation and resolution through creative restitution agreements. DoHS funds two VOM programs: JVOM and JMP.

During the 2024 SFY, the National Youth Advocate Program (JVOM) received 136 new referrals. Throughout the 2024 SFY, JVOM discharged 114 youth with only nine of the 114 being considered "unsuccessful or placed outside of the home."

The second VOM program to be funded during SFY 2024 is the Juvenile Mediation Program (JMP) which services truant children within their homes in Ohio, Brooke, and Hancock Counties. In the structuring of these services, BSS required providers to accept referrals from community members and not strictly from a DoHS source. This structure was established in an effort to keep juveniles from engaging with the juvenile justice system and to reach them at the earliest stage possible. The data collection for the entire SFY is incomplete as only the first three quarters were reported. This grant has not been renewed for SFY 2025. From July of 2023 through March of 2024, JMP reports receiving 331 referrals: 196 referrals from Ohio County, 133 referrals from Hancock County and two referrals from Brooke County. Of these referrals, 265 juveniles participated in JMP's program and 66 refused services. 245 juveniles improved their school attendance.

Appendix B: List of Juvenile Residential Facilities and Residential Emergency Crisis Support Facilities Licensed by the West Virginia Department of Human Services

Region 1 - Brooke, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Gilmer, Hancock, Jackson, Marion, Marshall, Monongalia, Ohio, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Tyler, Wetzel, Wirt, and Wood.

	T
Children's Home of Wheeling	Family Connections
Level II	Brooke Place, Level II
14 Bed Capacity, Males	12 Bed Capacity, Females
Ohio County	Brooke County
http://www.chowinc.org/	www.familyconnectionsinc.org
(304) 233-2585	(304) 527-3303
Florence Crittenton Home	Highland Hospital
Pregnant and Adolescent Mothers/ Residential	PRTF
Treatment	24 Bed Capacity, Coed
Level II	Kanawha County
32 Bed Capacity, 10 Infants, Females	www.highlandhosp.com
Ohio County	(304) 926-1696
https://www.crittentonwv.org/	
(304) 242-7060	
Monongalia County Youth Service Center	Yale Academy
Crisis Support	Co-occurring Disorders, Level II
8 Bed Capacity, Coed	24 Bed Capacity, Coed
Monongalia County	Marion County
www.MonCountyYouthServicesCenter.org	http://academyprograms.org/
(304) 599-2293	(304) 363-3341

Stepping Stone, Inc.	Yore Academy, Inc.
Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth Home	Co-occurring Disorders, Level II
14 Bed Capacity, Males	24 Bed Capacity, Coed
Marion County http://www.steppingstoneinc.org/	Marion County
(304) 366-8571	http://academyprograms.org/
	(304) 363-3341
Youth Academy, LLC	St. John's Home for Children
·	
Level II	Level II
22 Bed Capacity, Coed	10 Bed Capacity, Males
Marion County http://academyprograms.org/	Ohio County
(304) 363-3341	www.stjohnshomeforchildren.org/
	(304) 242-5633
Children's Home Society	Youth Service System
Arthur N. Gustke Shelter, Crisis Support	Helinski Shelter, Crisis Support
10 Bed Capacity, Coed	18 Bed Capacity, Coed
Wood County	Ohio County
http://www.childhswv.org/	www.youthservicessystem.org
(304) 424-5244	(304) 233-9627
Youth Service System	Youth Service System
Samaritan House, Crisis Support	Tuel Center, Transitional Living for Vulnerable
8 Bed Capacity, Male	Youth home
Ohio County	9 Bed Capacity, Coed
www.youthservicessystem.org	Wetzel County
(304) 233-9627	www.youthservicessystem.org
(55.) 255 552.	(304) 233-9627

Region 2 - Boone, Cabell, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Putnam, and Wayne.

Braley & Thompson	Cammack Children's Center
ACTT House Co-existing Disorders,	Level II
Level II	32 Bed Capacity, Coed
6 Bed Capacity, Males	Cabell County
Kanawha County	www.cammackchildrenscenter.org/
www.btkids.com_	(304) 523-3497
(304) 744-2155	
Daymark	Daymark
Turning Point I, Level I	Turning Point II, Level I
5 Bed Capacity, Coed	6 Bed Capacity, Coed
Kanawha County	Kanawha County
www.daymark.org	www.daymark.org
(304) 340-3675	(304) 340-3675
Pressley Ridge	Pressley Ridge
Ascend I at Grant Gardens	Grant Gardens
Level 3.5	Level III
6 Bed Capacity, Male	20 Bed Capacity, Male
Cabell County	Cabell County
www.pressleyridge.org_	www.pressleyridge.org_
(304) 743-4439	(304) 743-4439
Pressley Ridge	Golden Girls
Ascend II at Grant Gardens	Level II
Level 3.5	20 Bed Capacity, Females
6 Bed Capacity, Male	Cabell County
Cabell County	www.gggh.org
www.pressleyridge.org	(304) 453-1401
(304) 743-4439	

	2 2 5000
Golden Girls	ResCare of WV
Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth Home	Woodward I, ICF/IDD
6 Bed Capacity, Females	4 Bed Capacity, Coed
Cabell County	Kanawha County
www.gggh.org	www.rescare.com
(304) 453-1401	(304) 720-6902
River Park	River Park
Barboursville School, PRTF	B.R.I.D.G.E Program, PRTF
22 Bed Capacity, Coed	15 Bed Capacity, Coed
Cabell County	Cabell County
www.riverparkhospital.net	www.riverparkhospital.net
(304) 736-0915	(304) 526-9114
River Park	Stepping Stones
Roundtable Program, PRTF	Level II
21 Bed Capacity, Males	10 Bed Capacity, Males
Cabell County	Wayne County
www.riverparkhospital.net	www.steppingstonesinc.org/
(304) 526-9114	(304) 429-1354
Stepping Stones	Children's Home Society
Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth Home	Hovah Hall Underwood, Crisis Support
12 Bed Capacity, Males	15 Bed Capacity, Coed
Wayne County	Cabell County
www.steppingstonesinc.org	www.childhswv.org
(304) 429-2297	(304) 743-2345
1	1

Children's Home Society	Children's Home Society
Davis Child Shelter, Crisis Support	June Montgomery Harless Children's Shelter
10 Bed Capacity, Coed	Crisis Support
Kanawha County	10 Bed Capacity, Coed
www.childhswv.org	Logan County
(304) 255-0408	www.childhswv.org
	(304) 239-2470
Daymark	
Patchwork, Crisis Support	
10 Bed Capacity, Coed	
Kanawha County	
www.daymark.org	
(304) 340-3673	

Region 3 – Barbour, Berkeley, Braxton, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Harrison, Jefferson, Lewis, Mineral, Morgan, Pendleton, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur.

Burlington United Methodist Family Services (BUMFS)	BUMFS
Pathways Program, Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth Home 9 Bed Capacity, Coed program Mineral County www.bumfs.org (304) 289-6010	Mill Meadows, Level II 7 Bed Capacity, Males Mineral County www.bumfs.org (304) 289-6010
BUMFS Brenda's House, Level III 10 Bed Capacity, Coed program Mineral County	BUMFS Rees Headlee and Kitzmiller Cottages Level III 20 Bed Capacity, Coed

	T
www.bumfs.org	Mineral County
(304) 289-6010	www.bumfs.org
	(304) 289-6010
BUMFS	Elkins Mountain School
Keyser Group Home	Residential Intensive Treatment
7 Bed Capacity, Females	40 Bed Capacity, Males
Mineral County	Randolph County
www.bumfs.org	www.emtns.org
(304) 289-6010	(304) 637-8000
Potomac Center	Home Base
Main Campus, IDD/ICF	Level II
24 Bed Capacity, Coed	5 Bed Capacity, Males
Hampshire County	Upshur County
www.potomaccenter.com	www.homebaseinc.org
(304) 822-3861	(304) 746-2918
Elkins Mountain School	Home Base
Oak Ridge Program, Residential Intensive Treatment	Level II
10 Bed Capacity, Males	5 Bed Capacity, Males
Randolph County	Lewis County
www.emtns.org	www.homebaseinc.org
(304) 637-7400	(304) 746-2918
WV Children's Home	ResCare of WV
Level II	Terra Alta Children's Home, IDD/ICF
10 Bed Capacity, Coed	5 Bed Capacity, Coed
Randolph County	Preston County
www.humanservices.wv.gov	www.rescare.com

(304) 637-0278	(304) 789-5873
Genesis Youth Crisis Center, INC	Genesis Ridgeline Children's Shelter
Alta Vista Shelter, Crisis Support	Crisis Support
10 Bed Capacity, Coed	25 Bed Capacity, Coed
Harrison County	Harrison County
www.genesiswv.org	www.genesiswv.org
(304) 622-1907	(304) 709-7020
Genesis Emergency Crisis Center	Genesis Diagnostic
Crisis Support	Diagnostic
15 Bed Capacity, Coed	10 Bed Capacity, Coed
Harrison County	Harrison County
www.genesiswv.org	www.genesiswv.org
(304) 622-1907	(304) 709.7020

Region 4 - Fayette, Greenbrier, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming.

BUMFS
Beckley Center, Level II
10 Bed Facility, Males
Raleigh County
www.bumfs.org
(304) 252-8508
Davis-Stuart

Daniels Co-existing Disorders Home, Level II 8 Bed Capacity, Coed Raleigh County www.bumfs.org (304) 720-1904	Lewisburg Group Home, Level II 44 Bed Capacity, Coed Greenbrier County www.davis-stuart.org (304) 647-5577
Davis-Stuart Alicia McCormick House, Level I 8 Bed Capacity, Females Greenbrier County www.davis-stuart.org (304) 497-3544 Greenbrier Valley Children's Home 14 Bed Capacity, Coed Greenbrier County www.childhswv.org (304) 645-1302	Davis-Stuart Princeton Group Home, Level I 8 Bed Capacity, Males Mercer County www.davis-stuart.org (304) 425-6835 New River Ranch Level I 26 Bed Capacity, Coed Fayette County www.newriverranch.org (304) 574-1058
Children's Home Society Faltis Shelter, Crisis Support 14 Bed Capacity, Coed Nicholas County www.childhswv.org (304) 872-8190	Children's Home Society Southern WV Exceptional Youth Emergency Shelter, Crisis Support 5 Bed Capacity, Coed Raleigh County www.childhswv.org (304) 255-0408