



# NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE

## Status Update on LFC Juvenile Justice Report

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November 6, 2025

# Overview

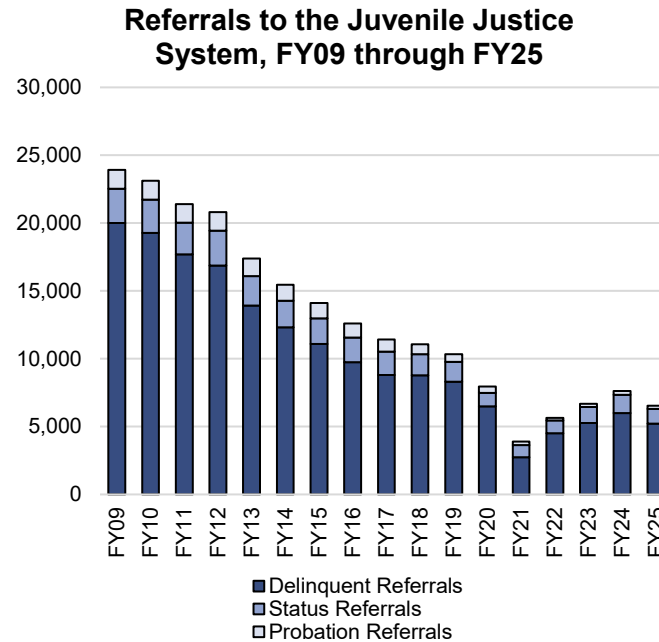
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- LFC staff will publish and present a full policy spotlight report about juvenile justice later this month during the November LFC hearing.
- At the request of the chair, this presentation provides a status update on the report and juvenile justice trends.
- The full report will be provided after it is presented to LFC and publicly posted online.
- Today's presentation will go over information and trends related to two questions:
  - 1.) What is happening in juvenile crime?
  - 2.) How is the New Mexico juvenile justice system responding to what's happening?



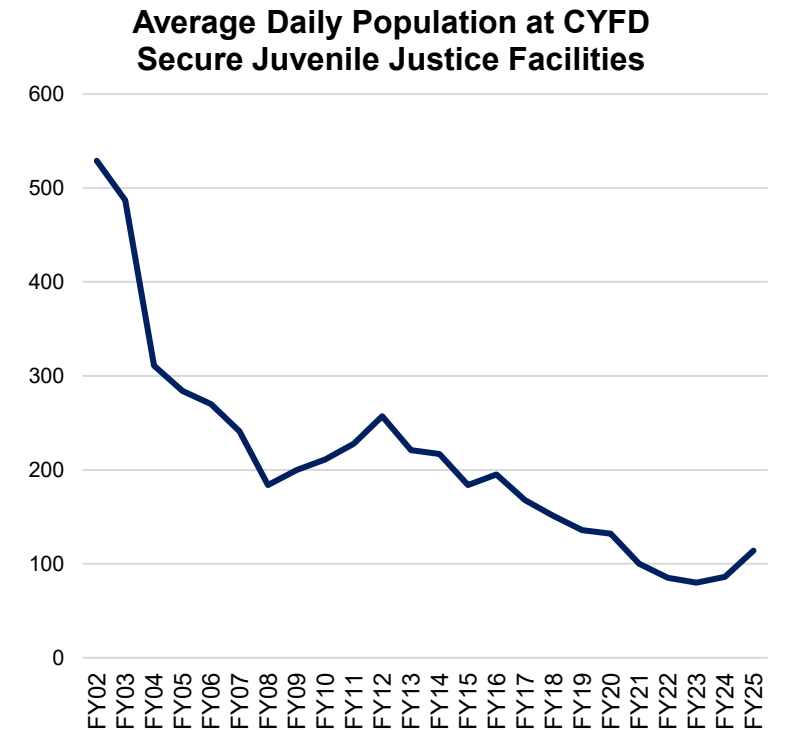
# Previous LFC Reports on Juvenile Justice.

- LFC program evaluators have previously conducted five reviews of the state’s juvenile justice system in 2004, 2006, 2016, 2018, and 2023.
- These reports consistently noted how New Mexico’s juvenile justice reforms during the 2000s were grounded in research.
- Previous LFC reports documented steadily decreasing juvenile justice populations and recommended re-directing facility cost savings toward building up prevention and treatment services.



Note: FY25 data is missing the last three months due to data availability. Exact data before FY09 is limited but past LFC reports indicate referrals were over 20 thousand in early 2000s.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

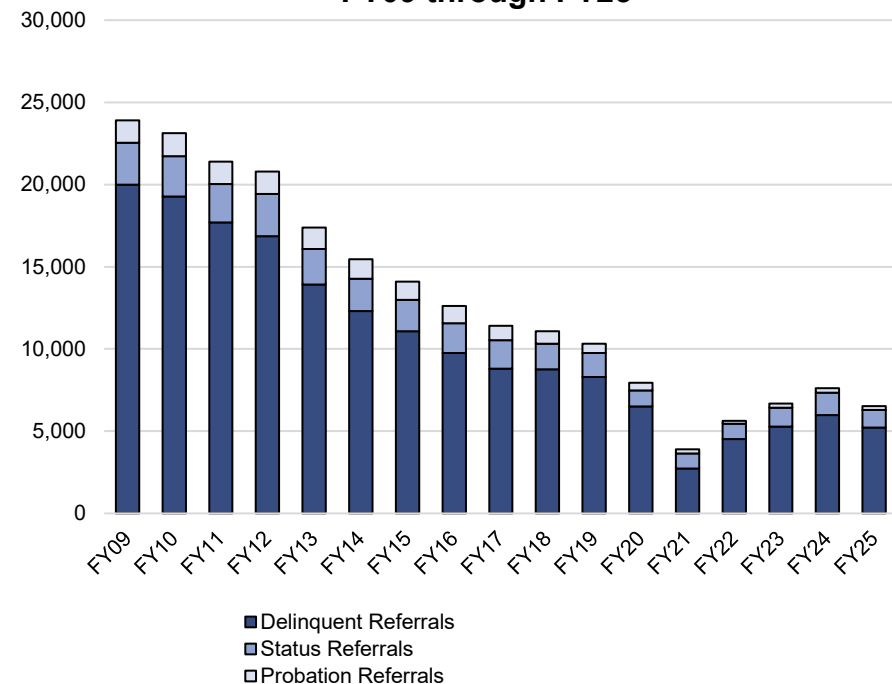


What is happening in juvenile crime?

# Trends in Reports of Juvenile Crime

- Reports of juvenile crime (referrals) to the juvenile justice system steadily decreased, reached a low point in FY21 during the pandemic, and recently increased since the pandemic.
- New Mexico's trends in juvenile justice mirror national juvenile justice trends.
- Despite recent increases, delinquency referrals are over 30 percent below FY19 pre-pandemic levels.

Referrals to the Juvenile Justice System, FY09 through FY25



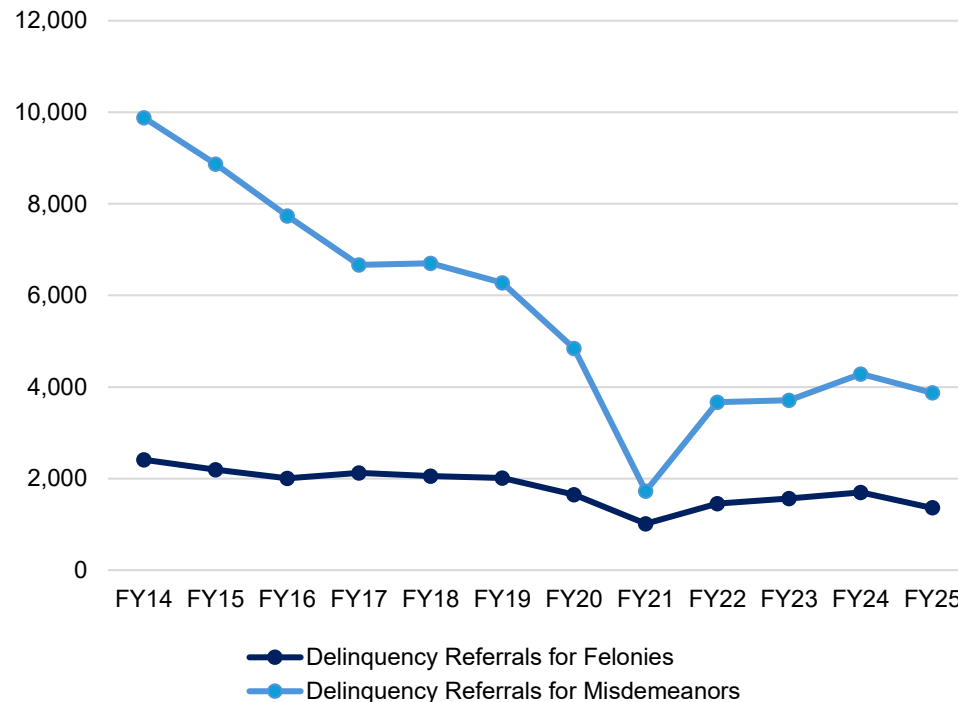
Note: FY25 data is missing the last three months due to data availability. Exact data before FY09 is limited but past LFC reports indicate referrals were over 20 thousand in early 2000s.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



# Most Juvenile Justice Referrals are for Lower Level Offenses

**Delinquency Referrals to the Juvenile Justice System by Highest Charge, FY14-FY25**



Note: FY25 data does not include the last three months due to data availability.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

**Top Charges for Juvenile Delinquency Referrals, FY14 through FY25**

Charge Type	Charge	Number of Charges	Percent of Total
Top Five Juvenile Misdemeanor Charges	Battery	12,023	9%
	Use or Possession of Drug Paraphernalia	9,303	7%
	Shoplifting (\$250 or less)	7,478	5%
	Battery (Household Member)	7,323	5%
	Public Affray (Fighting)	6,618	5%
<b>Top Five Misdemeanor Charges</b>		<b>42,745</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Total Misdemeanor Charges</b>		<b>102,391</b>	<b>75%</b>
Top Five Juvenile Felony Charges	Aggravated Assault (Deadly Weapon)	2,063	2%
	Unlawful Carrying of a Deadly Weapon on School Premises	1,645	1%
	Criminal Damage to Property (Over \$1000)	1,553	1%
	Burglary (Automobile)	1,487	1%
	Battery Upon a Peace Officer	1,317	1%
	<b>Top Five Felony Charges</b>		<b>8,065</b>
<b>Total Felony Charges</b>		<b>34,333</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Total Charges</b>		<b>136,724</b>	<b>100%</b>

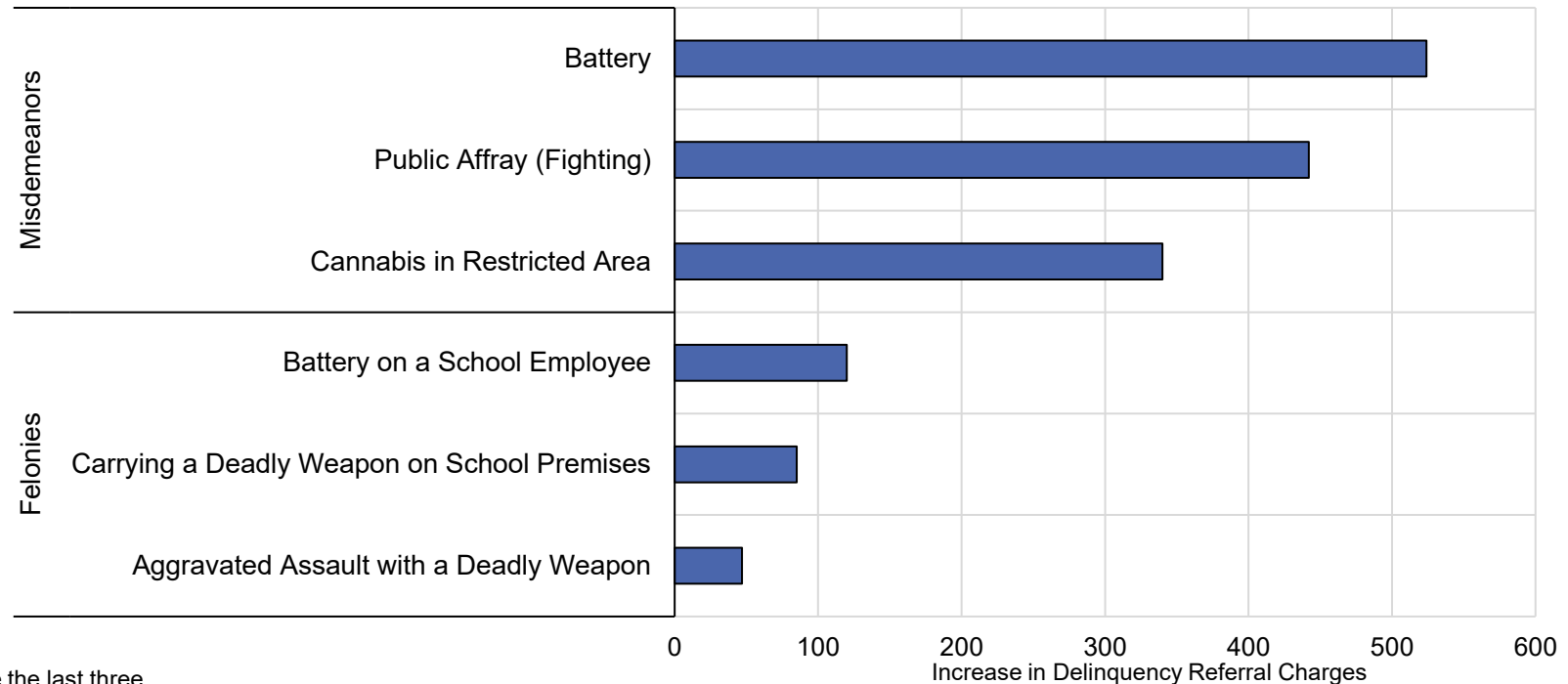
Notes: The last three months of data from FY25 were not provided by CYFD due to data availability. A single referral to the juvenile justice system can include multiple charges.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



# Charges with the largest increases since the pandemic.

Misdemeanor and Felony Charges in New Mexico Delinquency Referrals with the Largest Increases From FY21 Pandemic Low Point to FY25



Note: FY25 data does not include the last three months due to data availability.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



How is the New Mexico juvenile justice system responding to what's happening?



# Research

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- Research indicates therapeutic interventions, diverting low risk juveniles away from incarceration, and making incarceration more rehabilitative are ways to reduce juvenile delinquency and recidivism.

## Overview of Research Findings on the Effectiveness of Different Juvenile Interventions

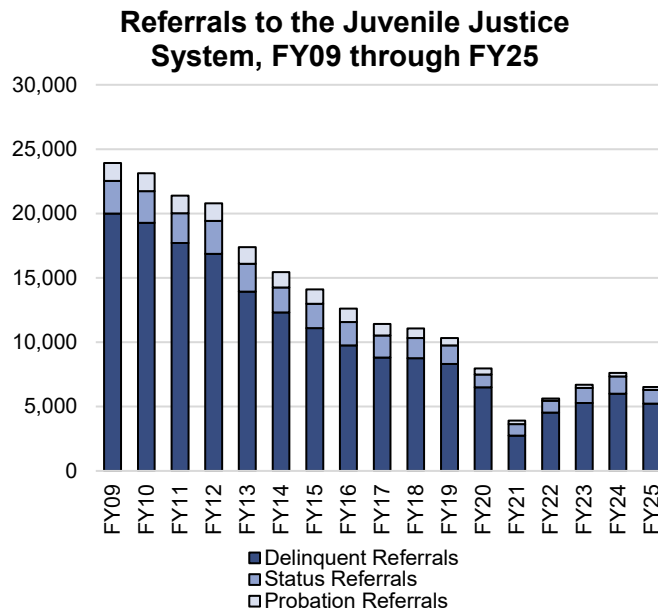
Intervention	Effectiveness at Reducing Juvenile Crime
Juvenile incarceration (commitment/detention).	Ineffective at reducing recidivism and associated with increased recidivism.
Diverting youth away from judicial system to punitive programs (scared straight or boot camp programs).	Ineffective at reducing recidivism and associated with increased recidivism.
Diverting youth away from court system to therapeutic interventions (counseling, skills building, mentoring, victim-offender mediation).	Effective at reducing recidivism, but effectiveness varies based on intervention and target population.
Therapeutic interventions for incarcerated juveniles.	Effective at reducing recidivism, but effectiveness varies based on intervention, program quality, and population.
Early social skills and self-control training to prevent antisocial behavior in children.	Effective at reducing future delinquent or antisocial behaviors.

Source: LFC review of research studies.



# New Mexico Reforms in 2000s

- New Mexico implemented two sets of evidence-based, data-driven juvenile justice reforms in the early- and mid-2000s: (1) diverting more low-risk youth away from the justice system and (2) making CYFD facilities for high-risk youth more rehabilitative (“Cambiar” initiative inspired by the Missouri Model).



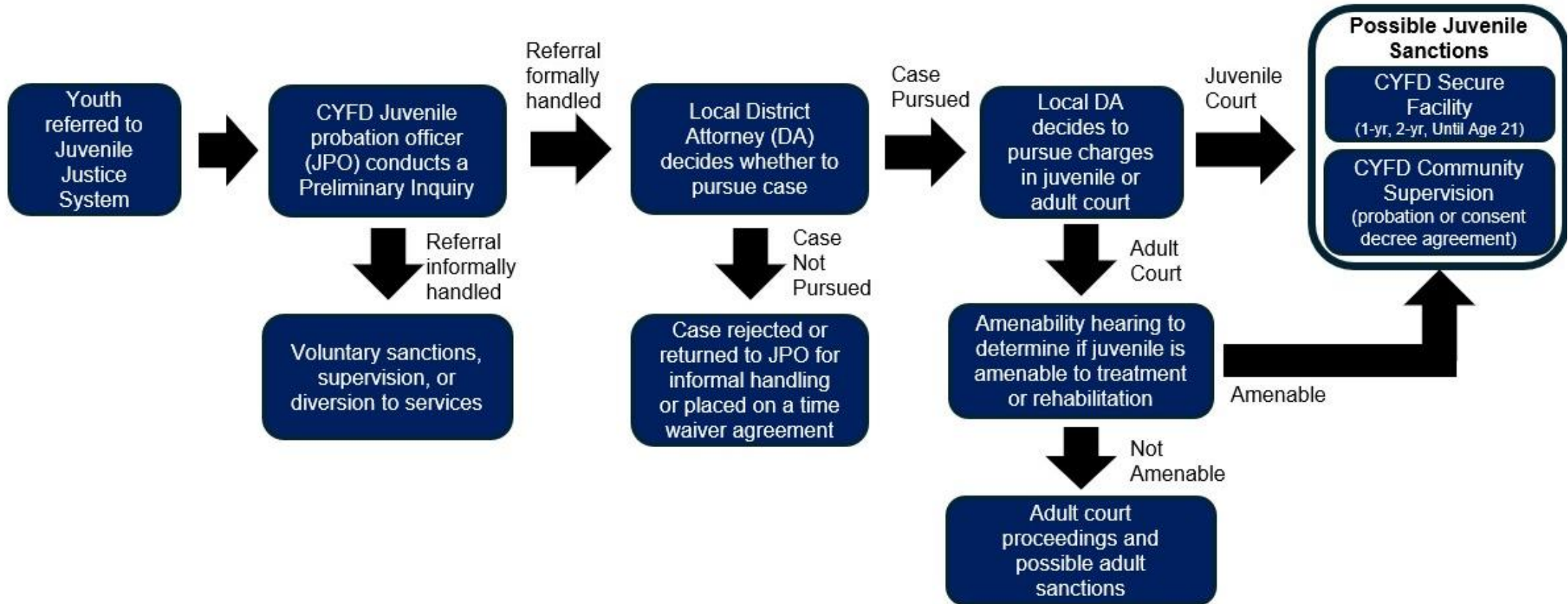
Note: FY25 data is missing the last three months due to data availability. Exact data before FY09 is limited but past LFC reports indicate referrals were over 20 thousand in early 2000s.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

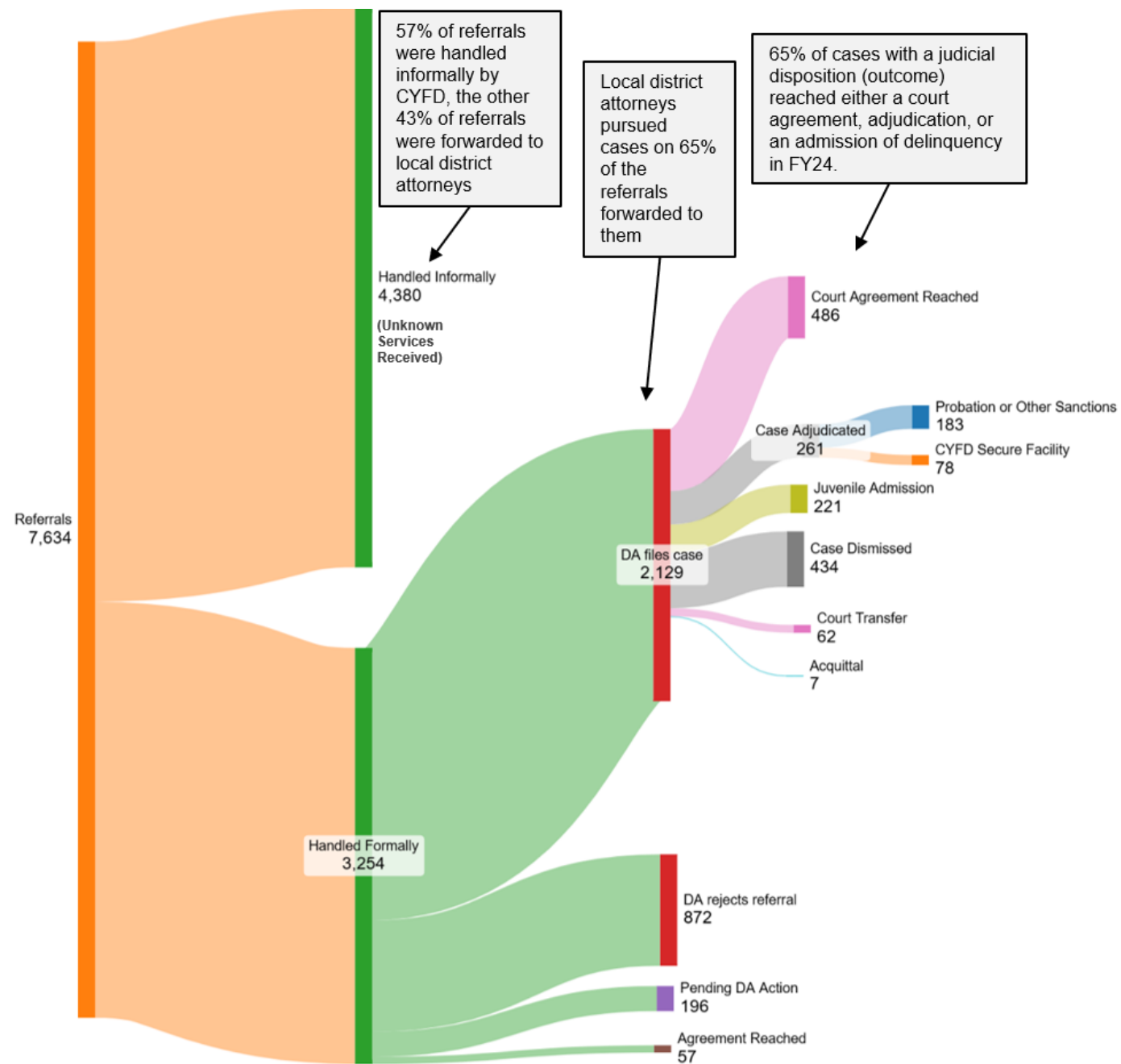
**Remodeling at John Paul Taylor Center CYFD Juvenile Secure Facility in Response to New Mexico’s “Cambiar” Initiative**



The juvenile justice process is a multi-stage process where CYFD staff, district attorneys, and courts make decisions on how to handle juveniles.



# Flow Chart on Outcomes of FY24 Juvenile Referrals to CYFD and Court System

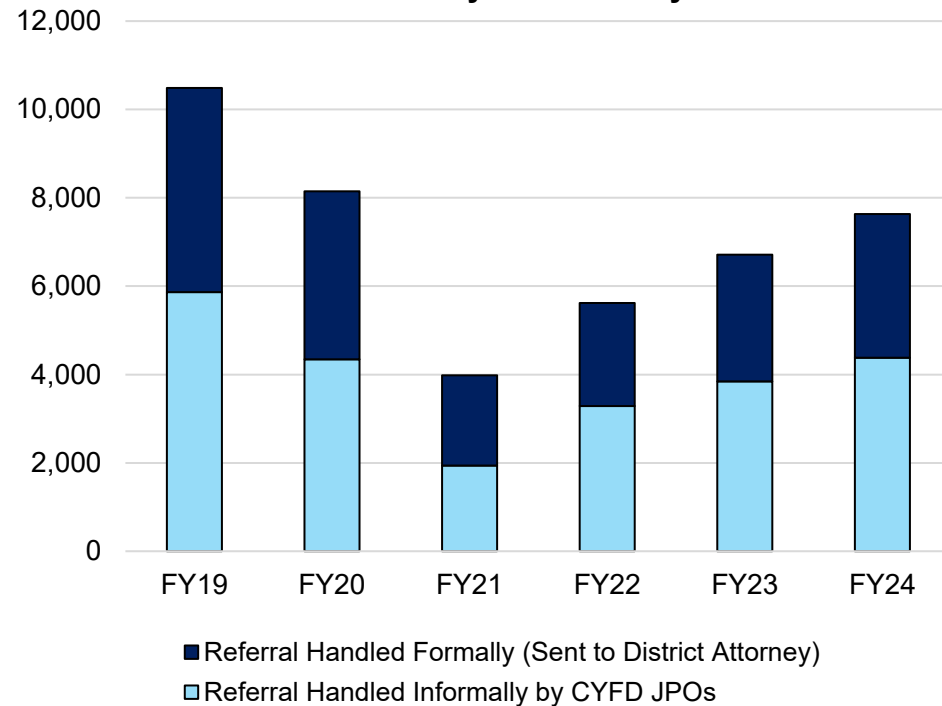


Source: LFC analysis of CYFD and AOC data.



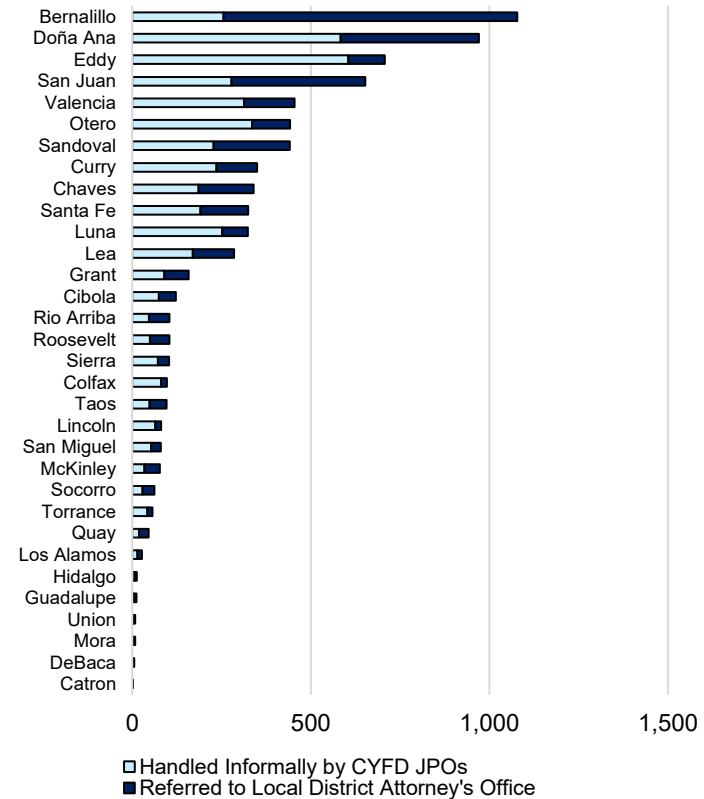
A majority of juvenile justice referrals are handled informally by CYFD Juvenile Probation Officers. Only referrals for lower level offenses can be handled informally.

Referrals to the Juvenile Justice System Handled Formally or Informally



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

Juvenile Justice Referrals Handled Informally and Formally, FY24 (n = 7,634 Referrals)

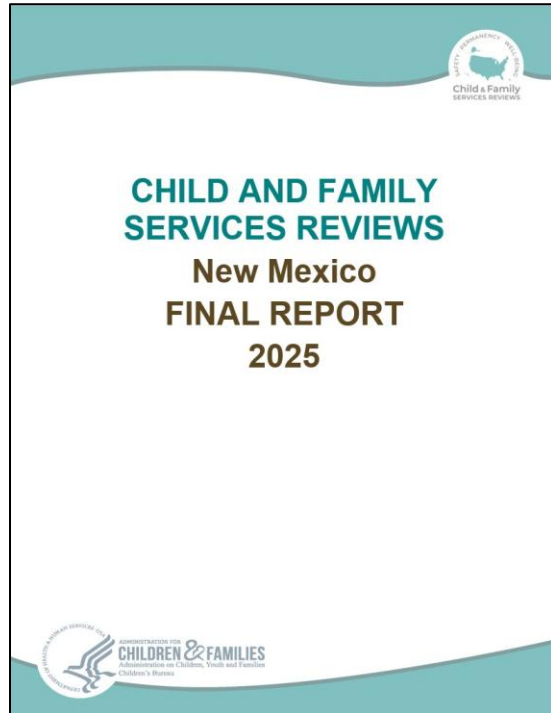


Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

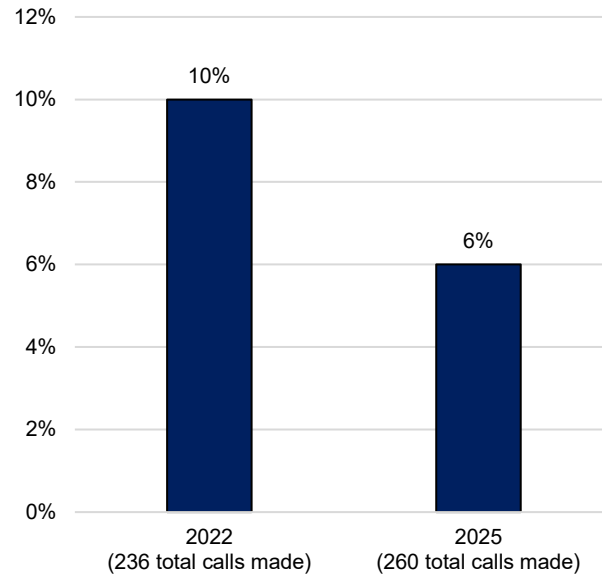


As the state diverts low risk juvenile referrals, New Mexico has documented gaps and declines in its behavioral health and treatment services. This means the state lacks enough services to divert juveniles to.

Child and Family Service Review of New Mexico, 2025

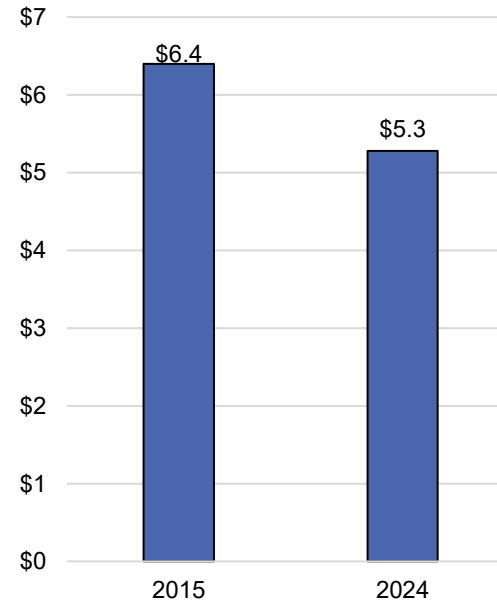


Percent of calls to New Mexico Medicaid Behavioral Health Providers Resulting in an Appointment Being Offered



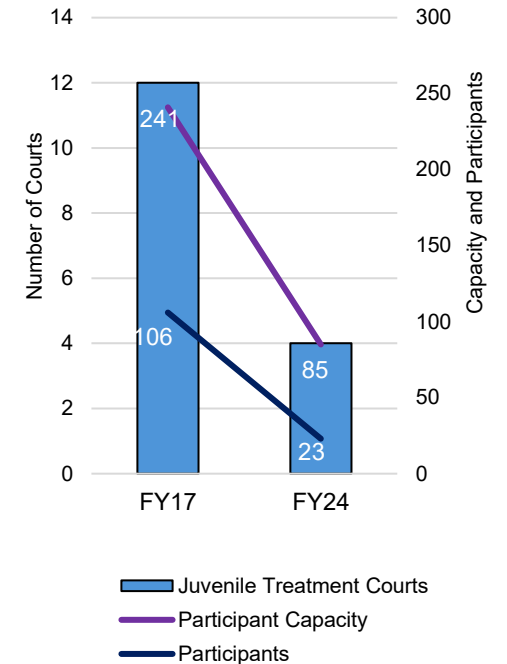
Source: LFC staff Medicaid secret shopper surveys.

New Mexico Medicaid Spending on Multisystemic Therapy (MST) for Youth, CY24 (in millions)



Source: LFC analysis of Medicaid data.

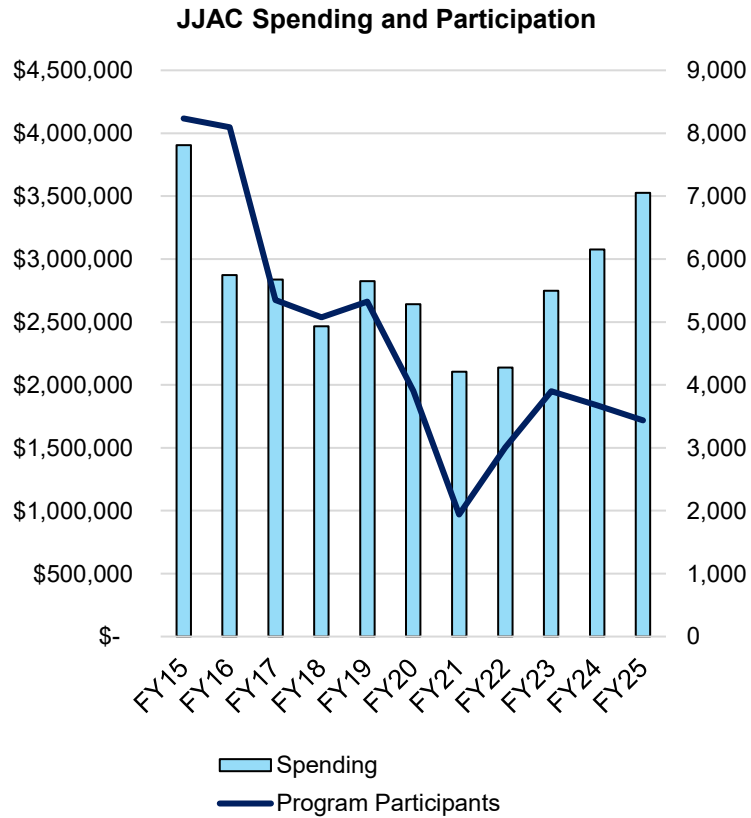
Number of Juvenile Treatment Courts and Capacity



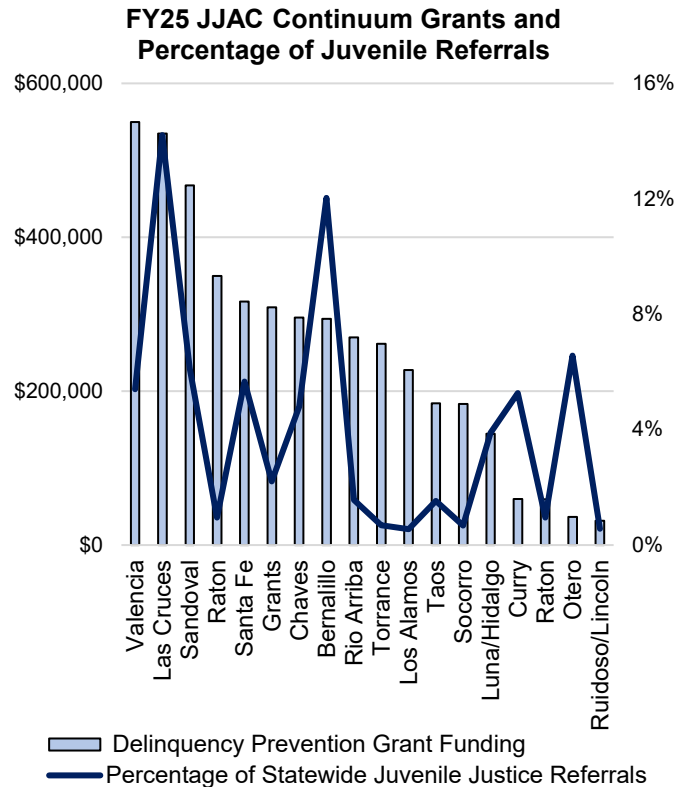
Source: LFC analysis of Administrative Office of the Courts data.



The state funds delinquency prevention grants through the state Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) but participation has decreased, funds are not targeted to where the most referrals occur, and local communities do not fully leverage grant funds.



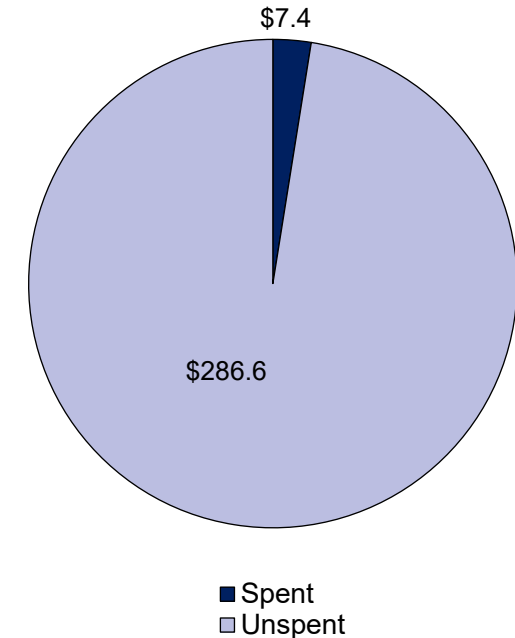
Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



Note: Referral data for FY25 does not include the last three months due to data availability.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

### Bernalillo County's FY25 Delinquency Prevention Grant Funding from JJAC (in thousands)

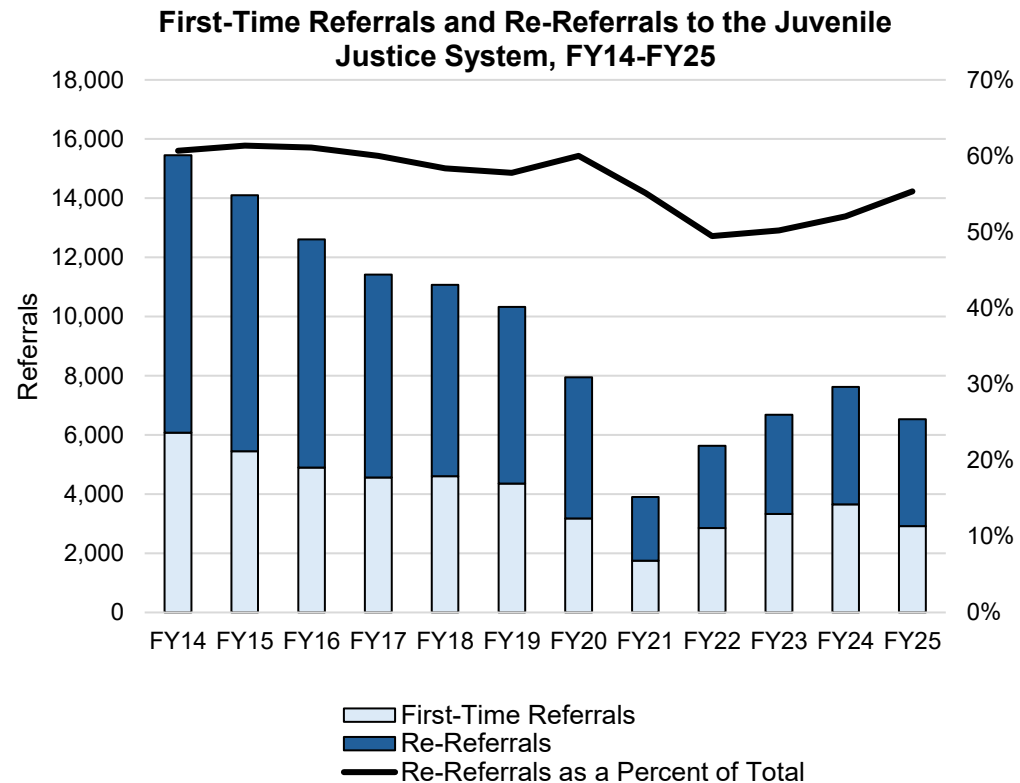


Source: LFC review of CYFD documentation.





As the state diverts most juvenile justice referrals to unknown services and is lacking behavioral health services, many youth are re-referred back to the juvenile justice system



Note: FY25 data does not include the last three months due to data availability.

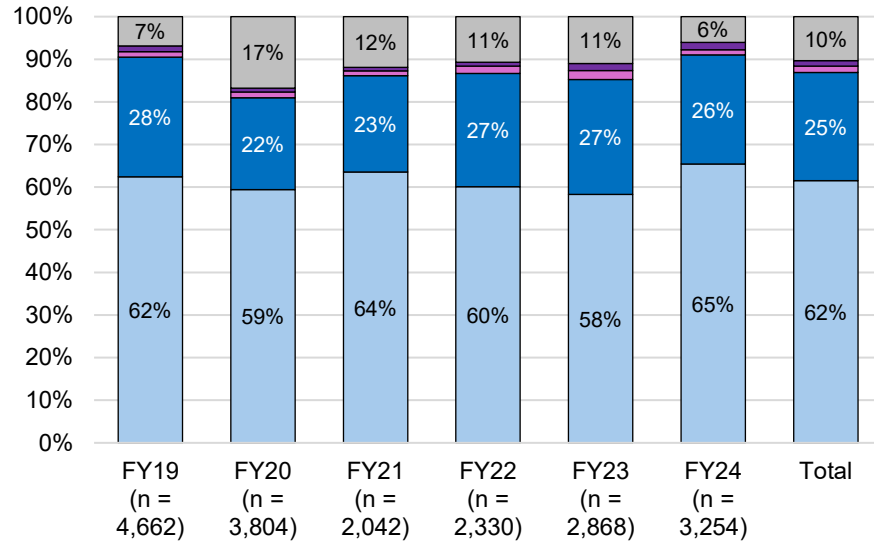
Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.





District attorneys file court cases on roughly two-thirds of juvenile justice referrals forwarded to them by CYFD and decline to pursue a quarter of juvenile justice referrals in court.

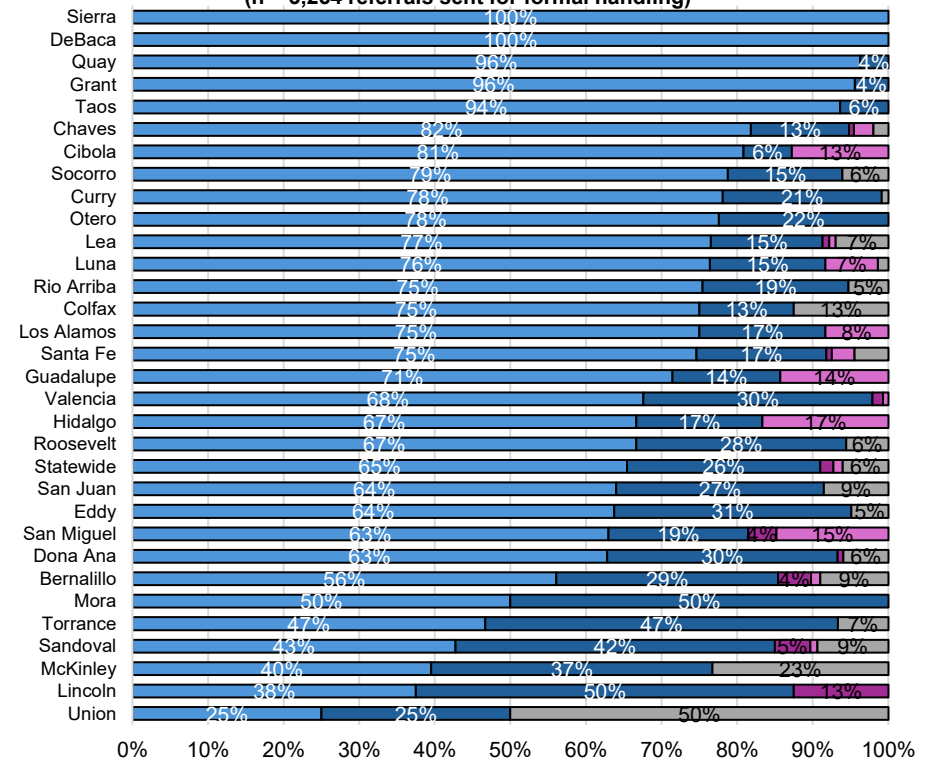
**District Attorney Decisions on Juvenile Referrals for Formal Handling**



- Pending
- Plea Bargain or Time Waiver
- DA Returns Referral to JPO for Informal Services
- DA Rejects Referral
- DA Files Referral in Court

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

**District Attorney Office Decisions on Juvenile Referrals Forwarded by CYFD Juvenile Probation Officers by County, FY24 (n = 3,254 referrals sent for formal handling)**

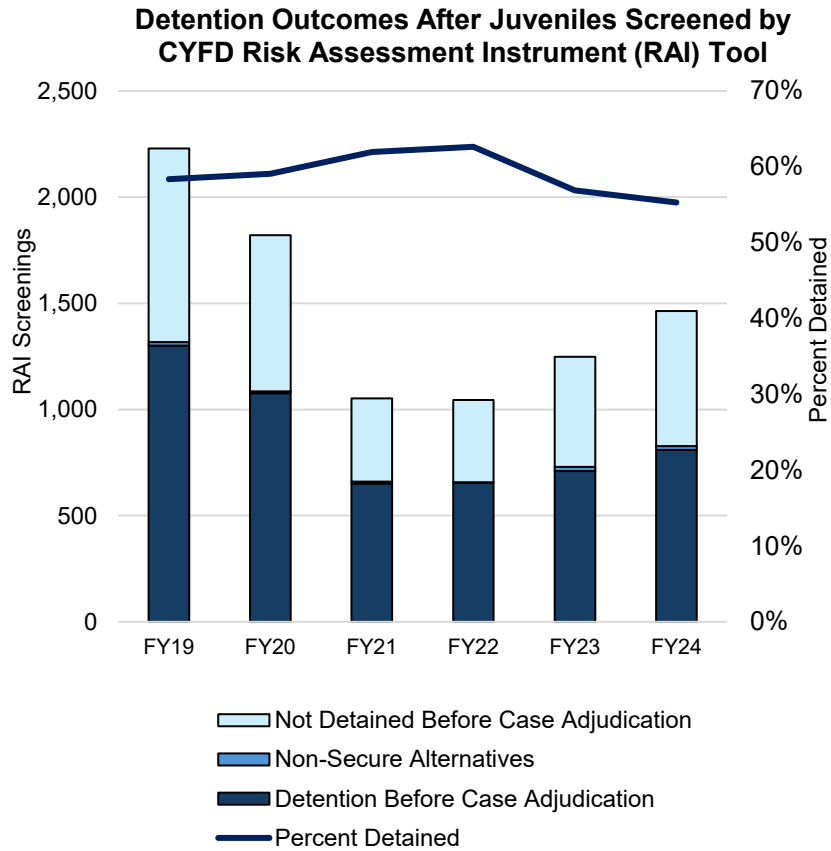


- DA Files Case in Court
- DA Rejects Referral
- Plea Bargain or Time Waiver
- DA Returns Referral to JPO for Informal Services

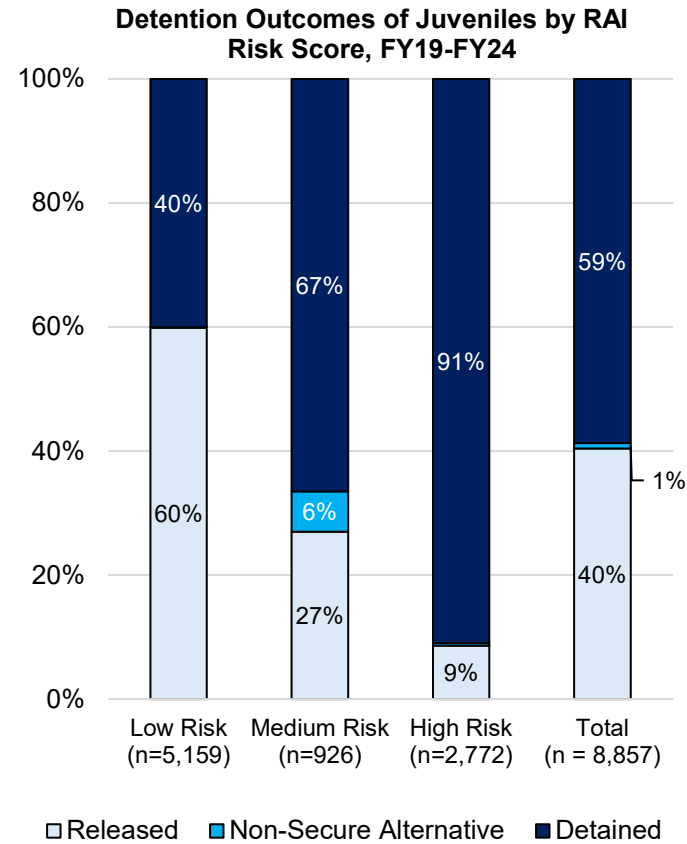
Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



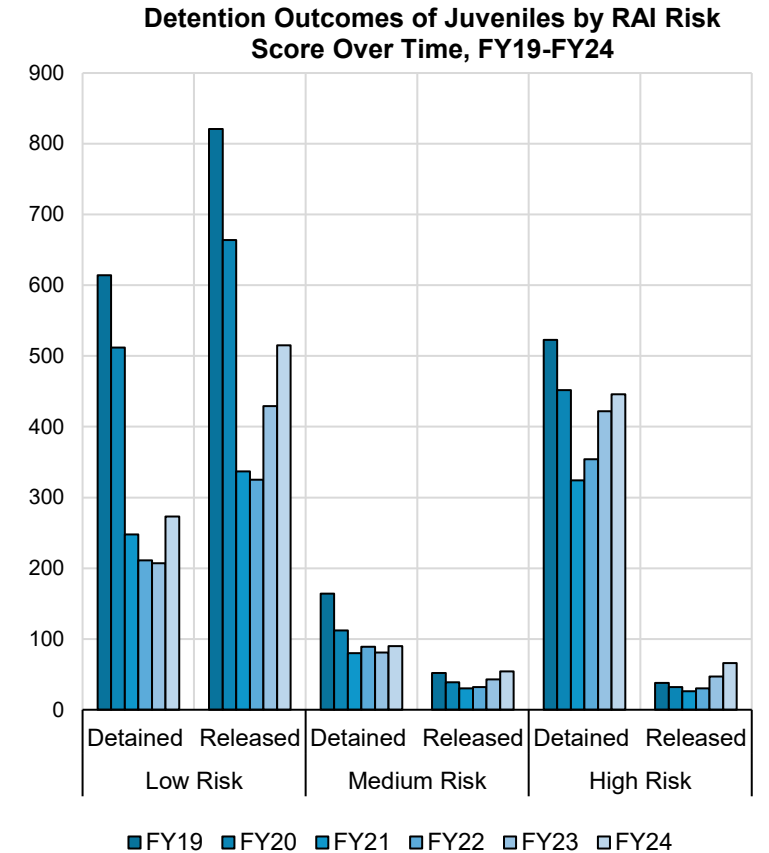
# State law requires CYFD to use a risk assessment instrument (RAI) to determine if a youth is enough of a risk to detain in a county juvenile detention center before legal proceedings.



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

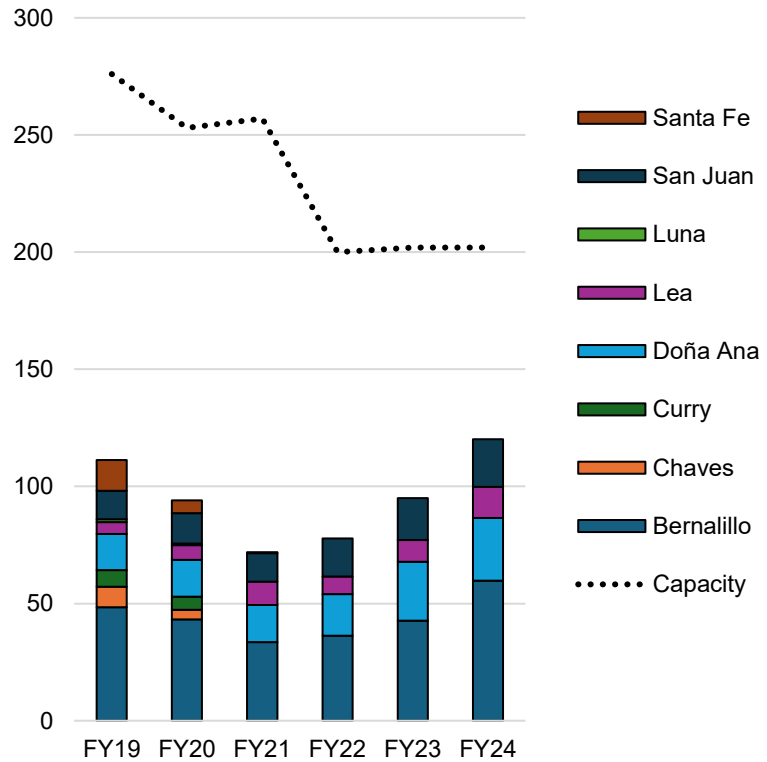


Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



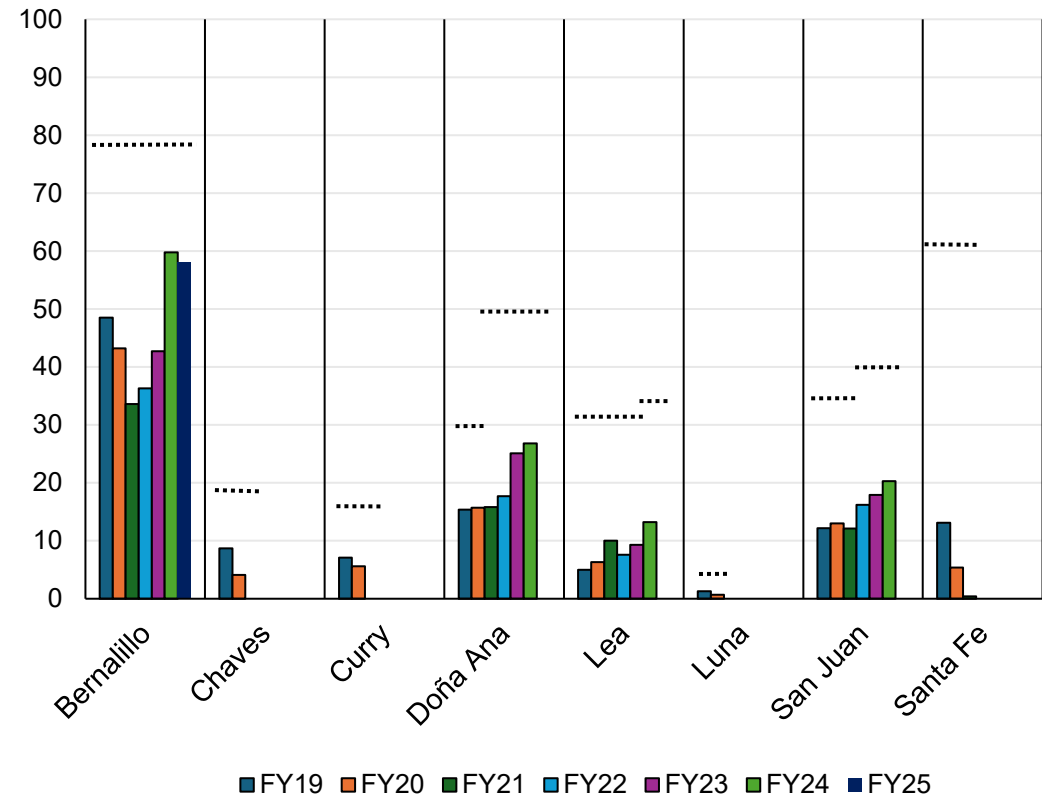
County juvenile detention centers hold youth prior to legal proceedings and have excess physical bed capacity. Recent capacity pressures are primarily due to limited staffing and federal staff-to-juvenile ratios.

**Total Bed Capacity and Average Daily Population at County Juvenile Detention Centers**



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

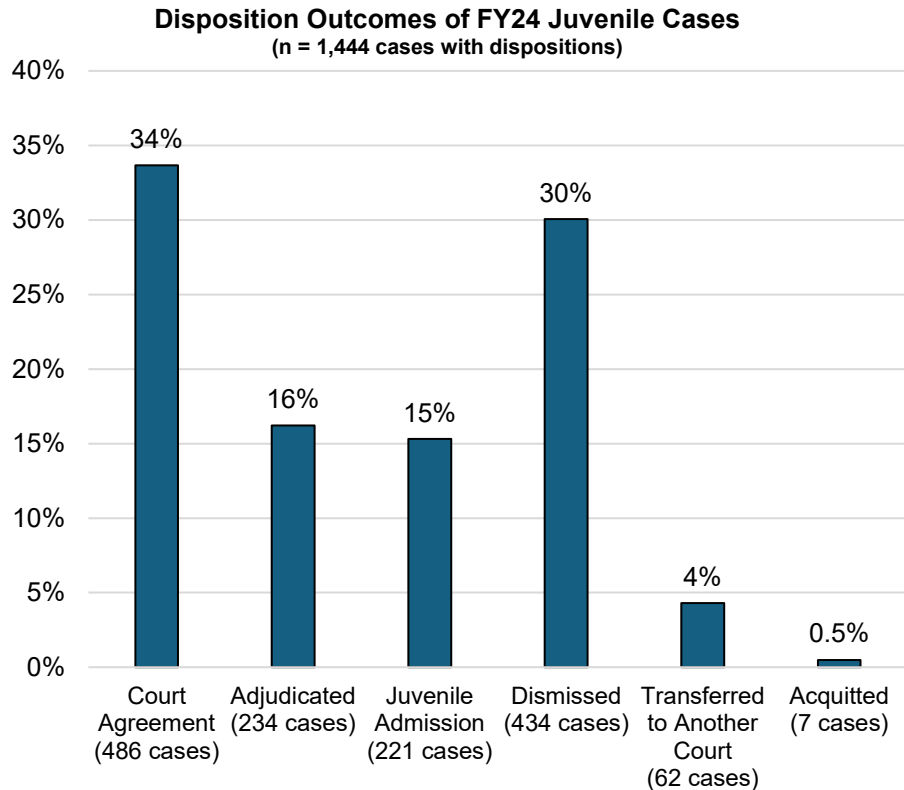
**Bed Capacity and Average Daily Population at County Juvenile Detention Centers**



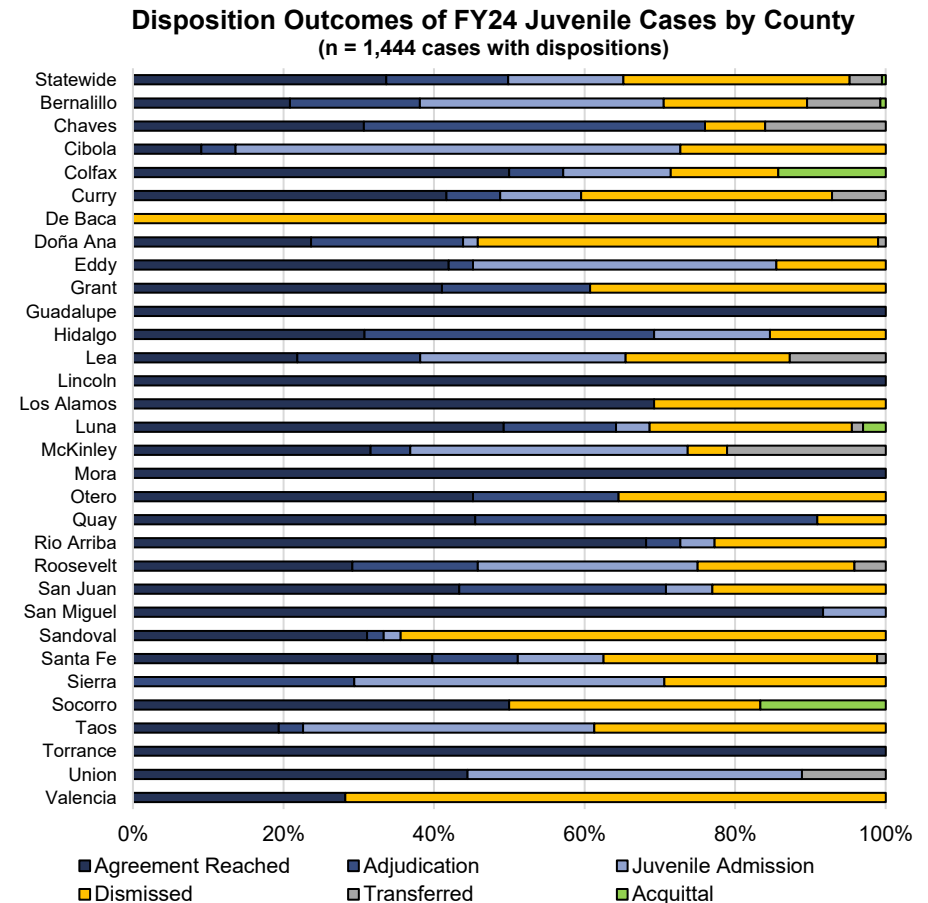
Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



Roughly two-thirds of juvenile cases filed in court result in a court agreement, adjudication, or admission of delinquency.



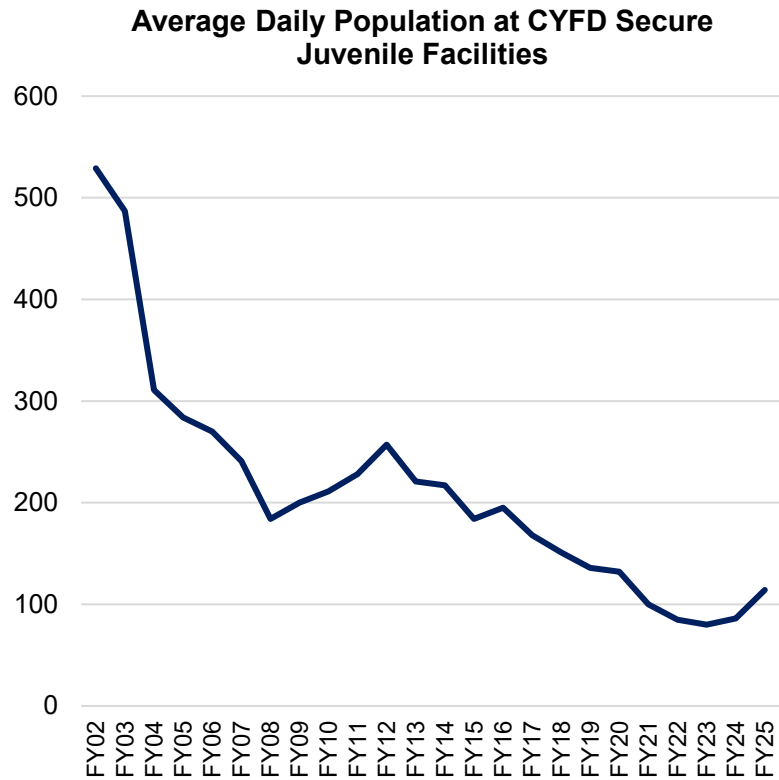
Source: LFC analysis of Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) data.



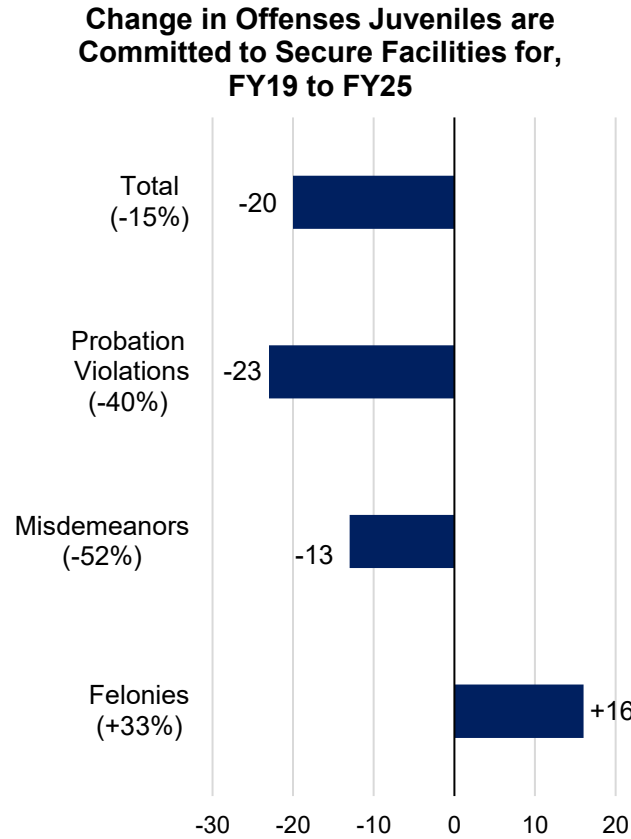
Source: LFC analysis of AOC data.



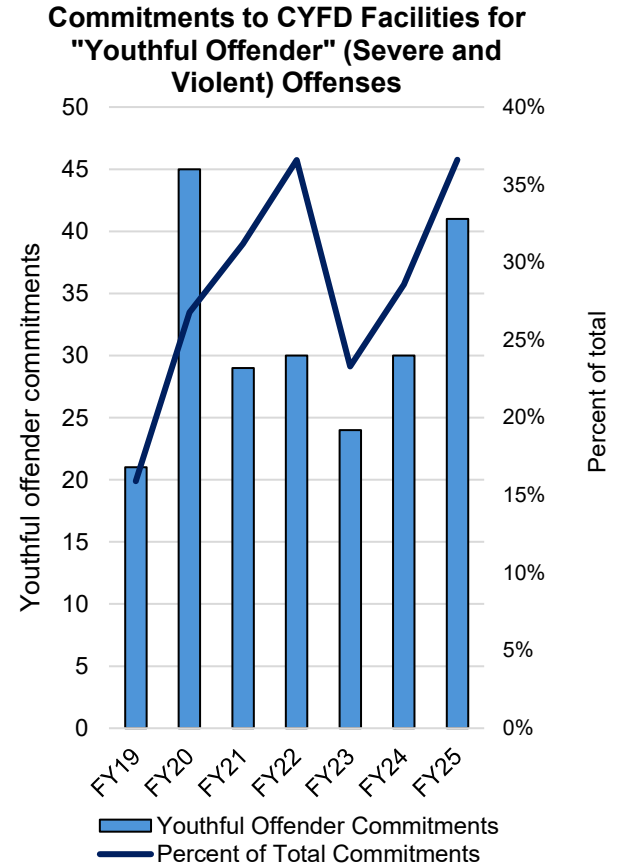
Aligned with best practice, fewer youth are being sentenced to CYFD secure facilities for probation violations or misdemeanors than in the past. New Mexico is reserving secure confinement for juveniles committing more severe offenses.



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



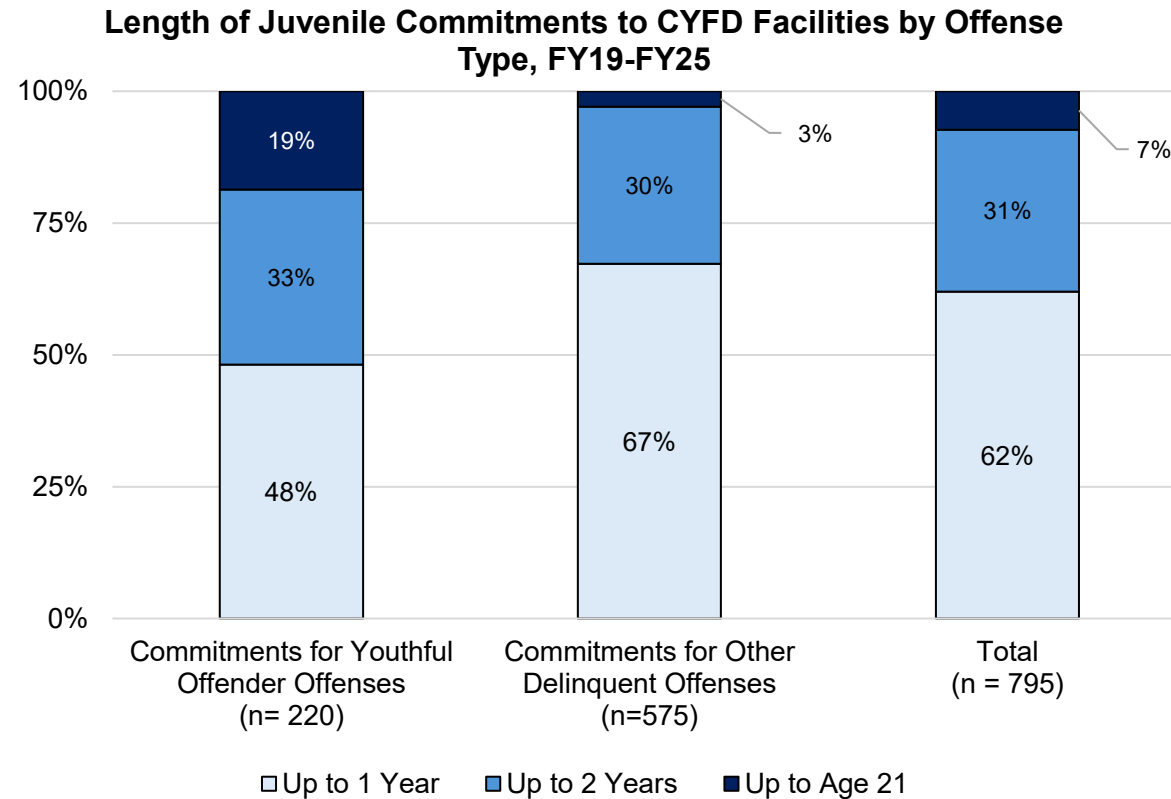
Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



The majority of juvenile commitments (sentences) to CYFD secure facilities are for one year, but commitments for more severe youthful offender offenses are often longer than one year

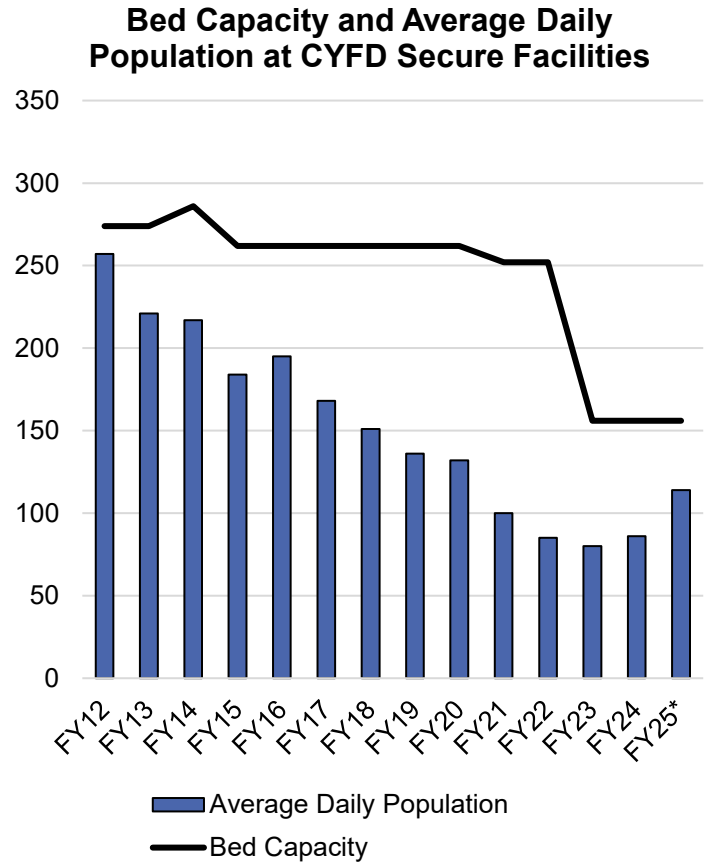


Note: A juvenile can be committed for multiple offenses.  
 Some delinquent offenses can be committed up to age 21 if the juvenile was also committed for a youthful offender offense.

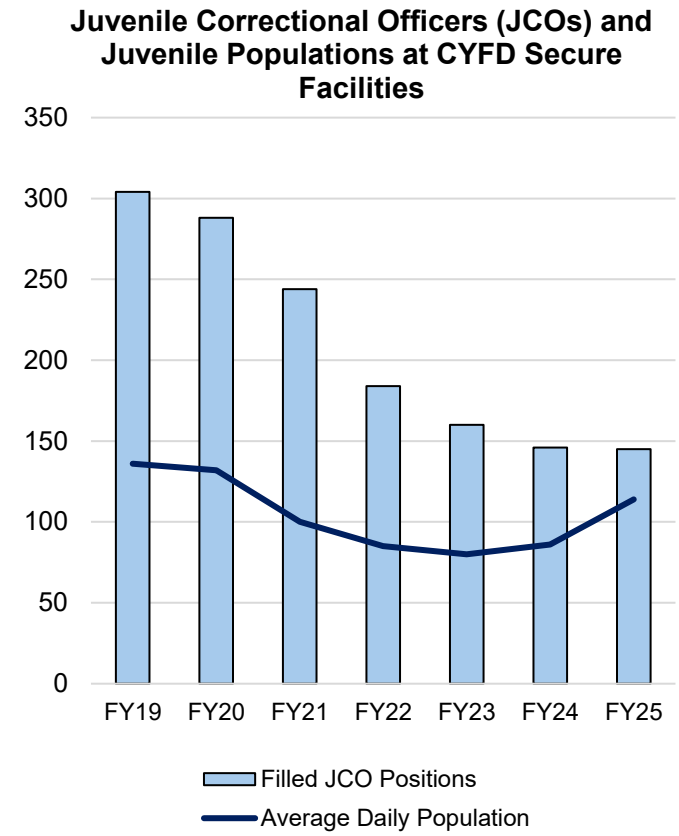
Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



# CYFD secure facilities are not staffed up to fully use existing bed capacity and facility space.



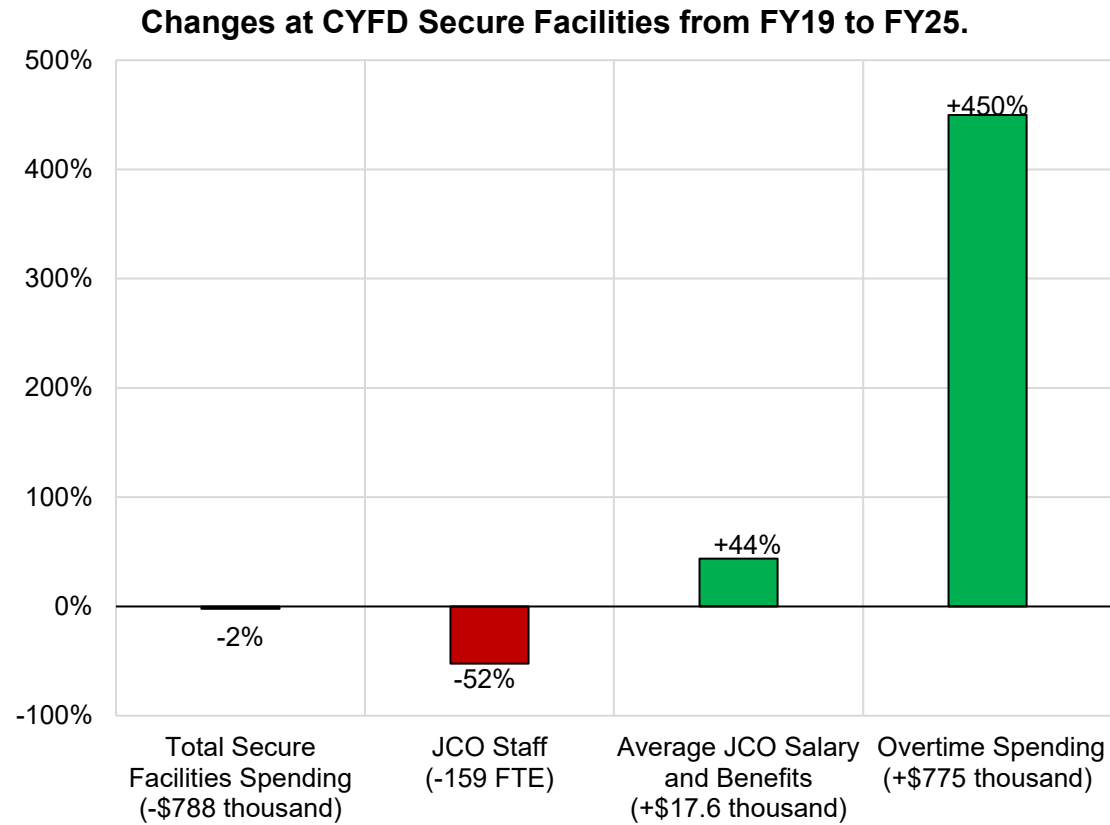
Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



Source: LFC analysis of State Personnel Office (SPO) and CYFD data.



CYFD's secure facilities spending has stayed relatively flat even with decreased staffing because of raises and overtime increases.

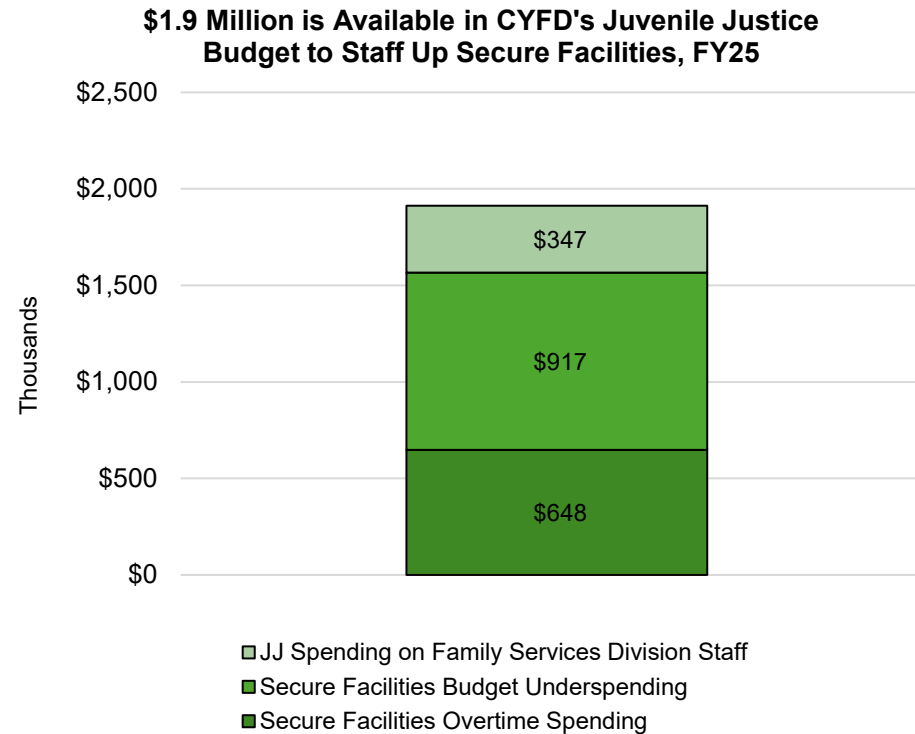


Source: LFC analysis of CYFD and SPO data.





There is at least \$1.9 million in CYFD's current juvenile justice budget available to help staff up secure facilities by an additional 32 juvenile correctional officers .

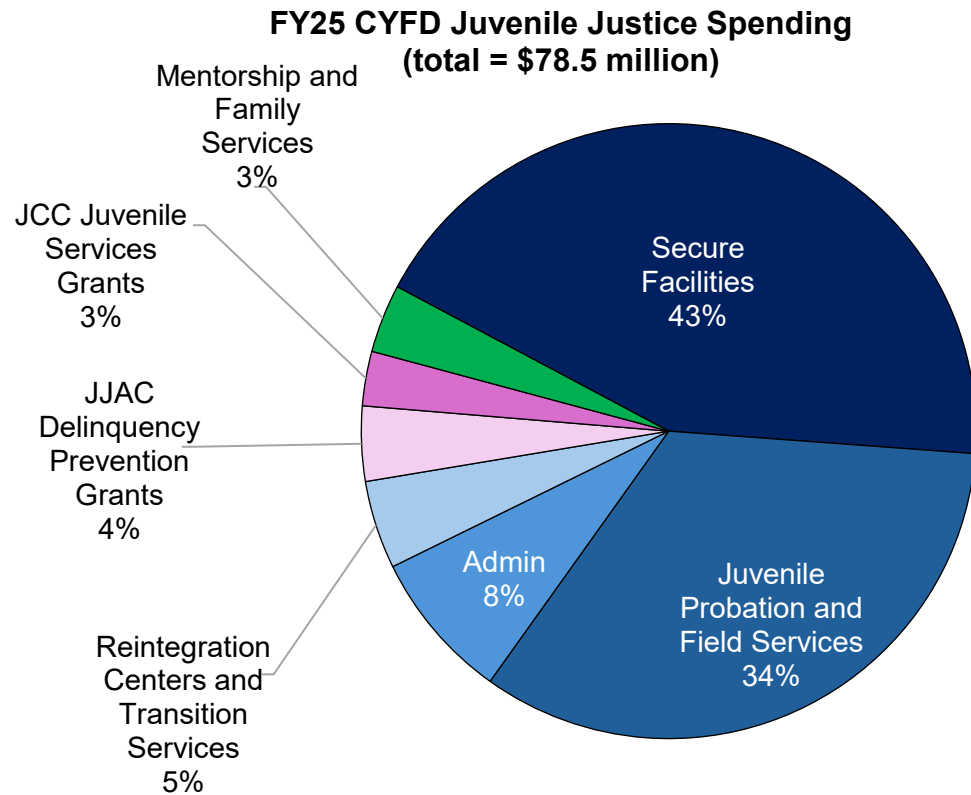


Note: Actual spending on overtime was \$948K in FY25, but this assumes CYFD will need \$300K for overtime costs.

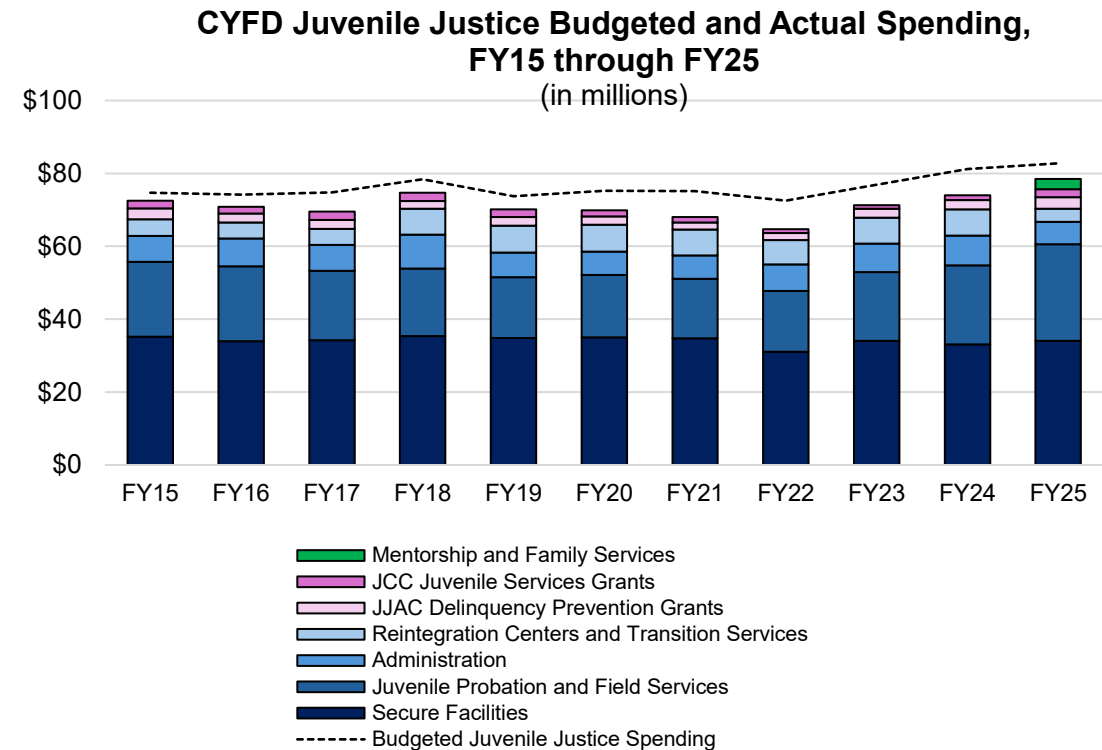
Source: LFC analysis of SHARE and SPO data.



# Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) juvenile justice spending is primarily on secure facilities and juvenile probation and parole offices.



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



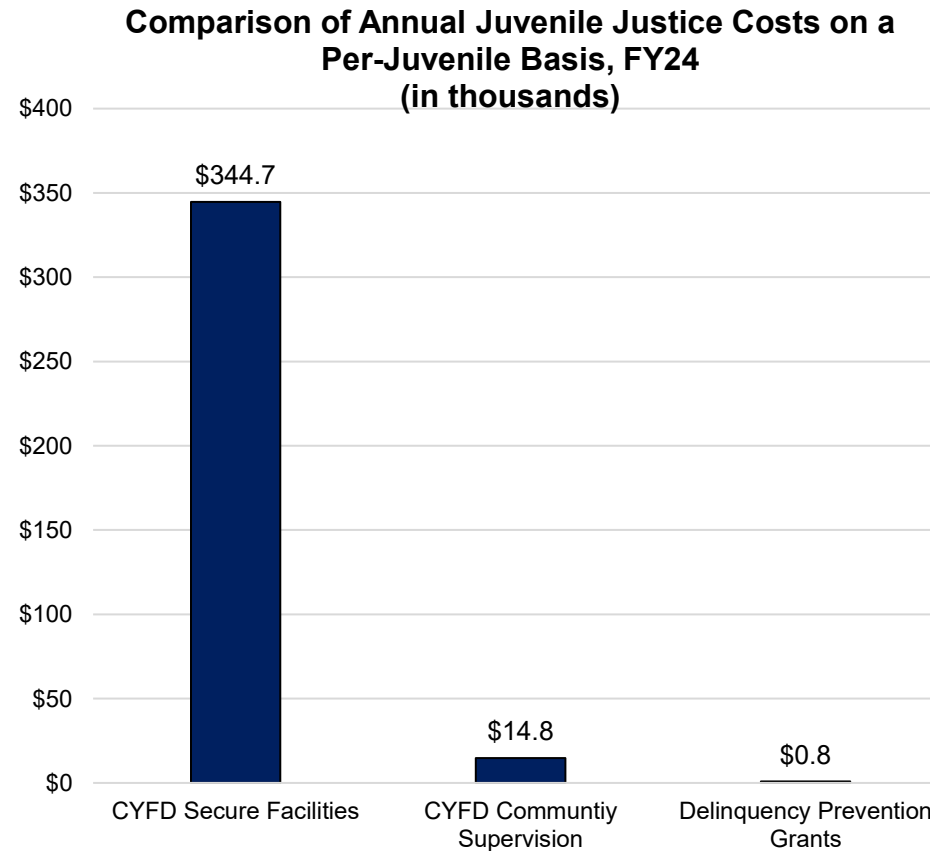
Note: Mentorship services was not reported out as its own spending category until FY25 but was previously in the juvenile justice budget. FY25 spending on family services division personnel was not previously in juvenile justice spending.

Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



## On a per-juvenile basis, placing a juvenile in a secure facility is more expensive than community supervision or delinquency prevention programming

A single two-year commitment of a juvenile to a CYFD secure facility costs the taxpayer roughly \$690 thousand.



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.



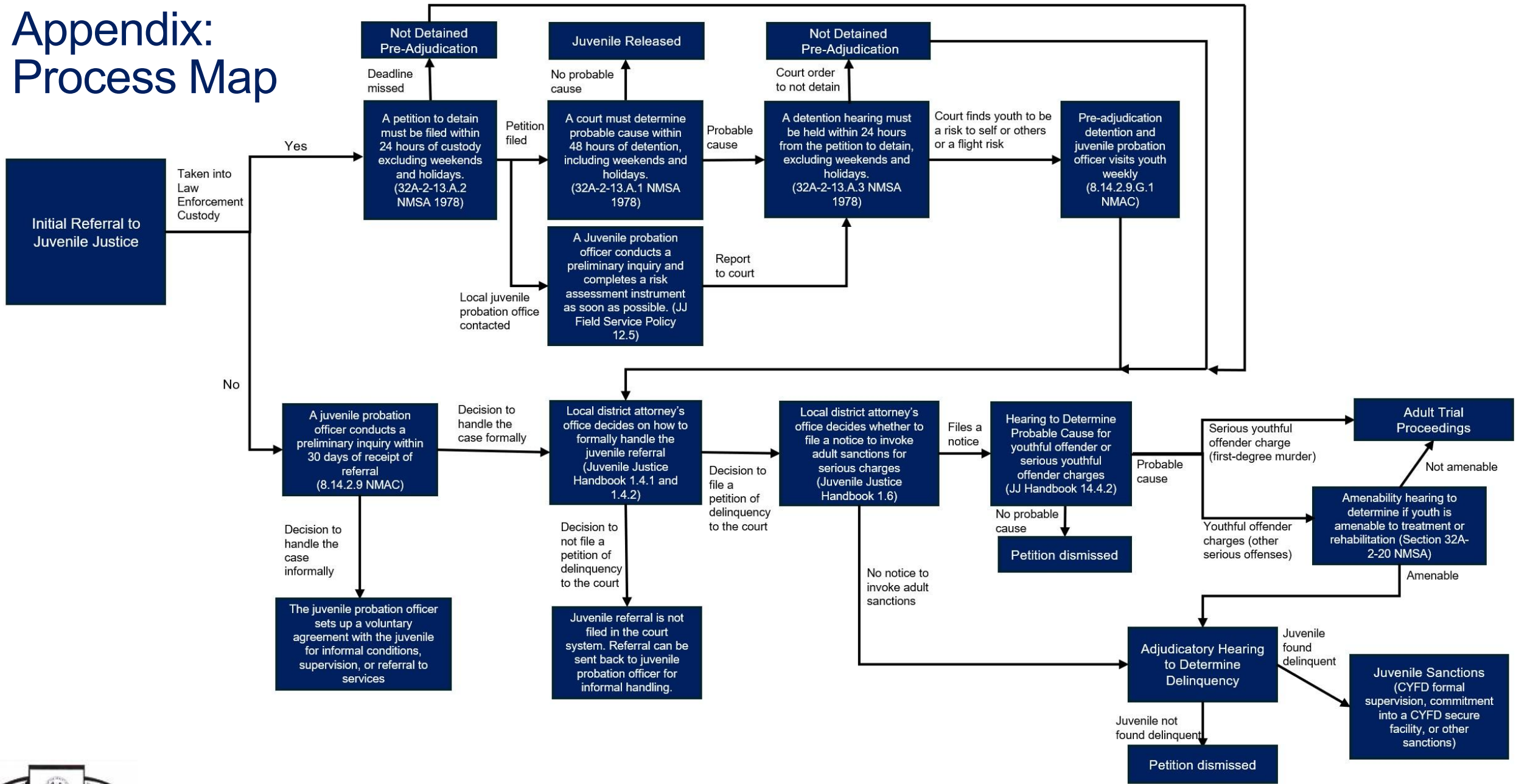
# Closing

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- The full policy spotlight report about juvenile justice will become available during the November LFC hearing.
- Thank you for your time and attention.
- LFC staff stand available to answer your questions.

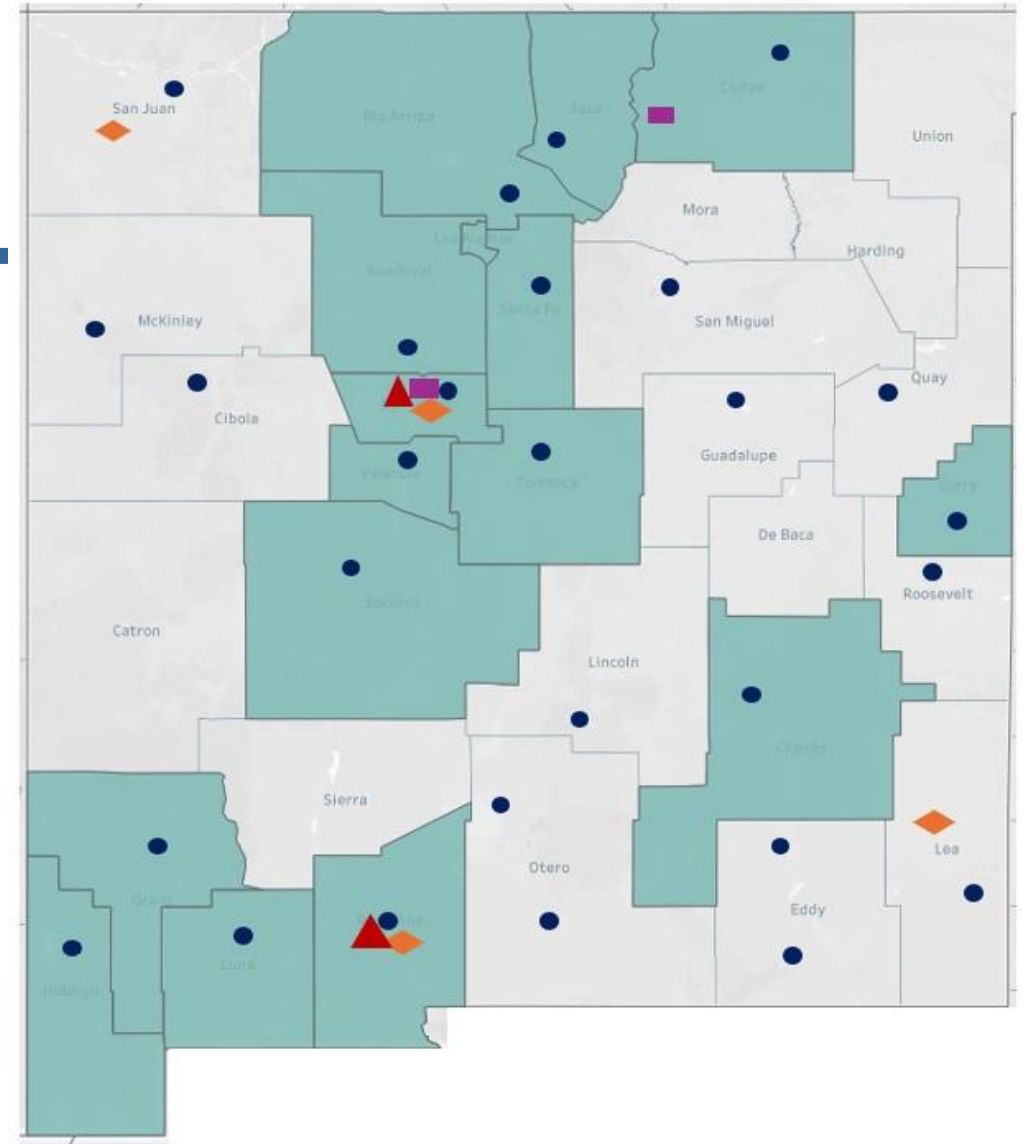


# Appendix: Process Map



# Appendix: Map of New Mexico's Juvenile Justice System

- CYFD Juvenile Probation and Parole Offices (Referrals, Diversion, or Supervision)
- ◆ County Juvenile Detention Centers (Detention Before Legal Proceeding)
- ▲ CYFD Juvenile Secure Facilities (Commitment After Case Adjudication)
- CYFD Reintegration Centers (Reintegration Services After Commitment)
- County with a Local JJ Continuum Board (Community Grant Programs)

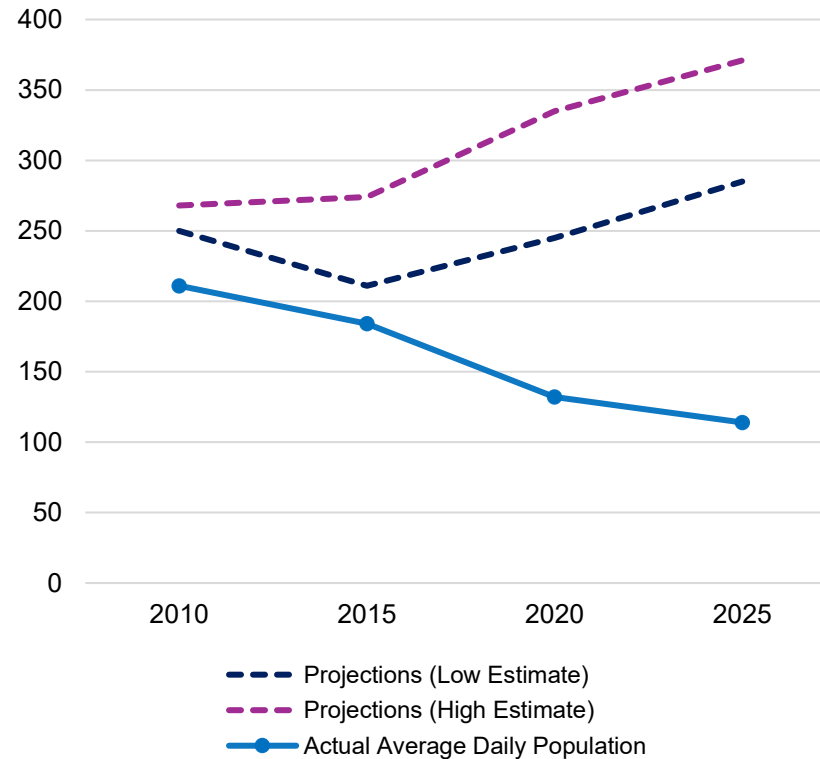


Note: In juvenile justice terminology, “adjudication” means conviction or legal judgement of a case and “commitment” means incarceration in a CYFD secure facility after sentencing.



Appendix: CYFD's 2010 juvenile justice facilities master plan to build small regional facilities across the state would cost up to \$261 million to implement and overestimated the 2025 juvenile justice population by at least 150 percent

**2010 Facility Master Plan Population Projections  
vs. Actual Average Daily Populations in CYFD  
Secure Facilities**



Source: LFC analysis of CYFD data.

