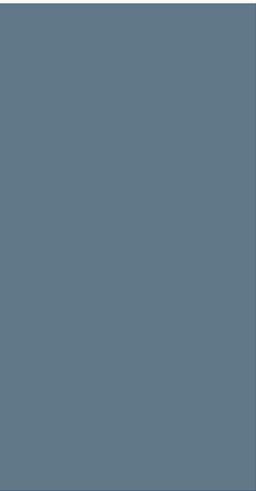


# FY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Alabama Department of Youth Services





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# *About Us...*

The Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS) is the state agency charged with the responsibility for administering and regulating juvenile justice programs and services. Dys is responsible for custody and rehabilitative services to youth committed by the state's juvenile courts and is independent and separate from adult corrections in Alabama. Regional detention facilities are licensed by Dys but are a combination of contracted and local government controlled entities. The Executive Director, who reports to an eighteen-member board, oversees the overall operation of Dys. Dys operates three institutional facilities and contracts with 10 community programs. The three Dys operated facilities are the Mt. Meigs, Vacca, and Autauga Campuses. Dys contracts with private providers to manage and oversee ten specialized community based treatment programs. All contract programs are licensed by Dys. In addition to the youth committed to Dys, the agency also funds 50 diversion grant programs that serve all 67 counties throughout Alabama.

## **Our Mission**

To be a life changing resource for youth involved in the justice system by providing quality educational opportunities, services, and supports to reduce reoffending, improve positive outcomes, strengthen families, and enhance community safety.

## **Our Vision**

To connect with youth involved in the justice system and to change the trajectory of their lives.

## **Our Values**

**Safety & Accountability**

**Character & Integrity**

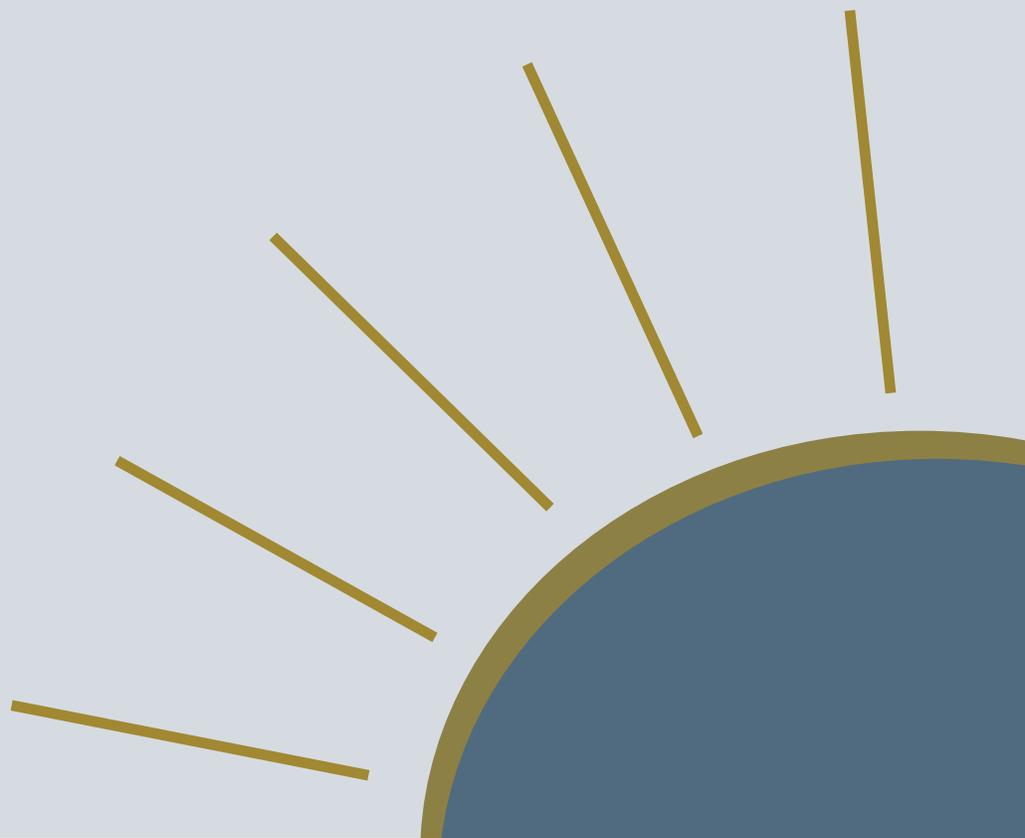
**Communication & Collaboration**

**Respect & Connection**

**Empowerment & Discovery**

**Equity & Inclusion**

**Transparency & Excellence**





## *From the Executive Director*

Dear Governor Ivey,

On behalf of the Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS), I am pleased to present you with the DYS Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report. This report highlights staff accomplishments, the expansion of programs and services, student achievements, and community outreach. We are grateful to all of our staff who have worked to ensure the success of our youth despite the continued challenge of staff shortages.

Throughout the year, our agency worked diligently to fill staff vacancies for front line positions. In order to address the vacancy rates, we focused on increasing staff recruitment and retention initiatives. This included increasing starting salaries for our direct care positions and developing additional social media and marketing campaigns to reach potential hires. We will continue to explore additional opportunities to decrease our staffing shortage and increase the retention rates of our direct care staff.

For the youth that we serve, we have expanded programs in Institutional Services that include additional after school activities, a school music program, and a youth Honor's Dorm. We also want to highlight our student achievements, which include youth scholarships, art exhibitions, literary awards, and post-secondary enrollment with a two-year college. We are excited to see our youth excel and will work diligently to continue to increase educational and vocational opportunities for them. Our youth's success is our success.

Along with our expanded programs within Institutional Services, we have also focused to ensure community services were expanded and additional programs were provided. It is our goal to ensure that all youth who could benefit from diversion services are able to receive them. Our staff have worked diligently to expand the community-based service continuum to all 67 counties.

There are many other highlights in this report that I encourage you to explore. We will continue to be thankful for the ongoing support and guidance we receive from stakeholders and the communities across the state. Thank you to all of our staff, volunteers, providers, and community partners. We appreciate everything they have done and continue to do for our agency. We will also continue to be grateful to this administration, the legislature, the court system, and the DYS Board of Directors for their support. We will always strive to connect with youth involved in the justice system and to change the trajectory of their lives.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven P. Lafreniere".

Steven P. Lafreniere

# DYS Board of Directors

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**Honorable Kay Ivey**  
Governor

**Mary Katherine Pittman/Denson Clark**  
Governor's Representatives

## LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS

**Senator Will Barfoot**  
**Senator Linda Coleman-Madison**

**Representative Barbara Boyd**  
**Representative K.L. Brown**

## ALABAMA JUVENILE JUDGES ASSOCIATION

**Honorable Patricia Demos, District Judge**

## ALABAMA CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

**Crissy Griffin, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer**

## STATE DEPARTMENT HEADS

**Kim Boswell, Commissioner**  
AL Dept. of Mental Health  
Proxy: Kim Hammack

**Kenneth Boswell, Director**  
AL Dept. of Economic and Community Affairs  
Proxy: William Babington

**Nancy Buckner, Commissioner**  
AL Dept. of Human Resources  
Proxy: Shea Cobb-England

**Dr. Eric Mackey, State Superintendent**  
AL Dept. of Education  
Proxy: Jason Swann

**Dr. Scott Harris, State Health Officer**  
AL Dept. of Public Health  
Proxy: Michele Jones

## CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS

**Phillip Wynne**  
1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**William McDowell**  
5TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**James Dupree**  
2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**Buddy Aydelette**  
6TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**Charles Smith**  
3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**Robert Duke**  
7TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**Stacie Jenkins**  
4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

# Report of the Board .....

The Youth Services Board met four times during fiscal year 2023: **December 2, 2022, March 31, 2023, June 23, 2023, and September 29, 2023.** The meetings were held in the Board Room of Washington Hall located at 1000 Industrial School Road, Mount Meigs, Alabama.

## Staffing Concerns Remain a Challenge

Recruitment and retention of frontline staff continues to be a challenge for the Department. Despite significant salary increases and an aggressive recruitment campaign, Mr. Lafreniere reported at the December Board meeting there was a 30 to 40 percent vacancy rate with these staff positions. These vacancies impact the ability to provide programming and receive youth into the facilities in a timely manner.

During the March meeting, Mr. Lafreniere reported a 57% turnover rate for frontline staff positions in 2022. Varied recruiting techniques were being utilized, including attending job fairs and using social media. Starting salaries for the DYS direct care positions were increased twice in the last two years. DYS is actively working with the State Personnel Department to raise starting pay for a third time. Ms. Alesia Allen, Deputy Director of Institutional Services, reported that campus administrative staff were assisting in the dorms to provide adequate coverage in order to maintain a safe and secure environment. Facility Directors, Specialists, and Case Managers were commended for their team efforts to provide day to day coverage in the living units. In September, Mr. Lafreniere reported that the beginning salary for front line staff had been increased effective August 1st to \$16 per hour.

## Intake of Committed Youth

At the June meeting, Mr. Lafreniere stated that staff vacancies at facilities are impacting the ability to receive committed youth from local juvenile detention centers. In mid-June, there were 108 youth waiting for an available bed space within the DYS system. The majority of these youth were being held in a county or regional juvenile detention center. This resulted in approximately 25% of local detention beds being occupied by DYS commitments. This situation created a financial hardship for some of the detention centers and committing counties. During the September Board meeting, Mr. Lafreniere reported that DYS increased the detention center subsidy amount by \$500,000 to assist counties that had exhausted their detention budgets.

## DYS OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

**Charles Smith**  
Chair



**Michele Jones**  
Vice Chair



**William McDowell**  
Secretary/Treasurer



## **Expanded Contract Placements and Diversion Programs**

During the March Board meeting, Mr. Chris Narcisse, Deputy Director of Community Services, reported that requests for proposals (RFPs) for placements were developed and issued on January 30, 2023. The RFPs were opened on March 16th with proposals being received in the categories of intensive treatment programs, developmentally or intellectually disabled youth programs, and short-term programs for both males and females. Proposals were received from Brighter Path, Lee County Youth Development Center, Teen University, King's Home, Right of Passage, and Pathway. Contracts were completed and fully executed prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year in October 2023. These new contracts increased the number of available beds for moderate and high-risk youth.

Mr. Narcisse also announced that the application process for community diversion programs started in late January with applications being due by June 29th. At the September meeting, Mr. Narcisse reported that the review of the diversion grant process had been completed and grant awards were prepared for the successful applicants. It was reported that all 67 counties now have a diversion resource available for youth. Fifty-nine of these counties now have a community-based option for delinquent youth, with thirteen counties expanding services. Fifty counties also provide diversion services for youth exhibiting problematic and or illegal sexual behaviors.

## **DYS Campus Enhancements**

As reported throughout the fiscal year to the Board, Autauga, Mt. Meigs, and Vacca Campuses had a number of significant changes, improvements, and achievements. In the March meeting, Ms. Allen reported that the Student Development Building was being fully utilized to provide enhanced treatment services, including adequate space for group counseling, family engagement, and space for probation staff to meet with youth. Also, with the opening of the new Intensive Treatment Unit, Phyfer B Hall is now utilized to serve the general campus population.

For the Mt. Meigs Campus dining hall, bids were received and a contract awarded for a new retrofitted metal roof. Mr. Lafreniere also reported that all testing on the foundation of the Community Services Building (Johnson Hall) at the Vacca Campus was complete. The building was determined to be safe for staff to continue to occupy. Bids will be received in the future for the necessary repairs.

## **New Hires Complete Executive Staff**

During the March meeting, Mr. Lafreniere announced the appointment of Mr. Christopher Narcisse as the Deputy Director for Community Services. Mr. Narcisse fills the position formerly held by Mr. Pat Pendergast prior to his retirement in 2022. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Narcisse had served as the DYS coordinator of Federal Programs for a number of years.

In September, Mr. Lafreniere introduced Mr. Anthony Wynn as the new Director of Special Operations for DYS. In this restructured executive staff position, Mr. Wynn will supervise the Screening and Placement Office, Office of Training and Staff Development, and the Special Investigations Unit. Mr. Wynn comes to the Department following a number of years of experience in juvenile justice agencies in Maryland and New York.

## **Special Recognitions**

During the December meeting, Mr. Lafreniere recognized the 25th anniversary of the Writing Our Stories program. DYS Board member and former DYS Director James Dupree, Jr. was also recognized for his role in establishing the program and recognizing how the arts can be effectively incorporated into the juvenile justice system. At the September meeting, Mr. Lafreniere and Dr. Smitherman presented Ms. Jeanie Thompson with a plaque and a resolution for her 26 years of working with the Writing Our Stories Program. The presentation coincided with the retirement of Ms. Thompson as Executive Director of the Alabama Writers Forum. The September meeting also served as an opportunity to recognize four outgoing DYS Board members: Senator Will Barfoot, Representative K. L. Brown, Mr. Phillip Wynne, and Mr. Robert Duke, who were recognized with a resolution thanking them for their service to the Department.

# Recognizing our Staff



## Officer Antonio Howard 2023 DYS Employee of the Year

Mr. Antonio Howard, Security Supervisor at the Mt. Meigs Campus, is the DYS 2023 Employee of the Year. Officer Howard has proven to be an asset to this department for almost 16 years. He has continuously displayed consistency and dependability during his tenure with the department and is a dedicated and loyal employee.

Officer Howard's current duties include being a Mandt Instructor, Master Control Tactics Instructor, CPR and First Aid Instructor, and Coordinator for the Juvenile Response

Team (JRT) for all three campuses. Officer Howard shares his experiences when training new employees and assists with the one week training of the new hires by reviewing protocols for searches and contraband. He also travels with the JRT team to all three campuses to help staff improve their job performance and responsibilities and ensure they have all the tools necessary to perform their job duties. Officer Howard establishes a positive rapport with staff and students. Officer Howard has been observed encouraging and motivating students who are viewed as having challenging behaviors. He is a true believer of the CARE principles and says CARE training is a vital part of each of our success at any position with the Department. He gives students positive feedback and a positive outlook on their situation. Some of the students at the Mt. Meigs Campus affectionately calls him Uncle Howard. He continues to be a mentor to the students.

Officer Howard creates healthy relationships with students and sets attainable goals with them. His proactive efforts help keep small issues from becoming larger ones. He takes time to hear what students are saying and considers their feelings. Officer Howard is also a team player. He works all shifts to ensure security has coverage. This gesture ensures the safety of the staff as well as the students. Officer Howard sets aside time to talk with the officers he supervises and campus staff in an effort to motivate them during times of uncertainty.

Whenever problems arise, DYS can count on Officer Howard to offer solutions. He ensures the DYS operations of the campus are safe and secure. DYS would like to thank Officer Howard for all that he has done and continue to do for the agency.



Pictured L to R: Mr. Victor Black, Program Specialist, Mr. Steve Lafreniere, Executive Director, Ms. Tonya Dorn, Employee Council Chair, and Officer Antonio Howard, 2023 Employee of the Year.

# FY23' DYS *Employees* of the Quarter

**Mr. Lexie Spurlock** is a Youth Services Aide for Phyfer A on the Mt. Meigs Campus. Mr. Spurlock has been with DYS for 5 years and is a valuable asset to the Department and the Phyfer A unit. He has a positive attitude and passion for working with youth in our care. He demonstrates a non-adversarial approach using training techniques adapted by the Department. He exhibits effective communication when interacting and engaging with the students in his care. He has genuine concern for the betterment of all students and is a role model for them. He takes the time to converse with students and provides encouraging words throughout the day. Mr. Spurlock participated in the 1st DYS Leadership Academy and utilized the knowledge he gained in the day to day functions of Phyfer A. Mr. Spurlock has few to no incidents on the night shift. He ensures that all necessary paperwork is turned in and ensures the dorm runs smoothly.



**Mr. Timothy Curry** is a Youth Services Senior Aide with the Mt. Meigs Campus. Mr. Curry currently oversees campus beautification efforts. Mr. Curry and his team of students take on the task of keeping the campus grounds maintained, painting buildings (inside and out), painting inside the living units, as well as keeping the dining hall and other occupied buildings clean throughout the day. Mr. Curry engages and trains some of the most challenging students on campus. He sets aside time to talk with these students one-on-one in an effort to mentor them about life, including the responsibilities of being a man. He strives to improve the quality of the entire campus as well as the life for the students he encounters. Mr. Curry models a high standard of interacting and engaging with the students under his direct care during their work day. Mr. Curry is an individual you can call on when you need him.



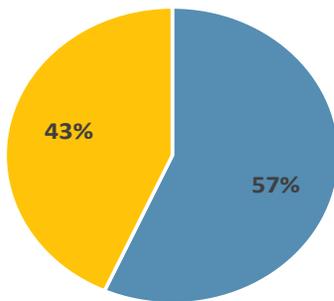
**Mr. Alvin Wilson** is a 25 year DYS employee and serves as the DYS Central Office custodian. Mr. Wilson serves this agency with hard work and dedication. Mr. Wilson brings a good attitude and positive energy to work with him every day. Alvin's official job responsibility is to serve as building custodian for the DYS Central Office, but he willingly performs many additional tasks outside of cleaning. He takes pride in making the Central Office building look good for the employees and our visiting guests. He goes out of his way to be helpful to everyone he comes in contact with, which is far beyond his assigned work responsibilities. Mr. Wilson has been a wonderful friend to so many and he has been supportive to all of the staff throughout the years. He is a kind, generous, friendly, and compassionate person who brought so much light to DYS.



# Staff Recruitment and Retention

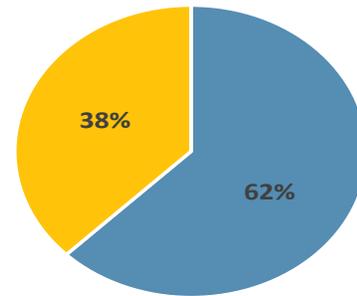
For FY23, the average number of staff for the agency was 357 employees. There were 98 new hires (57%) and 75 separations (43%). For Youth Services Aides, DYS averaged 123 employees. There were 75 new hires (62%) and 45 separations (38%). The agency participated in multiple career fairs and utilized social media in an effort to recruit new employees. The focus of the efforts was the recruitment of Youth Services Aides and Security Officers. DYS experienced a 37% turnover rate for FY23.

**New Hires and Separations  
All Staff**



■ Hires ■ Separations

**New Hires and Separations  
Youth Services Aides**



■ Hires ■ Separations

## Staff Recruitment

DYS participated in multiple job recruitment initiatives, which included community career fairs as well as DYS initiated career fairs hosted at local Career Centers. DYS staff participated in career fairs to provide job seekers with information about the agency as well as immediate career opportunities.



## Training & Staff Development

Staff development and continuing education is an important part of the agency's mission. Opportunities for staff to develop and enhance their skills include leadership academies, professional development workshops, and job specific trainings. The Office of Training and Staff Development key initiatives and accomplishments include:

- ★ Twelve New Employee Orientation (NEO) sessions (114 new employees)
- ★ Mandt System training and certification to all new employees
- ★ One hundred and eighty-five (185) monthly in-person training sessions
- ★ Five DYS specific training days for educational staff
- ★ Nine monthly web-based training modules
- ★ Seven newly developed training modules
- ★ New curriculum for New Employee Orientation

## Continuing Education

The **DYS School District 210** held a Cognia engagement review to prepare for accreditation in 2024. The DYS School District sent a team of 10 teachers, principals, and leaders to the Cognia Impact Conference held in Montgomery, October 26-27, 2022. This conference was an opportunity for learning, connecting, and sharing, with a focus on improving outcomes for learners in Alabama, as well as provide the DYS School District Team an introduction to the 30 accreditation objective and process.



The **DYS Institutional Services Division** held the bi-annual Leadership Academy the week of April 17-21, 2023. Participants of this year's academy included Mt. Meigs Team Leaders - Mr. Ferron Ford, Ms. Michelle Archie, Mr. Larry Harmon, Ms. Alfreda Williams, and Ms. Judith Moore. The DYS Leadership Academy covered multiple topics that included both agency and national juvenile justice trends, systems overview, understanding culture, management style and concepts, communication strategies, problem solving and conflict management, leadership skills, and experiential exercises. The participants received a certificate of completion and were assigned mentors to assist them throughout the year.

Dr. Fatima Johnson, Campus Administrator of the Vacca Campus, and Ms. Marique Ruffin, Campus Administrator of the Mt. Meigs Campus, attended the **Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) Facility/Superintendent Director Training**. Some of the learning topics included: Conditions of Confinement, Understanding and Responding to Trauma, Ethics in Juvenile Justice, Strategies on Staff Wellness, Engaging and Empowering Families, Emergency Planning, Promoting Positive Youth Development, Action Plan Development, Leadership in Youth Facilities, and Making Facilities Safe.



# Staff Appreciation

During the 1st week of May, the DYS campuses and the Central Office host a variety of events to celebrate all of the DYS employees who are vital to the agency and are the cornerstone of our operation. DYS strives to make a difference in the lives of the youth we serve, and it is through the dedication and determination of the DYS staff that this is made possible.

Campus and Central Office staff participated in employee appreciation events that included award ceremonies. The ceremonies honored staff to acknowledge their years of service. Luncheons were provided along with special treats for the staff. Staff also participated in the National Day of Prayer. This year staff also had the opportunity to enjoy specialty food trucks for lunch on certain days of Employee Appreciation Week.



## DYS Internship Program

The DYS Internship Program started again in January 2023 and is designed for students who are seeking employment in the juvenile justice and/or social work fields. DYS seeks to maintain a rich and robust internship program that provides students an opportunity for learning as well as professional growth and development. Interns can participate in a number of structured learning activities across a variety of departmental programs that are tailored to the specific educational goals and academic requirements that conform to the Department's policies.



DYS continues to encourage partnerships with colleges and universities in an effort to bring additional interns to DYS. Our agency offers a wide array of experiences with various divisions including Training and Staff Development, Community Services, Institutional Services, Advocacy, and Quality Assurance. In 2023, DYS welcomed two interns from Alabama State University and one intern from Auburn University at Montgomery. (Pictured top left: Executive Director Steve Lafreniere and ASU Intern Corasia Ward. Pictured bottom left: AUM Intern Gianna Goins, Executive Assistant to the Director Dr. Shannon Weston, and ASU Intern Tyiesha Smith.)

# *Welcoming New Leadership*

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Mr. Christopher Narcisse was appointed as Deputy Director of Community Services on January 1, 2023. Mr. Narcisse has over 19 years of experience working at DYS. He began his career as a Case Manager on the Mt. Meigs Campus before serving in the Federal Programs Office, which he has led for over 12 years. Prior to working at DYS, Mr. Narcisse served as a Senior Case Manager with Three Springs, Inc. and a Social Services Provider with Georgia Mountain Community Services. Mr. Narcisse also teaches courses in Counseling and Psychology as an adjunct professor. He mentors under privileged youth and works with youth and adults with intellectual disabilities. He also provides instructional and motivational speaking to various companies, schools, athletic programs, colleges and universities as well as churches throughout the United States. Mr. Narcisse is a graduate of Troy University where he received a Master's degree in Counseling and Psychology.



Mr. Anthony W. Wynn was appointed as Director of Special Operations on August 1, 2023. Mr. Wynn joins us having 35 years of experience working in juvenile justice agencies from facility level management to senior level leadership positions. Originally from Alabama, Mr. Wynn has worked in juvenile justice systems in New York, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and most recently in Maryland. Mr. Wynn is responsible for Screening and Placement, Special Investigations, Liaison with the Training Department, and special projects assigned by the Executive Director.

Mr. Wynn started his career as an entry level staff. His service to youth led him from an entry level position to an Executive. Mr. Wynn has worked with youth in secure facilities, limited secure, community-based and non-community based programming, which included boys and girls. Mr. Wynn has a successful track record of working with youth in the juvenile justice system.

# Institutional Services

The DYS Institutional Services Division highlights student success. The three facilities, Mt. Meigs Campus, Vacca Campus, and Autauga Campus, provided a number of positive youth development focused programs and services during FY23. This focus aligns with the DYS Strategic Plan to improve conditions of confinement for youth and increase positive youth development opportunities. Each campus offered unique opportunities for youth to engage in pro-social activities.

## Alabama Blues Project

The Alabama Blues Project (ABP) is a nonprofit organization that specializes in providing Blues music lessons for children ages 6-18 in the areas of vocals, harmonica, guitar, and drums. Students are taught by the best Blues musicians in the state and learn about the history of the Blues as well as how to perform the blues. The Alabama Blues Project programs pass on Alabama's rich Blues culture to the next generation while teaching self-esteem, discipline, cross-cultural understanding, interaction, and teamwork. The Vacca Campus served as one of the program's latest sites. The program culminated with a Vacca Youth performance.



## Youth Honor's Dorm

Cornerstone, named by the youth who reside in the living unit, opened as an Honor's Dorm. The dorm provides transitional planning for youth with determinant commitments. Requirements include positive pro-social behavior and the desire to work towards additional educational and/or vocational goals. Youth are working toward graduating High School or obtaining a General Educational Development Diploma (GED) or enrolled in post-secondary education. Designed to reflect a college dorm like environment, youth operate in a more normative living atmosphere in preparation for transition out of DYS Custody.

## Responsible Fathers Program

Mt. Meigs "Fathers' Day in September" program assists youth who identified as being a father. The youth have the opportunity to have a visit with their child. This initiative is now incorporated into the Responsible Fathers Program, in collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club of River Region, and is now part of campus programming.



# Institutional Services

As part of a **reading initiative for youth**, special guest speaker, Mr. Bryan Stephenson, spoke to the Autauga Campus youth on July 11, 2023. Mr. Stephenson is the author of the New York Times bestseller, Just Mercy - A True Story of the Fight for Justice. Mr. Stephenson spoke to the youth and the staff and held a question and answer session. Pictured L to R: Mr. Cornelius Williams-Fenderson, Ms. Alicia Faire, Mr. Bryan Stephenson, Ms. Alesia Allen, and Mr. Steve Lafreniere.



Youth celebrate **Black History Month events** at the Mt. Meigs, Vacca, and Autauga Campuses. Students participated by serving as speakers, singing in the choir, reading poems, and creating educational displays. Guest speakers included Mr. Alvin Tucker from Fortitude Leadership Academy and Mr. Bobby Sneed, who provided a motivational speech to the youth.

The **Mt. Meigs youth pavilion** was constructed to provide an additional outdoor venue for programming and activities. DYS is thankful to have so many wonderful volunteers who have assisted our agency throughout the years. Taylor Road Baptist Church volunteers, along with DYS maintenance staff, assisted with building the new pavilion.



## New Administrator Appointed

Mr. James White was appointed as the Administrator of Institutional Services on June 1, 2023. Mr. White has worked for the Department 23 years and served as the Assistant Administrator of Institutional Services since 2019. Mr. White earned a Master's degree from Auburn University Montgomery in Criminal Justice and is a military veteran (Army). Mr. White has served in many different roles including Campus Administrator at the Mt. Meigs Campus, as well as Youth Services Specialist, Case Manager, and Child Care Worker. Mr. White brings to the position experience with the work and priorities of Institutional Services and the Department.

# Community Services

The Community Services Division at DYS provides administrative oversight for all resources dedicated and located in the community. The Division is responsible for developing community-based services, monitoring and compliance, technical assistance and training, and maintaining a working relationship with the courts in each county. Areas of responsibility are divided between the following offices:

- ➔ **Licensing:** Licenses new providers and conducts annual updates (more if necessary) for compliance and re-licensing of existing facilities and programs.
- ➔ **Federal Program Reviewers:** Provides oversight, training, and technical assistance to contract providers who utilize the Alabama Medicaid Rehabilitative Services option through DYS. DYS also utilizes the Medicaid Federal Programs Reviewers (FPRs) to assist the Federal Programs Division to monitor Medicaid eligible providers.
- ➔ **Contract Residential Monitors:** Provides oversight and technical assistance to private contracted providers across the State. Each contracted provider receives a minimum of 3 visits per month from their assigned Service Monitor.
- ➔ **Diversion Program:** Monitor utilization and perform on-site visits at least twice a year.
- ➔ **Educational Advocates:** Reviews and provides technical assistance for all educational programs within DYS licensed facilities for educational programming and compliance with Specialized Treatment Center standards promulgated by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).
- ➔ **County Children Facilitation Teams:** Attend local Multi-Need staffings/meetings.
- ➔ **Children's Policy Council Representatives:** Attend county Children's Policy Council meetings and represent DYS and related services.
- ➔ **PREA Certification:** Assists residential providers who serve delinquent youth with compliance with PREA Standards. Annual audits are conducted within DYS licensed facilities.

**The Community Services Site Visits** create a system of multiple reviewers who are able to observe facilities for program compliance and the welfare of youth in DYS custody. Total number of oversight & monitoring visits for **FY23** is provided below.



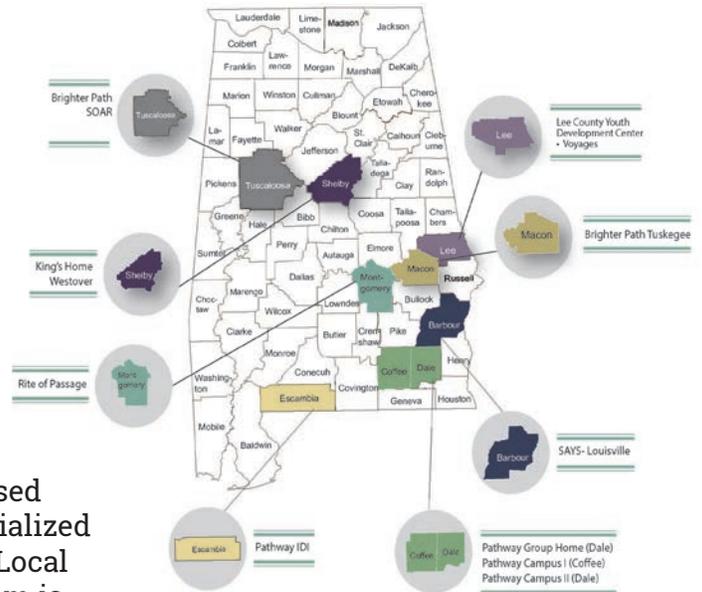
# Community Services

## Contracted Community Program Partners

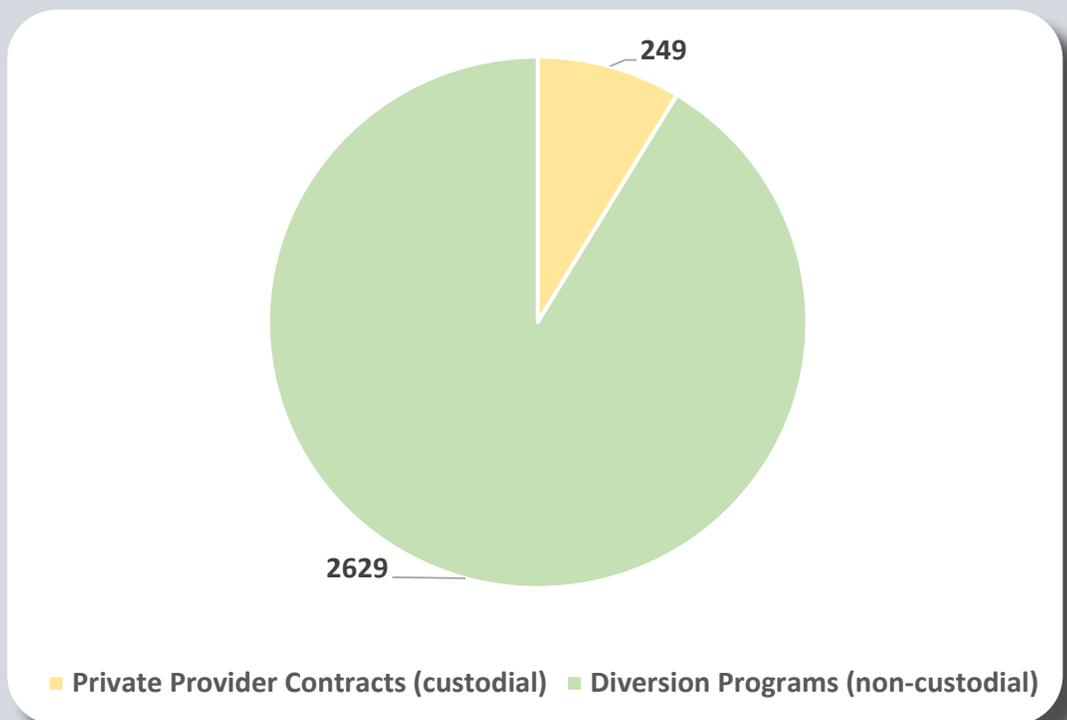
FY23 DYS issued new 3 year Request for Proposals (RFPs) for community placement program beds for youth committed to DYS and in need of specific programming or gender-specific programming (Females). In response to admission trends that have been observed over the last 3 years, DYS modified the number and types of beds (Medium Risk males) to address the increase in this population. DYS contracted for an additional 32 medium risk beds to address the need and the waiting list spike.

## Educational Services

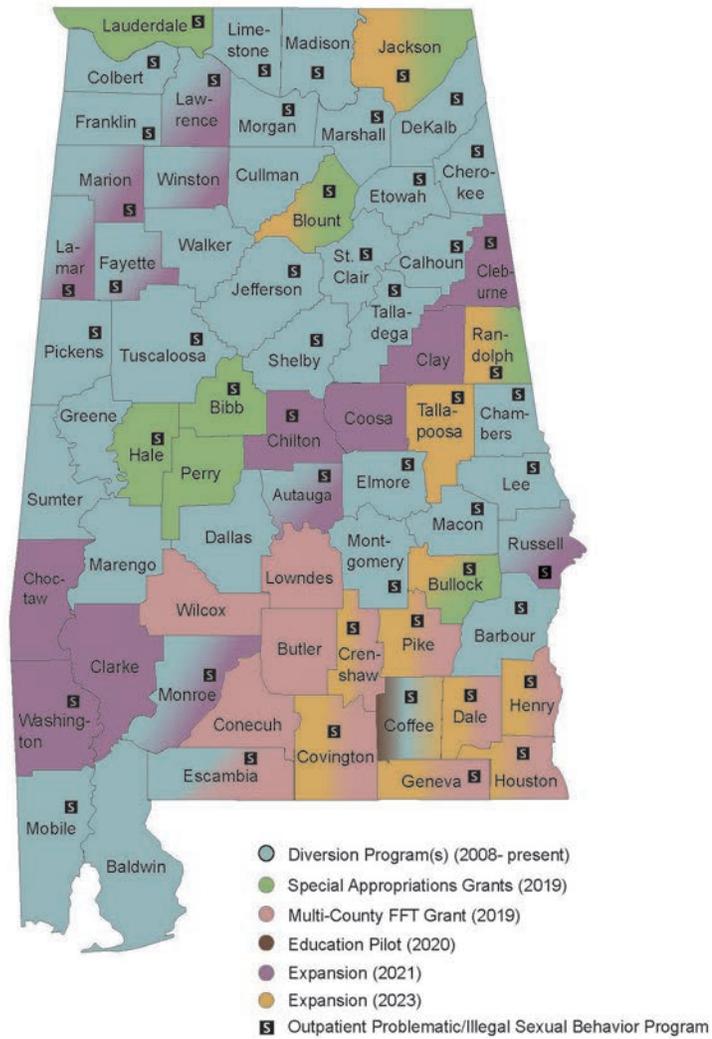
All educational programs/services located in a DYS licensed residential facility are registered with the ALSDE as Specialized Treatment Centers (STCs). Each STC is supported by the Local Educational Agency (LEA) in the county where the program is located. Students can receive educational credits for courses, receive remedial educational services for credit recovery and to catch up with peers, and GED educational prep services.



## FY 2023 Community Services Number of Youth Served

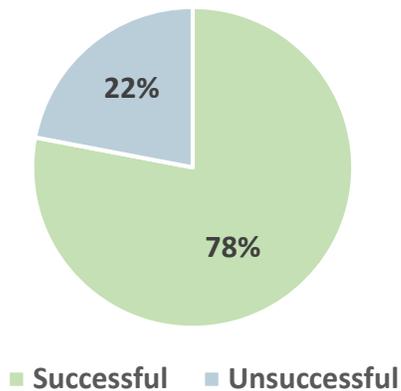


# DYS Funded Diversion Program Locations

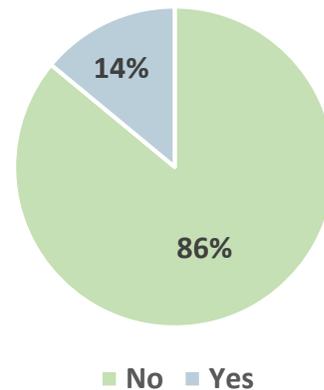


## FY 2023 Diversion Program Outcomes

### Successful Completion



### 6 Month Re-Offend Rate



# Educational Services

## Highlighting Student Achievements



**"Sculpture in the Garden" Exhibition** - This exhibition was sponsored by the Montgomery Botanical Gardens at Oak Park and showcased stand alone pieces designed by students at the Mt. Meigs Campus. The three pieces included a boat, dragon, and jazz man. Two of the L.B. Wallace School students won first and second place awards.



**Museum of Fine Arts Exhibition** - Five visual art students from the LB. Wallace School had their artwork accepted into the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts student exhibition. In conjunction with the current exhibition Boundless, students were asked to explore three-dimensional artwork using non-traditional materials that can be hung on walls. Under the supervision of their teacher Mrs. Toni Toney, students used wood, paint, yarn, and cardboard to create images that represent the limitless potential of art materials and creativity.



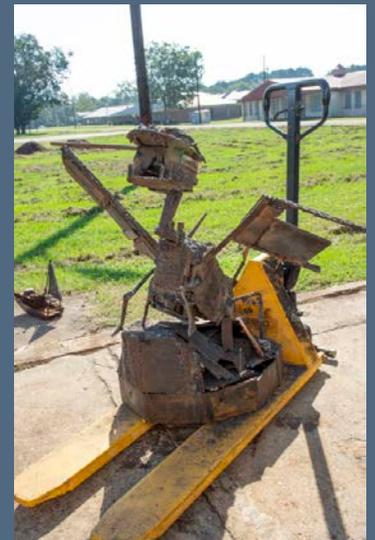
**Literary Arts Competition** - In the 2023 Alabama High School Literary Arts Awards Competition, two students from the DYS School District received the Poetry Judge's Special Recognition and four students received the Poetry Certificate of Merit Awards.



**Writing Our Stories** - In November 2022, DYS and the Alabama Writer's Forum (AWF) celebrated 25 years of the Writing Our Stories (WOS) Program. This program is a nationally recognized program that provides the youth in DYS custody with the opportunity to become better writers and readers. Each year the youth showcase their poetry in a published anthology. In total, the Writer's Forum has published 63 anthologies and 19 chapbooks. Two published anthologies from the partnership with Writing Our Stories for FY23 include Open the Door 25 and Invisible Kingdom.



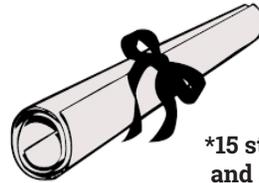
**Youth Scholarships** - Two youth received scholarships for academic excellence. One youth from the Mt. Meigs Campus received the National Performance-based Standards Russ Jennings Scholarship. This award is only given to two students in the entire country. The scholarship is in the amount of \$15,000 and provides support for a young person from start to finish of a two-year educational program. A youth from the Vacca Campus received the GEAR-UP BMN 2022-2023 Excellence Scholarship Award of \$500.00.



# Academic Snapshot



**6 High School Diplomas**



**20 GEDs\***

\*15 students in DYS School District, and 5 students in community programs.



**10 students enrolled in post-secondary education**

## Career Technical Education

A total of 40 students earned National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certificates while enrolled in the DYS School District. NCCER standardized construction and maintenance curriculum and assessments allow credentials to be tracked through NCCER's Registry System, which allows organizations and companies to track the qualifications of their craft professionals and/or check the qualifications of possible new hires. NCCER's Registry System also assists craft professionals by maintaining their records in a secure database. The table below reflects the credentialing totals in each area.



### Welding

**12** students received NCCER credentials.  
**27** students passed a portion of the NCCER test.



### Carpentry

**18** student received NCCER credentials.  
**37** students passed a portion of the NCCER test.



### Brick Masonry

**10** students received NCCER credentials.  
**29** students passed a portion of the NCCER test.



### Microsoft

**53** students passed a portion of Microsoft Academy exams.  
**11** Expert Certificates  
**8** Associate Certificates

# Programmatic Oversight

## Advocacy Unit

The Advocacy Unit is responsible for responding to, reporting, and following up on verbal and written complaints or grievances from youth in DYS custody.

- **In FY23, the Advocacy Unit made 556 visits to the DYS facilities and contracted community providers.**

The DYS grievance process is a problem solving process for youth to grieve an action, incident, living condition, dispute, or application of any Departmental policy or practice which they believe to be unjust. The DYS Advocates respond to the grievances by working directly with the youth in order to resolve any issues or concerns the youth may have while in DYS custody. The ultimate goal of the advocacy process is to resolve grievances within a reasonable amount of time in a way that addresses issues or concerns of the youth fairly.

## Quality Assurance

The Office of Quality Assurance is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the agency's quality control measures to increase accountability, accurate data reporting, and transparency. The overall goal for the office is to ensure agency goals are met and that all programs consistently provide effective services that help our youth achieve meaningful outcomes. The Office of Quality Assurance oversees the implementation of facility improvement planning, PbS data collection, and incident reporting.

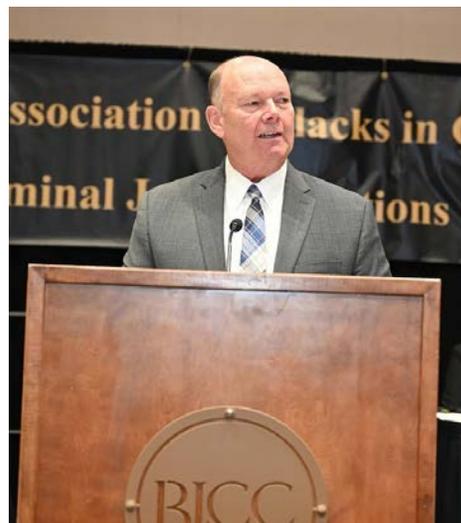
- The Office of Quality Assurance utilizes the **DYS Incident Reporting Information System** to collect, analyze, and report performance outcomes for the Mt. Meigs, Vacca, and Autauga Campuses.
- The Office of Quality Assurance utilizes the **Performance-based Standards data** dashboard and web-based portal to collect and report performance-based outcomes in October and April each year. This reporting is additional information used in conjunction with the monthly Incident Report Summaries provided to the campuses.

In FY23, DYS collected the following information to be utilized in reporting and analyzing performance-based outcome measures:

<b>212</b>	<b>Staff Climate Surveys</b>
<b>201</b>	<b>Youth Climate Surveys</b>
<b>191</b>	<b>Youth Reentry Surveys</b>
<b>130</b>	<b>Youth Record Reviews</b>

# Community Outreach & Partnerships

DYS Executive Director, Steve Lafreniere, provided opening remarks for the National Association of Blacks In Criminal Justice (NABCJ) Annual Conference, which was held in July, 2023 in Birmingham, AL. The NABCJ conference theme for this year was titled, "Remembering Our Past, Embracing Our Present, Envisioning Our Future."



DYS Executive Staff attended the Capital City Rotary Club Meeting in August, 2023. DYS was invited to present an overview of the agency to the Montgomery Area Rotary Club members. Mr. Lafreniere, along with the Executive Staff, answered questions following the presentation.

DYS Executive Director, Steve Lafreniere, participated in the Auburn University Research Symposium, which highlighted several research projects from AU psychology students. DYS and Auburn University School of Psychology have enjoyed a 20 year partnership of service provision, research, and evaluation with youth who are committed for illegal sexual behaviors. The work of these undergraduate and graduate interns can help further the field knowledge, inform policy, and enhance practice approaches for youth with problematic sexual behaviors.



# Youth Services Financial Statement

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2021</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2022</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2023</b>
General Fund	6,704,537	6,704,537	12,704,537	6,704,537	6,704,537
Children First Trust Fund	8,107,317	8,107,318	10,126,407	10,432,066	9,381,266
Education Trust Fund	51,230,341	53,588,339	53,588,339	54,037,009	54,926,923
Special Revenue	29,216,241	16,991,569	19,255,362	25,824,338	19,451,305
Special Programming for Achievement Network (SPAN)- ETF line item approp.	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>98,824,168</b>	<b>88,957,495</b>	<b>99,240,377</b>	<b>100,563,682</b>	<b>94,029,763</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Personnel Costs	18,961,903	19,079,086	19,169,641	18,693,971	19,826,170
Employee Benefits	8,298,259	8,243,059	7,993,256	7,436,498	7,543,341
Travel In-State	42,352	22,943	28,404	55,941	93,645
Travel Out-of-State	20,505	9,561	7,764	17,926	18,814
Repairs & Maintenance	973,797	803,147	1,244,228	992,635	1,236,563
Rentals & Leases	180,834	138,672	200,562	200,616	211,819
Utilities & Communications	1,506,874	1,501,402	1,358,277	1,351,706	1,509,377
Professional Services	13,856,095	11,460,408	15,964,452	15,290,548	13,880,175
Operating Expenses	2,048,162	1,995,210	2,370,088	2,038,996	2,366,055
Transportation Equip Operations	232,460	174,232	229,685	314,534	313,137
Grants & Benefits	47,781,328	29,620,845	32,559,362	38,918,203	37,128,736
Grants & Benefits transferred to SPAN	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732
Capital Outlay	136,678	580,734	5,403,343	9,233,323	2,845
Transportation Equip Purchases	16,798	69,916	71,695	106,587	154,356
Other Equipment Purchases	1,248,662	491,345	772,957	635,652	885,669
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>98,870,438</b>	<b>77,756,292</b>	<b>90,939,445</b>	<b>98,852,868</b>	<b>88,736,435</b>

# School District Financial Statement

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2021</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2022</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2023</b>
General Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Education Trust Fund	6,522,499	5,414,481	6,733,348	7,257,203	7,470,702
Special Revenue	416,836	315,521	508,342	322,480	509,079
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>6,939,335</b>	<b>5,730,002</b>	<b>7,241,690</b>	<b>7,579,683</b>	<b>7,979,782</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Personnel Costs	3,779,776	3,749,097	4,010,322	4,307,243	4,729,524
Employee Benefits	1,330,563	1,325,573	1,377,421	1,482,615	1,571,232
Travel In-State	10,187	1,894	6,935	11,354	27,947
Travel Out-of-State	-	-	-	-	6,281
Repairs & Maintenance	5,545	7,338	82,227	37,132	539
Rentals & Leases	12,531	8,638	11,413	12,745	13,774
Utilities & Communications	60,000	110	-	1,287	-
Professional Services	89,705	82,551	68,350	88,717	39,899
Operating Expenses	217,859	150,889	291,867	201,375	266,594
Transportation Equip Operations	689	-	-	-	59
Grants & Benefits	1,272,000	290,472	1,010,661	1,234,779	1,079,704
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-
Transportation Equip Purchases	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment Purchases	131,836	113,440	382,494	202,435	244,230
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>6,910,691</b>	<b>5,730,002</b>	<b>7,241,690</b>	<b>7,579,683</b>	<b>7,979,782</b>

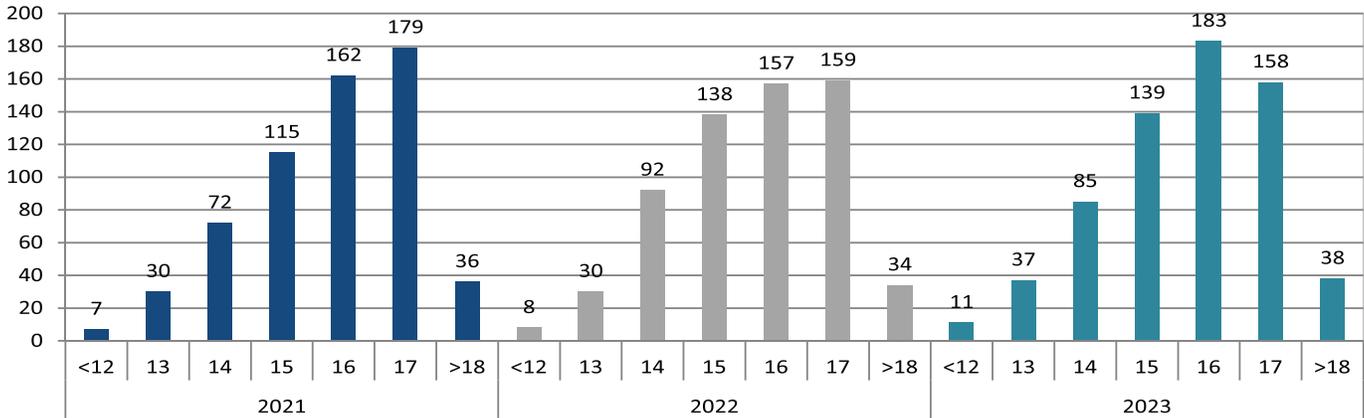
# DYS BY THE NUMBERS

There were 651 youth admitted to DYS in FY23. The age group with the most youth admissions is 16 followed by 17 and 15 years of age. Technical violations remain the number one reason for admission to DYS. Technical violations include violation of probation. Property crimes continue to be the 2nd highest. Person non-felony offenses continue to be the 3rd highest offense for admission.

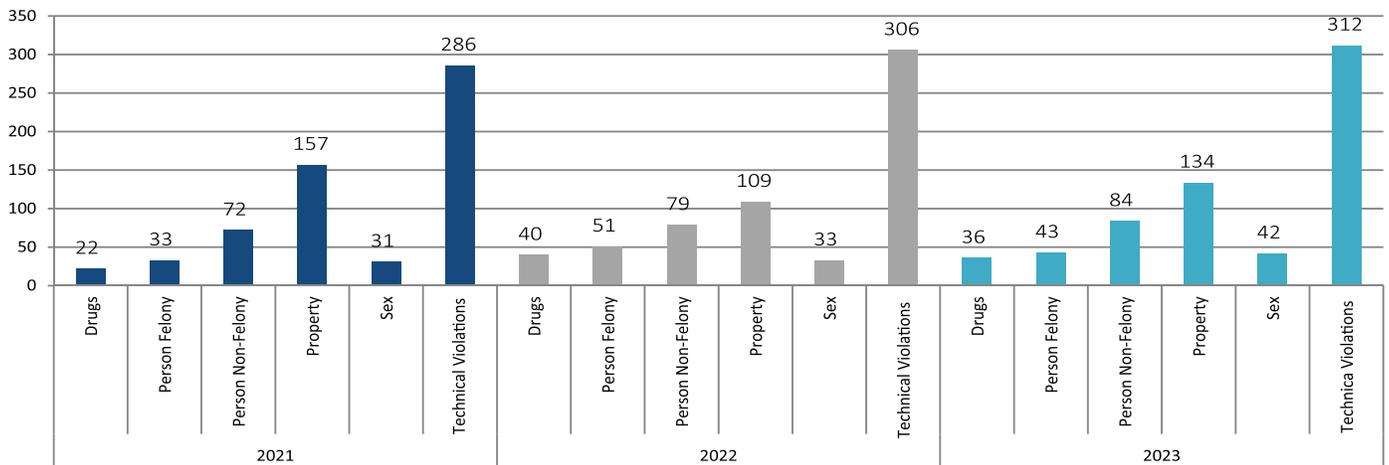
**NUMBER OF YOUTH**



**YOUTH BY AGE**

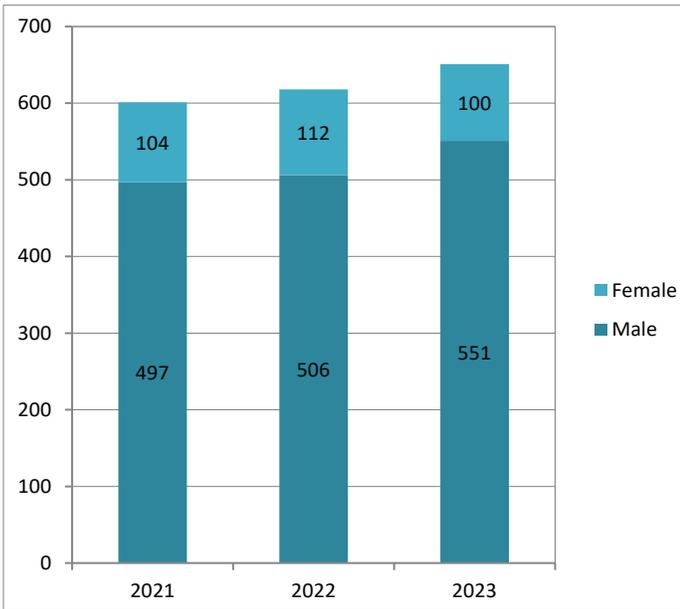


**YOUTH BY OFFENSE**

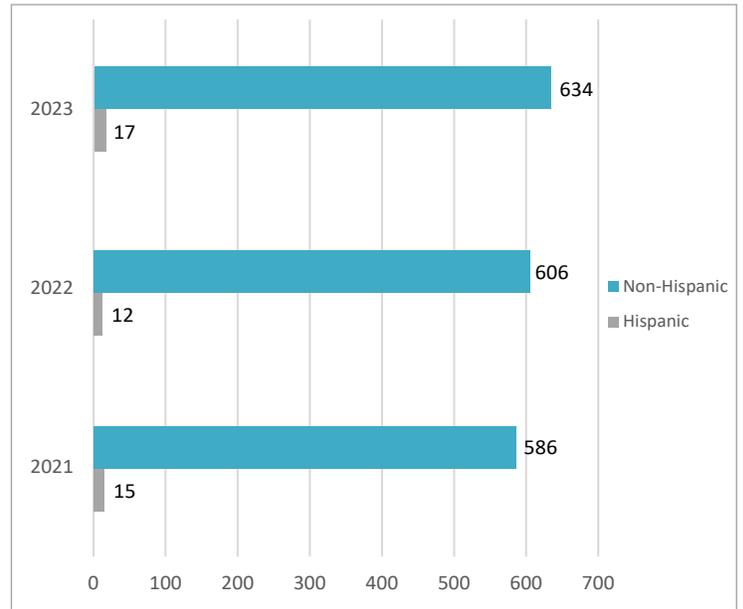


Female admissions for FY23 was 15% of the overall population, which is slightly down from 18% in FY22. In regards to ethnicity, 2.6% of youth were identified as Hispanic in FY23, which is slightly up from 1.9% in FY22. For admissions by race in FY23, 62.5% were Black/African-American, 35.7% were White, and 1.6% were Other. The demographics for race for FY22 were 57% were Black/African-American, 41% were White, and 2% were Other. In FY21, 55.6% were Black/African-American, 42.7% were White, and 1.6% were Other.

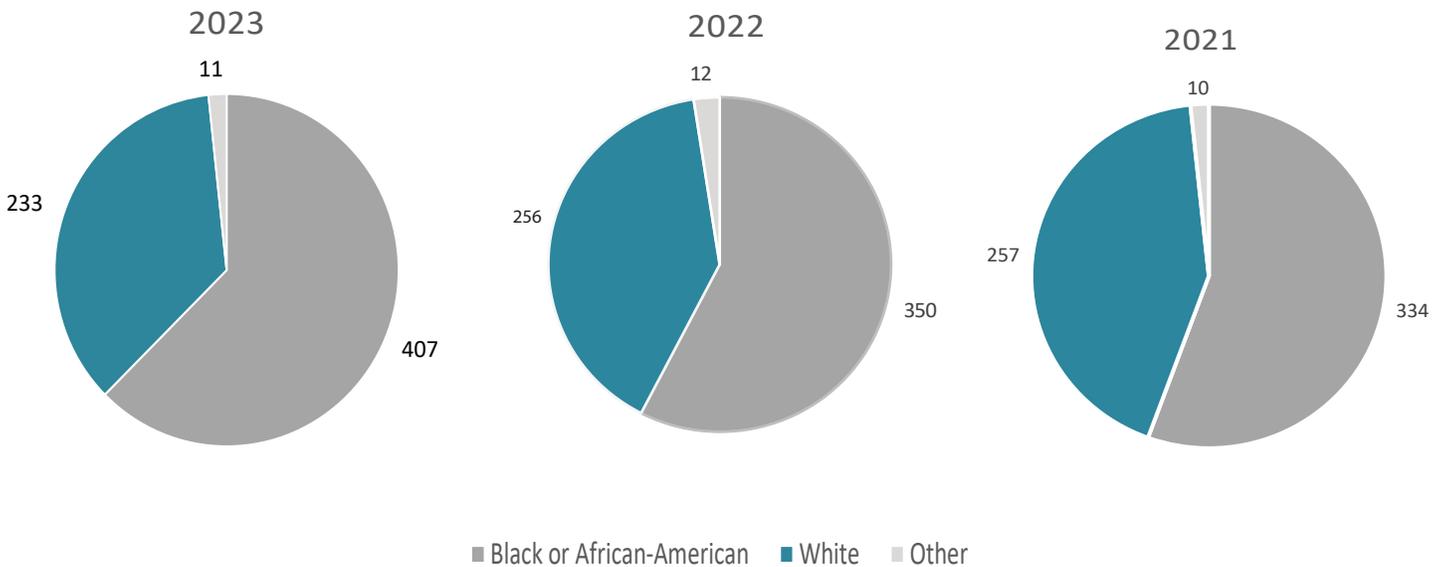
### YOUTH BY GENDER



### YOUTH BY ETHNICITY



### YOUTH BY RACE



# DYS Organizational Chart

