


# Maryland's Racial and Ethnic Disparities Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2025

Submitted by:

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# Introduction

States must submit their compliance data for the Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO), section 223(a)(11)(B)1, separation, and jail removal core requirements for federal fiscal year[1] 2024 (October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024) and their Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) plans electronically to the OJJDP Compliance Monitoring Tool separately from the Title II formula grant application. This submission must include 12 months of data for at least 85 percent of facilities that are required to report compliance data. States that fail to meet these requirements will be determined not to have an effective system of compliance monitoring and thus will be deemed out of compliance with the DSO, separation, and jail removal requirements.

**Plan for compliance with the R/ED core requirement**. Pursuant to the JJDP Act at 34 U.S.C.§ 11133(a)(15), in order to achieve compliance with the R/ED requirement, States must "implement policy, practice, and system improvement strategies at the [s]tate, territorial, local, and [T]ribal levels, as applicable, to identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities among youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, without establishing or requiring numerical standards or quotas, by—

(A) establishing or designating existing coordinating bodies, composed of juvenile justice stakeholders (including representatives of the educational system) at the [s]tate, local, or [T]ribal levels, to advise efforts by [s]tates, units of local government, and Indian Tribes to reduce racial and ethnic disparities;
(B) identifying and analyzing data on race and ethnicity at decision points in [s]tate, local, or [T]ribal juvenile justice systems to determine which such points create racial and ethnic disparities among youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system; and
(C) developing and implementing a work plan that includes measurable objectives for policy, practice, or other system changes, based on the needs identified in the data collection and analysis under subparagraph (B)."

The term "racial and ethnic disparity" means "minority youth populations are involved at a decision point in the juvenile justice system at disproportionately higher rates than nonminority youth at that decision point." 34 U.S.C. § 11103(41).

States are required to provide R/ED plans using a three-pronged, research driven, outcome-based strategy for their R/ED work. The R/ED plan must include a sentence that designates and names a coordinating body, that advises efforts by States, units of local government, and Indian Tribes to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

Prong one of the submission includes the reporting of statewide data at key juvenile justice decision points where research has shown that potential disparity may occur. Those decision points are, arrest, diversion, pre-trial detention, disposition commitments, and adult transfer.

Prong two includes the development of a R/ED Action Plan. Maryland's action plan outlined below, is designed specifically to align with the Three-Year State Plan for FFY 2024–2026.

Maryland's R/ED Action Plan provides answers to the questions below:

[1] "FFY" is defined as the federal fiscal cycle for the year cited throughout the report. "SFY" is defined as the Maryland state fiscal year cited which runs from July 1 through June 30 throughout the report.

1. What do your R/ED numbers tell you about your jurisdiction?
2. What would success in R/ED reduction look like for your State?
3. How do you want to reduce R/ED next year?
4. Why do you believe this is a reasonable reduction?
5. What do you need, if anything, from OJJDP to be successful with your R/ED action plan?
6. What safeguards will you put in place to ensure that as you work to reduce R/ED, you are equipping youth to live productive lives?

Prong three requires States to report on progress in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the R/ED Action Plan through an outcome-based evaluation. This outcome-based evaluation is required to be included in Maryland's Year 2 (FFY 2025) and Year 3 (FFY 2026) submission.

# Maryland's Most Recent R/ED Numbers

Maryland's FFY 2025 Maryland Racial and Ethnic Disparities Plan illustrates data for the following contact points of our juvenile justice system: Arrest/Referral to Juvenile Court/Intake, Diversion, Pre-trial Detention, Disposition Commitments, and Transfers to the Adult Court System. For the purpose of this report, Maryland utilized the following definitions for each contact point to determine the level of Racial and Ethnic Disparities within the juvenile justice system:

- Arrest - Statewide and local jurisdiction data of intake complaints to Juvenile Court/Intake data was utilized for reporting purposes.
- Diversion - Complaints diverted by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) Intake (resolved or informally adjusted to pre-court supervision) without a formal petition.
- Pre-trial Detention - Statewide and local jurisdiction data of youth held in one of the five (5) youth detention centers awaiting disposition of a formal complaint.
- Disposition Commitments - Statewide and local jurisdiction data for out-of-home placements for youth committed to Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services, including a demographic breakdown of the totals for this contact point.
- Adult Transfers - Youth held in the Department of Juvenile Services detention facilities for the adult court pending a transfer hearing.

## Arrest

In SFY[2] 2024, Maryland had 14,184 intake complaints which is a 31.5% increase over the last three state fiscal years. Despite the notable increase, intake complaints are still not as high as they were pre-pandemic.

The table below displays the most recent demographics of Maryland's youth population from ages 11–17. Comparing this data to the demographics of intake complaints statewide from SFY

[2] "SFY 2024" is the Maryland state fiscal year which runs from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

2022 to 2024 (also below), makes the racial and ethnic disparities for Black youth more apparent.

| Maryland's Youth Population (Ages 11–17)[3] by Race (2023) | | |
|---|---|---|
| White Youth | Black Youth | Hispanic/Other Youth[4] |
| 39.5% | 30.5% | 30% |

## Intake Complaint Decision Demographics, FY 2022-2024

| Demographics | FY2022 | FY2023 | FY2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | | |
| Black | 62.1% | 63.6% | 67.0% |
| White | 28.2% | 24.8% | 21.7% |
| Hispanic/Other | 9.7% | 11.6% | 11.3% |
| **Sex** | | | |
| Male | 70.1% | 71.2% | 70.4% |
| Female | 29.9% | 28.8% | 29.6% |
| **Age** | | | |
| 11 and under | 4.1% | 1.0% | 1.1% |
| 12 | 6.0% | 1.5% | 1.6% |
| 13 | 10.1% | 10.1% | 11.4% |
| 14 | 14.8% | 17.5% | 19.4% |
| 15 | 19.2% | 23.2% | 23.5% |
| 16 | 20.7% | 23.0% | 20.6% |
| 17 | 20.9% | 20.5% | 19.9% |
| 18-20 | 4.2% | 3.3% | 2.5% |
| *Total Complaints* | *10,790* | *12,391* | *14,184* |

Data Source: 2024 DJS Data Resource Guide, pg. 38

From SFY 2022 to 2024, the proportion of intake complaints involving Black youth increased relative to their share of the general youth population, rising by 4.9%. This indicates a growing racial disparity in juvenile system involvement. In contrast, White youth have exhibited a decrease in their involvement, with intake complaints dropping by 6.5% over the past three years. Hispanic/Other youth[5] saw a slight 0.3% decrease in intake complaints over the past year. Despite this, the current percentage remains higher than in SFY 2022, reflecting ongoing challenges despite some improvement.

[3] Data Source: DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, p .201. The data uses the 2023 Census and Maryland Department of Planning, Population Estimation for Maryland as its sources.

[4] The race data reported by Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services combines Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American/Indian/Alaskan. Hawaiian/OPI, and two or more races into a single reporting category titled "Hispanic/Other"

[5] The race data reported by Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services combines Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American/Indian/Alaskan. Hawaiian/OPI, and two or more races into a single reporting category titled "Hispanic/Other"

In SFY 2024, approximately 60% of the state's intake complaints occurred in Maryland's five largest jurisdictions (as illustrated below):

- **Anne Arundel County**: Of the 1,393 referred youth, 58.9% were Black, 13.4% were Hispanic/Other, and 27.7% were White.[6]
- **Baltimore City**: Of the 1,649 referred youth, 94.6% were Black, 2.4% were Hispanic/Other, and 3% were White.[7]
- **Baltimore County**: Of the 2,816 referred youth, 78.4% were Black, 6.3% were Hispanic/Other, and 15.3% were White.[8]
- **Montgomery County**: Of the 1,415 referred youth, 52.9% were Black, 34.7% were Hispanic/Other, and 12.4% were White.[9]
- **Prince George's County**: Of the 1,218 referred youth, 79.2% were Black, 17.5% were Hispanic/Other, and 3.3% were White.[10]

The following table displays the percentage of Black youth and Hispanic/Other youth in Maryland's five largest jurisdictions versus the percentage of Black youth and Hispanic/Other youth in these jurisdictions that have been referred to DJS (intake complaints). Black youth experienced the largest disparities out of all youth of color as evidenced below, with the highest disparity occurring in Baltimore County with a 43.9% difference. In contrast, there were no disparities marked for Hispanic/Other youth.

| **Youth of Color Intake Complaints (Ages 11 - 17) - MD's Five Largest Jurisdictions** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Black Youth** | | **Hispanic/Other Youth** | |
| | **Population** | **Complaints** | **Population** | **Complaints** |
| Anne Arundel | 20.2% | 58.9% | 27.3% | 13.4% |
| Baltimore City | 65.2% | 94.6% | 18.1% | 2.4% |
| Baltimore County | 34.5% | 78.4% | 23.6% | 6.3% |
| Montgomery | 20.3% | 52.9% | 46.9% | 34.7% |
| Prince George's | 51.9% | 79.2% | 39.5% | 17.5% |

Data Source: 2024 DJS Data Resource Guide

## Diversion

In SFY 2024, 57.3% of juvenile cases were diverted, marking an 11.1% decrease over the past three state fiscal years. This regression in diversion resulted in the rise of authorized formal petitions during the same period, indicating that more youth are entering the formal justice system rather than being diverted to alternative programs.

[6] Data Source: DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, p. 48. Under *Intake Complaint Decision Demographics, FY 2022 -2024*
[7] Data Source: DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, p. 50. Under *Intake Complaint Decision Demographics, FY 2022 -2024*
[8] Data Source: DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, p. 52. Under *Intake Complaint Decision Demographics, FY 2022 -2024*
[9] Data Source: DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, p. 76. Under *Intake Complaint Decision Demographics, FY 2022 -2024*
[10] Data Source: DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, p. 78. Under *Intake Complaint Decision Demographics, FY 2022 -2024*

The following table shows the state's three-year trend regarding diversion[11] (resolved and informally adjusted, “informaled”[12]) for intake complaints statewide.

**Percentage of Cases Diverted - Statewide**

| Case Forwarding Decision | FY2022 | FY2023 | FY2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resolved | 57.1% | 54.0% | 47.2% |
| Informaled | 11.3% | 11.4% | 10.1% |
| Authorized Formal Petition | 31.6% | 34.6% | 42.7% |
| *Total Complaints* | *10,790* | *12,391* | *14,184* |

Data Source: 2024 DJS Data Resource Guide, pg. 38

The table below shows the percentage of cases diverted for youth of color and the disparities that persist at this contact point.

**Percentage of Cases Diverted - Youth of Color**

| Case Forwarding Decision | FY2022 | FY2023 | FY2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resolved | 55.7% | 52.2% | 45.4% |
| Informaled | 9.5% | 10.4% | 8.6% |
| Authorized Formal Petition | 34.8% | 37.4% | 46.1% |
| *Total Complaints* | *7,749* | *9,315* | *11,103* |

Data Source: 2024 DJS Data Resource Guide, pg. 44

54% of juvenile cases for youth of color were diverted, also signaling an 11.2% reduction over the past three state fiscal years. While this is a slight difference of 3.3% compared to the statewide percentage, it still represents a concerning trend for youth of color, as authorized formal petitions for this group have increased by 11.3%. This continued decline in diversion could further contribute to inequities within the system.

## Pre-trial Detention

As shown in the table below, 1,161 youth were placed in pre-trial or predisposition detention in SFY 2024, marking a significant 58.4% increase in youth placements compared to SFY 2022. It

[11] An increase in the percentage of cases diverted means fewer youth progress deeper into the justice system (a positive outcome); the opposite is also true (a negative outcome).
[12] Informaled is defined by DJS as, an agreement consented to by the youth and parent/guardian diverting the case from formal court proceedings. The term is up to 90 days and may be extended to 180 days for substance abuse and mental health treatment needs by DJS or as otherwise ordered by the court. Failure to comply with the supervision agreement may result in a formal petition being filed.

is difficult to pinpoint a single reason for the increase. However, the two most likely drivers in the increase in detention placements are the COVID pandemic and recent legislative changes. SFY 2020 includes the last pre-COVID number of total placements for juvenile detention, which was 1,755. That number dropped to 831 juvenile placements in SFY 2021 which clearly shows the impact of the pandemic. Additionally, the Maryland Legislature passed House Bill 814 in 2024 which rolled back recent reforms by allowing youth, ages 10–13, to be charged with certain juvenile offenses. This subjects a whole new population to potential system involvement at several contact points.[13]

YOUTH PLACEMENT DEMOGRAPHICS, FY 2022-2024

| Youth Demographics | FY2022 | FY2023 | FY2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | | |
| Black | 77.6% | 79.2% | 79.4% |
| White | 13.8% | 10.3% | 9.6% |
| Hispanic/Other | 8.6% | 10.6% | 10.9% |
| **Sex** | | | |
| Male | 87.6% | 91.4% | 86.1% |
| Female | 12.4% | 8.6% | 13.9% |
| **Age** | | | |
| 11 and under | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| 12 | 1.4% | 0.7% | 1.5% |
| 13 | 5.9% | 4.3% | 7.7% |
| 14 | 13.8% | 14.9% | 19.2% |
| 15 | 27.4% | 28.2% | 27.3% |
| 16 | 18.8% | 20.7% | 17.7% |
| 17 | 19.8% | 19.4% | 15.8% |
| 18-20 | 12.7% | 11.6% | 10.4% |
| *Total Admissions from Juv. Court* | *733* | *907* | *1,161* |

Data Source: 2024 DJS Data Resource Guide, pg. 106

The data points to youth of color being disproportionately represented in detention. From SFY 2022 to more recently in SFY 2024, placements for White youth decreased by 4.2%, Black youth placements increased by 1.8%, and Hispanic/Other youth placements saw a larger increase of 2.3%.

## Disposition Commitments (Secure and Non-Secure)

In SFY 2024, there were 347 committed placements in Maryland which marks a 33.5% increase from SFY 2022 as evidenced by the table below.

[13] Data Source: DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, p. 16–17

## Committed Placements by Demographics, FY 2022-2024

| Demographics | FY2022 | FY2023 | FY2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | | |
| Black | 73.5% | 78.5% | 75.8% |
| White | 15.4% | 12.8% | 12.7% |
| Hispanic/Other | 11.2% | 8.7% | 11.5% |
| **Sex** | | | |
| Male | 94.2% | 93.9% | 94.2% |
| Female | 5.8% | 6.1% | 5.8% |
| **Age** | | | |
| 11 and under | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 12 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 13 | 1.5% | 2.6% | 1.4% |
| 14 | 9.6% | 6.4% | 8.6% |
| 15 | 20.4% | 14.4% | 15.3% |
| 16 | 23.1% | 22.8% | 26.2% |
| 17 | 29.6% | 30.8% | 28.8% |
| 18-20 | 15.8% | 23.1% | 19.6% |
| *Total Placements* | *260* | *312* | *347* |

Data Source: 2024 DJS Data Resource Guide, pg. 138

Over the last three years, committed placements for White youth have decreased from 15.4% to 12.7%. Black youth remain overrepresented, with their percentage rising from 73.5% to 75.8%. Despite the small decrease, Black youth continue to make up the majority of placements, highlighting ongoing disparities. Hispanic/Other youth placements fluctuated, decreasing from 11.2% to 8.7%, but rising again to 11.5%, signaling the need for further examination of the factors driving these changes.

## Adult Transfers

The table below reveals that in SFY 2024 Maryland had 474 youth charged as adults pending a transfer hearing to potentially return to juvenile court jurisdiction. This is a 53% increase compared to the 310 youth charged as adults in SFY 2022.[14] House Bill 814, as discussed above, most likely had an impact on the increase in the adult transfer population as well.[15] One of the biggest changes resulting from the Bill requires DJS to forward complaints to the State's Attorney's Office for review and charging decisions on a new subset of cases.[16] As a result, DJS 6,057 juvenile complaints were forwarded to the State's Attorney and 87.5% were formally petitioned.[17] Additionally, while the percentage of cases waived to adult court does not show an

[14] Data Source: DJS 2023 Data Resource Guide, p. 128
[15] A detailed discussion of the impact of the new law is in the DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, pgs. 16–18
[16] Id.
[17] Id.

increase in SFY 2024, 24.8% of the cases are still pending disposition at the time the resource guide was published.[18] This spotlights the significant backlog in case resolution resulting from the mandatory review of cases by the State's Attorney. The Office will monitor the data regarding transfers up to adult court jurisdiction as the backlog subsides.

YOUTH CHARGED AS ADULTS PENDING TRANSFER DEMOGRAPHICS BY DETENTION FACILITY[1], FY 2024

| Demographics | Balt. City Juvenile Justice Center | Charles H. Hickey Jr. School | Cheltenham Youth Facility | Lower East. Shore Children's Center | Western Maryland Children's Center | Statewide* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | | | | | | |
| Black | 86.8% | 80.8% | 78.5% | 85.3% | 72.1% | 82.3% |
| White | 6.6% | 9.6% | 8.9% | 8.8% | 11.6% | 7.8% |
| Hispanic/Other | 6.6% | 9.6% | 12.6% | 5.9% | 16.3% | 9.9% |
| **Sex** | | | | | | |
| Male | 100.0% | 100.0% | 92.6% | 82.4% | 32.6% | 93.5% |
| Female | 0.0% | 0.0% | 7.4% | 17.6% | 67.4% | 6.5% |
| **Age** | | | | | | |
| 14 | 0.0% | 0.7% | 1.5% | 2.9% | 2.3% | 1.1% |
| 15 | 5.5% | 3.4% | 3.7% | 0.0% | 2.3% | 4.0% |
| 16 | 41.2% | 34.9% | 40.0% | 32.4% | 46.5% | 40.5% |
| 17 | 45.1% | 53.4% | 46.7% | 55.9% | 44.2% | 47.9% |
| 18-20 | 8.2% | 7.5% | 8.1% | 8.8% | 4.7% | 6.5% |
| *Total Admissions* | *182* | *146* | *135* | *34* | *43* | *474* |
| **ADP** | **53.0** | **51.6** | **37.2** | **6.4** | **9.1** | **157.3** |
| **ALOS** | **109.7** | **120.9** | **106.0** | **72.6** | **89.7** | **123.4** |

Data Source: 2024 DJS Data Resource Guide, pg. 115

Black youth remain overrepresented, comprising 82.3% of cases, slightly down from 83.4% in SFY 2023. White youth saw a small increase of 0.3%, while Hispanic/Other youth rose by 0.8%. The overall increase affects all racial groups, but Black youth continue to be disproportionately detained pending transfer hearings.

# Outcome-based Evaluation

## R/ED Numbers Summary

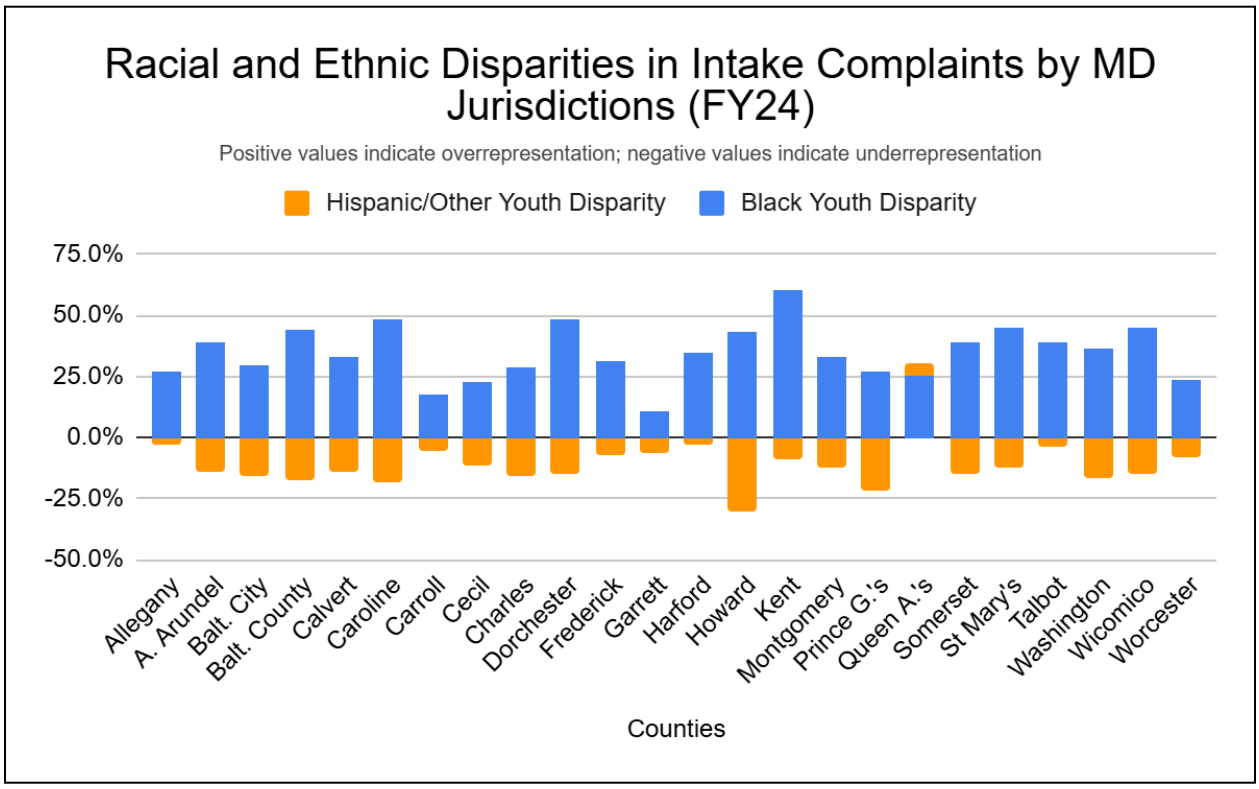
As outlined above, the SFY 2024 data from the State of Maryland still shows racial and ethnic disparities at every contact point for youth of color. Black youth in particular had wider disparities than Hispanic/Other youth with increases at arrest and pre-trial detention in SFY 2024. It is also important to note that Black youth and Hispanic/Other youth experienced opposite trends in disposition commitments and adult transfers. Black youth experienced slight reductions at these two contact points whereas Hispanic/Other youth experienced slight increases.

This is the second consecutive fiscal year where diversion declined, both statewide and for youth of color. The exact cause of the trend is not yet known, however, the recent rollback of

[18] DJS 2024 Data Resource Guide, pg. 38

system reform and additional requirements for case reviews is the most likely source of these changes.

Encouragingly, the majority of counties with the largest disparities for Black youth in SFY 2023 (St. Mary's County, Howard County and Baltimore County) as well as two of the five largest jurisdictions in Maryland (Montgomery and Prince George's County) made progress to reduce their overrepresentation in referrals. Now, recent data suggests that Dorchester County, Wicomico County, Kent County, and Caroline County have the largest disparities for Black youth statewide (shown below). The only county where disparities exist for Hispanic/Other youth is in Queen Anne's county.




Data Source: [2024 DJS Data Resource Guide]

## Goals Updates

Goal 1: **Reduce intake complaints by increasing the number of diversion and detention alternative opportunities for youth of color.** This goal was not fully met, as the decrease in diversion and the increase in detention placements indicate there is room for improvement in providing more alternatives to incarceration for youth of color. However, a new supportive program for Maryland youth (Community Assistance for the Release Eligible or "CARE")[19] was launched in early SFY 2025 to provide resources to justice-involved youth and their families.

[19] Data Source: The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services Announces Launch of Commission on Juvenile Justice, Reforms Detention Policies, p. 2

Goal 2: **Increase the availability of diversion and detention alternatives by funding programs that focus on diversion and alternatives to incarceration from the Office's Title II Formula (JJAC) and Juvenile State Match Requirement (JSMR) Grant Program funding**. This goal was fully met; the Office provided four JJAC awards totaling $492,261.78 and five JSMR awards totaling $778,564 to organizations that focused on community-based alternatives to incarceration, community-based programs to strengthen families and communities, positive youth development, and diversion. The Office plans on conducting site visits and check-ins with subgrantees for next year's evaluation to see how grant funds are being used to ameliorate the lives of justice-involved youth and their families.

Goal 3: **Conduct outreach and education to counties showing the largest disparities (e.g., Howard County, St. Mary's County, Baltimore County, and Wicomico) and the largest counties in the state (e.g., Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County, and Montgomery County) to address R/ED.** This goal was not fully met. Given the capacity limitations of the State Advisory Group members and the DSA staff, this goal may have been unrealistic to complete in 12 months. However, community events were conducted in Baltimore City, Howard County, and Anne Arundel County. The SAG also conducted virtual events directed toward youth and addressing mental health. Both the SAG and DSA staff look forward to continued outreach in the communities across the state.

## Successes and Barriers to Goals

One barrier encountered with Goal 1 was the rise of formally processing intake complaints. Despite ongoing efforts by both DJS to expand diversion and alternatives to detention, the rise in formal processing reduced opportunities for diversion statewide and most especially for youth of color. Another barrier was the failed efforts of the State to pass Senate Bill 422 and Senate Bill 827.[20] Both bills would have addressed Maryland's compliance concerns with youth being held in adult jails and direct-file provisions. Maryland law has exclusionary offenses that prohibit jurisdiction in the juvenile court.[21] These offenses apply to youth over age 16, and certain crimes for youth over age 14.

Barriers also existed with outreach and education. To address these challenges and ensure better alignment moving forward, the designated state agency (DSA) held a SAG Retreat in September 2024, followed by another in February 2025. These retreats provided technical assistance from the American Institute of Research (AIR) designed to better inform members with their roles and responsibilities and improve communication and coordination within the group. DSA staff will focus on continued SAG recruitment for members with a strong interest in this area and look to build relationships with stakeholders in areas of the state that are more remote.

However, Goal 2 provided great success through increasing the availability of diversion and detention alternatives through Title II formula funds and state match. The state's Notice of

[20] Data Source: Maryland General Assembly - Senate Bill 422 and Data Source: Maryland General Assembly - Senate Bill 827
[21] Maryland Courts and Judicial Proceedings 3-8A-03

Funding Availability (NOFA) for Title II also made significant changes to what organizations would be eligible for funding. These changes included a tiered-system for applicants with the possibility of continuation funds for small grassroots organizations if positive outcomes are demonstrated. This was done in an effort to diversify the applicant pool.

## Technical Assistance from OJJDP

OJJDP can provide technical assistance to Maryland by offering strategies to engage rural communities with the widest disparities. This technical assistance could include trust-building with community members, partnering with credible messengers in communities, creating multidisciplinary teams, and communicating the importance of alternatives to detention for local authorities such as law enforcement, state attorneys, and judges.

## Strategies for Crime-free Juveniles

The State of Maryland equipped juveniles to live crime-free by launching and expanding violence prevention initiatives. Thrive Academy, a gun violence reduction program of DJS, continued to operate in Baltimore City and Baltimore County and expanded to Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties in SFY 2024. Additionally, counties received funding from the Governor to host fun activities for youth to participate in, keeping them busy from committing crime.

In conjunction with state efforts, the SAG equipped juveniles to live crime-free by focusing on education, empowerment, and access to supportive resources. In recognition of Youth Justice Action Month, the SAG hosted two events—one focused on encouraging civic engagement among youth through voting and legislative advocacy, and another that spotlighted mental health needs of system-involved youth. These events helped young people see themselves as active participants in shaping their futures (empowerment). The Office also provided mental health support and other tools to help them manage challenges and avoid the kinds of risks that can lead to system involvement (access to supportive resources).

## Federal Fiscal Year 2026 Goals

In light of Maryland's recent numbers and outcomes of last year's goals, the SAG has recommended modifications of the goals in hopes of protecting youth of color from encountering the juvenile justice system.

Goal 1: **Conduct outreach to and form partnerships with Maryland's Eastern Shore (Dorchester County, Wicomico County, Kent County, Queen Anne's, and Caroline County).** This is a priority the R/ED Subcommittee raised as rural areas, like Maryland's Eastern Shore, tend to be marginalized and lack the resources and guidance necessary to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Recent data also highlights this region as having the widest racial and ethnic disparities in the state.

Goal 2: **Monitor subrecipients of the Office's Title II Formula (JJAC) and Juvenile State Match Requirement (JSMR) Grant Program in collaboration with the Grant Monitoring Subcommittee by way of audits and site visits.** The purpose of this is to assess the impact of the Office's grant funding and see how the newly funded programs are servicing youth and families involved with several justice system contact points. The results will also be added to next year's evaluation.

Goal 3: **Advocate for the importance of alternatives to detention and diversion by providing trauma-informed technical assistance to local authorities, including law enforcement and court officials.** This will be done through topics on R/ED, adultification, and adverse childhood experiences (ACES). The DSA will focus on the impacts of charging youth as adults and holding them in adult jails. This will be a major topic of focus for the SAG and the DSA in FFY 2026.

# Conclusion

The State of Maryland experienced various changes in the last fiscal year including an increase in each contact point and the continuation of racial and ethnic disparities. Nonetheless, this has not changed the State of Maryland's commitment to preventing youth of color from making contact with the juvenile justice system. The SAG also looks forward to working with the Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging Best Practices to search for additional solutions. It is the hope that next year's goals, outreach, technical assistance, and the continued expansion of prevention initiatives like Thrive Academy, Safe Summer, and Safer Stronger Together will spark better outcomes in the next state fiscal year.