

Boyd K. Rutherford  
Lt. Governor

Larry Hogan  
Governor

Sam Abed  
Secretary

## THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES: A DECADE OF SUSTAINED SUCCESS

When Sam Abed was appointed as Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) in February 2011, the Department was facing serious challenges that impacted its ability to deliver adequate and appropriate services to youth in its care. At the time of his appointment, DJS facilities were overcrowded and, consequently, suffered from instability and a lack of accountability for staff and youth. Additionally, the Department's community operations struggled to provide adequate supervision to youth in the community due to large case-loads and lack of appropriate oversight by management.

Secretary Abed has built his leadership of the Department on three pillars: **(1) The Developmental Model**, which bases reforms on the science of adolescent brain development. **(2) Data-driven decision-making**; and **(3) Transparency in DJS operations**. These pillars reflect the values of treating youth in an age and developmentally appropriate manner, basing decisions on objective data rather than anecdotal evidence or trends and building trust in DJS by sharing data with stakeholders and the public.

Since 2011, DJS has successfully implemented reforms that specifically addressed the Department's challenges and moved the agency towards a community-based approach to juvenile justice. Some of these reforms include:

- Creating the Central Review Committee to move youth more quickly between placements and drive down the number of youth waiting in DJS facilities.
- Drafting and/or revising nearly 200 Department policies and procedures.
- Creating a structured Quality Assurance process for DJS facilities and community offices to ensure executive level oversight and accountability for departmental operations.
- Driving down the time to hire new staff in order to maintain full staffing at DJS facilities.
- Implementing the SafeMeasures cloud-based case management system to provide real-time oversight for DJS community case managers and supervisors.
- Beginning in 2012, publishing of an annual Data Resource Guide to provide objective data for stakeholders and the public regarding DJS operations.
- Creating the Office of Family Engagement and Office of Equity and Inclusion to increase fairness and equity for families and youth of color.
- Building relationships with law enforcement, the courts, legislators, the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit, youth advocacy groups, and other stakeholders.

After a decade of successful reforms and partnerships, the data demonstrates a massive shift in the juvenile justice landscape in Maryland. The number of youth entering the juvenile system at intake and the number of youth in DJS facilities are at all-time lows. Youth with lower risk and need profiles are either diverted out of the system or supervised appropriately in the community. As of FY 2021, spending on DJS community operations is 200% higher than spending for DJS facilities, which is

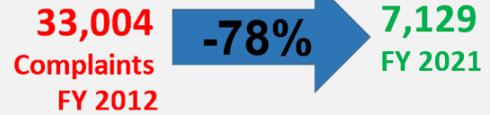
unprecedented in agency history. These results have aligned with the values espoused by Secretary Abed's administration and demonstrate the improved outcomes for Maryland's youth and families.

## complaints



**DECLINED 78%** over 10 years

*Nearly all complaints are generated by law enforcement*



## crime



Juvenile complaints have **DECLINED** in **ALL** categories over 10 years

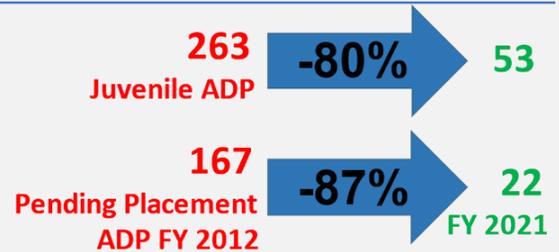
- Crime of Violence **Declined 57%**
- Misdemeanor **Decline 82%**
- Non-Violent Felony **Declined 69%**

## detention



**DECLINED 64%** over 10 years

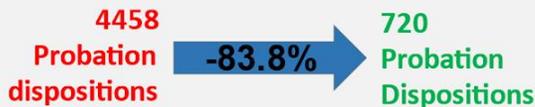
*Youth Charged as Adults now make up 51% of the DIS detained population*



## dispositions



Probation Dispositions **DECLINED** FY2012 to FY2021



Committed Dispositions **DECLINED** FY2012 to FY2021



## budget



**58%** residential and community budget **reductions** over 10 years

Residential Services went from **56 million to 9 million** of the total budget.  
Community Services went from **32 million to 27 million** of the total budget.



## recidivism



12-month re-conviction rates **DECLINED**

*Residential committed programs are serving youth with higher level crimes and higher risk levels.*

Probation Recidivism is down **3.8%** points



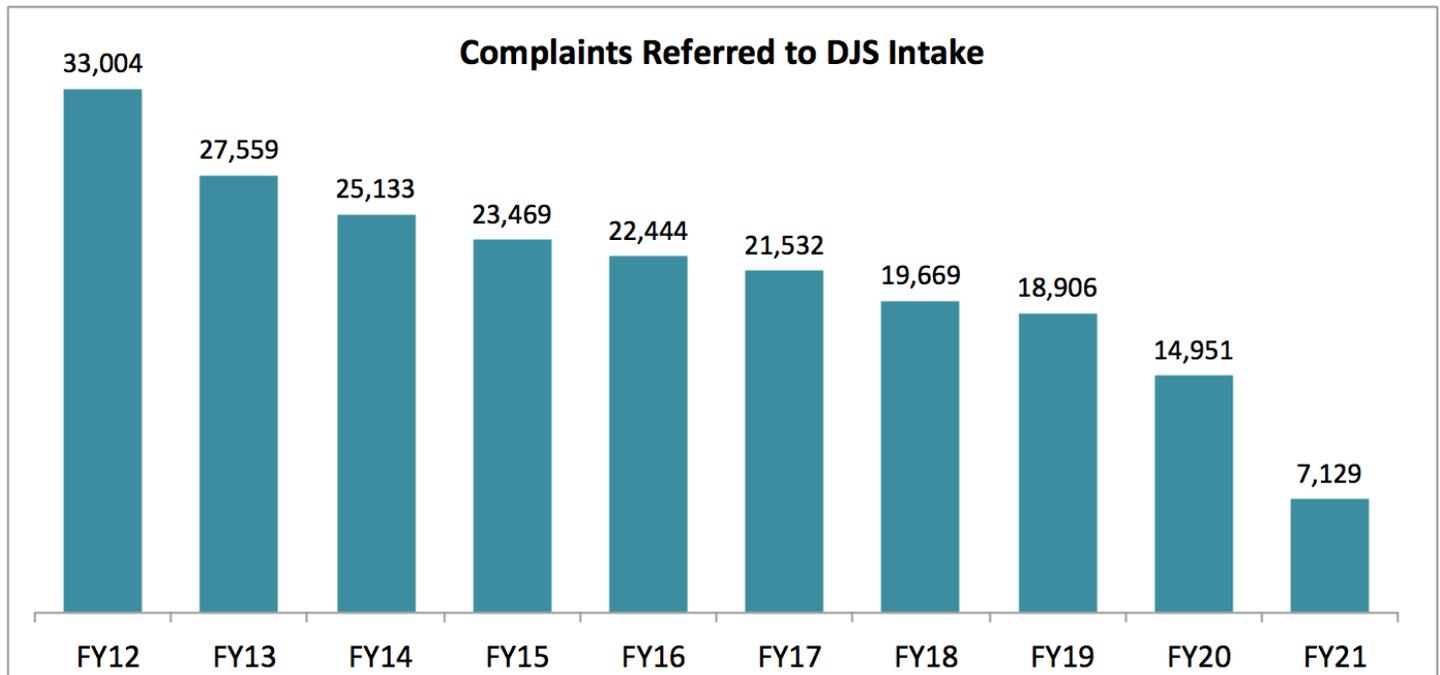
Committed Recidivism is down **2.6%** points



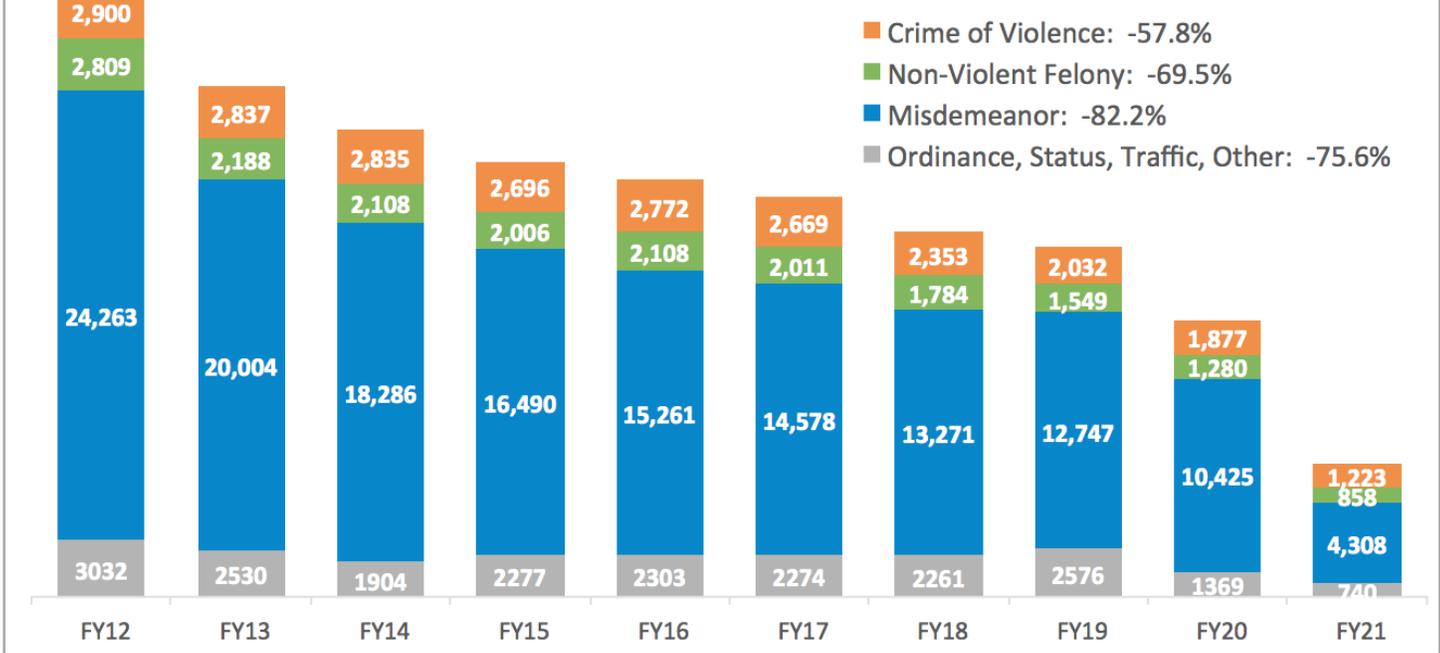
## Reduction in Juvenile Intakes

The number of juvenile complaints brought to DJS intake units (ie. “the front door” of the juvenile justice system) has decreased by 78% in the last decade. This drastic drop in youth coming in to the juvenile justice system reflects a variety of factors from an increased availability of community resources for youth and families, the increased use of diversion at the time of intake, improvements to standardized risk assessment tools, decreases in the number of youth who re-offend after involvement with DJS, and changes in practices by law enforcement, who are the source of virtually all juvenile complaints.

This significant decrease in complaints is seen in all categories of juvenile offenses. Over the last 10 years, juvenile complaints for crimes of violence have declined by 57%, misdemeanors have declined by 82%, and non-violent felonies have declined by 69%.

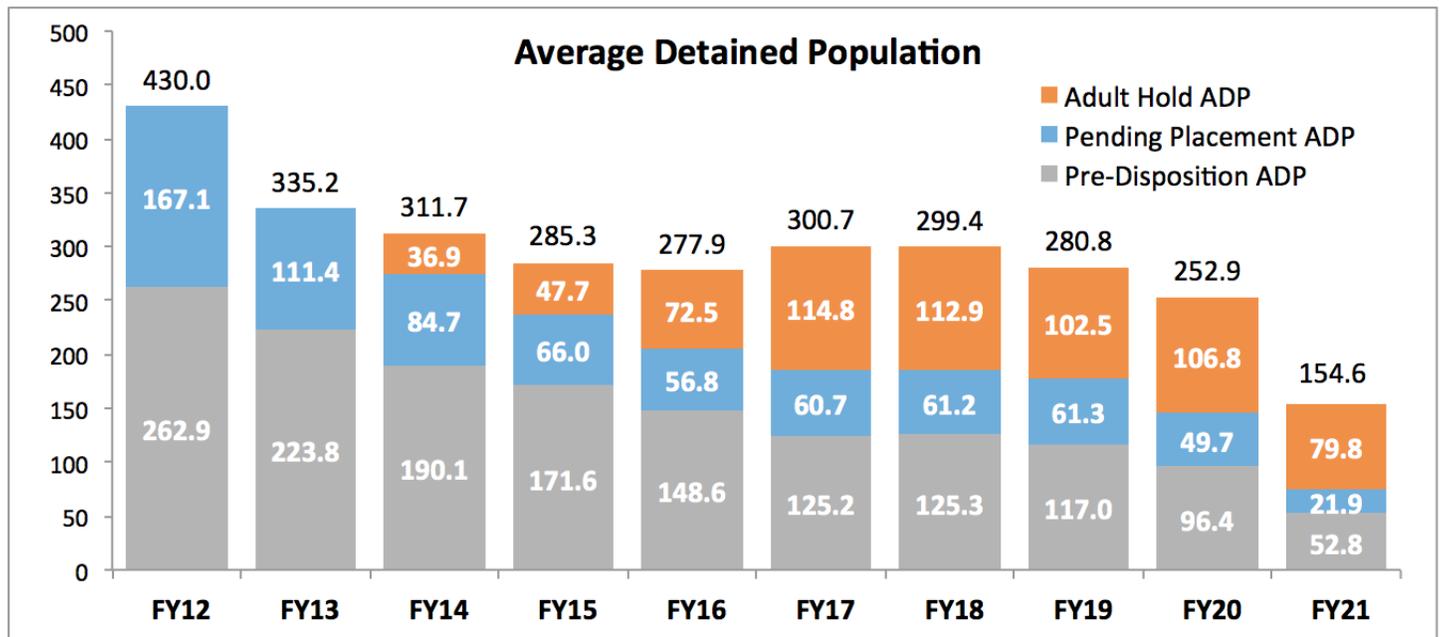


## Complaints Referred to DJS Intake



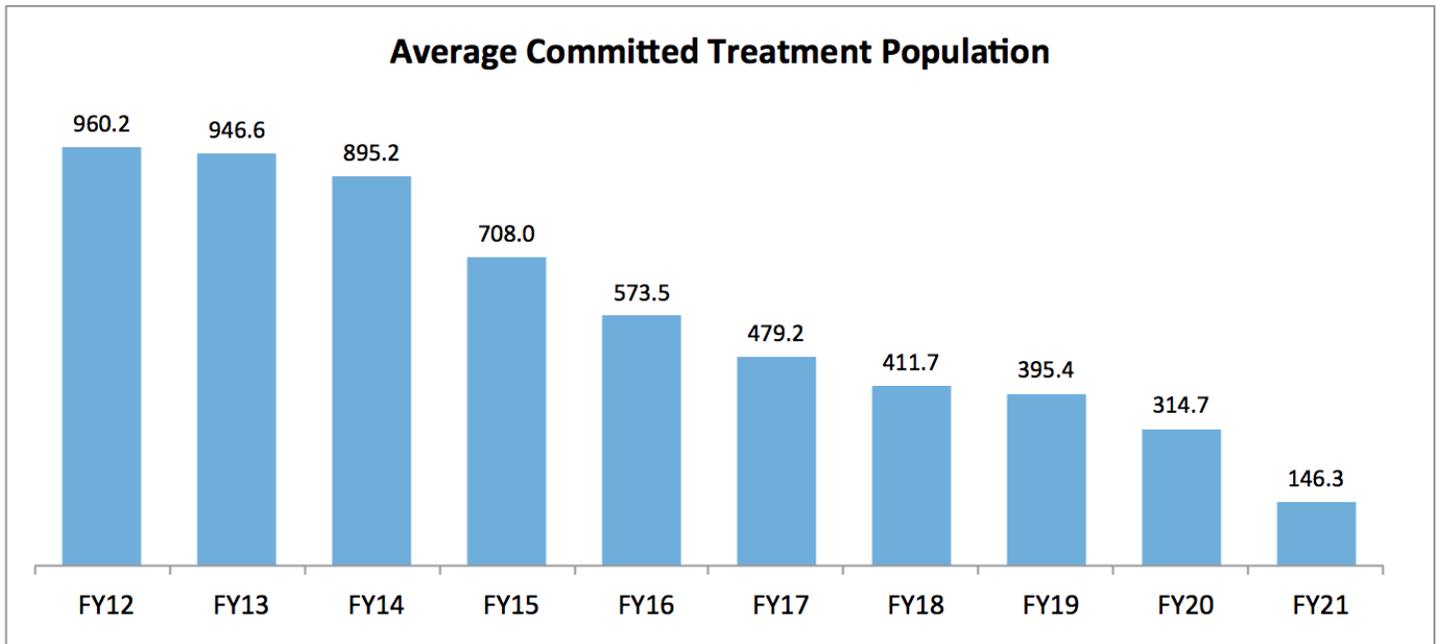
## Reduction in Youth Detention Population

The number of youth in DJS detention facilities has declined 46% since 2015. This significant reduction is due in part to reforms aimed at limiting the use of detention for youth who pose a risk to public safety. As a result of this reduction in detention population, DJS is better able to focus its resources on higher risk youth such as youth charged as adults.



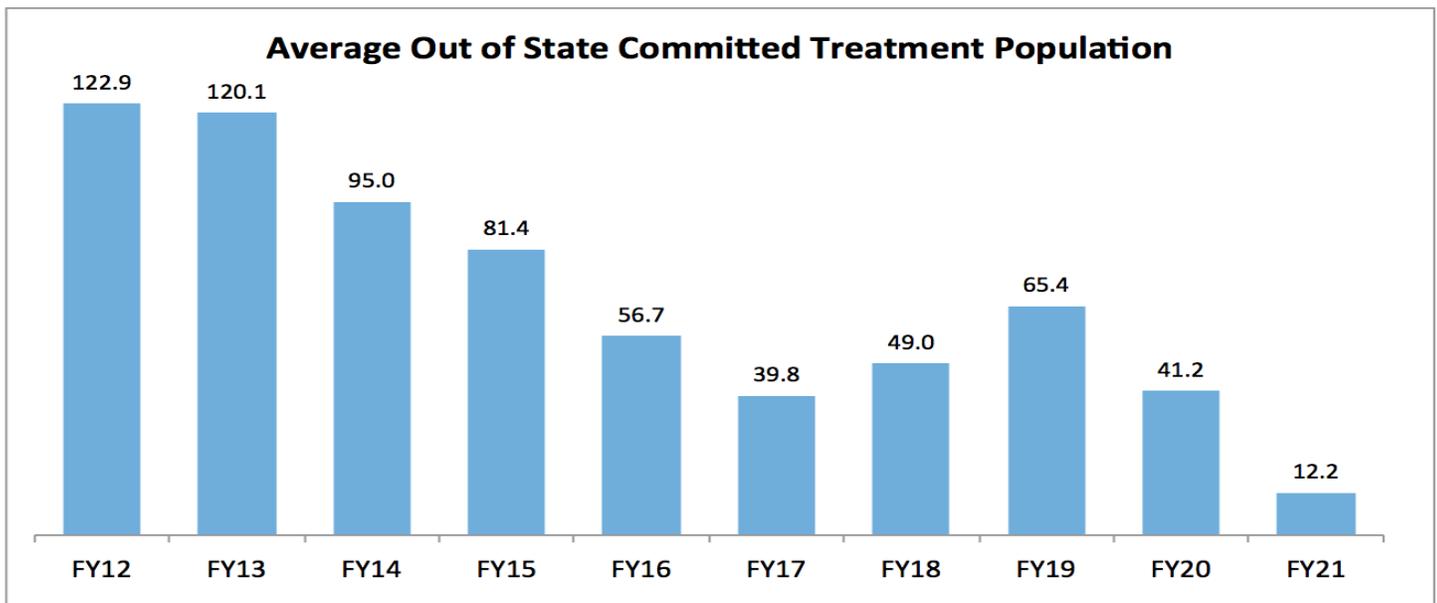
## Reduction in Youth Committed Population

The number of youth committed to DJS for treatment has declined nearly 80% during the current administration. This dramatic drop in youth in the “deep end” of the juvenile system is attributable in part to reforms such as objective risk assessment tools and intentional efforts to divert lower risk youth to more appropriate services. The reduction in the population of committed youth has allowed DJS to shift resources to community programs that support youth and families in Maryland.



## Reduction of Out-of-State Placements

The average daily population of DJS youth who are being sent to out-of-state placements has dropped by 90% from FY 2012 to FY 2021. While the declines to the overall DJS population have contributed to this significant decrease, DJS reform efforts to treat lower risk youth in the communities and, thus, make more in-state treatment beds available for higher need youth played a role, as well. Consistent with research findings, youth who are treated closer to their homes, families, social networks and schools are more likely to have successful outcomes.



## **Funding for Community Resources Now Exceeds Funding for Residential Treatment by 200%**

In light of the significant declines of juvenile complaints, and detention, committed and out-of-state populations, DJS is committing more funds to community resources than to residential treatment for the first time in its history. Consistent with the adolescent developmental model, DJS has made an intentional effort to focus its resources in the community and lessen the use of residential treatment whenever possible. As a result of the Department's reform efforts and in collaboration with system partners like the Maryland courts, DJS has officially shifted its resources to a community-first treatment strategy rather than looking primarily to residential options. Research supports the conclusion that youth with lower risk/need profiles have improved long-term outcomes when they are appropriately supported in their home communities.

## **Reduction in Youth Recidivism Rates**

The recidivism rate for DJS youth on probation declined from 20.6% to 16.2% between 2015 and 2021. This measurement is based on youth who are either reconvicted or re-adjudicated for a new offense while under DJS supervision in the community. This decline reflects in part reforms that adjusted supervision levels in the community based on a youth's risk level as well as the deployment of an automated case management system to ensure that DJS staff are properly supervising youth.

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## **Secretary Sam Abed Highlights**

### **Secretary Sam Abed Background**

In February 2011, Governor Martin O'Malley appointed Sam Abed, the former Deputy Director of Virginia's juvenile justice agency, as Secretary of DJS. He was later re-appointed by Governor Larry Hogan in 2014.

### **Secretary Abed: The Longest-Serving DJS Cabinet Secretary in Agency History**

Since the Department of Juvenile Services became a cabinet-level agency in 1989, there have been nine DJS secretaries. With over a decade in the position, Secretary Abed is the longest serving DJS secretary in Maryland history. Proving that juvenile justice leadership is bi-partisan, Secretary Abed has served in both Democrat and Republican administrations.

- Linda D'Amario Rossi, Secretary of Juvenile Services, 1989-91
- Nancy S. Grasmick, Ph.D., Secretary of Juvenile Services, 1991
- Mary Ann Saar, Secretary of Juvenile Services, 1991-95
- Stuart O. Simms, Secretary of Juvenile Justice, 1995-97
- Gilberto de Jesus, Secretary of Juvenile Justice, 1997-99
- Bishop L. Robinson, Secretary of Juvenile Justice, 2000-03
- Kenneth C. Montague, Jr., Secretary of Juvenile Services, 2003-07
- Donald W. DeVore, Secretary of Juvenile Services, 2007-11
- **Sam Abed, Secretary of Juvenile Services, 2011 - Present**



**National Academy of Sciences - Juvenile Justice Committee Member and Author**

In 2013, Secretary Abed was invited to join a Committee hosted by the National Academy of Sciences in Washington D.C. The Committee, consisting of juvenile justice experts from around the U.S., was tasked with authoring a follow-up to the seminal *Reforming Juvenile Justice* report released by the National Academy of Sciences in 2013. The following year, Secretary Abed and his juvenile justice colleagues completed the follow-up report, which was titled *Implementing Juvenile Justice Reform: The Federal Role*. Released in 2014, *Implementing Juvenile Justice Reform* provided a practical guide for juvenile justice practitioners to implement the adolescent development concepts in *Reforming Juvenile Justice*.

**Secretary Abed Wins “Inspiring Voice” Award**

For the Department’s work with youth in Baltimore City, Secretary Sam Abed was one of several honorees receiving an “Inspiring Voice” award. On April 21, 2015, this award was given by Community Law in Action (CLIA), a youth advocacy group based in Baltimore City. Secretary Abed was recognized for “his work being a problem-solver in Maryland’s juvenile justice system.”

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