



CHANGING
Maryland
for the Better



Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE SERVICES

Department of Juvenile Services Customer Service Annual Report



Customer Service Lead for the Department of Juvenile Services

Jay Cleary, Chief of Staff
217 E. Redwood Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-230-3348
Joseph.cleary@maryland.gov

Contributors to the Annual Report

Nicole Amedori

Jay Cleary

Lesley Oswin

Eric Solomon

Fang Qian

Bernice Walker

Table of Contents

2017 to 2022 Highlights	4
Recognition Given to Employees	5
Leadership Analysis of FY22 and Summary of FY23 Approach	8
Detailed FY22 Results and FY23 Plans	12
Customer Service Survey Results	12
Status of Customer Service Training	13
Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution	13
Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries	13
Best Practices	13
Plans for Improvement	14
Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives	14
Making Agency Services Available Online	14
Processing Times for Customer Transactions	15
Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands	15
Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience	16

2017 to 2022 Highlights

- DJS was one of the first juvenile justice agencies in the United States to create an Office of Family Engagement for the purpose of improving the experiences of its primary customers ie. youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system in Maryland. Originally created in 2015, the Office of Family Engagement was renamed the Engagement Strategies Unit and became part of the DJS Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) in 2020.
- In 2018, DJS implemented customer service training for its staff. This training provides skills for DJS staff to appropriately interact with youth and families involved with the juvenile justice system. In particular, the training has a trauma-focused approach.
- DJS's Family Peer Support Initiative was implemented in 2018 in five Maryland jurisdictions: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, and Wicomico County. Through this customer-focused program, DJS youth and families in those jurisdictions were linked to "peer supports" to help guide them through the juvenile justice process and connect them to services in the community.
- With the arrival of the COVID-19 virus in Maryland in March 2020, DJS facilities increased the use of video calls and the number of weekly phone calls for youth in DJS facilities to help them stay connected to loved ones during the pandemic.
- In January 2020, DJS implemented its first-ever Employee Recognition Awards Program. This program allows for DJS staff to be nominated for various awards on a monthly basis. Since the program's inception, almost 160 deserving DJS staff have been recognized with awards for their hard work and dedication.
- Beginning in 2018, DJS's Communications Office has worked to increase the levels of engagement on the department's social media platforms. On Facebook, the department's posts reached an average of 950 people per post in 2022, which was a 29% increase since 2018 (675 people in 2018 to 950 people in 2022). On Twitter, the number of followers increased about 30% since 2018. (1365 followers in 2018 to 1966 followers in 2022).

Recognition Given to Employees

DJS Employee of the Month Award (September 2021 to August 2022)

Total Number of DJS Employee of the Month Awardees: 12

September 2021 - Carla R. - Cheltenham Youth Detention Center
October - Ashley M. - Cheltenham Youth Detention Center
November - Lakesha B. - Transportation Unit
December - Linda K. - Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center

January 2022 - Laura W. - DJS Headquarters
February - Shantear W. - Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center
March - Esther D. - DJS Headquarters
April - Daryl W. - Garrett County Children's Center
May - Matt F. - Bel Air Office
June - Shannell B. - Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center
July - Roger R. - Sykesville
August - Jamilla T. - Baltimore City Plaza Office

DJS Hero Award (September 2021 to August 2022)

Total Number of DJS Hero Awardees: 16

September 2021 - Cynthia T. - Rockville Office
October - n/a
November - Nic R. - DJS Headquarters
December - Andrea M. - DJS Region 4

January 2022 - Katherine B. - Upper Marlboro Office
Gwendolyn S. - Cheltenham Youth Detention Center

February - Caroline D. - Baltimore City Plaza Office

March - Thomas C. - Green Ridge Youth Center
Lynn J. - DJS Headquarters

April - Jessica D. - DJS Headquarters

May - Torrie J. - Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School
Renita S. - Hagerstown Office
Steven A. - Backbone Mtn. Youth Center

June - Shavon W. - Frederick Office
Jody Pepple - Backbone Mtn. Youth Center

July - Britni H. - Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center

August - Jason R. - Green Ridge Youth Center

DJS Shining Star Award (September 2021 to August 2022)

Total Number of Shining Star Awardees: 24

September 2021 - Rosalind J. - Largo Office
Ryan H. - Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School
Reginald S. - Transportation Unit

October - Lisa R. - Intake Unit
Shanyn M. - Cumberland Office
Darlene W. - Salisbury Office

November - April B. - Largo Office

December - Shannon D. - Thomas J. S. Waxter Children's Center
Sharon Yoder - Western Maryland facilities
James T. - Western Maryland facilities

January 2022 - Casy S. - Cumberland Office
Drew T. - Backbone Mtn. Youth Center

Steve E. - Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School

February - Joanna W. - Eastern Shore region

March - Katherine T. - Cambridge Office

Steve N. - Washington County/Western Maryland

April - Alyssa A. - Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center

Kim F. - Parkville Office

May - Curtis J. - Catonsville Office

June - Stephanie V. - Bel Air Office

Beth P. - Snow Hill Office

July - Shaneice M. - Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center

August - Karen L. - DJS Headquarters

Moses D. - DJS Headquarters

DJS SUPER TEAM AWARD (September 2021 to August 2022)

Total Number of DJS Super Team Awardees: 12

December 2021 - Richard B. - DJS Headquarters

Lesley O. - DJS Headquarters

Paola V. - DJS Headquarters

Darren H. - Community Detention Unit

LaRessa F. - Community Detention Unit

Daniel M. - Transportation Unit

April 2022 - Rashied B. - Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center

Sara M. - Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center

Jordan S. - Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center

Zereena V. - Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center

July - Andrew J. - Cambridge Office
Dustin S. - Cambridge Office

Total Number of DJS Awardees (September 2021 to August 2022): 64

Leadership Analysis of FY22 and Summary of FY23 Approach

DJS RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 VIRUS PANDEMIC

DJS continues to focus on infection control measures in order to keep DJS's staff, youth, and families safe. Thankfully, the widespread availability of various COVID-19 vaccines has allowed many of the DJS staff and age-appropriate youth to receive a vaccination. While infection control measures remain in place in DJS facilities, the restrictions on visitation have been relaxed to provide much-needed and beneficial in-person interactions between DJS youth and their families.

DJS continues to closely monitor and report the numbers of COVID-19 cases among staff and youth in DJS facilities. To ensure transparency, customers can access the COVID-19 page on the DJS website to learn about all of the agency's infection control measures and other reforms to its operations to reduce the risk among DJS staff and youth. Additionally, data related to COVID-19 positive results among DJS staff, youth, and private providers is provided on a daily basis. The DJS COVID-19 page can be found here: <https://djs.maryland.gov/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

DJS works with many stakeholders within the juvenile justice system in Maryland, but its primary customers are youth and families.

In 2015, DJS created the Office of Family Engagement (OEI) for the purpose of improving the experiences of youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system in Maryland. In 2020, the Office of Family Engagement was renamed the Engagement Strategies Unit and became part of OEI. The shift into the OEI demonstrated DJS's ongoing commitment to improving the experiences of youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system with a lens on race equity. The shift also reflected DJS's commitment to improving engagement with youth, communities, victims, and families.

OEI helps staff to change practices that would lead to disparate outcomes for youth and families, particularly youth and families of color.

For youth residing in DJS's secure facilities throughout the State, the opportunity to have regular and meaningful contact with family members plays an important role in the youth's overall well-being. In FY18, the former Office of Family Engagement distributed "toolkits" to DJS facility staff to provide a practical guide for implementing engaging family events. Whether through a yoga and meditation class or a class that taught youth and families how to create a family budget and savings plan, DJS staff and outside volunteers provide more opportunities for youth and their families to have meaningful visits at DJS facilities.

Due to the arrival of the COVID-19 virus in Maryland, DJS had to implement infection control measures for the safety and well-being of DJS youth and staff in facilities. While in-person family visitation was suspended in March 2020, it was reinstated a year later consistent with infection control measures as set forth by the Maryland Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

Today, families can schedule in-person visitation with 24 hours' notice to the facility. There are also opportunities for youth and families to come together for special themed events at the facility.

DJS has also increased the amount of remote contacts youth could have with family members via telephone and, if feasible, video chat. Beginning in March 2021, DJS upgraded its visitation policies to allow youth in DJS facilities 5 contacts per week with family members/approved individuals. This includes two 10-minute phone calls through the facility phone system, one 20-minute phone call made through a facility case management specialist, and two 15-minute virtual video calls. Mail correspondence between youth and families was increased from 2 to 4 letters per week. Youth in medical isolation recovering from the COVID-19 virus are provided cell phones so they can have as much contact with family members as they wish.

In another policy improvement, DJS expanded the definition of family beyond familial relations (parents, siblings, etc.) to include individuals identified by the youth as having a special significance in their lives, which may include coaches, teachers, etc.

FAMILY PEER SUPPORT INITIATIVE (FPS)

In September 2018, DJS implemented the Family Peer Support Initiative (FPS) in five Maryland jurisdictions. This initiative is a customer-focused program that helps guide DJS youth and families through the juvenile justice process. All of the staff who act as

“peer supports” have had previous experience with the juvenile justice system, whether it was their own child or other family member. This shared experience helps build the rapport between the peer supports and the youth and families that they serve. Peer supports play an important role in not only guiding a family through the juvenile justice process but also connecting the family to services in the community that help with other issues related to social services, school resources and treatment providers.

Additionally, peer supports work closely with DJS case managers who are supervising youth in the community. As seen in other human service agencies, family peer support programs have been shown to reduce parental stress, increase the sense of empowerment, and motivate families to increase their involvement in the process.

At its inception, FPS operated in five jurisdictions: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Prince George’s County, and Wicomico County through June 30, 2022. During FY22, over 250 families were referred to the Family Peer Support Initiative. These referrals have led to over 2,000 hours of engagement meetings between families and peer supports, including open houses and workshops.

In FY22, FPS conducted workshops for DJS youth and families that covered topics such as wellness, self-care, understanding Individualized Education Plans, and sex trafficking awareness and prevention. In total, 17 workshops were held with attendance totaling 101 DJS-involved youth and family members.

Additionally, FPS conducted “open houses” where families could meet with peer support specialists to get information about the program. Over 280 youth and family members attended 47 open houses throughout the five jurisdictions in FY22.

Lastly, FPS held support groups for justice-involved families so they could express their concerns and ask questions as their loved ones proceeded through the juvenile justice system. Support groups were led by FPS specialists who had lived experience either directly or through a family member previously involved in the justice system. In FY22, family peer support specialists held 45 support groups that reached a total of 373 family members.

Currently, DJS is working to expand this Initiative statewide and is currently seeking one or more vendors to provide statewide coverage through the procurement process. In FY23 and beyond; DJS seeks to continue the successful engagement efforts of FPS in order to give DJS youth and their families a “voice” throughout the legal process and empower them to achieve successful outcomes.

OFFICE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION SUPPORT GROUPS

In December 2020, OEI conducted a focus group with parents who expressed a need of having a space to speak with other parents, to feel supported, and to discuss their experiences navigating the juvenile justice system. In response to the focus group's feedback, OEI, with assistance provided by the DJS behavioral health staff, began hosting monthly support groups in February 2021. The groups were part of a wider DJS effort to improve a family's overall experience and the process of navigating the juvenile justice system. The groups started in English at first, and then DJS determined that it was best to offer the same support in the Spanish language.

From February 2021 through March 2022, DJS reached over three dozen parents in both English and Spanish language support groups. Going forward, family support groups will be the responsibility of the new family peer support vendor once they are selected through the procurement process. It is projected that a vendor should be selected by early 2023.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS PROCESS

Officially beginning in January 2020, the DJS Employee Recognition Committee (Committee) has continued to recognize the hard work and dedication of DJS employees, especially during this challenging time. What started with just the Employee of the Month award expanded to 3 additional awards: DJS Hero Award, DJS Shining Star Award and the newly-created DJS Super Team Award (first awarded in February 2021).

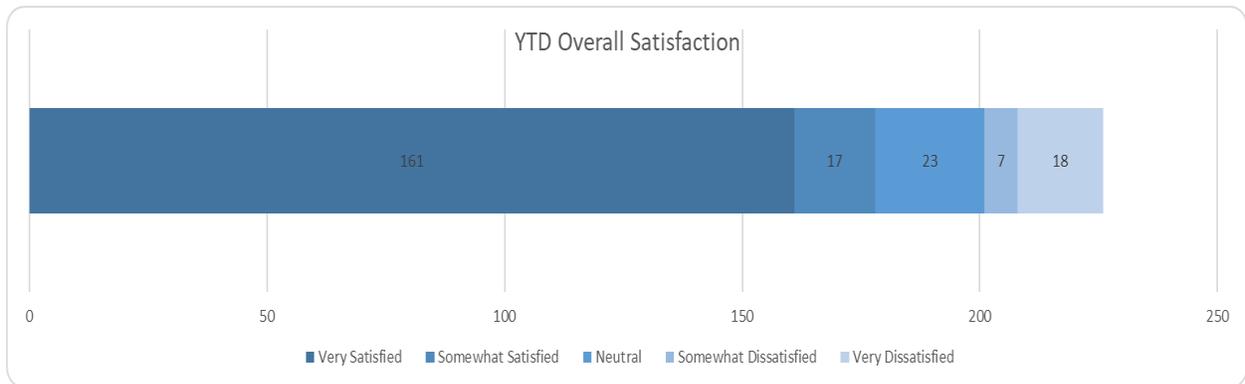
A complete list of winners for September 2021 to August 2022 can be found in the "Recognition Given to Employees" section of this Report.

Since the creation of the DJS employee award process, the Committee has given awards to almost 160 DJS employees for their outstanding work.

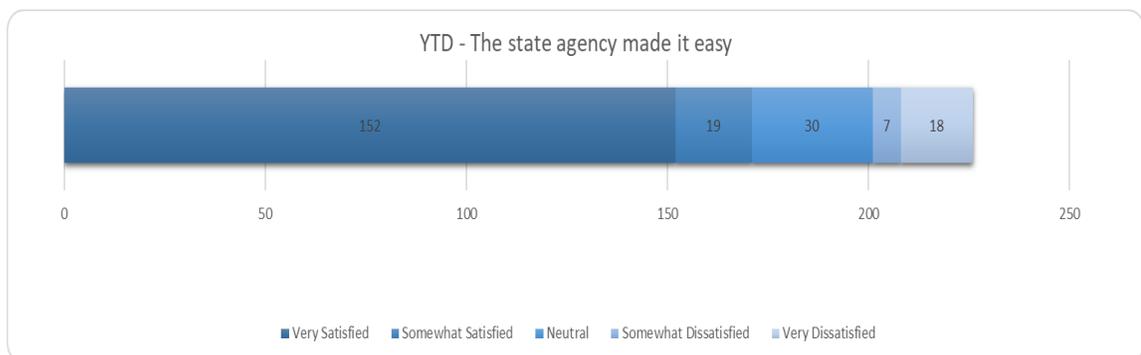
All DJS award winners receive a certificate of recognition signed by the chief of staff. Additionally, award winners are recognized through social media posts on Facebook and Twitter that include the winners' pictures and a brief description of their exemplary performance in service to DJS youth and families. These social media posts garner hundreds of views and interactions.

Detailed FY22 Results and FY23 Plans

Customer Service Survey Results



- From January 1, 2022 to July 11, 2022, 226 responses were provided to the overall satisfaction question. Of the 226 total responses, 178 or 78.7% indicated that the customer was satisfied.



- From January 1, 2022 to July 11, 2022, 226 responses were provided to the statement that the customer received friendly and courteous service. Of the 226 total responses, 171 or 75.6% indicated that the customer agreed that they were satisfied with the friendly and courteous service they received.

Status of Customer Service Training

As of July 19, 2022, a total of 274 DJS employees have completed customer service training for 2022, which is 15% of the agency's workforce. Most of the training is conducted online, however there are classroom training modules sessions also available.

In 2022, staff were offered Think Trauma, Module 4. This module focuses on Trauma and Staff Wellness and looks at how staff can practice self-wellness in a stressful work environment. It highlights the toll that working with traumatized youth can take on staff and the organization as a whole. This training helps participants reduce their own stress and cope with those situations that are the most challenging for them while promoting their overall wellness. In addition, new staff also complete the initial Customer Service training, via the HUB. The department will continue its efforts to ensure that customer service training is ongoing for both new and seasoned staff.

Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

DJS strives to accurately and in a timely manner respond to inquiries directed toward the agency. Most written inquiries directed to the agency's headquarters, whether they are Public Information Act requests or general inquiries, are resolved within two to four weeks.

Best Practices

The majority of customer inquiries received by DJS headquarters are Public Information Act requests. The process of reviewing and responding to those requests is centralized under the agency's director of communication. Other customer inquiries are directed to the chief of staff, who is the agency's customer service lead. By centralizing the process of handling customer inquiries to headquarters between two individuals, the agency can be more efficient and consistent in the manner it works with its customers.

Plans for Improvement

NEW FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES FOR FY22 AND FY23

OEI works to ensure fairness and equity in every aspect of DJS's operations. Part of this work includes promoting the will, skill, and proficiency of the DJS staff to implement inclusive reforms for youth, families, and staff. Going forward in FY22 and FY23, OEI will commence training sessions to strengthen the capacity of the DJS staff when working with families involved in the justice system. Additionally, OEI will be working to improve the accessibility of the DJS website by expanding from written materials to video content. The creation of video content will enhance the user experience and provide another means to share information with customers who want to learn more about the agency and juvenile justice system.

VICTIM SERVICES

DJS is committed to treating all victims with dignity, respect, courtesy, sensitivity, and informing victims of their rights. OEI recognizes that when citizens find themselves involved with the youth justice system, they may have questions regarding what to expect. In an effort to facilitate their understanding of complaint processing and empower victims to participate in processes that affect their outcomes, DJS will enhance the information provided on the website. OEI will develop a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section for victims and ensure that brochures related to victim matters are available for download.

Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

Making Agency Services Available Online

The department's website is continually undergoing improvements to enhance the user experience and ease of accessibility. Currently, DJS has online forms for customers to make a public information request. DJS has enhanced its website to help youth and families locate each of the department's 30 community offices, 10 facilities, and two Evening Reporting Centers around the State. Additionally, the DJS website has a section for the Juvenile Services Education Program that provides important information including school calendars and menus for each of the 10 secure facilities.

DJS also has a page that displays facility capacity through visual indicators to assist judges and magistrates in making court decisions.

Additionally, there is a “Families” tab for DJS families to obtain information about the juvenile justice system, the department’s resources, and community resources.

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

Intake is the first point of contact between the department and youth, who are most often brought to the department’s attention through a juvenile complaint filed by law enforcement. At this critical junction, DJS intake staff must review the complaint and meet with the youth, family, and other caretakers and the victim if possible to determine how the youth’s case will proceed. A youth’s case could be formally sent to the State’s Attorney to potentially begin the court process or could be informally handled outside of the court through DJS or resolved at intake entirely.

In FY22, the rate of DJS intake workers finalizing juvenile intake decisions within 25 days and meeting the intake decision deadline was 96.2%. The DJS is pleased with this result because timely case forwarding decisions at intake are critical to ensure justice, fairness and public safety for the community, victims and youth involved in juvenile offenses.

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

DJS’s primary contact with youth and families in the community are in the department’s community offices throughout the State. These community offices are divided among eight operating regions. Throughout the COVID-19, DJS community case managers leveraged technology such as video chats and texting to maintain relationships with DJS youth under supervision in the community. Going forward, the focus for DJS community operations will be on more in-person contacts in the communities where DJS youth reside and less on appointments in DJS offices. Through active community outreach, DJS will enhance the customer experience for youth and families throughout Maryland.

Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

During FY22 (from July 2021 to June 2022), DJS had 319 new Facebook page likes, an increase of 6%, continuing its FY21 trend of 6.8%. The department's communications office responds within 24 hours to any Facebook posts or messages.

DJS tailors its Facebook content to its internal and external audience, announcing events such as its Annual Day to Serve events, monthly employee awards, and other staff recognitions – especially during COVID-19– distributing public health information, entry-level graduations, job recruitment listings, family engagement, and youth activities.

In FY22, DJS's Facebook page reached a total of 87,884 people. The average Facebook post reached 950 people per post and increased 51% compared to FY21 with an average of 486 people reached per post.

Similarly to Facebook, the DJS Twitter account promotes the agency's mission, highlighting the work with youth and families, employee's recognition, and facility events. DJS currently has 1,966 followers, an increase of 5% approximately compared to FY21 with 1,872 followers.

In FY23, DJS will continue to promote important events, employee recognitions and provide more information about the agency's reform efforts, initiatives, and explanations about the juvenile justice system generally. The department believes that social media can be a valuable tool to provide helpful information to its customers and better insight into how the juvenile justice process works in Maryland. In addition, social media is another resource for families, youth, employees, and the general public to engage with the department.

Conclusion

For the past several years, DJS has taken an intentional approach to improve services and support to its primary customers ie. justice-involved youth and families. From standing up one of the first juvenile justice family engagement offices in the U.S. to implementing an employee recognition program that has given awards to approximately 160 staff in 2 years, DJS has taken the customer service promise to heart.

For the first time in the agency's history, DJS is incorporating direct feedback from youth and families on the impact of the department's policies, enhancements to programs and services in both department facilities and the community and ways that DJS can become more responsive. Most of all, conducting family support groups and

youth roundtables in department facilities has given DJS the opportunity to better understand the cares and concerns of its primary customers in a way unlike ever before.

DJS is proud of the improvements to its customer service efforts since 2017. Nonetheless, DJS remains committed to building on those successes to become more responsive to the needs of youth and families as well as its own hard-working staff. DJS is looking forward to expanding the Family Peer Support Program to the entire state so that even more DJS families can experience the positive benefits of that program.

Additionally, DJS is focused on promoting the wellness of DJS staff. While the department has focused on trauma-informed care for justice-involved youth, DJS has recently begun to address the impact of trauma on DJS's staff as a result of their own personal and work experiences. Through trauma-focused staff training modules, DJS is working to give staff the coping skills to help them work effectively in often stressful environments and improve relationships with DJS youth. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, DJS's behavioral health staff began conducting support groups for DJS staff who had lost loved ones or were experiencing general stress from the pandemic environment.

Looking forward, DJS remains committed to improving the customer service at all levels to ensure that the agency continues to strive towards its vision of successful youth, strong leaders, and safer communities.

