

# Juvenile Justice Update

## Department of Juvenile Justice's Mission Statement

Adopted in 2020, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) transforms young lives by providing evidence-based rehabilitative treatment services and supervision, strengthening the well-being of youth and families, and fostering safe communities.<sup>1</sup>

## Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2013

In 2012, members of the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform studied Georgia's juvenile justice system and crafted recommendations to improve public safety and reduce costs. These recommendations and resulting legislation, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2013, reorganized, revised, and modernized Title 15, Chapter 11 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, a section of state law known as the Juvenile Code.

In addition to improving public safety and reducing costs, the new code aimed to strengthen family relationships in order to allow each child to live in safety and security.

Policies and practices include:

- Increased use of evidence-based programs
- Treating youth in the community rather than in secure facilities
- Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Program, which aims to reduce recidivism

## Signs of Progress from 2013 to 2022<sup>2</sup>

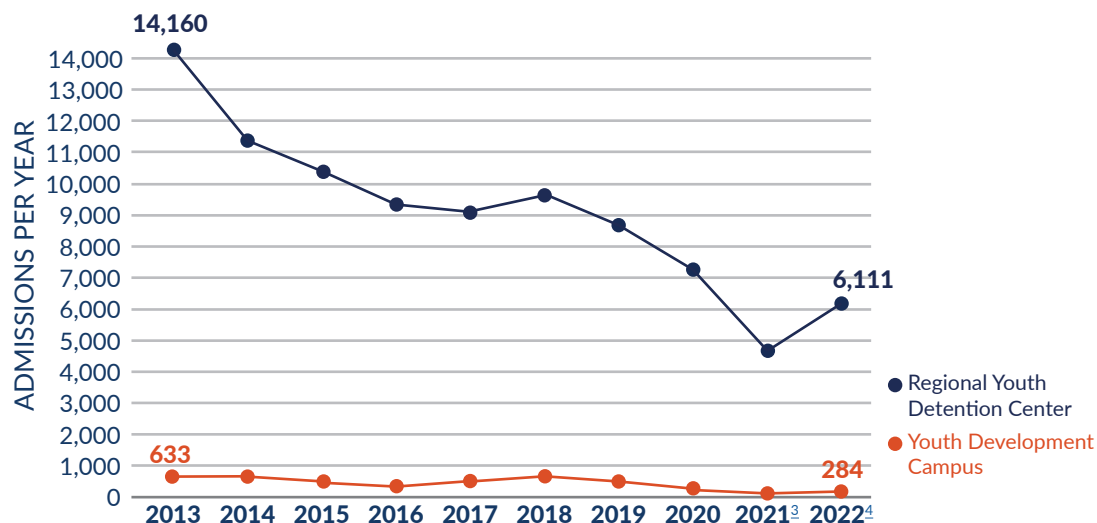
- ↓ 57% reduction in short-term secure confinement
- ↓ 55% reduction in secure detention
- ↓ 53% reduction in overall commitments to DJJ

## Georgia Youth in Secure Residential Facilities

The Department of Juvenile Justice has two secure residential facilities for juveniles in custody:

**Regional Youth Detention Centers (RYDCs)** provide temporary, secure care and supervision to youth who have been charged with offenses or who have been adjudicated delinquent and are awaiting placement.

**Youth Development Campuses (YDCs)** provide secure care, supervision, and treatment services to youth committed to DJJ custody for the short and long-term.



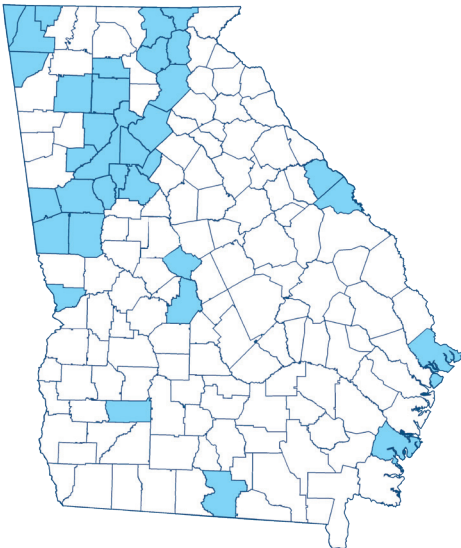
## Supporting High-Risk Youth on Probation

More than 16,000 youth have received evidence-based services through either the **Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant (JJIG)** or the **Community Service Grant (CSG)**.<sup>5,6</sup> Nearly every county in Georgia is eligible to receive these grants to reduce the number of out-of-home placements of youth. The grants provide funding and technical support for juvenile courts to deliver evidence-based treatment programming for juvenile offenders in their home communities.

### Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant (JJIG)

administered by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

In FY23, JJIG served 927 at-risk youth.<sup>7</sup> 68% of those youth were Black.<sup>8</sup>



Counties served by JJIG

#### Funding of JJIG

	Initial (2013)	Current (2023)
State	\$5 million	\$7.9 million <sup>2</sup>
Federal	\$1 million	\$126,000 <sup>10</sup>

#### Cost Savings of JJIG in FY23<sup>11</sup>

It costs \$90,000+ per year to house a child outside the home.

Number of youth diverted with a successful outcome: 590

Avoided cost of detaining youth due to diversion: \$53.1 million

#### JJIG Outcomes in 2023<sup>12</sup>

Out-of-Home Placements: 62%

Reduction in out-of-home placements compared with FY14 baseline

Program Completion: 73%

Successful completion rate for youth in JJIG placements

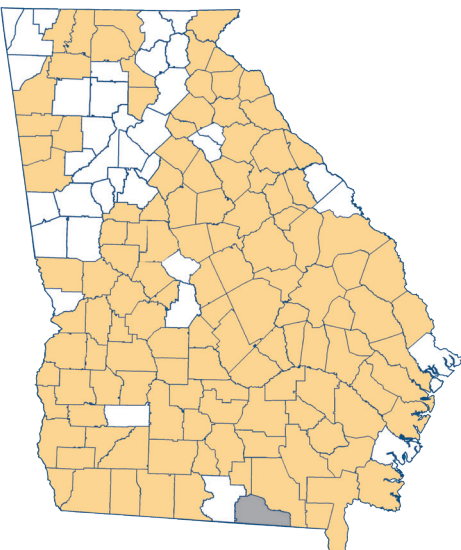
School Engagement: 93%

Youth who were actively enrolled in, or had completed, school

### Community Service Grant (CSG)

administered by the Department of Juvenile Justice

In FY23, CSG served 392 at-risk youth.<sup>13</sup> 65% of those youth were Black.<sup>14</sup>



CSG CSG Eligible

#### Funding of CSG

	Initial (2014)	Current (2023)
State	\$1.6 million	\$3.2 million <sup>15</sup>

#### Cost Savings of CSG in FY23

It costs \$90,000+ per year to house a child outside the home.

Number of youth diverted with a successful outcome: 248

Avoided cost of detaining youth due to diversion: \$22.32 million

#### CSG Outcomes in 2023<sup>16</sup>

Out-of-Home Placements: 57%

Reduction in out-of-home placements compared with FY14 baseline

Program Completion: 76%

Successful completion rate for youth in CSG placements

School Engagement: 92%

Youth who were actively enrolled in, or had completed, school

## JJIG and CSG Evidence-Based Programs\*

Program	Description
Seven Challenges	Program designed specifically for adolescents with drug problems to motivate decisions and commitments to change and to support success in implementing the desired change
Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Evidence-based treatment for children and adolescents impacted by trauma and their parents to overcome the negative effects of traumatic life events
Multi-Systemic Therapy-Problem Sexual Behavior	Similar to Multi-Systemic Therapy but uses family and peer level interventions to address problematic sexual behaviors
Multi-Systemic Therapy	Intensive individual-based family intervention that addresses the environmental factors that impact chronic and/or violent youth offenders
Aggression Replacement Training	Group-based intervention that addresses aggression and violence by improving moral reasoning and social skill competency
Functional Family Therapy	Individual-based family intervention that addresses delinquency, violence, substance use, and/or disruptive behavior disorders by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors
Thinking for a Change	Group-based intervention that addresses the criminogenic thinking of offenders by developing, problem-solving, and social skills

JJIG Program
  JJIG and CSG Program

\*This is a list of what applicants and existing grantees could choose from in FY23, but grantees can continue to use previous interventions that may not appear on this list.

## Other Services and Programs

Program	Description
Office of Behavioral Health Services (OBHS)	Provides mental health services including mental health assessments, general counseling and case management, sexually harmful behaviors treatment, and substance abuse treatment, utilizing evidence-based interventions
Project Safety Neighborhoods (PSN) Initiative	A partnership between the Office of Reentry Services and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District that works to reduce the re-offense rate among youth by providing individual and group mentoring in the community
The F.R.E.S.H. (Focusing Resources Effectively to Sustain Hope) Start Youth Initiative	Provides current and former DJJ-involved youth supervised in the community with career opportunities
Office of Residential and Community-Based Services (ORS)	Provides residential placement services to juvenile justice-involved youth within a total of 55 residential locations statewide





## References for Juvenile Justice Update

Suggested citation: Voices for Georgia's Children. (2023). Fact Sheet: Juvenile Justice Update. Voices for Georgia's Children. <https://adobe.ly/3Ek3oPR>.

- 1 "About Us," Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://djj.georgia.gov/about-us>.
- 2 "Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse: Juvenile Justice Decision Points Time Series," Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://juviledata.georgia.gov/node/22>; "2022 Annual Report," Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, <https://djj.georgia.gov/document/document/djj-annual-report-2022/download>.
- 3 "2021 Annual Report," Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, <https://djj.georgia.gov/document/document/djj-fy21-annual-report-revised-05032022/download>.
- 4 "2022 Annual Report," Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, <https://djj.georgia.gov/document/document/djj-annual-report-2022/download>; "Georgia Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Evaluation Report, Year 9, 2021 - 2022," Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2022. Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://cjcc.georgia.gov/document/document/jjigfy22year9annualreportfinalpdf--UNPUBLISHED--DO-NOT-SHARE-this-URL--/download>.
- 5 "Georgia Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Evaluation Report, Year 10, 2022-2023," Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2023.
- 6 "Community Services Grant Year Seven: 2020-2021," Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2021.
- 7 "Georgia Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Evaluation Report, Year 10, 2022-2023," Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2023.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 "Community Services Grant Evaluation Report, Year 9, 2022-2023". Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and the University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, Personal Communication (December 2023).
- 16 "Community Services Grant Year Seven: 2020-2021," Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2021.