



Juvenile Probation Services

Annual Report

Detailed Analysis

STATE OF
NEBRASKA
JUDICIAL BRANCH
Administrative Office
of the Courts & Probation

fiscal year 2024

July 1, 2023—June 30, 2024

STATE OF
NEBRASKA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

Juvenile Probation
Services Division

Dear Stakeholders:

This year marked an exciting opportunity for the Juvenile Probation Services Division as Nebraska Probation embarked on the development of our first strategic plan which was approved by the Nebraska Supreme Court in June 2024. This effort was built upon the culmination of a comprehensive two-year system review completed by the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center (RFKNRC) in which a formal report with recommendations were distributed in September 2023. Many of the priorities identified within the Nebraska Probation Strategic Plan directly reflect the in-depth analysis of our strengths and areas for improvement that were undertaken during the review of the Nebraska juvenile justice system.

The Probation Strategic Leadership Team, comprised of chief probation officers from across the state and Probation Administration leadership, diligently worked to prioritize the recommendations received through the report, as well as incorporated other key priorities recognized as best practices by the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) and other respected justice research entities. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the Probation staff and stakeholder partners who actively participated in the review process. Your invaluable contributions were essential in making this strategic plan a reality. The Nebraska Probation Strategic Plan is available for viewing on the Nebraska Supreme Court website.

Over the past few years, the Juvenile Probation Services Division has been incorporating the Fundamental Measures for Juvenile Justice (FMJJ) into our Annual Report and data tracking. This year, you will find a noted change to this report at the end of this publication which is a page that will describe each measure with a link for more information.

Juvenile Probation Services Division has seen an increase in youth adjudicated to Probation supervision by the court. Despite this, we saw a 3% decrease in the juvenile recidivism rate. Nebraska continues to seek new and creative services to serve youth within their homes, as well as skill-driven, adolescent informed placement options.

I want to take this opportunity again to thank all our dedicated Probation officers and juvenile justice professionals across the state for their diligent and collaborative work in serving youth and families through our shared vision and commitment to inspiring hope, empowering individuals, and strengthening communities.

Kari Rumbaugh

Kari Rumbaugh
Deputy Administrator
Juvenile Probation Services
Division

Juvenile Probation Outcomes

The goal of juvenile Probation in Nebraska is to prevent juveniles from returning to the juvenile justice system or entering the adult criminal justice system by:

- Engaging juveniles and their families in the court process;
- Eliminating barriers to accessing effective treatment and services; and
- Partnering with educational and community stakeholders.

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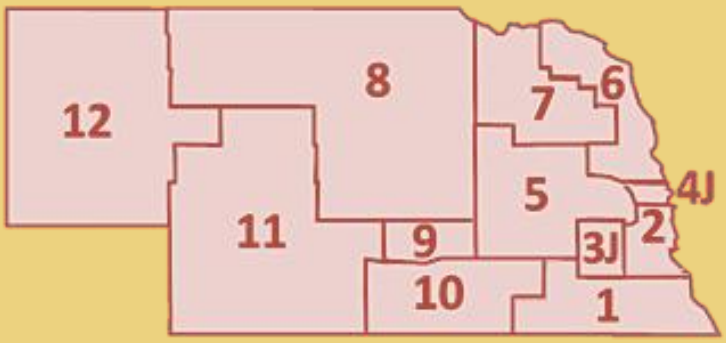
Nebraska State Probation Vision:

Inspiring Hope
Empowering Individuals
Strengthening Communities

Nebraska State Probation Mission:

As Nebraska Probation, our mission is to strengthen communities and promote victim safety.
We lead and serve with integrity, equity, and empathy to ensure every voice is heard.
We address the diverse needs of those we serve through evidence-based investigations and interventions.

Map of Juvenile Probation Districts



This map includes the judicial Probation districts across the state of Nebraska covering all 93 counties.

For more information about Probation districts, visit:

https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/directories/district-information

Juvenile Justice System Enhancement-Nebraska

Juvenile Justice System Enhancement ~ Nebraska (JJSEN) is the Juvenile Probation Services Division's approach to prioritizing our continued focus on youth justice best practices. This is the fourth year of JJSEN efforts.

Fiscal year 2024 focused on prioritization and implementation of the recommendations provided within the *Juvenile Justice Enhancement Nebraska Probation System Review Final Report from December, 2022.* This report is available on the Nebraska Judicial Branch website https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/probation/juvenile-probation-services-division/juvenile-justice-system-enhancement-jjsen .

The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice conducted a statewide Probation system review which concluded in August 2022. The formal report and recommendations were received by the Nebraska Supreme Court in early 2023. In October 2023, authorization was received from the Court to incorporate the recommendations from the report within the Nebraska Probation Strategic Plan. This plan further solidifies our commitment to ongoing system enhancements guided by best practice with a clear road map of how they will be implemented. The recommendations were prioritized and included in the strategic plan in May 2024. View the Nebraska Probation Strategic Plan on the Nebraska Judicial Branch website: https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/publication-report-files/Probation-Strategic-Plan-2024_0.pdf

Some of the Juvenile Probation Services team members meeting with John Tuell from RFK for a site visit in March 2024.

The Probation system review conducted in 2021 and 2022 recommended enhancements to our training structures related to the information management system utilized by probation officers. Therefore, a full-time staff member was allocated to this effort in October, 2023. This new staff member consulted with NCJJ regularly as she gathered information on training needs across the state and developed recommendations in the form of a system needs assessment. Implementation of these enhancements to the training on the information management system began in June 2024.

Dr. Robin Jenkins of the Impact Center continues to support Probation staff in the use of Implementation Science. His expertise has guided the development of the first ever Strategic Plan approved by the Nebraska Supreme Court in June of 2024 and posted on our website.

Dr. Jenkins stated, "The Strategic Plan exemplifies Probation's new model of Organizational Ownership couched in implementation and organizational development science, and the unfailing commitment to bring evidence-informed practices into daily business operations and use."

Juvenile Probation Services Division continued to partner with Dr. Keith Cruise of National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners (NYSAP) for technical assistance in preparation for the launch of TRACKS (Targeted, Responsive Assessment for the Court is Key to Youth Success.)

The implementation team refined tools and methods for successful implementation of two new behavioral health screens aimed at early identification and support for youth entering the Probation system. A success statement was created and stakeholders were engaged in preparation for formal launch of these new processes and tools in fall of 2024.

National Partnership

SPOTLIGHT

A Letter From:

Keith Cruise

Ph.D., MLS

Director, Behavioral Health Screening Services

Keith Cruise holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of North Texas, a Masters of Legal Studies degree from the University of Nebraska, and is a licensed clinical psychologist in Connecticut and New York.

Dr. Cruise has over 25 years of experience providing consultation, training, and technical assistance to local and state juvenile justice systems with a particular emphasis in implementing trauma-informed screening, assessment, and case planning. Dr. Cruise has received grant funding from multiple federal agencies to examine the effectiveness of enhanced mental health screening for polyvictimization, trauma-informed case planning, and the impact of trauma screening on service delivery and legal outcomes for youth with justice-system involvement.

He also conducts forensic evaluations and has testified in juvenile and adult criminal courts across the country. Dr. Cruise is a co-director of the Center for Trauma Recovery and Juvenile Justice (CTRJJ) and serves as the Director of Behavioral Health Screening Services of NYSAP.

The National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners, LLC (NYSAP) is a training and technical assistance organization that supports juvenile justice programs to help implement screening and assessment practices for youth in the juvenile justice system. NYSAP has collaborated with Juvenile Probation Services Division to support system reform goals through the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement–Nebraska (JJSEN) initiative. More specifically, Juvenile Probation sought NYSAP's assistance to examine and refine the behavioral health screening process used during the predisposition investigation. The division has embraced a thoughtful approach to enhancing the behavioral health screening process that is (a) grounded in the existing evidence-base, (b) guided by implementation science, and (c) informed by the diverse and unique needs of youth and families across the state of Nebraska.

Below are some critical steps taken to support an enhanced behavioral health screening process through the JJSEN initiative.

- Thoughtful Planning and Cross-System Collaboration. Juvenile Probation Services formed a collaborative work group to ensure processes and procedure enhancements could be supported across all districts.
- Understanding and Communicating the Why. An effective behavioral health screening practice involves so much more than selecting the "right tool". Two critical decisions were supported by the workgroup and embraced by leadership. First, based on the research evidence and best practices, the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument–2 (MAYSI-2) and Child Trauma Screen (CTS) were identified as two tools to support comprehensive behavioral health screening. Second, the workgroup developed, and leadership supported, rebranding the behavioral health screening process using the acronym TRACKS (Targeted, Responsive Assessment for the Court is Key to Youth Success).
- Training and Effective Practice. A key priority in developing TRACKS has been designing a staff training model that ensures Probation personnel can competently and confidently engage youth and families in the behavioral health screening process. This training model can be sustained over time.

Probation staff across the state will be trained in the TRACKS model with ongoing implementation support provided by Juvenile Probation Services leadership through ongoing consultation with NYSAP. This team should be commended for the thoughtful, intentional, and systematic planning process involved in the creation of TRACKS. Their commitment to a behavioral health screening process that is evidence-based, informed by implementation science, and specific to the Nebraska context has a strong potential to ensure that youth in need of behavioral health services will be identified, triaged, and connected to services that support their recovery and address the dynamic delinquency risk factors that brought them into the juvenile justice system.

Annual Artwork Contest

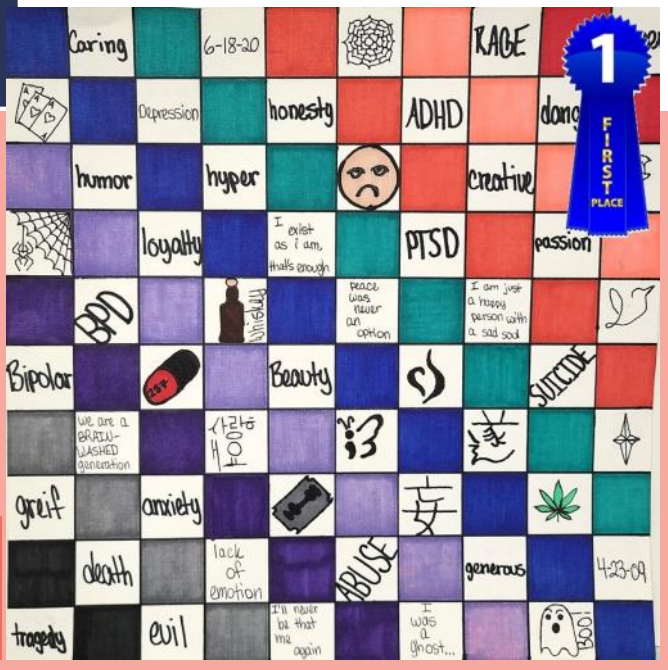
The annual Artwork Contest started in 2016 to encourage youth throughout the state to express themselves by telling the story of their journey through creativity.

Probation staff were asked to encourage the youth they supervise to create artwork for the contest. All forms of art were accepted. Thirty-seven entries were received from across the state with a majority of them writing a short explanation of their entry. The results were moving and inspiring.

Artwork is represented on the Judicial Branch website and the winners are displayed in the Juvenile Probation Services Division office, displayed at conferences, as well as used in publications.

1st Place Winner/Tie

Shalynn from District 3J created this moving drawing about the trauma she has experienced and her journey in healing on the outside with her scars



1st Place Winner/Tie

Savannah from District 7 won for her well-planned checkerboard drawing with every square having a special meaning from her life including the colors selected.

More Artwork Contest Winners

2nd Place Winner/Tie

Alexa from District 7 wrote this poem about her journey in life and all the bad things that have occurred asking if she is a bad person.

My Journey

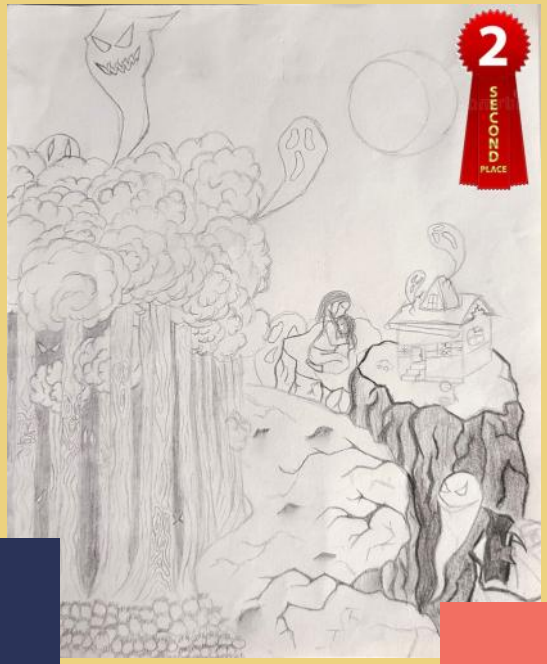
I like to think i'm a good person
someone who's just went through a lot
i never met my grandpa
my other grandpa doesn't like me
my grandma died
one uncle got into a motorcycle accident
he ended up with severe brain damage
and tried to sexually assault me
another uncle died
my parents divorced
my mom was verbally abusive
i moved in with my dad
i got put in therapy
i got diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder
i developed bad coping skills
i made some bad choices
my dad made me switch schools
i got bullied
my other grandma died
i attempted suicide
i still hadn't learned good coping skills
i drank alcohol
constantly
nothing else made me happy
my parents called the cops on me
i got a MIP charge
i lost me temper and hit my stepbrother once
my parents called the cops again
i got an assault charge

Am i a bad person?
are these the reasons for the way i am?
or is that an excuse?
i've always been told i am
i know why people think that
i understand why
i don't think i agree with them
its hard to think different
from what everyone around you is telling you
and you start believing them
i believe them
i try to do better
i go to the therapy
i pass the drug tests
i get good grades
i'm proud of myself
but no one else does
they bring up the past
they make me feel like a bad person again

why can't i be good enough
am i really that bad of a person?
did i do those things bc of my past?
or am i just evil?
what is wrong with me?

2nd Place Winner/Tie

Sophia from District 10 tied for 2nd place with her description, "The flowers are opioid flowers and the forest is addiction. The path is cracked and bumpy like mine. The ghosts are the violence in my past and the islands were what was taken from me."



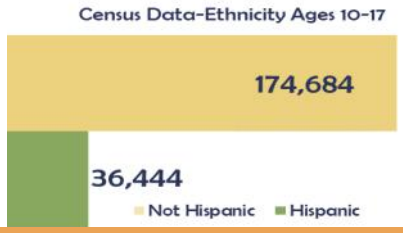
3rd Place Winner

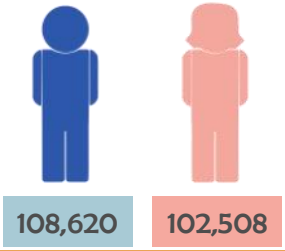
Ayla from District 2 says her artwork uses words and colors to describe key elements in her life from death of a close relative, being bullied, and finding ways to embrace her spirituality and strive to be more grateful.

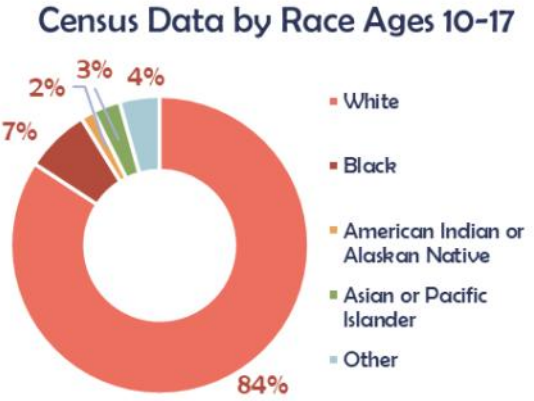
Nebraska Youth Census Population

Represented below are the total number of youth in Nebraska's population base within age boundaries of juvenile court jurisdiction. These youth represent juvenile court jurisdiction in Nebraska, which is ages 11-17, although 2020 census data includes 10 year-olds. Youth can remain in juvenile court until their 19th birthday. Nebraska census data is only available every ten years.

FMJJ 1.01

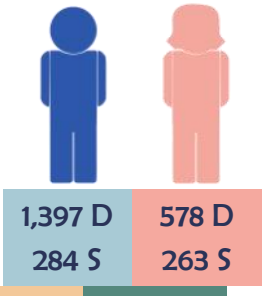




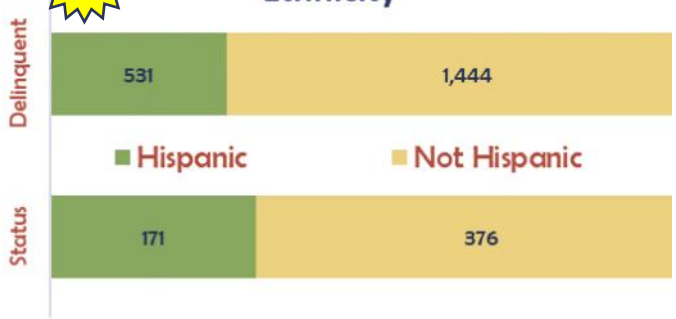


Population of Youth Placed on Probation

The demographic information below reflects youth placed on probation for delinquent (D) and status-related (S) offenses. There were 2,522 youth placed on probation during the fiscal year. A status youth comes before the court for non-delinquent offenses such as truancy, running away, or other behaviors that a parent is not able to control. As of July 1, 2017, youth who are ten years of age and under at the time of a traffic, infraction, status, misdemeanor, or felony offense is alleged, are no longer eligible for juvenile probation. The total number of youth placed on probation decreased by 6% from FY 2023.

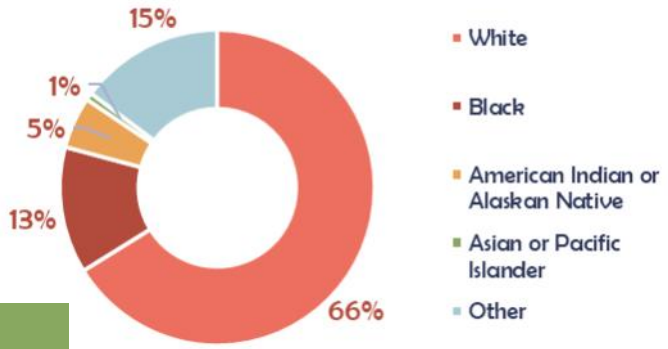


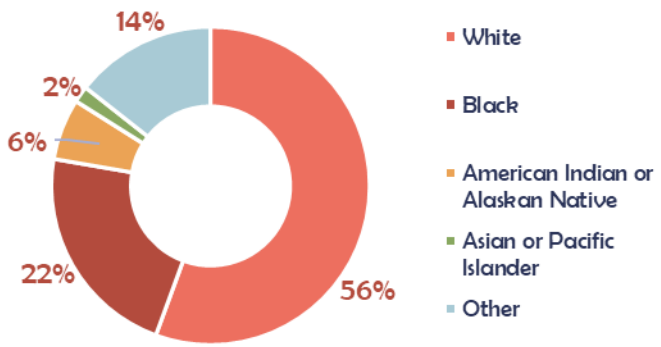
FMJJ 1.07



Youth Placed on Probation by Age			
Age	Delinquent	Status	Total
11	17	7	24
12	36	10	46
13	143	34	177
14	285	61	346
15	427	106	533
16	452	156	608
17	486	147	633
18	129	26	155
Total	1,975	547	2,522

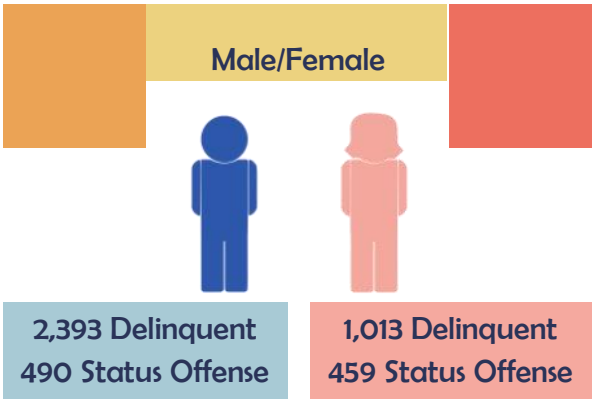
FMJJ 1.07



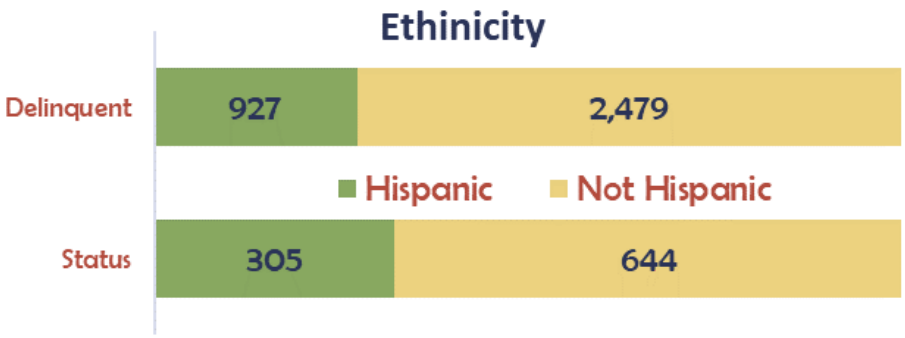


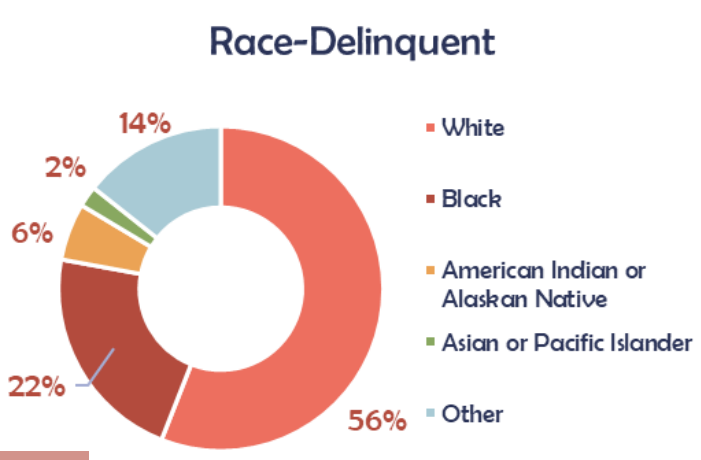
Total Population of Youth on Probation

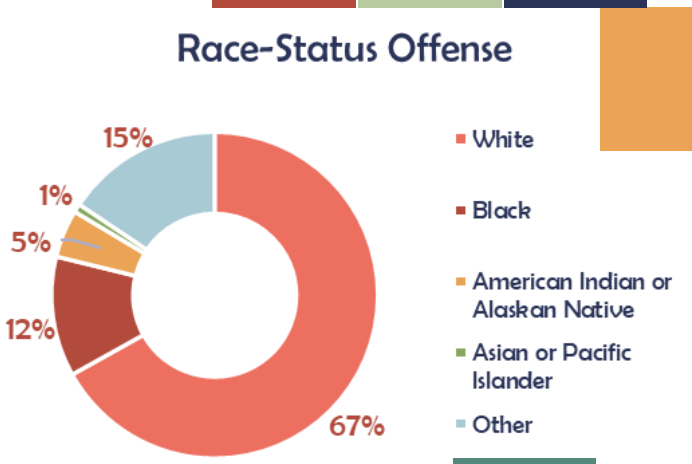
In this section, all data represents the total population of youth actively supervised on probation which includes youth already on probation from the previous year. There were 4,355 youth served during this fiscal year. The table below shows demographic data for the population of youth served by Probation separated by delinquent and status-related offenses. The total number of youth served on Probation increased by 3% as compared to FY 2023.



Total Youth Served by Age			
Age	Delinquent	Status	Total
11	21	8	29
12	56	16	72
13	218	52	270
14	445	107	552
15	680	190	870
16	797	274	1,071
17	850	249	1,099
18	339	53	392
Total	3,406	949	4,355







Juvenile Intake

Intake Decisions

303
Released to Parent Without Restrictions

403
Released with Alternatives to Detention (ATD)

224
Staff Secure Detention

712
Secure Detention

98%

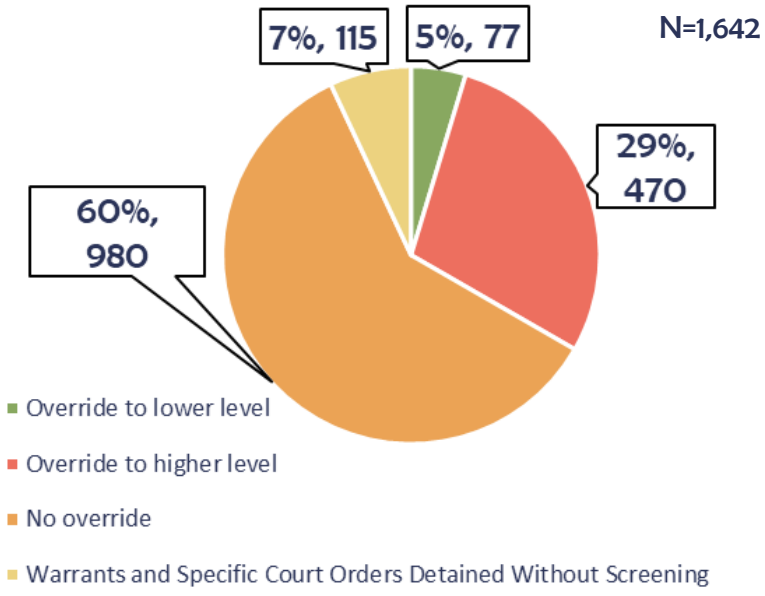
Percent of intakes that met criteria on the detention Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) were detained*

* Includes both staff secure and secure detention

Nebraska Revised Statutes §43-250 & §43-260 authorize probation to manage the juvenile intake function. Intake serves as a critical system entry point, with the primary objective of guiding detention decisions that are the least restrictive while ensuring community safety. When law enforcement places a youth in temporary custody and requests detention, probation administers a standardized risk assessment instrument (RAI) to inform the intake decision. Statute §43-251.01 (5)(b)(i) states, "A juvenile shall not be detained unless the physical safety of persons in the community would be seriously threatened or detention is necessary to secure the presence of the juvenile at the next hearing, as evidenced by a demonstrable record of willful failure to appear at a scheduled court hearing within the last twelve months."

Note: A youth may experience more than one intake or intake outcome within the reporting period.

Juvenile Intake Outcomes



What is an Override:

Juvenile intake instrument overrides occur when there are special circumstances that a Probation officer considers to authorize a higher or lower intervention than recommended by the instrument. Overrides are used to ensure community safety while utilizing the least restrictive options available and must be approved by a supervisor.

ATD Definition:

Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-245 (3), a program or directive that increases supervision of a youth in the community in an effort to ensure the youth attends court and refrains from committing a new law violation.

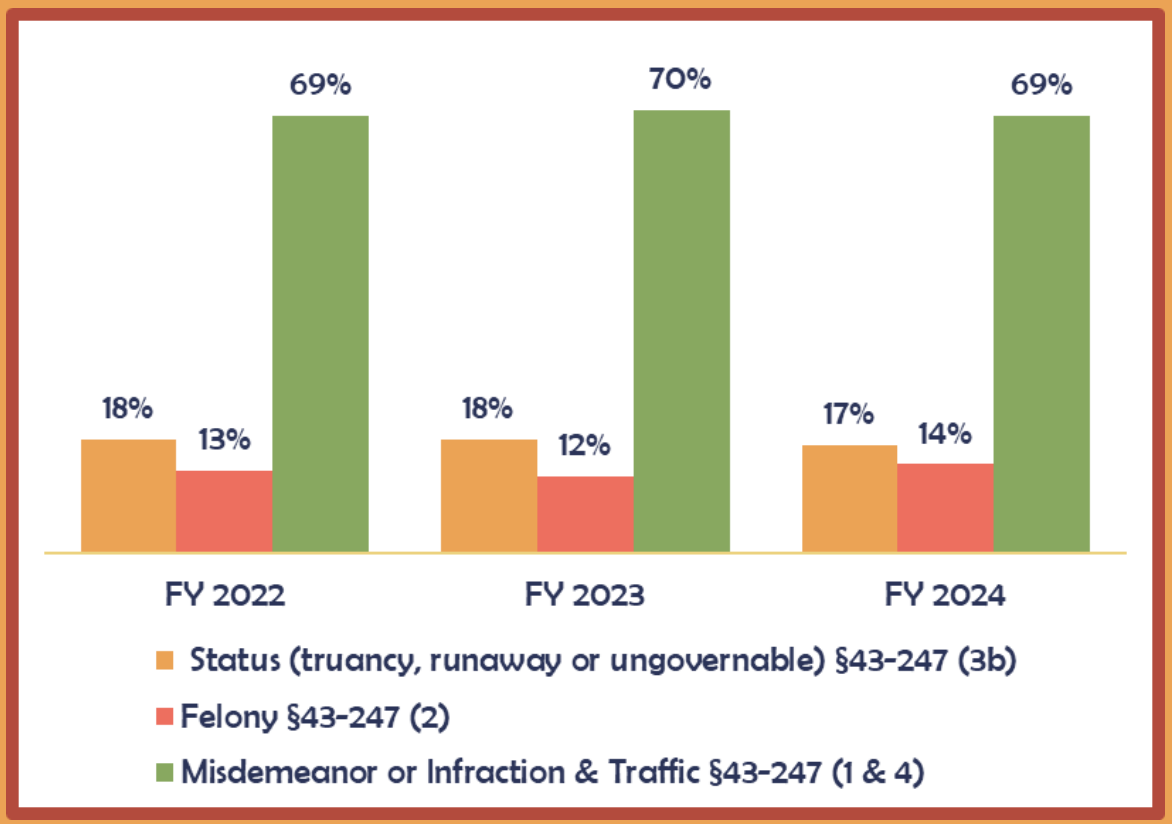
Probation's current alternative to detention continuum includes electronic monitoring, day and evening reporting centers, community youth coaching, and temporary shelter placement.

Adjudication

The Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation has oversight over youth who are subject to supervision by a probation officer and have been adjudicated under one or more of the following subdivisions of Nebraska Revised Statute §43-247 (1), (2), (3b) and (4). Adjudication is the fact-finding phase of a juvenile case in which a judge receives and weighs evidence before determining whether a delinquency or status offense has been proven.

Each subdivision refers to the offense type that brought the youth before the court. The chart below identifies the percentage of youth who were adjudicated in each category; some were for multiple offenses. The majority of youth placed on probation were adjudicated under subdivision (1) for offenses which are considered a misdemeanor or infraction.

Adjudication Resulting in Probation



Of the 419 status youth,

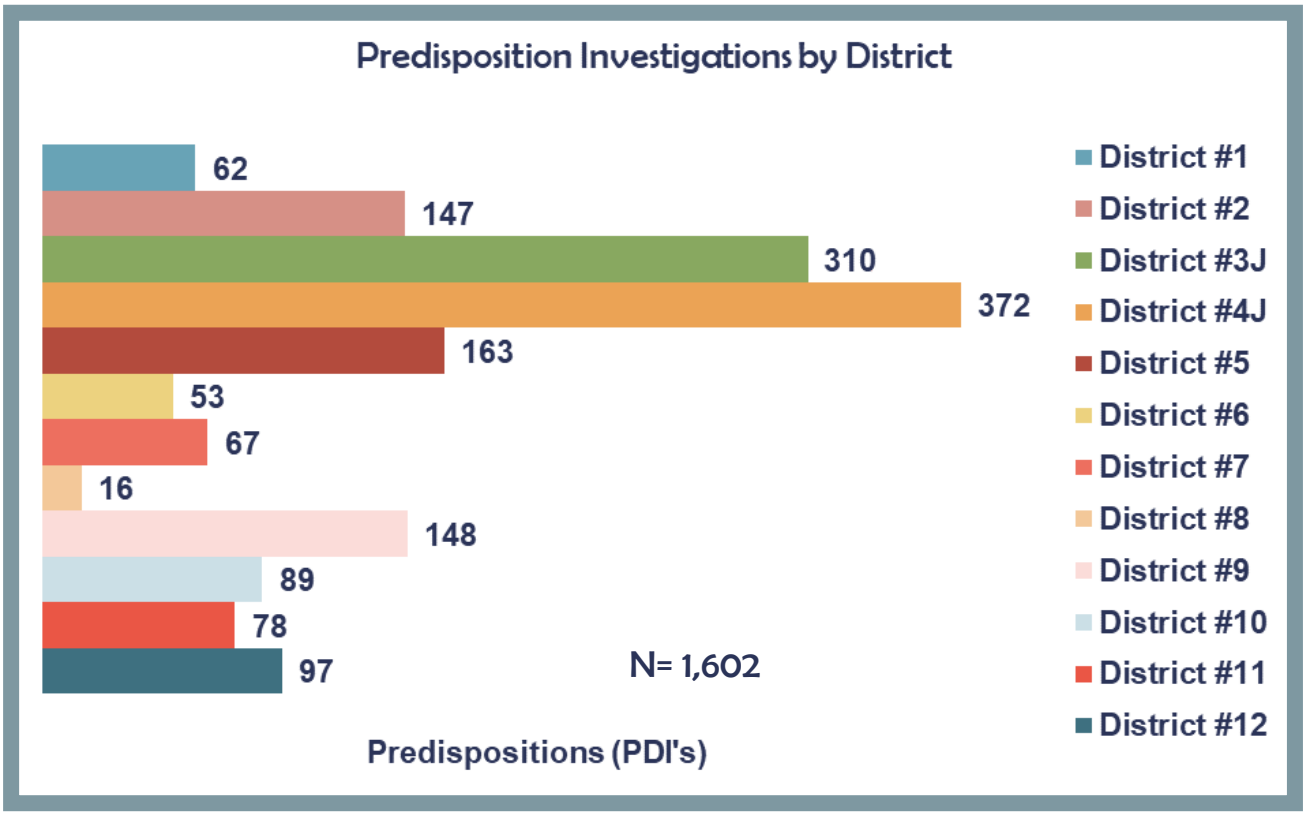
85%

were for truancy

Initial Entry

Predisposition Investigation (PDI)

Probation is responsible for completion of comprehensive investigations, also known as predisposition investigations (PDI). Investigations include: interviews with the youth and family, collateral contacts, validated risk/need/responsivity assessments, screening tools, available treatment reports, and/or evaluations. The investigation and recommendations target the youth's risk, needs, and responsivity, as well as the supervision and services that will be most effective in reducing the juvenile's risk for continued delinquent behaviors. The total number of PDI's for fiscal year 2024 was 1,602, which is down 10% from fiscal year 2023.



Initial Criminogenic Risk Assessment:

Probation staff are highly trained and certified to utilize the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI 2.0), which is a gender and culturally-informed, strengths-focused assessment tool. The YLS/CMI 2.0 is a validated tool used to identify a youth's criminogenic risk, which is the risk to continue delinquent actions that could come to the attention of the court. The YLS/CMI 2.0 accurately predicts criminogenic risk through the identification of a youth's individual risk/needs/responsivity (RNR), which supports a probation officer's priorities in service matching and case management.

OVERALL RISK—WHO is most likely to return to court? WHERE should our resources be focused and WHAT level of supervision is needed to impact change?

RESPONSIVITY—HOW do factors not directly related to risk require us to adapt our approach in order to be successful?

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS—WHAT need factors contribute most to the youth's overall criminogenic risk and can be targeted for risk reduction?

Risk/Need/ Responsivity

Need factors that contribute to risk are represented by the YLS/CMI 2.0 Domains. Key life area language makes the interpretations easier to discuss with the youth, family, and those not trained.

YLS/CMI 2.0 Domains	Key Life Areas
Prior and current offenses/dispositions	Prior and current court involvement
Education/employment	School/work
Substance abuse	Alcohol and/or drug use
Personality/behavior	Coping/self-control skills
Family circumstances/parenting	Family relationships
Peer relations	Friends
Leisure/recreation	Use of free time
Attitudes/orientation	Thoughts and beliefs

FMJJ 1.07

LOW
27%

Percentage of youth placed on probation that were assessed as low risk using the YLS/CMI 2.0 for continued unlawful behavior

Down 1% from FY 2023

MODERATE
57%

Percent of youth placed on probation that were assessed as moderate risk using the YLS/CMI 2.0 for continued unlawful behavior

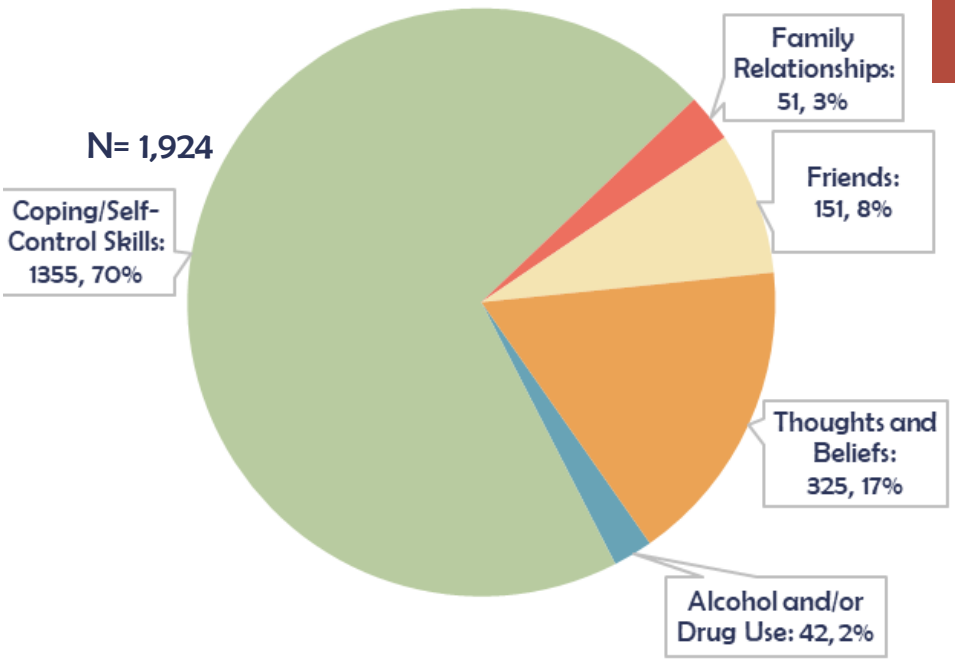
Same as FY 2023

HIGH/VERY HIGH
16%

Percent of youth placed on probation that were assessed as high or very high risk using the YLS/CMI 2.0 for continued unlawful behavior

Up 1% from FY 2023

Drivers Identified on Success Plans



Determining the "Driver"

Determining the single most influential criminogenic risk factor or "driver" is essential to risk reduction as not all criminogenic risks influence behavior equally. The "driver" is used to focus case management and create a Success Plan for targeting behavior change in high-risk youth.

Juvenile Justice Employee

SPOTLIGHT

Yesica Flores

Recipient of the "OUTSTANDING PROBATION OFFICER of the Year" Award

Yesica shown left with Chief Justice Heavican

Yesica Flores from District 3J was awarded the "Outstanding Probation Officer of the Year" Award, also known as the Ladonna Snell Memorial Award, which recognizes the exemplary performance of a probation officer. The award is presented to officers with a record of exceptional efficiency, superior performance, and dedication beyond standard expectations.

Ms. Flores began her career with Nebraska Probation in November 2017, serving in various roles within District 3J. She started as an investigation assistant and in May 2019, was promoted to investigations officer. In July 2021, she advanced to a specialized probation officer, and in November 2024, was promoted to her current role as Juvenile Justice Resource Supervisor (JJRS).

Her education includes a Bachelor's degree in Child, Youth, and Family Sciences with minors in Criminal Justice, Sociology, and Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that she obtained in December 2014.

"Ms. Flores interacts well with her peers, professional service providers, parents, foster parents, and youth assigned to her."

Yesica acts as a mentor to her co-workers and is always ready to serve as the need arises for anyone needing her services as a Spanish-speaking bilingual employee.

The nomination read, "Yesica has proven to be an invaluable resource to the juveniles and families assigned to her for supervision. Her case work is exemplary and often goes far beyond expectations. She supervises a caseload of high-risk youth in an efficient and comprehensive manner. Yesica is respected by attorneys and judges for her professional demeanor. In addition, Ms. Flores interacts well with her peers, professional service providers, parents, foster parents, and youth assigned to her."

"Yesica has proven to be an invaluable resource to the juveniles and families assigned to her for supervision."

Her ability to arrange services for juveniles experiencing addiction or a mental health crisis often requires her to go beyond the standard measure of performance of a typical probation officer. She takes an active role in several workgroups. Yesica is the co-chair of the Family Engagement Ad Majora Committee and assisted in the rewrite of the District process manual. She is also a member of the internal TRACKS implementation workgroup. Outside of the District, Ms. Flores participates in a team to redesign aspect of our agency software program, as well as an intake trainer for New Probation Officer Training (NPOT).

Yesica claims that her drive to continue serving our communities comes from knowing her personal values align with those of our agency. Beyond these achievements, a greater accomplishment is being a source of hope to others.

NE-ART Training

Nebraska Aggression Replacement Training (NE-ART) is a research-based model used for moderate to high-risk youth. NE-ART is a comprehensive program in social emotional learning which allows youth to learn new skills to handle stressful situations, understand their emotions and others emotions in a positive way. Many youth do not have the necessary skill set to handle situations appropriately. Having an understanding that many of our youth do not have the skills needed to act in a pro-social manner is critical.

Habilitation is the process of learning new behaviors to appropriately respond to challenging situations. NE-ART curriculum provides lessons of the three basic core components: social skills, self-control and traps and traits. The program is an eight-week course where youth attend three times per week. The importance of moderate and high-risk youth competing this program is vital to long term behavior change and evidence of the growing completion numbers is positive. After graduation, additional materials are provided for probation officers to continue skill training with youth. These materials target specific stressful situations that youth encounter on a daily basis and create opportunities to practice newly-learned skills.

NE-ART provides many benefits for youth who receive the curriculum. Among them: enhanced skills used for successful lives, increasing knowledge of self and others, helping to learn empathy for others and develops self-control. Research on this curriculum has shown positive results in reducing recidivism in low skilled youth as well as aggressive youth. Prior to a youth beginning the class, orientation is held which involves the parent, care giver, or the individual caring for the youth. This is a key component as it brings a team approach to what will be learned in the coming weeks and newly-learned skills can be utilized in the home setting which can be supported by the parents, care giver, etc. Knowing empathy, self-control, social skills and character education is fundamental for success in all areas of life.

194

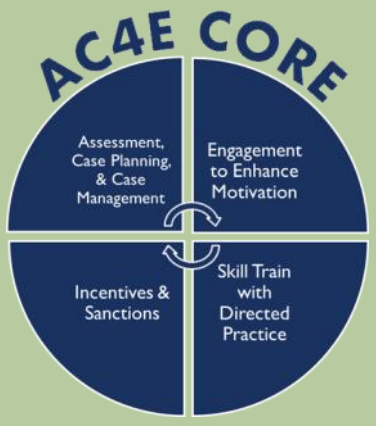
Youth who successfully graduated from the 8-week curriculum

Youth Comments:

What did you learn about yourself that you didn't know?

- That I am more responsible than I show and if I thought before I did stuff I probably wouldn't get in trouble.
- I learned about how I use some coping skills without even realizing it.
- It helps me think ahead in situations and understand the situation better.
- That I can hold back and calm down instead of saying something.
- If I use my skills, I have really good conflict resolution.

AC4E Training



Nebraska Probation has adopted a case management model for individuals supervised by Probation referred to as AC4E: Advanced Coaching for Excellence. AC4E guides Probation officers through four core components of case management aimed at individualized skill building to reduce risk and promote successful release from Probation. It is critical that Probation understand the science of behavior modification. One component of AC4E is incentives and sanctions. Incentives are utilized to reward youth for positive behaviors and learning new skills and sanctions are used to address and stop undesired behaviors. Probation officers tie sanctions to skill building opportunities to decrease the chances of the behavior repeating.

Incentives and sanctions must be meaningful to the youth to be effective in changing behavior. Research shows relationships are key to successful probation completion. As incentives and sanctions are imposed with youth, utilization of the Humanity Optimism Perspective and Empathy (H.O.P.E.) model is vital, so youth feel valued, listened to, and their perspective matters. In 2024, AC4E leadership training was held focusing on incentives and sanctions with Probation staff. The purpose of this training was responding to behaviors and focusing on the parallel practice of supervising Probation staff using H.O.P.E. For more information on graduated response, see page 17.

RISE Program

AmeriCorps

Number of Youth Who Graduated RISE:

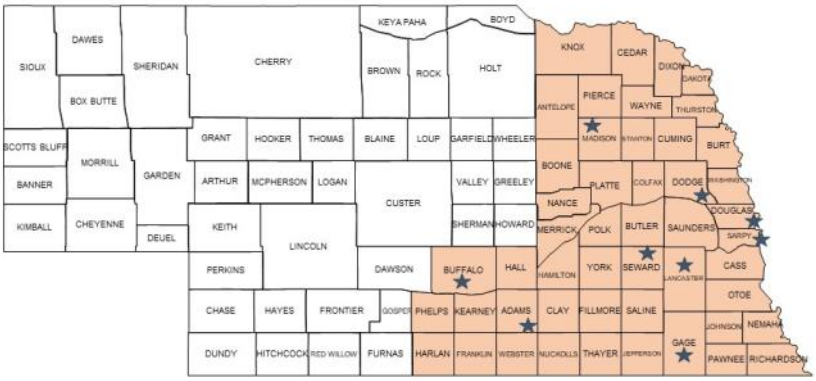
103

Percentage Over AmeriCorps Goal for Graduates:

3%

Data represents the number of youth that completed RISE this fiscal year. The AmeriCorps grant budget allows for up to 11 RISE specialists, but there were 4 members available to accept referrals and facilitate the program curriculum during this fiscal year. Outlined grant goals aim for 200 youth referred. Of those, at least 100 youth to successfully complete and graduate from the program.

The Recognizing Increased Skills in Education (RISE) program, implemented in 2007, is a grant-funded AmeriCorps program which allows probation to place AmeriCorps members, titled "RISE program specialists," serving in nine probation districts. See the map below showing the county location of the RISE program specialist indicated with a star.



RISE program specialists are responsible for organizing and facilitating a skill-based curriculum to adjudicated youth, which includes five chapters: goal setting, motivation, organization, class participation/study skills, and test taking. When youth successfully complete all chapters, they are considered RISE graduates demonstrating new skills, improved school attendance, decrease of negative behaviors, and are less likely to be involved in future delinquent activities.

As skill development takes time, additional support is provided to youth for 3 to 6 months after completion of the curriculum. Previous evaluations of the RISE Program have shown promising impact including data which suggests that graduates of the program are more likely to have successful probation discharge than youth who do not graduate.

The RISE program is under a three-year evaluation study as part of the grant continuation. An external evaluator was contracted to complete this process. In this first year, previous evaluation studies and program curriculum were reviewed to draft an updated pre and post survey that relates to the RISE program curriculum. The final version of the survey was trained to AmeriCorps RISE members on how to facilitate to youth in the program. During the August 1, 2024 through July 31, 2025 grant year, the surveys will be implemented.

AmeriCorps Member Service Experience: Velicity—District 5

Velicity has served in Probation District 5 during the 2023-2024 grant year. This is her second year serving in this role. She's stated, "I have served the District 5 probation team for a while and have established an excellent rapport with the fellow staff and youth there.

I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve my community along side amazing probation officers! I still have so much to learn and am excited for the chance to continue growing in this position and as a person in the juvenile justice field."

Graduated Response

Research continues to build evidence supporting the implementation of age-appropriate graduated responses for youth on juvenile probation. In 2017, Nebraska Revised Statute §43-286.01 was enhanced to support the creation of a standardized matrix for youth incentives and sanctions. This is essential, as working with youth to change behavior can take time and have multiple differing responses. If youth are unable to change their behavior and continue to violate the court order, an alleged probation violation can be submitted to the court.

As Nebraska continues to align with the Fundamental Measures of Juvenile Justice (FMJJ), there will be some adjustments in how we are measuring and reporting data. All of the Fundamental Measures on this page align with national juvenile justice data with the intention of improving outcome reporting.

4 to 1

This ratio is best practice as it relates to incentives and sanctions.

For every one sanction, four incentives is the goal.

Number of Incentives

14,267

FMJJ 8.11

Average # of Incentives/Per Discharged Youth

5.6

Number of Sanctions

3,113

FMJJ 8.12

Average # of Sanctions/Per Discharged Youth

1.4

Technical Violations

Number of Youth With at Least One

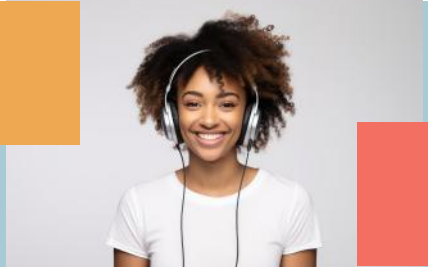
FMJJ 8.01

664

A technical violation occurs when a probation youth does a behavior that is in opposition to supervision expectations pursuant to the court order, but does not constitute a new crime

Nebraska Revised Statute §43-286.01 states: "Failure to complete a sanction may result in repeating the sanction, increasing the duration, or selecting a different sanction similar in nature. Continued failure to comply could result in a request for a motion to revoke probation."

Tangible Incentives



Value of Incentives Awarded

$44,567

Tangible Incentives Awarded

5,308

Special Exception Incentives Provided to Youth

34

% Increase in Special Exception Incentives From FY 2023

89%

Incentive-based probation has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for justice involved youth. Positive reinforcement of desired behaviors increases the likelihood that the pro-social behaviors continue. Use of incentives during supervision aligns with Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-286.01(9) which states that probation officers shall utilize a "graduated response" when supervising youth on probation. It is important to note, working with youth to change behavior can take time. If a youth is unable to demonstrate change in their behavior and continue to violate the court order, an alleged probation violation process is initiated. Research suggests use of a 4:1 ratio, for every one sanction, four incentives shall be applied.

Additionally, research suggests that incentives shall be meaningful and tailored to effectively promote positive youth development. Therefore, a tangible incentives program was developed in 2020 with a grant awarded by the Sherwood Foundation. Examples of incentives include gift cards to various retail stores, movie theaters, and fast-food restaurants, plus items like art supplies, socks, journals, Bluetooth speakers, or sporting equipment. In fiscal year 2022, the program was enhanced with special exception incentives, which are items that are directly tied to the goals of the youth and assist in sustained success. Three personal youth stories are highlighted below detailing special exception incentives. During fiscal year 2024, 67% of probation districts reached a 4:1 ratio with the focus of targeting incentives as a tool to impact long-term behavior change in youth.

Special Exception Success Stories

- Kara: She had been placed out of home due to complex family challenges and ongoing substance use. This resulted in extremely low self esteem. Kara attended treatment and was proud that she was the first one in her family to do this. Part of her treatment was to say, "I am worthy" three times a day, which was really a struggle for her in the beginning. A special exception incentive was requested to give her a bracelet stating, "I am worthy" to celebrate Kara's success and be a constant reminder that she is worth fighting for.
- Mitchell: School attendance was a struggle for Mitchell and he was highly influenced by his peers. Eventually, he was placed out of home where he learned new ways to prioritize tasks which helped him greatly improve his school attendance and grades. In addition, Mitchell attended therapy, completed programming, and was successfully discharged from placement continuing to use his new skills. A mechanic tool set was purchased as a special incentive to celebrate his completion as a positive way to keep Michell involved in pro-social activities, help his family work on cars, and prepare to attend college.
- Devon: This youth struggled with substance use and truancy. As a senior, Devon was credit deficient and not attending school. Since placed on probation, he had only missed one day and was on track to earn all his school credits. Devon signed up for summer school and came in after school to get help when needed. Finally, he made the decision to stop substance abuse and realized it helped ease his anxiety. This gave him an understanding of the negative affects these substances had on his brain. A basketball hoop was chosen as a special incentive for Devon because he found basketball motivating. He now understands the value of being involved in a pro-social activity and the positive aspects it brings to his life.

Home-Based Initiative

Juvenile Justice
Home-Based Initiative

The home-based initiative launched in April of 2017. Since that time, two evidence-informed services have been expanded. These services are Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and the Boys Town In-Home Family Services (IHFS) model. The primary purpose of both MST and IHFS is to help the youth remain in their home while assuring community safety. AOCP's continued support of the Home-Based Initiative helps to ensure evidence-informed services are accessible to families, increasing the opportunities to serve youth in their natural communities.

Throughout this fiscal year, the focus for the initiative was on model fidelity and team development, which resulted in an increase in the number of families served compared to the past two fiscal years. Team development revolved around MST and IHFS teams following model expectations of supervisors to staff therapist (MST) or family consultants (IHFS) ratios. Full teams equate to opportunities to serve more families. Model fidelity occurred through monthly meetings with MST, IHFS, and probation leadership where data was examined and problem-solving conversations occurred.

In March 2024, a 2-day MST model fidelity meeting was held. Nebraska MST providers were invited to spend time with probation leadership and an MST expert honing their skills through discussion and booster training. The results of this training helped increase the numbers as shown in the data on the right. The two previous fiscal years, MST served an average of 70 families per month, while IHFS served an average of 106 families per month. This fiscal year there was an average increase in families served of 29 by MST and 14 by IHFS.

Average # of families receiving MST services per month

99

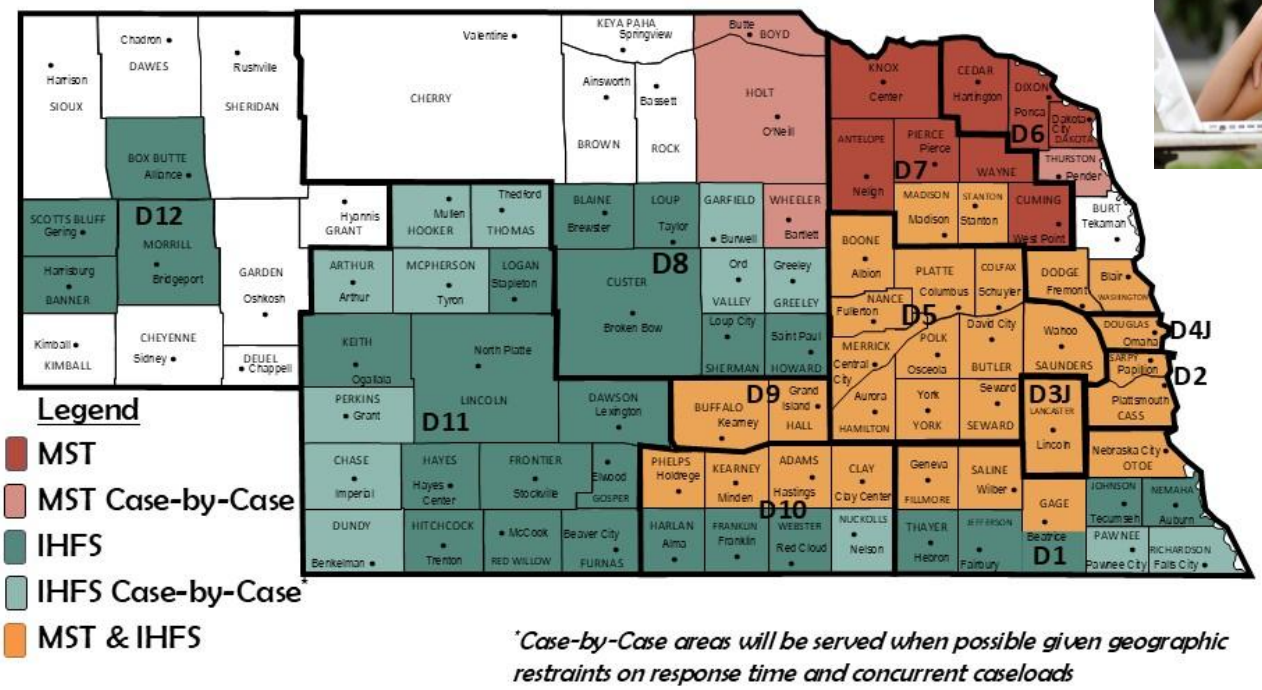
Evidence-informed home-based services cover

88%

of Nebraska Counties

Average # of families receiving IHFS services per month

120



*Case-by-Case areas will be served when possible given geographic restraints on response time and concurrent caseloads

Financials

Average Daily Cost of Probation

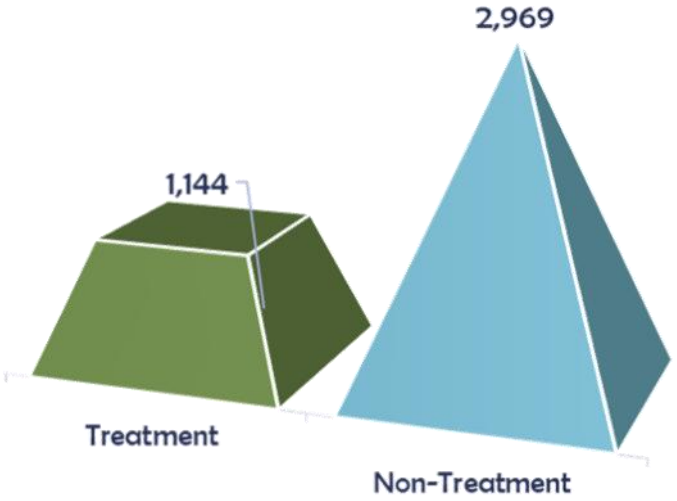
Includes personnel, operating expenses, and services funded by probation

$35.21

Probation staff work with registered service providers statewide to connect youth to quality behavioral health and non-treatment supportive services. Financial assistance is available to ensure youth can access services. With targeted services, supervision outcomes can reduce youths' risk of recidivism. Treatment services may include: substance-use or mental health treatment (outpatient or residential), and medication management. Non-treatment services may include: educational tutoring, day/evening reporting, mediation, shelter care, foster care, and transportation, just to name a few.

Service provisions for youth funded by alternative streams is not represented (i.e. Medicaid, private insurance, etc.). Youth may appear in both treatment and non-treatment counts. Detention is not included.

Service Type Per Youth Receiving Financial Assistance



Average Annual/Monthly Cost for Youth Receiving Financial Assistance

In-Home/Community-Based Services

$3,936.20
Overall Avg./Youth

$328.02
Monthly Avg./Youth

Out-of-Home Services

$31,839.66
Overall Avg./Youth

$2,653.30
Monthly Avg./Youth

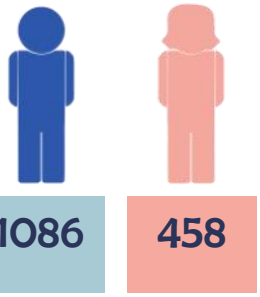
Out-of-Home Placement

Demographics

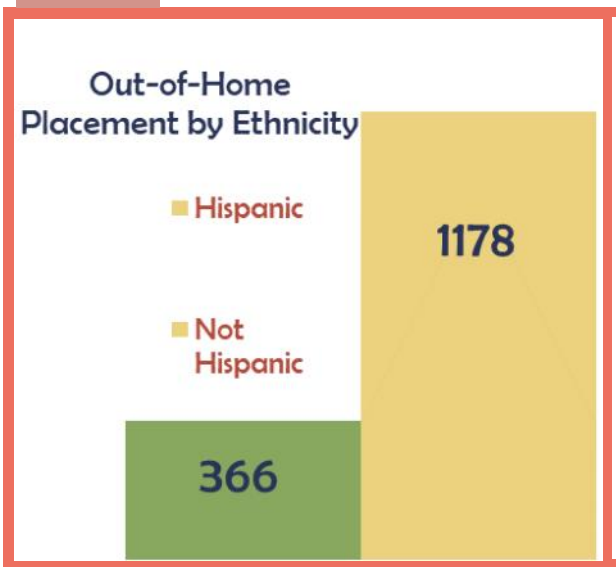
Juvenile justice system enhancement prioritizes the reduction of unnecessary placement of youth outside of their homes. Efforts continue to enhance and expand access to home-based services which will assist in accomplishing this priority. There are still times when all efforts have been exhausted and an out-of-home placement is necessary to provide for community safety and treatment services. The term out-of-home placement includes: congregate care (treatment and non-treatment), foster care, alternatives to detention, detention/jail, runaway, and youth residential treatment centers. In fiscal year 2024, 1,544 youth were served in an out-of-home placement for one day or more.

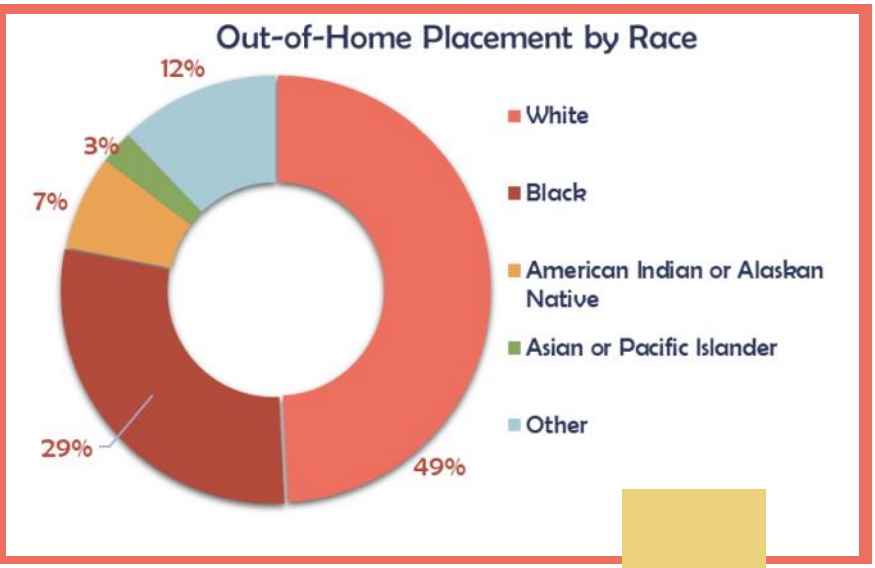
Out-of-Home

Male/Female



Age at Out-of-Home Placement	
Age of Youth	# of Probationers
11	11
12	34
13	140
14	244
15	346
16	378
17	305
18	86
Total	1,544



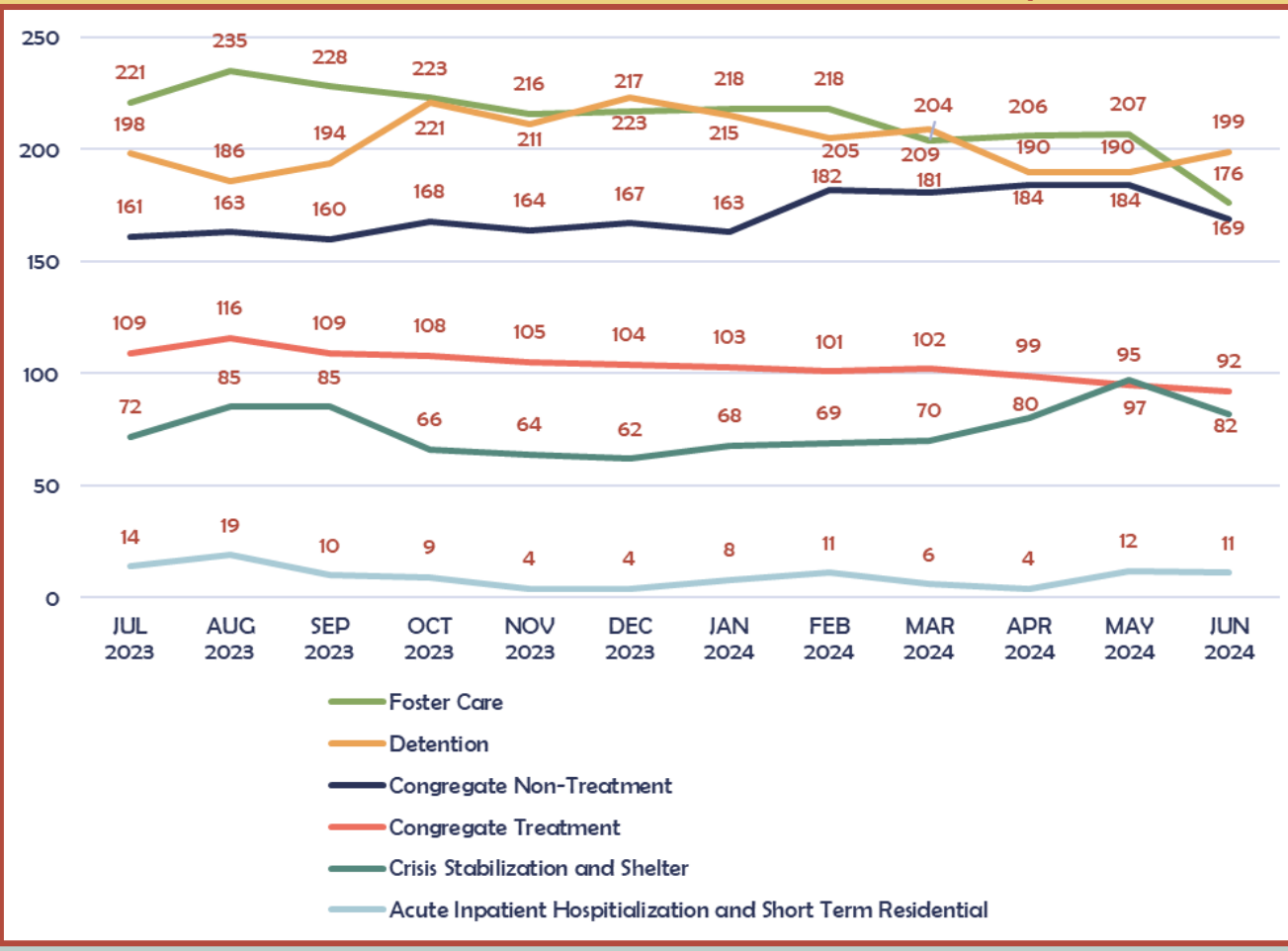


Out-of-Home Placement

Statistics

When youth are placed out of home, probation officers work immediately with the placement staff, youth, and family to develop a plan for youth to transition back to their homes and local community. This is especially important when youth are placed out of state because distance becomes a key factor in transition planning.

Total Number of Youth in Out-of-Home Placement per Month



Congregate Non-Treatment: group homes (A, B, and developmental disability), maternity group homes (parenting and non-parenting), and independent living
Congregate Treatment: psychiatric residential treatment facilities and treatment group homes
Detention: secure and staff secure
Foster Care: developmental disability, extended family home, professional foster care, emergency foster care, foster care,

OUT-OF-STATE CARE

13%

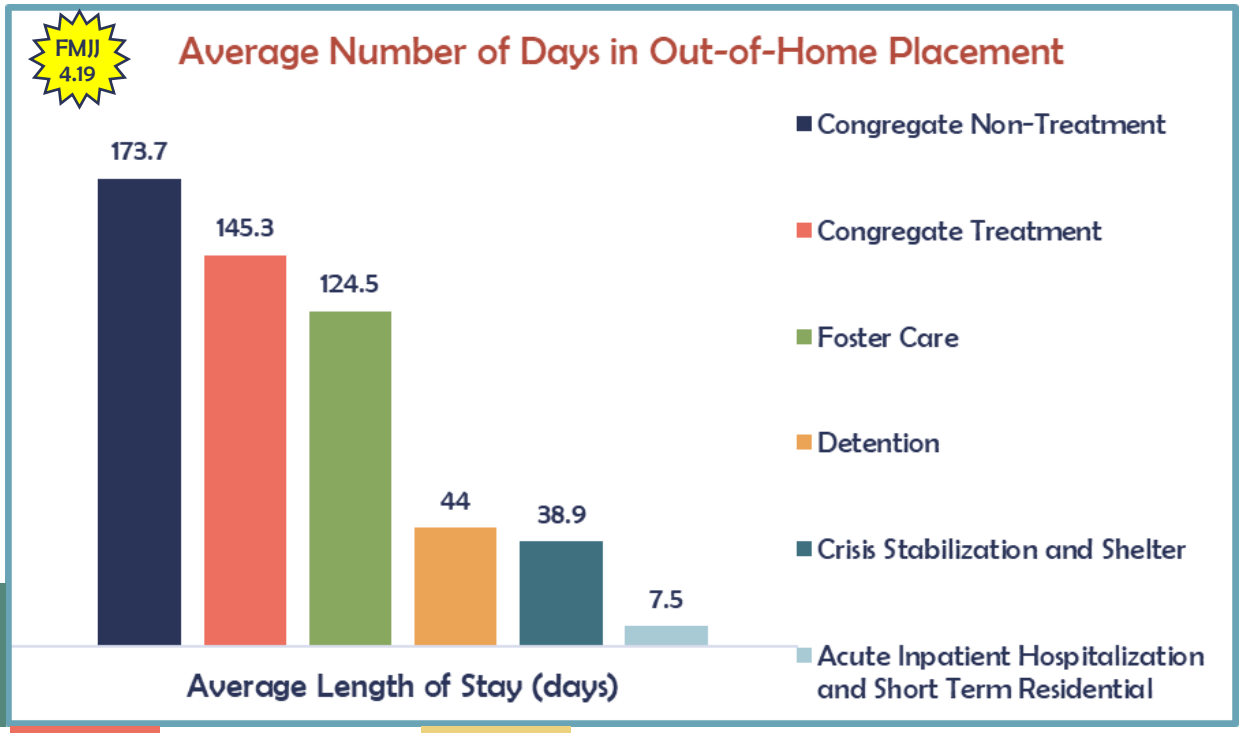
Of 1,544 treatment or non-treatment congregate out-of-home placements, 203 were outside the state of Nebraska

Out-of-Home Placement

Statistics

When a youth is placed out of home, each placement type has an optimal "average length of stay" detailed in each of the specific *Juvenile Service Definitions*, found on the Supreme Court website. This "average length of stay" reflects the time the service has shown evidence to achieve the service outcomes with the overarching goal of behavior change and risk reduction. Additionally, research demonstrates that short-term placements such as detention should focus on immediate community safety risks and have shown to increase risk if utilized for low-risk youth and for long periods of time.

For the youth that were discharged from out-of-home placement during the fiscal year, the following lengths of stay were reported. Note that a youth may have multiple out-of-home placements across multiple levels of service so the table reflects the number of placements that had a release date, not the number of youth discharged from out-of-home placement.



There was no statistically significant change in the use of out-of-home placement from FY 2023 to FY 2024

Discharge

77%

Juvenile court cases were discharged successfully

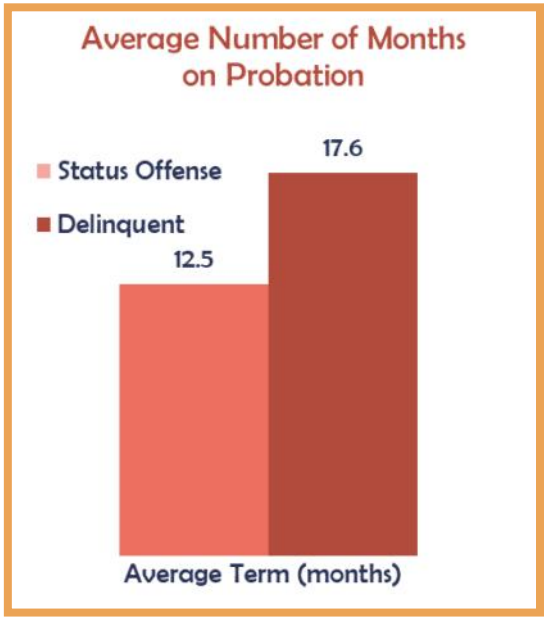
When a youth is placed on probation, it is key that a skilled probation officer works closely with the youth to ensure all court-ordered probation conditions are successfully completed. This should result in a reduction of the youth's risk and a change in those behaviors that brought the youth before the court. Once a youth has completed his or her probation conditions, a judge releases the youth from probation supervision. There are three options: the youth may be discharged from probation successfully, unsuccessfully, or probation may be revoked. A basic measure of success for juvenile probation is the number of youth that successfully complete probation.

In this fiscal year, 3,311 juvenile court cases were discharged from probation (113 youth were released for an "other" discharge option and are not included in the total). Examples of "other" discharge options include a district override or adjudication transfer.

3%

of the cases discharged in fiscal year 2024 were for youth who reached the age of majority

District #	Successful	Unsuccessful
1	95	27
2	233	34
3J	353	127
4J	454	153
5	212	23
6	215	36
7	115	59
8	63	10
9	228	71
10	133	21
11	214	52
12	240	30
Total	2,555	643



FMJJ 1.11, 4.21, 4.22 and 6.06

76%

Of Youth Who Completed Probation Did Not Have New Law Offenses While Under Supervision

76%

Of Youth Who Completed Probation Did Not Have Technical Violations While Under Supervision

Recidivism

Recidivism is nationally supported as a way to measure the impact of juvenile probation. The Supreme Court approved a standard definition for recidivism which is documented below. National experts continue to suggest using a consistent definition over time to determine impact as a best practice. Recidivism has remained stable despite an increase in high/very high-risk youth and total probation population.

The recidivism rate for FY 2024 went down 3% from FY 2023

DID NOT RECIDIVATE

82%

Note: Youth included in this data were discharged in fiscal year 2024

RECIDIVATE

18%

Nebraska Supreme Court Recidivism Definition

For the purpose of accurately assessing program recidivism across justice programs, Nebraska State Probation and Nebraska Problem-Solving Courts shall utilize the following uniform definitions of recidivism for all adults and juveniles within their respective programs.

A) Adults: As applied to adults, recidivism shall mean a final conviction of a Class I or II misdemeanor, a Class IV felony or above, or a Class W misdemeanor based on a violation of state law or an ordinance of any city or village enacted in conformance with state law, within three years of being successfully released.

B) Juveniles:
   1) As applied to juveniles, recidivism shall mean that within one year of being successfully released from a probation or problem-solving court program, the juvenile has:
      a) an adjudication pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-247(1) or (2)
      b) for a juvenile fourteen years or older, a final conviction for a Class W misdemeanor based on a violation of state traffic laws or ordinances of any city or village enacted in conformance with state law; or
      c) a prosecution and final conviction as an adult for any crimes set forth in subsection A) above
   2) For juveniles that age-out of the juvenile system within one year of program exit and who did not recidivate post-program as juveniles, the adult definition of post-program recidivism, including any drug-related or alcohol-related conviction, shall apply.

National Juvenile Justice

SPOTLIGHT

Kari Rumbaugh

Kari Rumbaugh, Deputy Administrator for the Juvenile Probation Services Division, received a special invitation to travel to Washington DC and testify with a panel of national youth justice professionals as an expert on juvenile probation to the Federal Coordinating Council for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Council convened in person at the Office of Justice Programs building on December 6, 2023.

In light of the significant accomplishments in Nebraska juvenile probation, Kari was selected to represent probation professionals from across the United States. Panelists were asked to provide up to five pages of written, as well as verbal testimony, focused on two essential questions: How can council member agencies enhance coordination, to prevent youth from entering the justice system, and to increase access/remove barriers to opportunities and services that support the success of justice involved youth in their communities.

Established in 1974 by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the Coordinating Council is an independent body charged with coordinating federal programs related to delinquency prevention and missing and exploited children. It is comprised of thirteen federal agencies and up to ten nonfederal practitioner members who are named by the President and Congress. The council's chair is the Attorney General and its Vice-Chair is the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

In her testimony, Kari identified six priority areas which address the council's questions.

- Support local communities in identifying their own individual needs, as well as provide them training and technical assistance to create services and programs that can prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system.
- Cultivate highly-skilled probation officers who receive specialized training, especially youth and family focused.
- Prioritize evidence-based and best practice resources such as a service recommendation matrix, home-based services, tangible incentives, or a reentry unit to enhance supervision and service access.
- Create opportunities for positive youth development by promoting a youth's individual strengths. One such method we use is an annual artwork contest.
- Promote local and national evaluations and technical assistance focused on best practices, as well as implementation.
- Provide clear measures for how to represent data and reporting which demonstrates evidence of fidelity. Create an annual report using the data which is posted on the website and distributed to juvenile justice stakeholders which focuses on program strengths and success stories.

This invitation and honor are reflective of the accomplishments happening within juvenile probation across Nebraska.

FUNDAMENTAL MEASURES

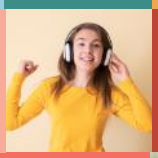
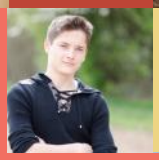
Table of Contents

The Fundamental Measures for Juvenile Justice are a tool for comparing juvenile justice systems. The measures were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice with input from organizations such as law enforcement, the court, and juvenile corrections — with the intention of improving national juvenile justice data.

Here is the website: https://www.ncjj.org/fmjj/

We have organized this section as a tool to define each fundamental measure listed in this report and tell you where to find the data.

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