

MONTANA JUDICIAL BRANCH

Youth Court At-A-Glance

January 2021 through December 2021



MONTANA SUPREME COURT
Office of the Court Administrator
301 South Park Ave., STE 328
Helena, Montana 59620
(406) 841-2950

JUVENILE JUSTICE OVERVIEW

Juveniles usually enter the juvenile justice system through contact with law enforcement, although they may be referred to juvenile probation by other agencies and parents. Juvenile probation is an integral part of the Youth Court and is overseen by the Youth Court judge within each of the 22 Judicial Districts. Most referrals to the Youth Court's juvenile probation office are in the form of a ticket accompanied by a report from law enforcement. Juvenile probation officers may handle any referral except traffic and fish and game violations, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Justice, Municipal, City, and District Courts.

Youth referred to probation must appear in front of the juvenile probation officer with a parent or guardian to answer to the allegations against them. Most youth will never see the Youth Court judge and will work solely through the Youth Court juvenile probation officer to resolve the ticket in what is referred to as the informal process. If the referral is forwarded to the county attorney and a petition is filed on the alleged charges, the youth will appear before the Youth Court judge in what is referred to as the formal process. Approximately 10% of the youth referred to juvenile probation each year are handled formally.

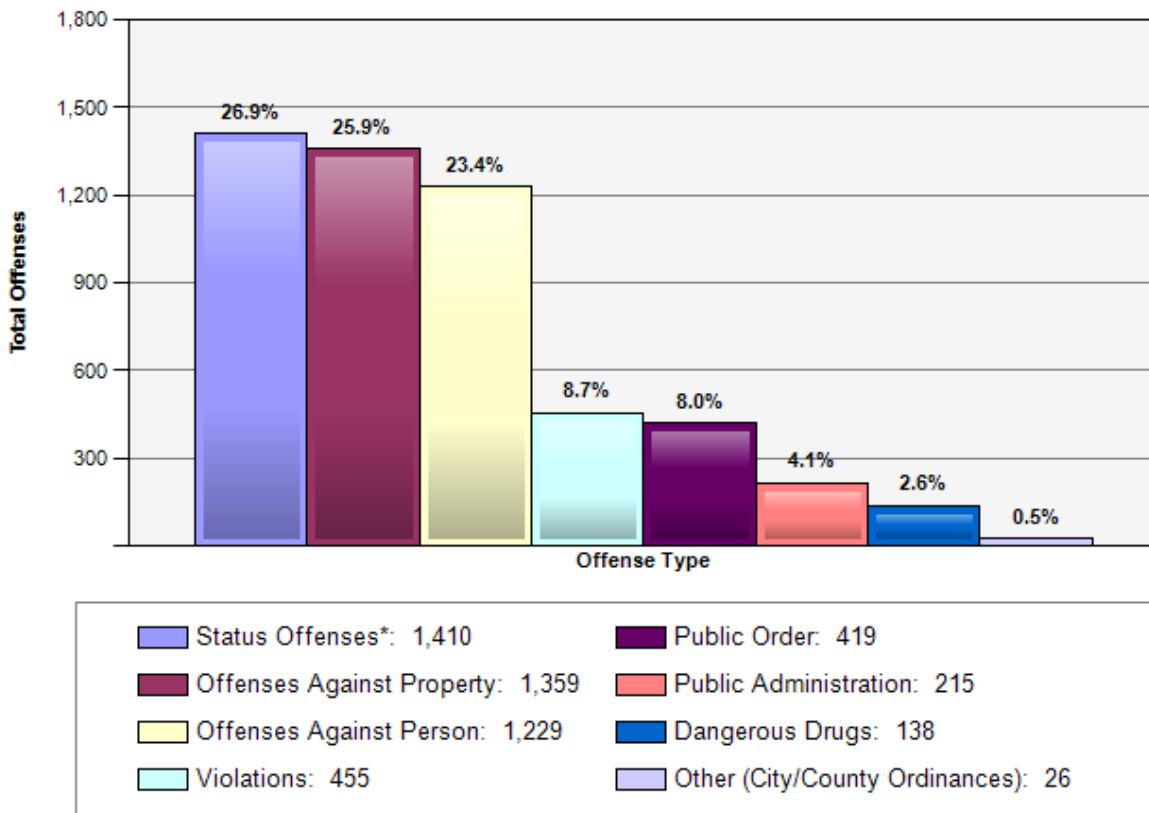


Juvenile Justice

REFERRALS TO MONTANA'S YOUTH COURTS

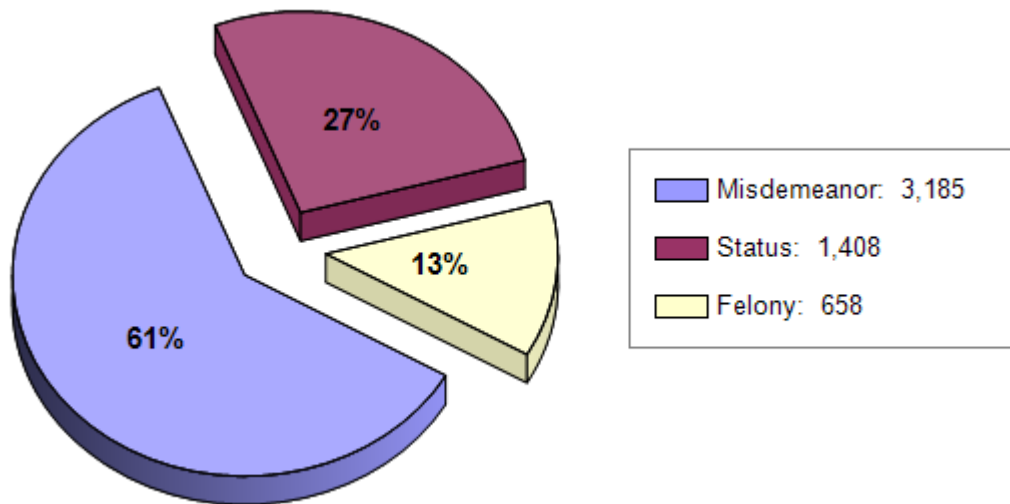
Youth Referred to Youth Court:	2,599
Referrals (a youth may have multiple referrals):	3,802
Offenses (a referral may have multiple offenses):	5,251

OFFENSE CATEGORIES

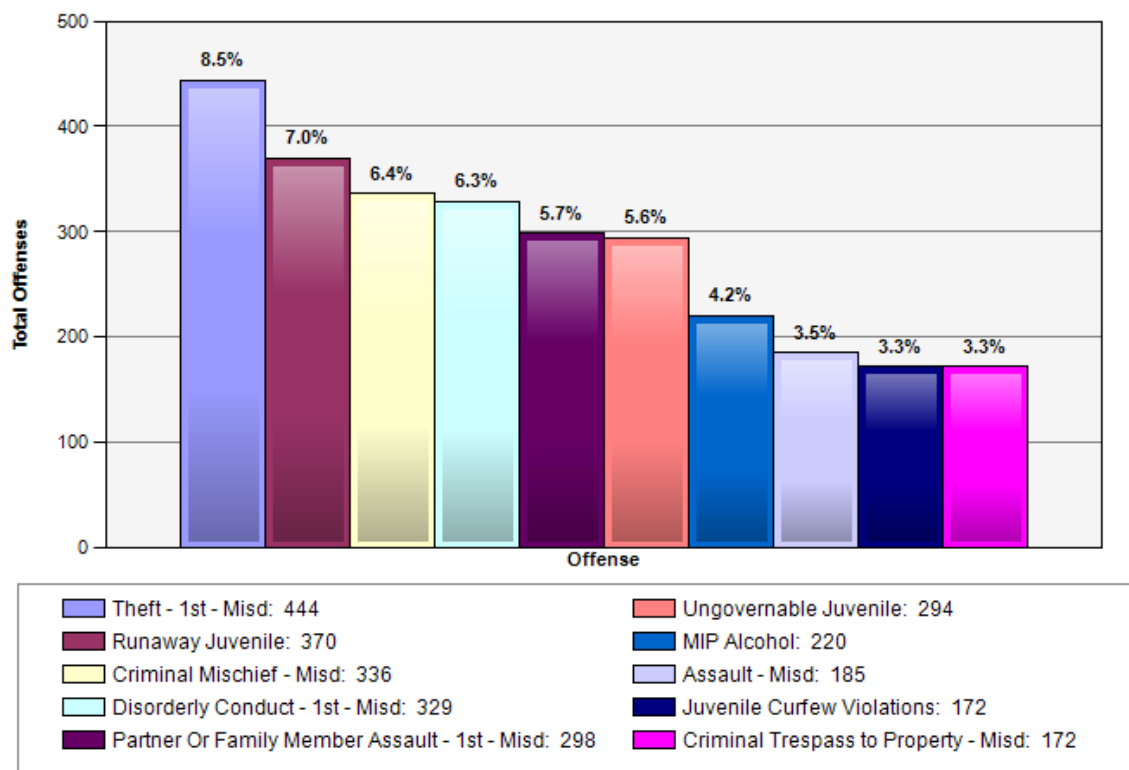


* These are matters that are offenses because of the youth's age and include such things as a minor in possession of alcohol and marijuana, truancy, curfew or a run-away violation.

OFFENSE CLASSIFICATIONS

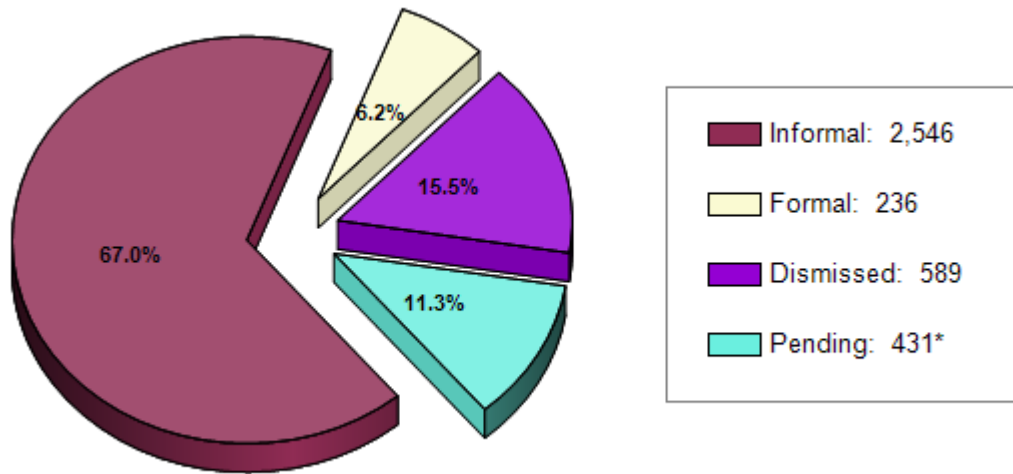


TOP 10 OFFENSES ASSOCIATED WITH REFERRALS TO JUVENILE PROBATION



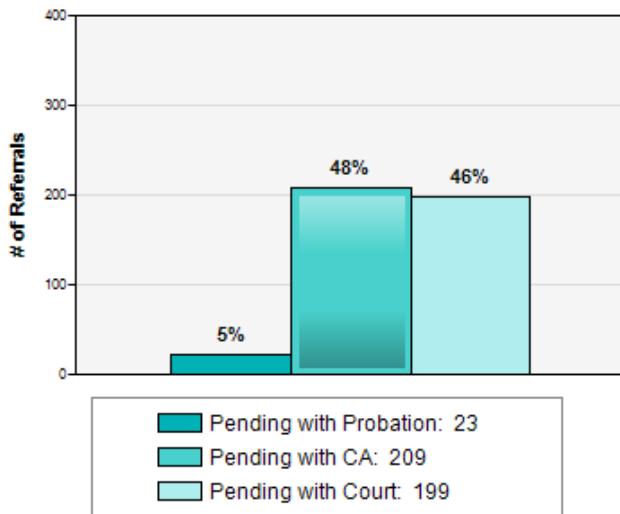
TYPE OF DISPOSITION USED

- Informal:** Referral handled by juvenile probation officer
- Formal:** Referral in which youth appears before Youth Court judge
- Dismissed:** Referral in which case is dismissed by juvenile probation officer, county attorney, or court
- Pending:** Referral awaiting action from the county attorney's office or the court, or a ticket has been issued and juvenile probation is waiting to see the youth and parent(s), or is awaiting further investigation by law enforcement

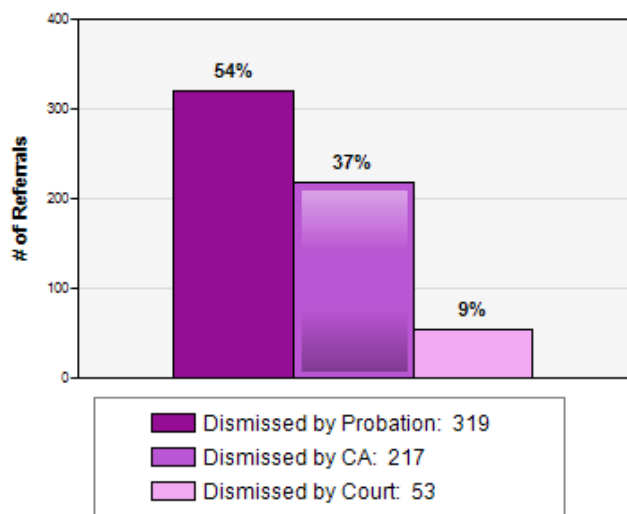


* Pending may include "In Progress" intakes, which are not included in other totals.

Pending Disposition Breakdown

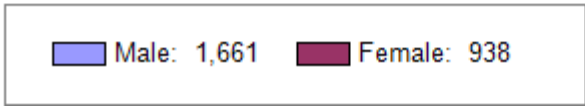
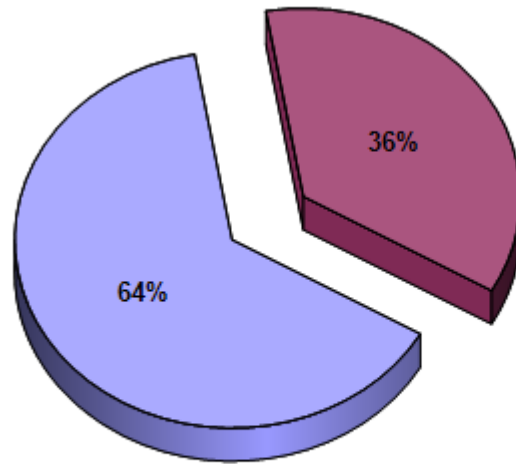


Dismissed Disposition Breakdown

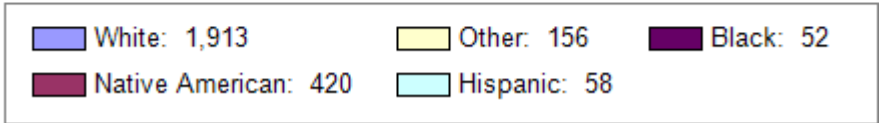
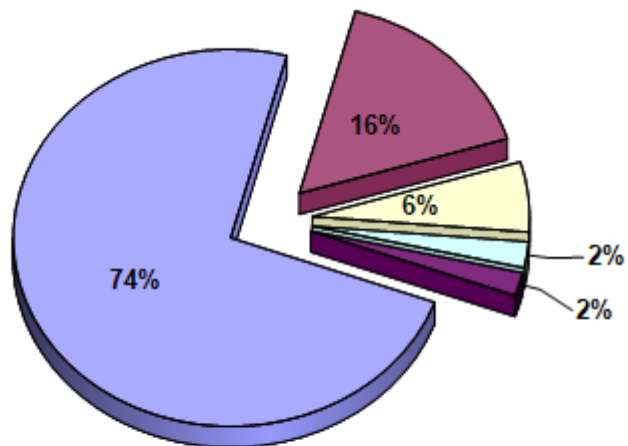


YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

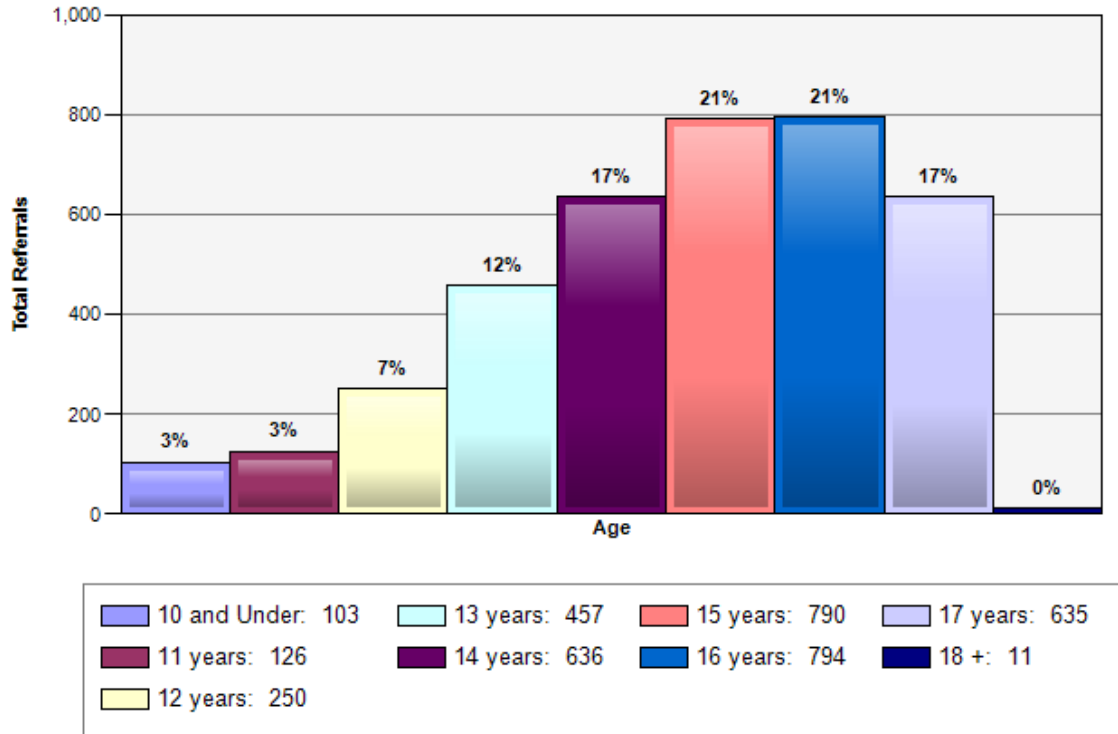


RACE

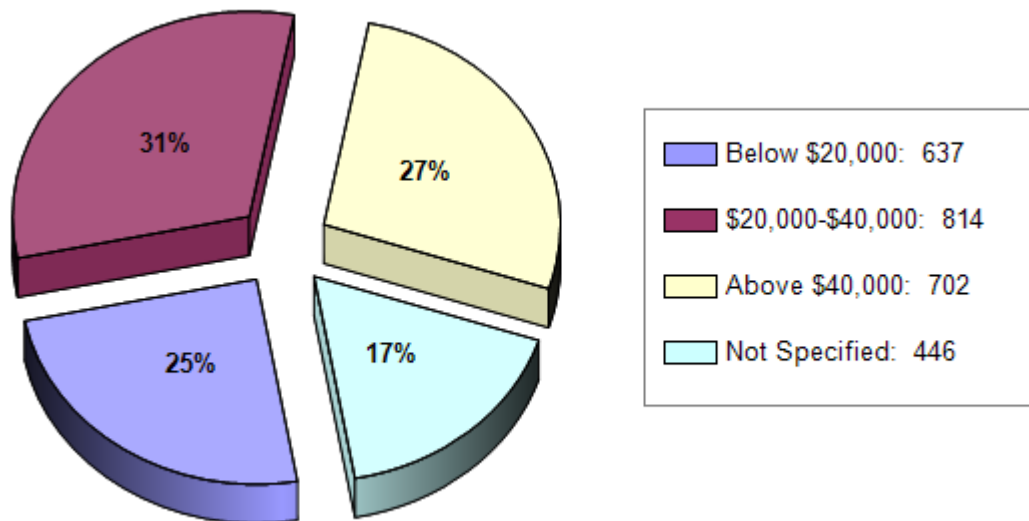


Referral Characteristics

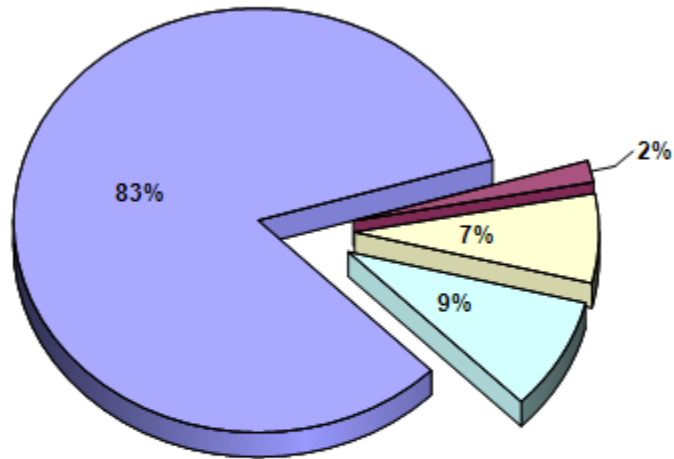
AGE AT TIME OF OFFENSE







FAMILY'S HOUSEHOLD INCOME



SCHOOL PARTICIPATION



 Youth in an Educational Program: 2,155	 Youth not Attending School: 177
 Youth Graduated/Completed GED: 43	 Not Specified: 224

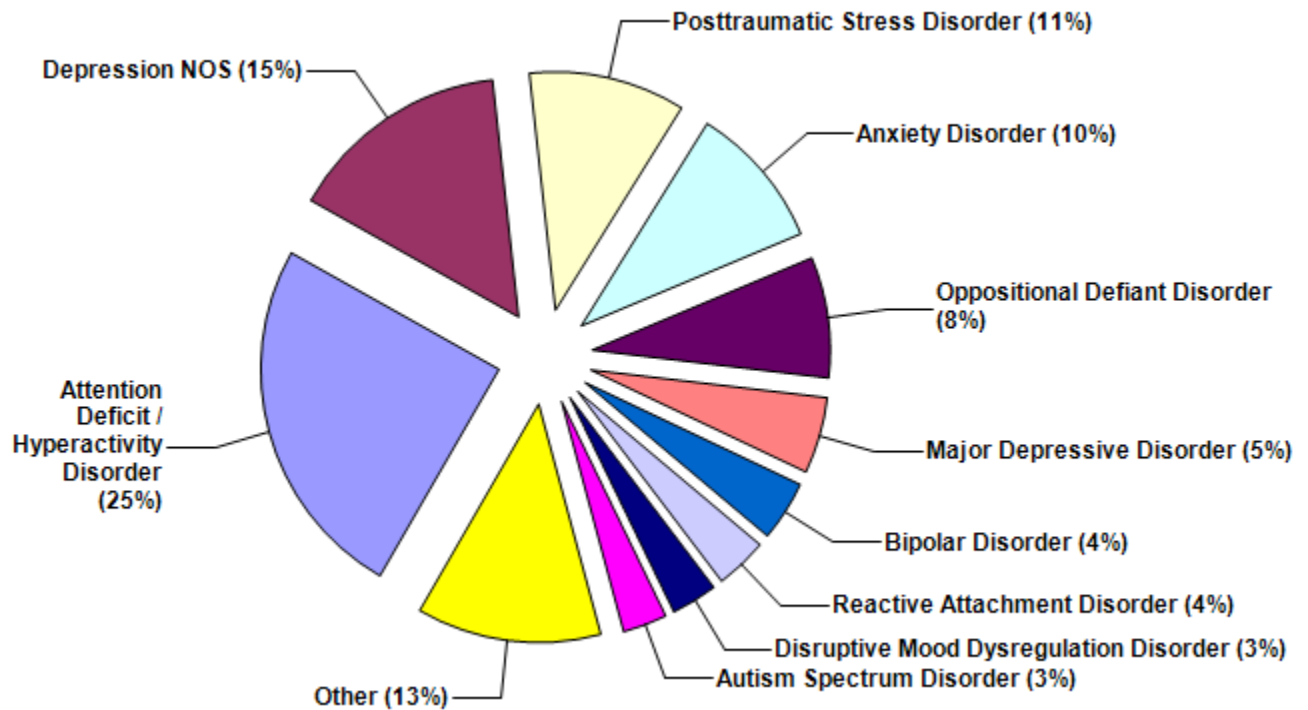
MENTAL HEALTH

TOP 10 MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSES

Oftentimes, a juvenile referred to youth court services may already be addressing a mental health matter, or as a result of services provided by youth court a mental health issue is identified.

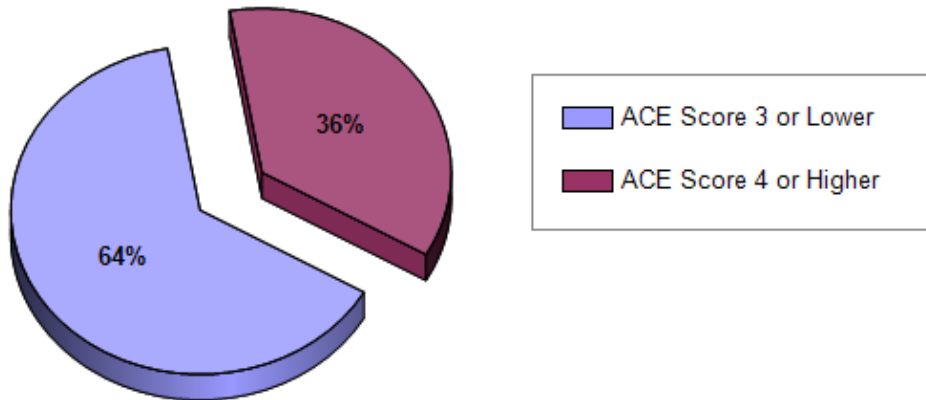
Out of 2,599 Unduplicated youth, 28%* (734) identified a mental health diagnosis.

** not all youth are required to provide mental health information so this number may be higher.*



ACEs AND MONTANA'S YOUTH COURTS

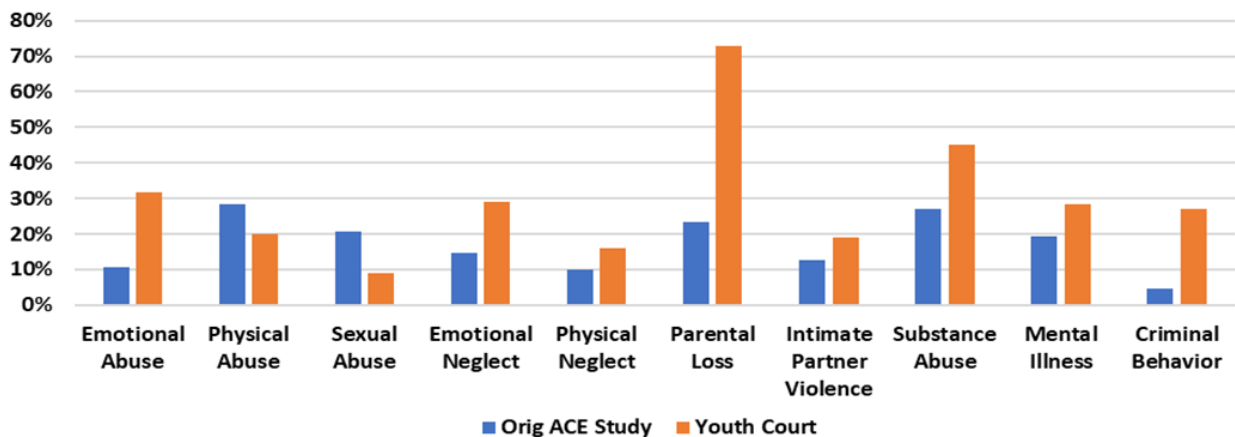
The CDC's Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs) uncovered a significant link between childhood trauma and the chronic diseases people develop as adults, as well as an increase in social and emotional problems. Since 2016, the Montana Youth Court Services Division has used the ACEs tool to assist in identifying additional risk factors in the population we serve. A high ACEs score (4 or more) has been proven to increase the likelihood of failing grades, drug and alcohol use and mental health problems and in those circumstances in which a youth receives an ACEs score of 4 or more, the supervising probation officer is directed to use a trauma-informed approach in their case-planning.



COMPARING YOUTH COURTS ACEs SCORES

The Office of Court Administration Youth Court Services Division has partnered with the ChildWise Institute to further analyze ACEs characteristics in the population we serve. The graph below is a representation of how youth in MT Youth Court Services compare to the original ACEs study in the ten risk factors identified by the ACEs tool.

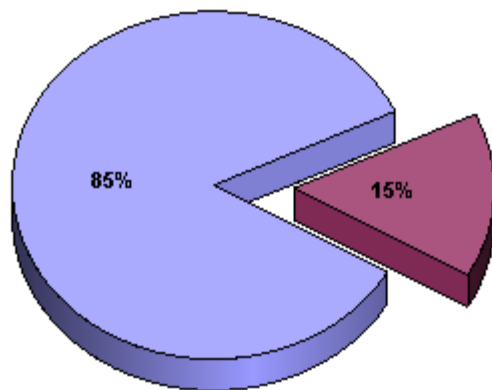
Comparison of ACEs Between MT Youth Court Services and the Original ACE Study



EXPERIENCES & EXPRESSIONS SCREENER (EES)

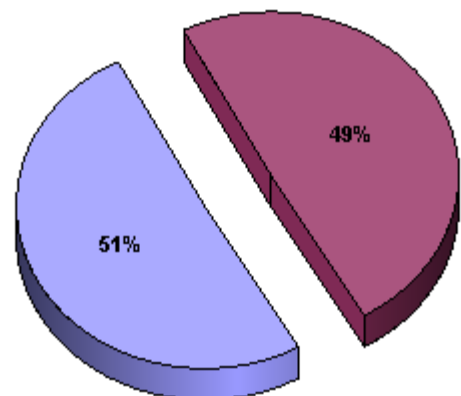
To engage in case planning that addresses trauma and victimization, the Experiences and Expressions Screener (EES) was implemented in 2021 and must be used when a youth is moderate or high risk to reoffend and placed on informal or formal supervision. The following charts include some initial findings from administration of the EES.

EES Participation



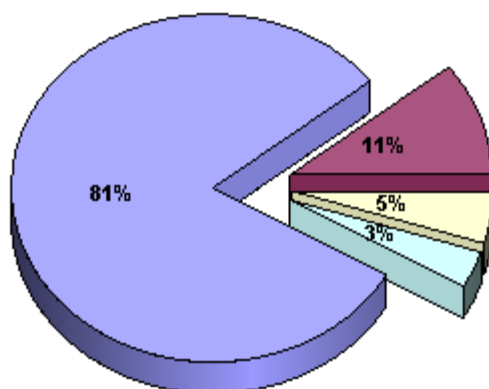
Participated (574) Declined (104)

EES Outcomes



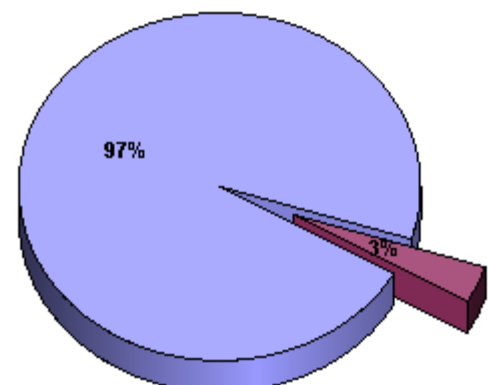
No Referral (291) Referral Made (283)

Thoughts of Suicide



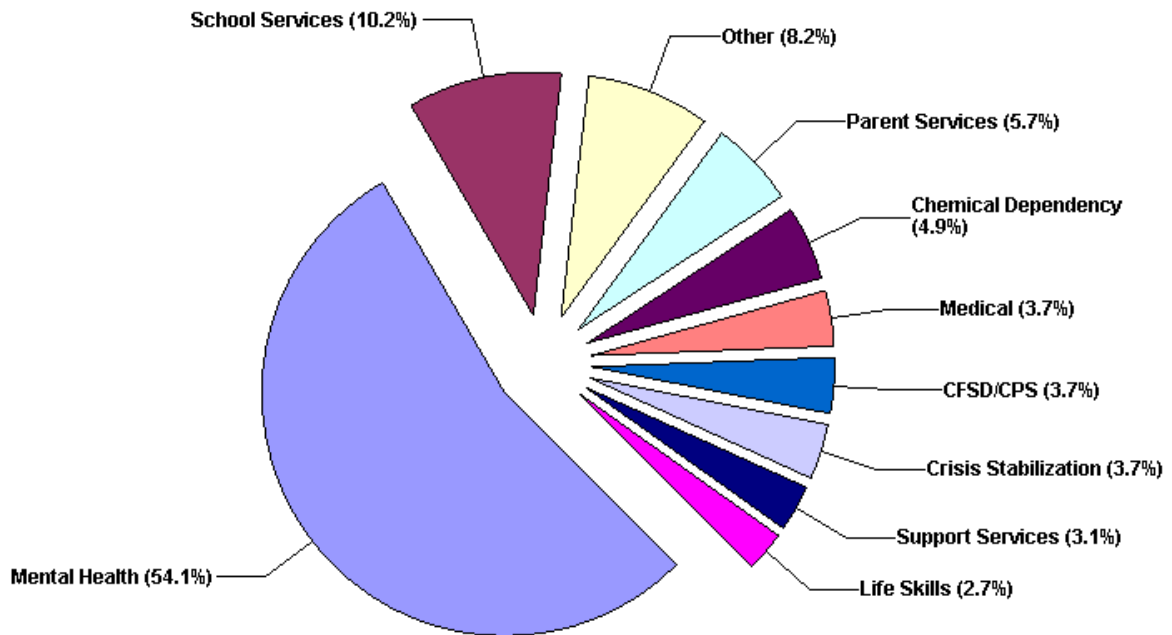
Not even once (467) One or two times (61)
 Three to five times (28) More than five times (20)

Feel Safe at Home

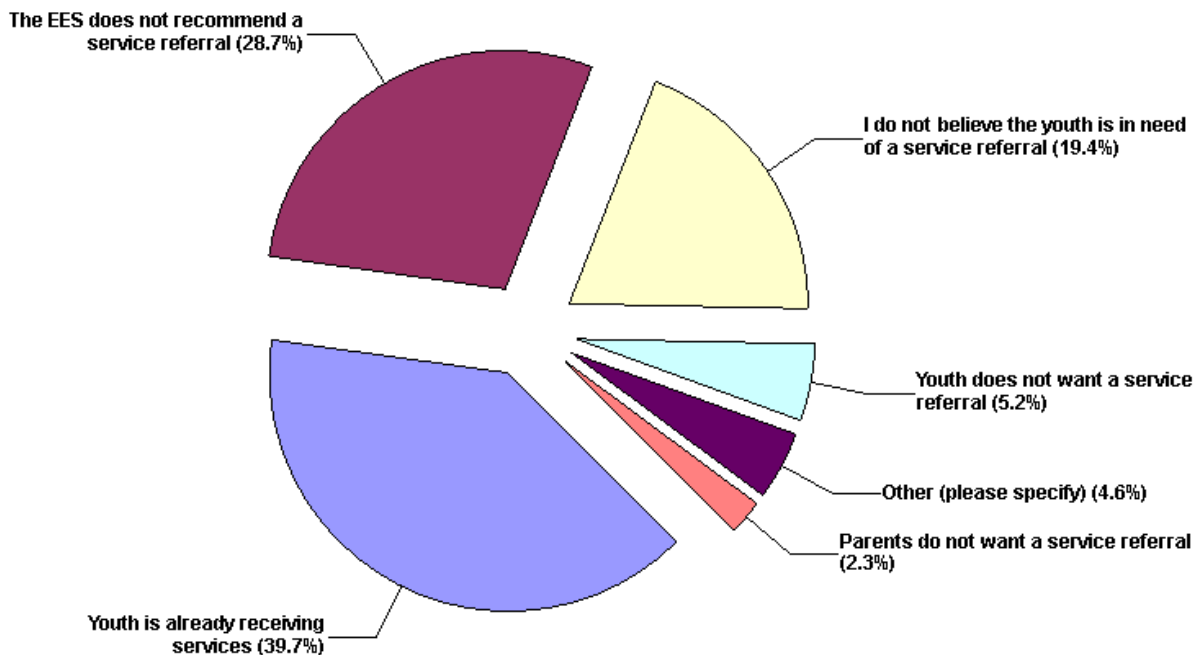


Yes (556) No (20)

EES: SERVICES REFERRED TO



EES: REASONS NO REFERRAL



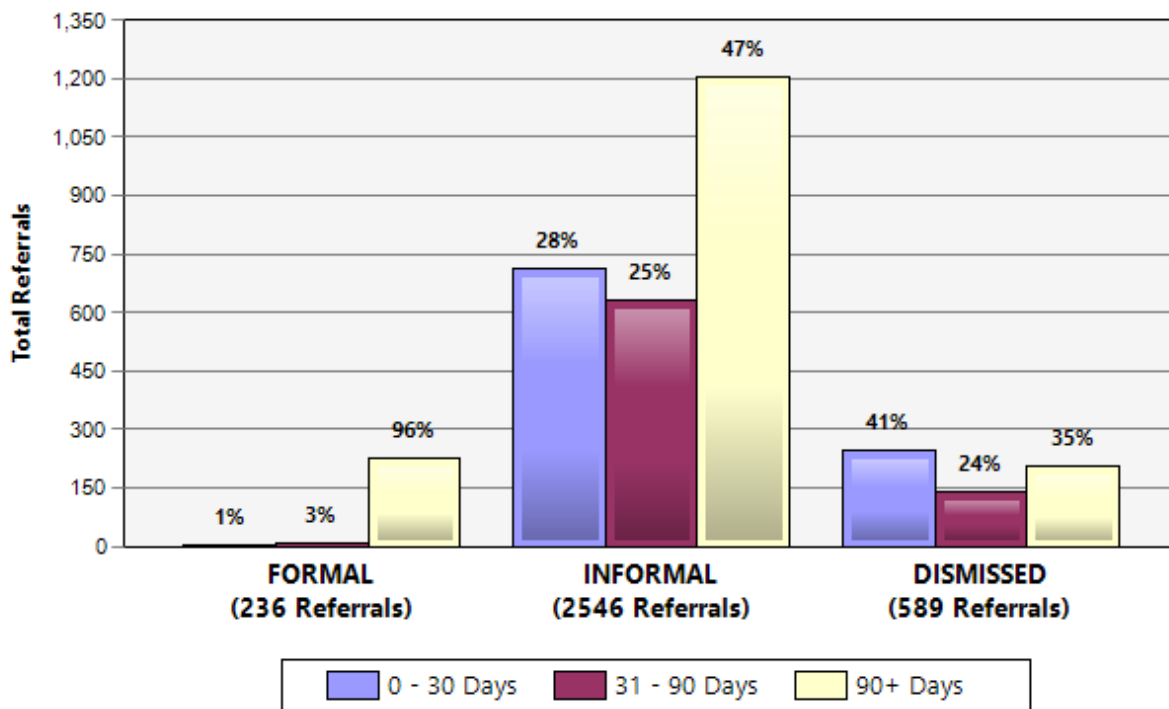
RESTORING JUSTICE TO VICTIMS AND HOLDING OFFENDERS ACCOUNTABLE

AVERAGE LENGTH OF DISPOSITION

Length of Disposition	Number of Referrals	
0-30 days:	957	(28.4%)
31-90 days:	777	(23.0%)
90+ days:	1637	(48.6%)

Every referral has a disposition, which is the equivalent to an adult sentence handed down by a Judge. The above chart includes all referrals except those that are in a *Pending* status because in these cases a disposition end date has yet to be determined.

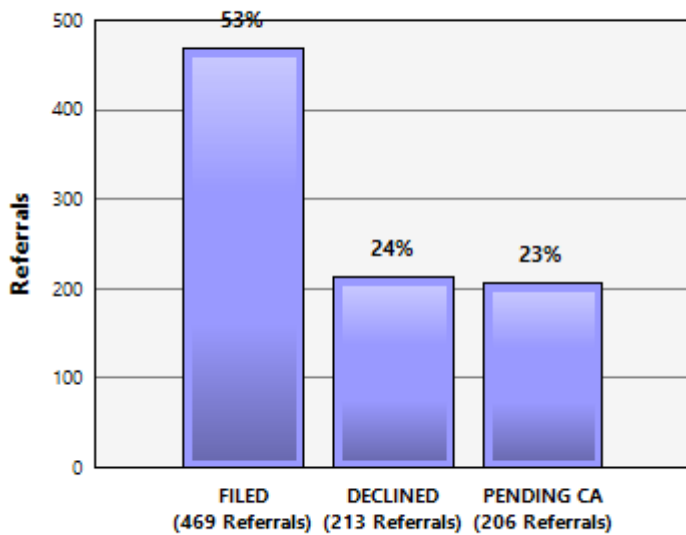
AVERAGE LENGTH OF DISPOSITION - BY TYPE



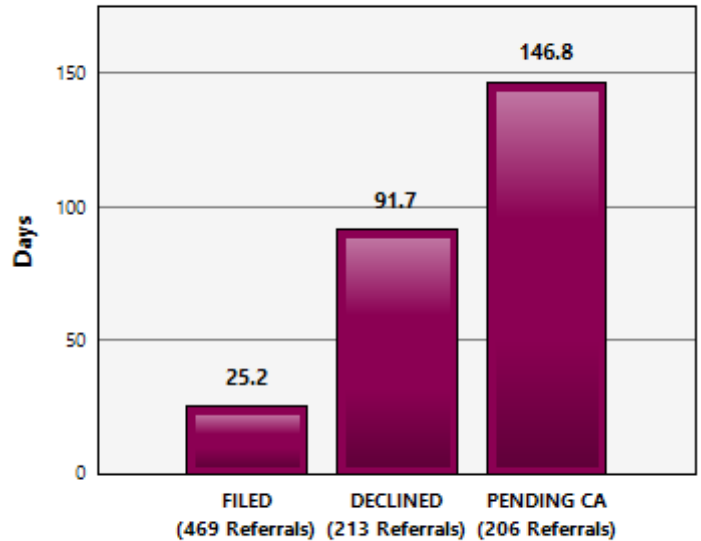
FORMAL REFERRALS TO THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Referrals made to the County Attorney: 888

Manner Handled:



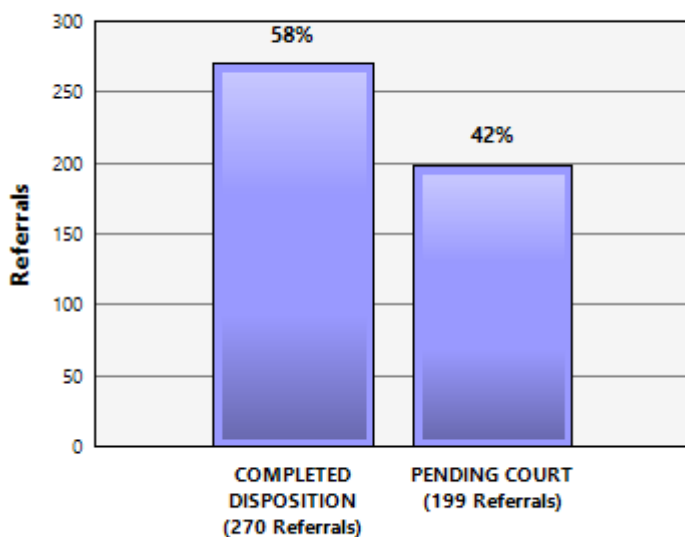
Average Processing Days:



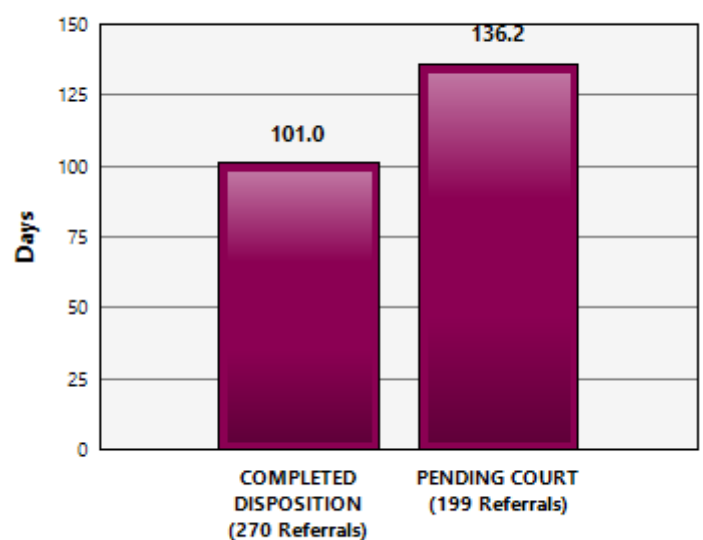
FORMAL REFERRALS TO THE COURT

Petitions filed with Youth Court: 469

Manner Handled:

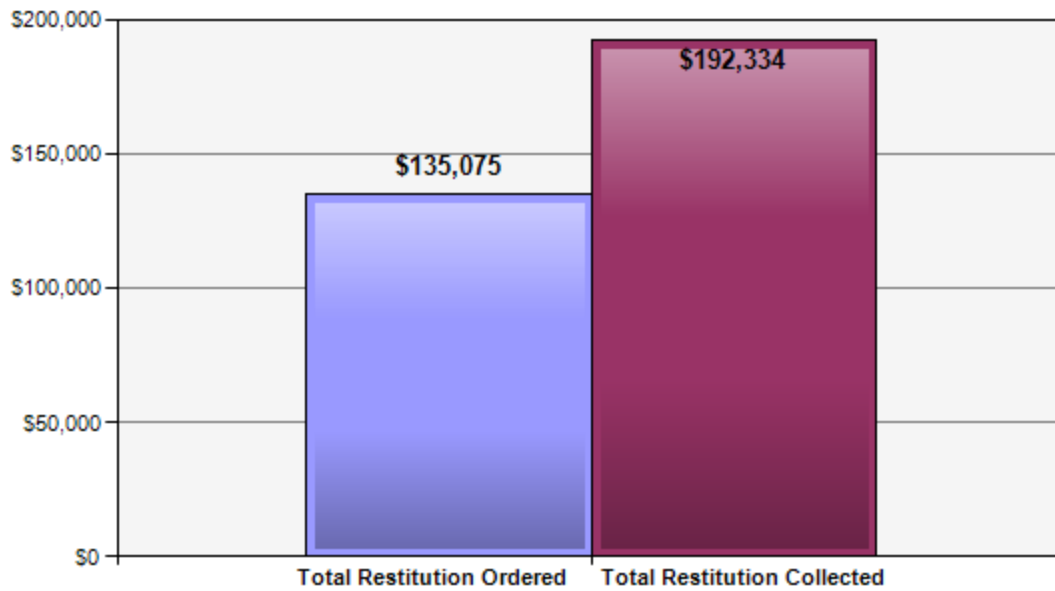


Average Processing Days:



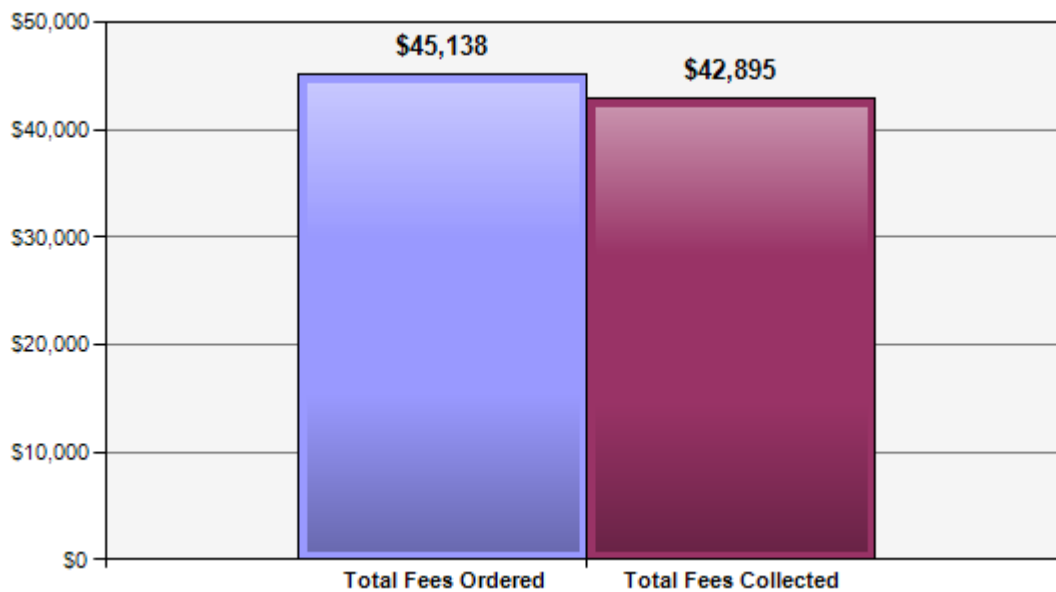
RESTITUTION

Number of Youth Ordered to Pay Restitution: 224



FEES

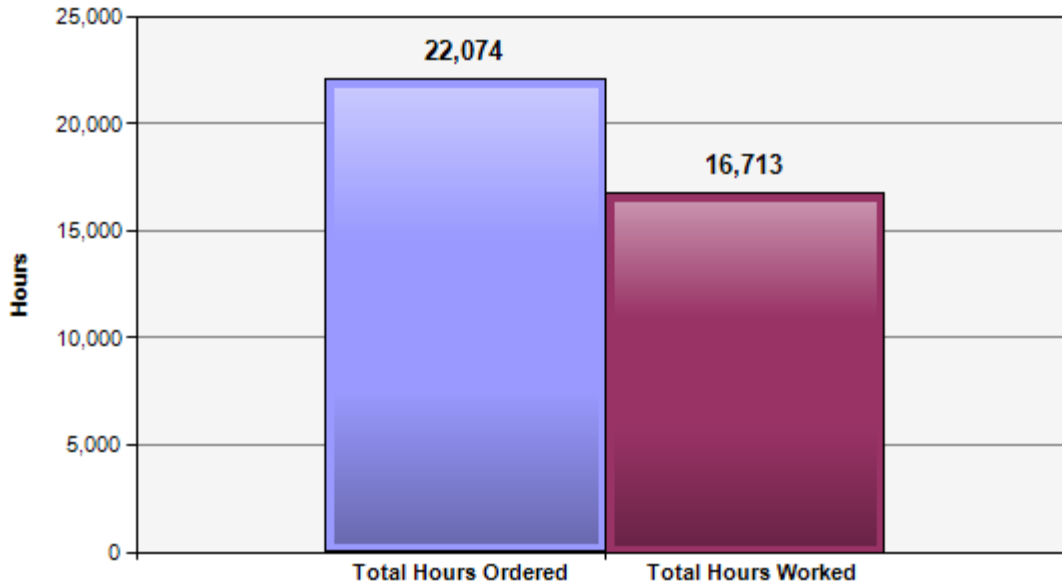
Number of Youth Ordered to Pay Fees: 916



Fees used to offset cost of drug testing, workers' compensation, and other services.

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

Number of Youth Ordered to Complete Community Service: 991



COMMUNITY SERVICE SWEAT EQUITY HOURS

Many youth are unable to contribute towards their restitution obligation because they have no family support, are not old enough to get a job, or lack the necessary social skills to get and keep a job. The Community Service Sweat Equity program is offered to youth as an opportunity, by utilizing community service, to earn restitution money to repay their victims.

Total Number of Youth that Worked Sweat Equity Hours:	104
Total Sweat Equity Hours Worked:	3,673.52
Total Money Earned to Pay to Victims:	\$32,143.95

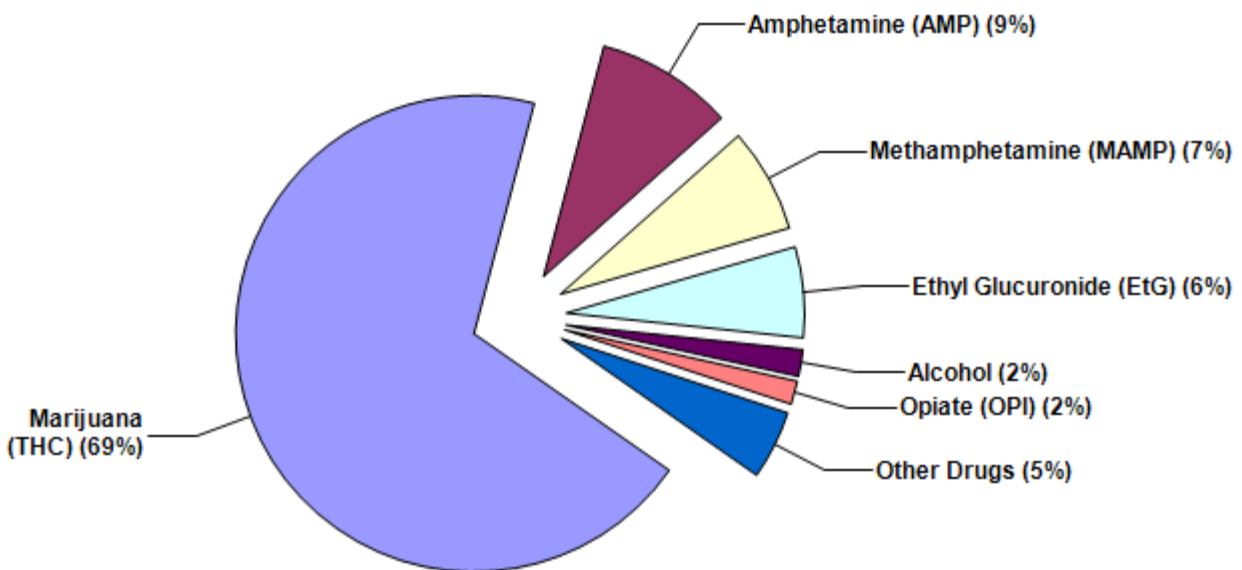
RESISTANCE TO DRUGS

Offenders ordered to submit to drug testing are tested randomly unless there is suspicion to believe the youth has recently been using. Youth in a drug treatment court may be required to test more often as required by the judge.

Total Number of Youth Drug Tested:	393
Total Number of Tests Administered:	1,928
Total Number of Youth Testing Positive:	234

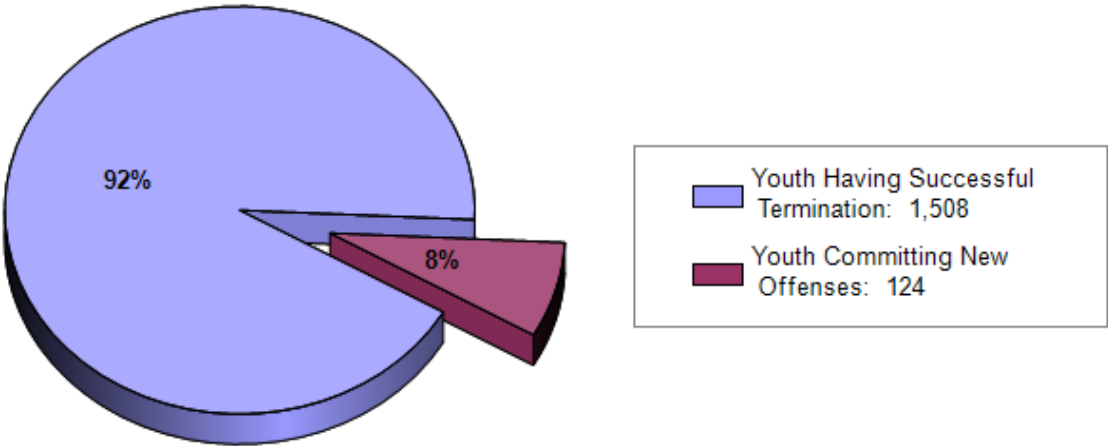
* A single youth may have tested positive multiple times

TOP DRUGS USED



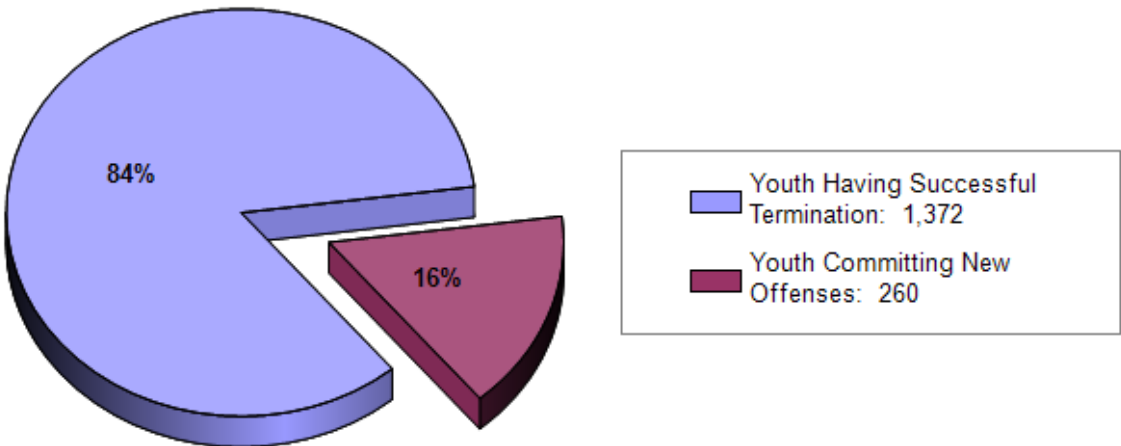
RECIDIVISM WHILE UNDER SUPERVISION (UNDUPLICATED YOUTH NEW TO THE SYSTEM)

Recidivism on unduplicated youth that had their initial Intake in **2020** and committed a new offense prior to the disposition end date.



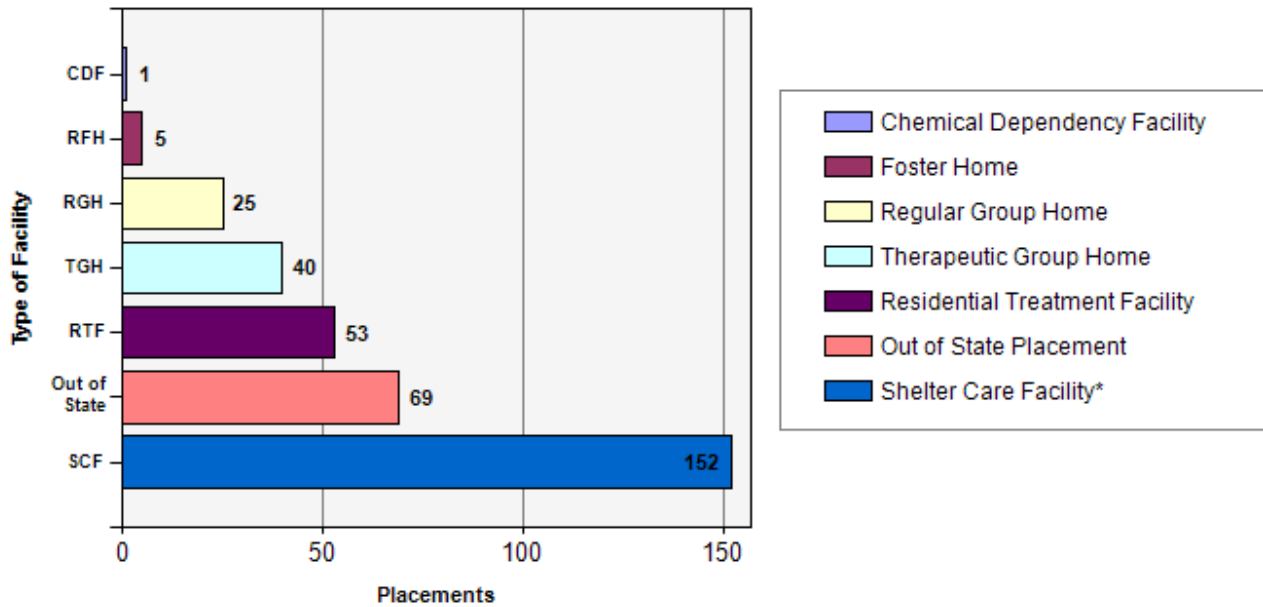
RECIDIVISM WITHIN 1 YR AFTER CASE COMPLETION (UNDUPLICATED YOUTH NEW TO THE SYSTEM)

Recidivism on unduplicated youth that had their initial Intake in **2020** and committed a new offense within 1 year of the disposition end date.

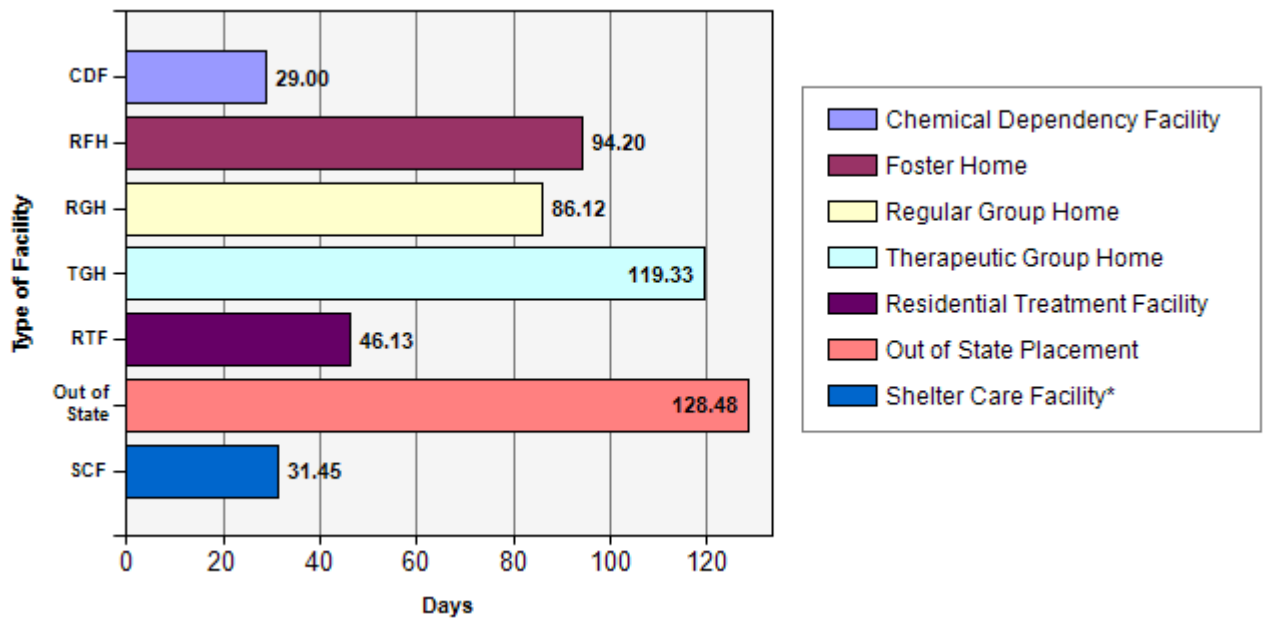


OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

Out of 3,802 referrals to Youth Court, 231 youth were placed in out-of-home placements for this reporting year. Please note that a single youth may be placed multiple times and other agencies may have been responsible for the placement during this reporting period.

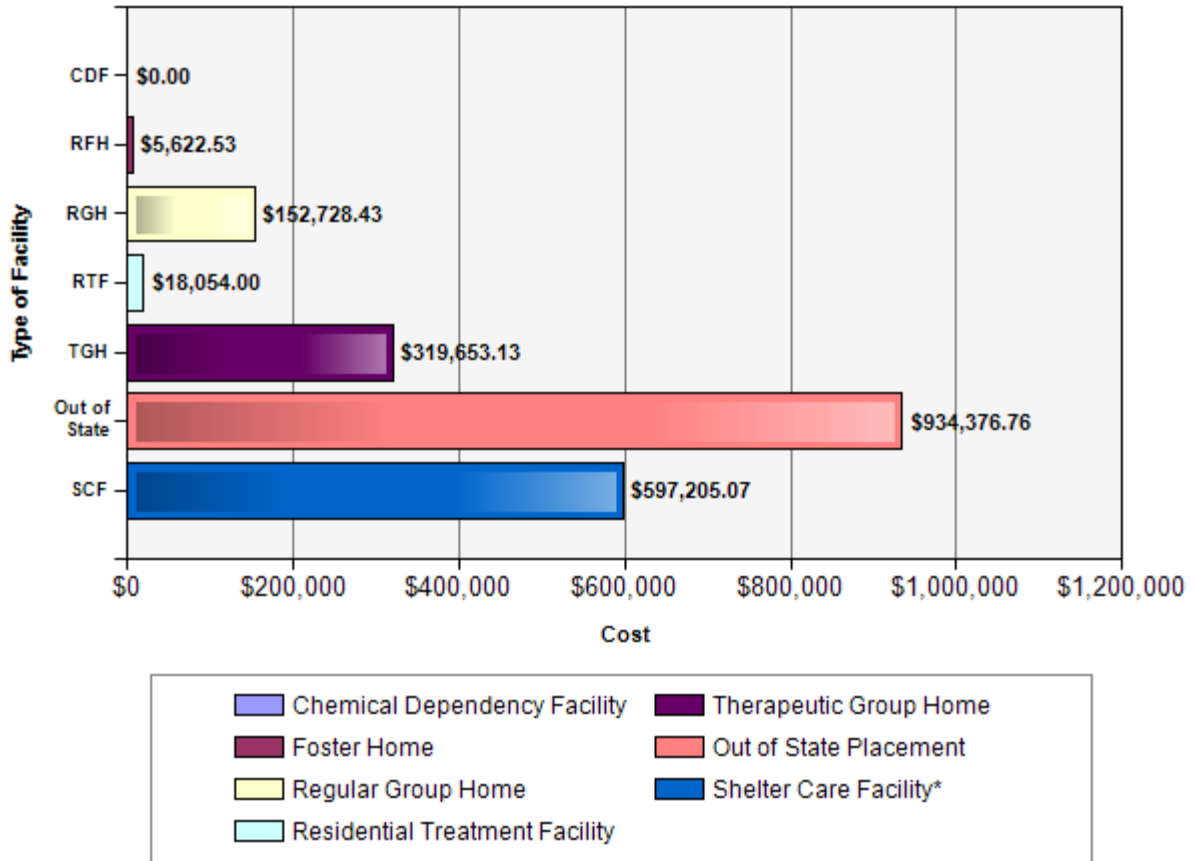


OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS – AVG LENGTH OF STAY



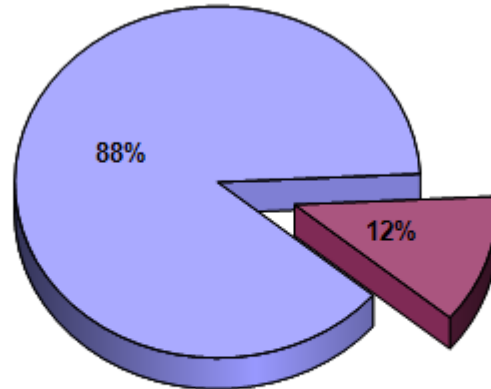
OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS - COST

These are the general fund costs incurred by the Youth Courts of Montana and do not include additional funding sources and cost-shares that may have been made by collaborating agencies (Medicaid, DPHHS, CMHB).



DETENTION

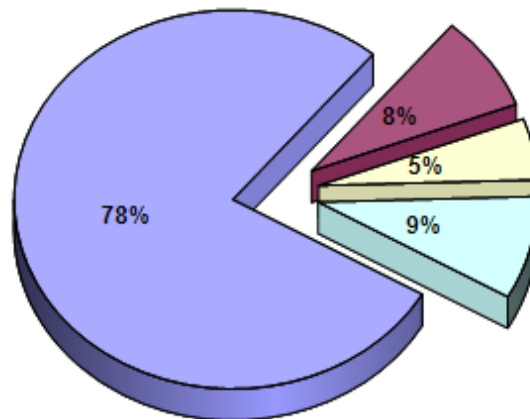
Youth detention facilities, which are physically restricting youth facilities designed to prevent a youth from departing at will are mostly funded and operated by counties. Local law enforcement officers make the decision to detain at the time of arrest. (A youth may be placed in detention more than once.)



Not Detained: 3,351 Detained at time of Arrest: 451

DETENTION – LENGTH OF STAY

When a youth is taken into custody, a hearing to determine probable cause must be held within 24 hours, excluding weekends and legal holidays. A hearing is not required if the youth is released prior to the time of the required hearing. If the court determines that continued custody of the youth is necessary and the criteria outlined in the Montana Youth Court Act is met, the youth may be placed in a secure detention facility pending an initial appearance before a youth court judge and placement may continue through time of disposition. (A youth may be placed in detention more than once.)

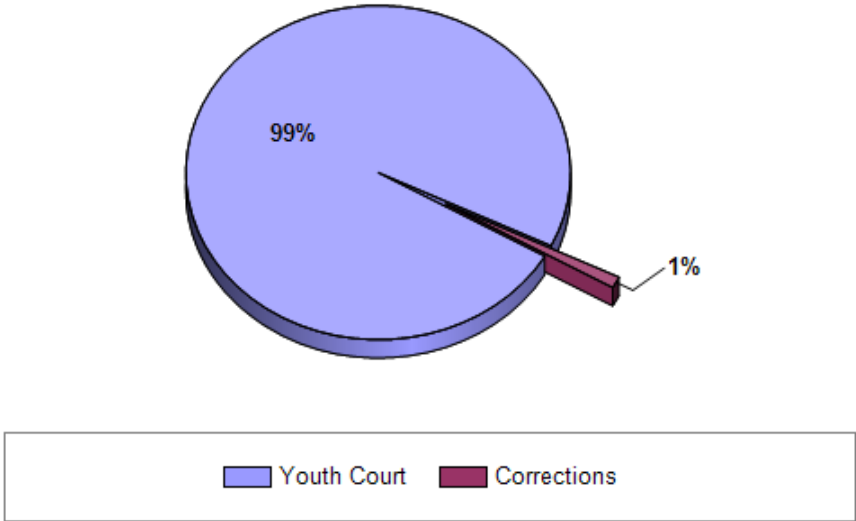


0-30 days 31-60 days 61-90 days +90 days

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS COMMITMENTS

Only a Youth Court judge may sentence a youth to the Department of Corrections. Approximately 1% of all youth referred to juvenile probation are sentenced to the Department of Corrections.

Of the 2,599 youth referred to Youth Court, 29 were committed to the Department of Corrections for placement in a youth correctional facility.

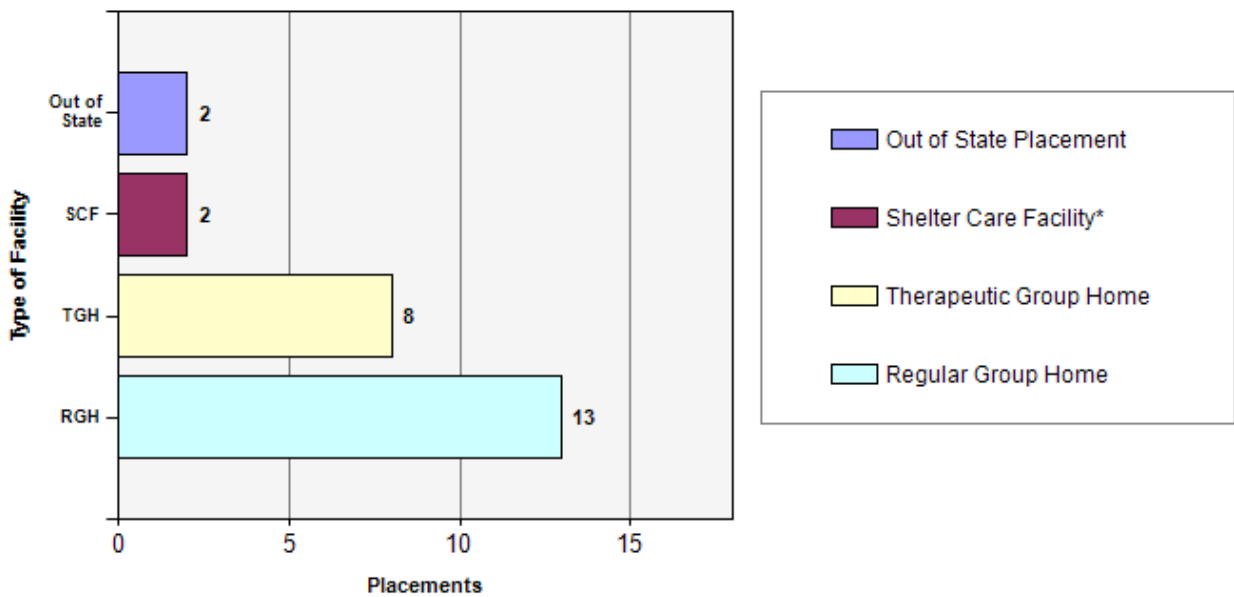


CONDITIONAL RELEASE YOUTH (CR)

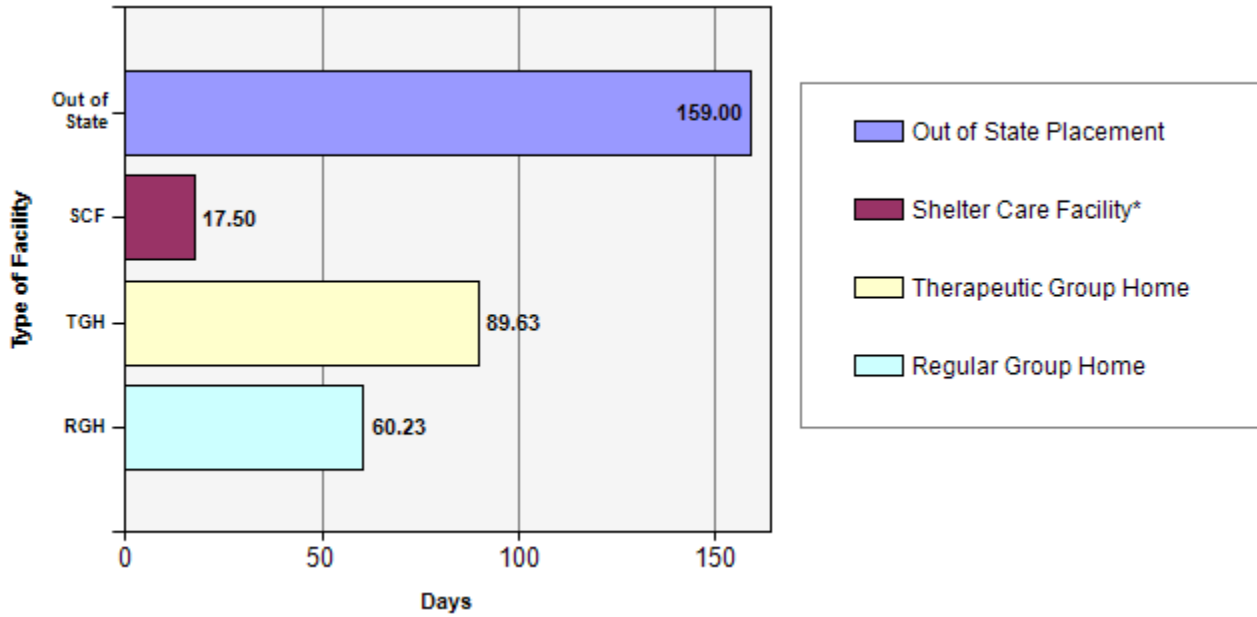
In 2019, Youth Court Service assumed community supervision of youth committed to the MT Department of Corrections upon conditional release from these facilities.

CR YOUTH: OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS

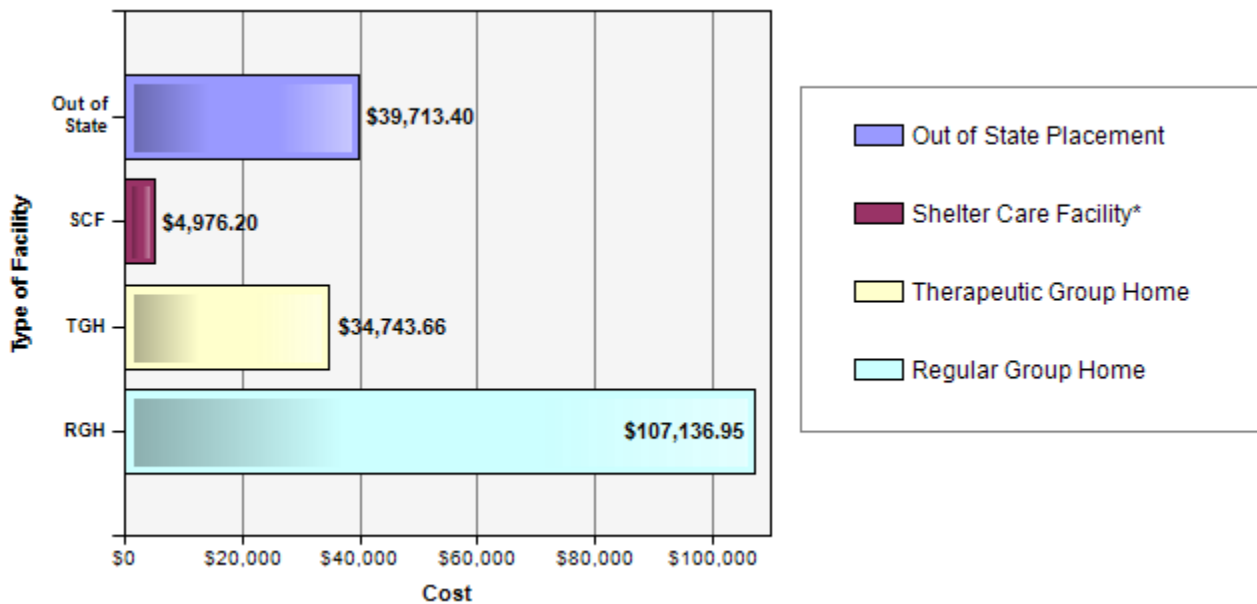
In 2021, Youth Court Services supervised 44 youth on conditional release. Of these youth, 17 were placed in a community placement as part of their conditional release plan. Although many youth on conditional release are discharged back to a family member, due to varying factors, some will require a community based placement. Please note that a single youth may be placed multiple times.



CR YOUTH: OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS – AVG LENGTH OF STAY

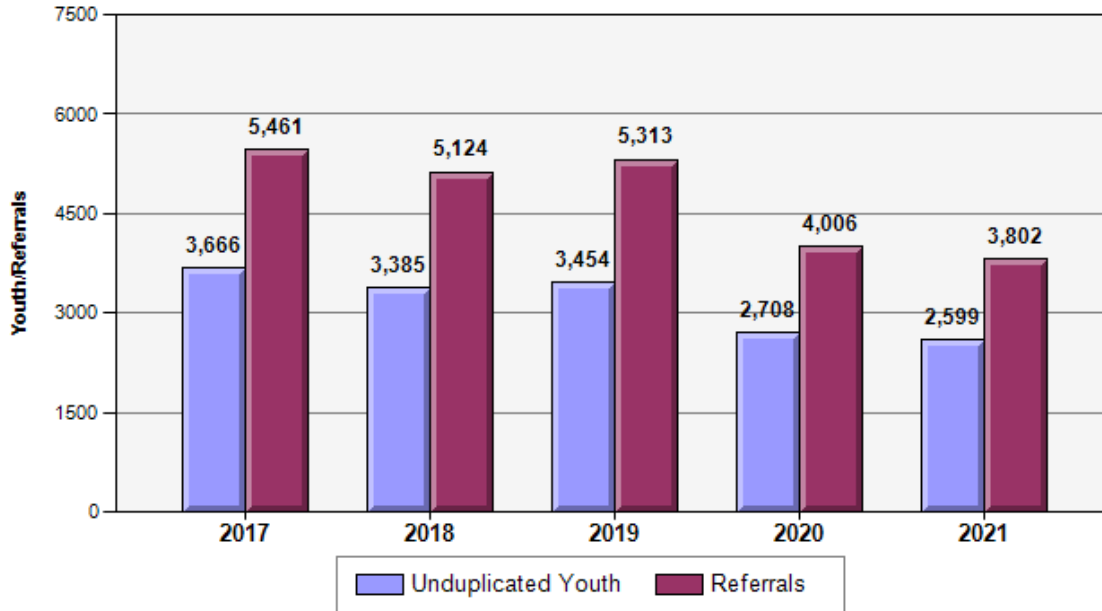


CR YOUTH: OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS – TOTAL COST



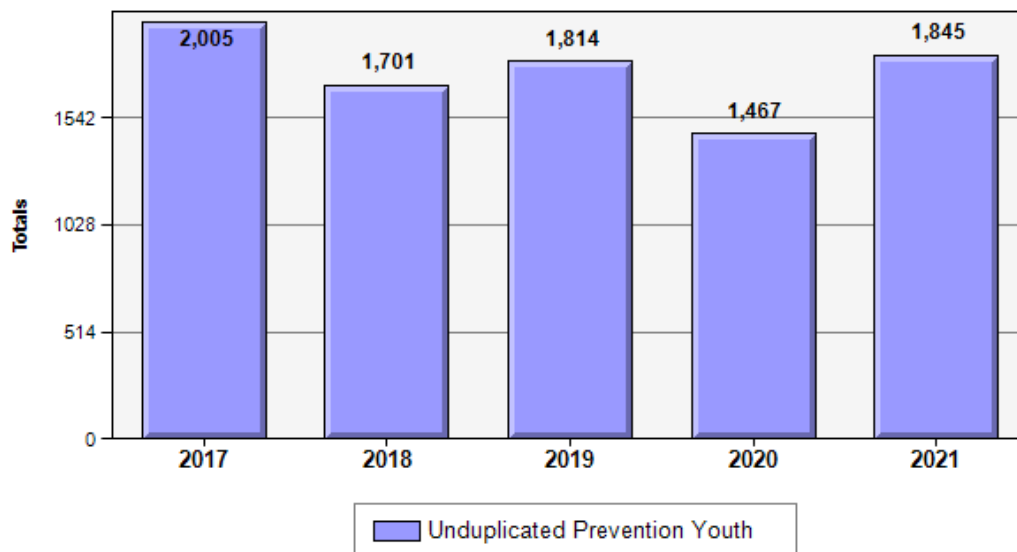
5 YEAR TRENDS

UNDUPLICATED YOUTH AND REFERRALS

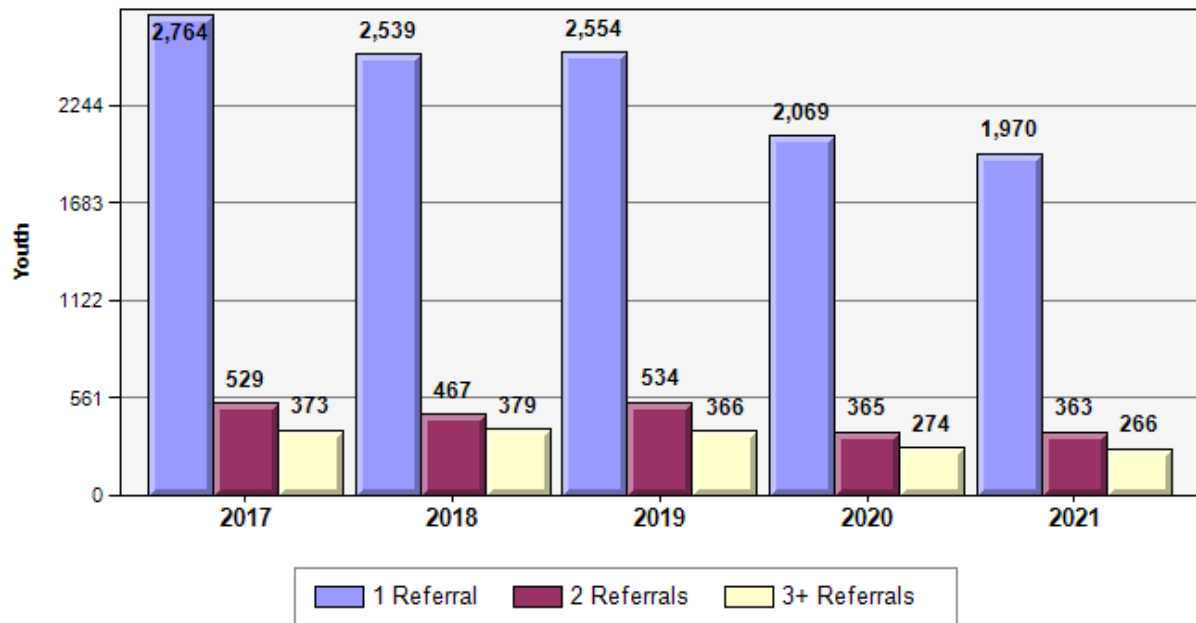


UNDUPLICATED PREVENTION YOUTH

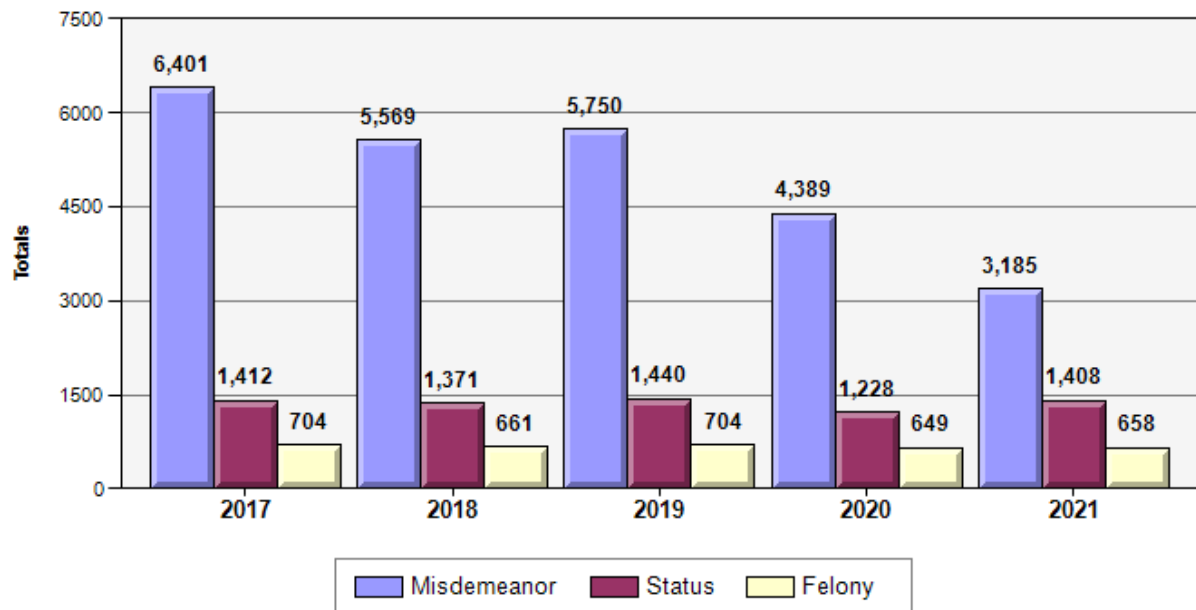
Through the State of Montana **Juvenile Delinquency Intervention Program (JDIP)**, judicial districts are provided the opportunity to develop prevention programs in which both youth referred to youth court services, as well as at-risk youth who have not come into contact with probation, can access services that promote positive growth and development. This graph identifies those prevention youth.



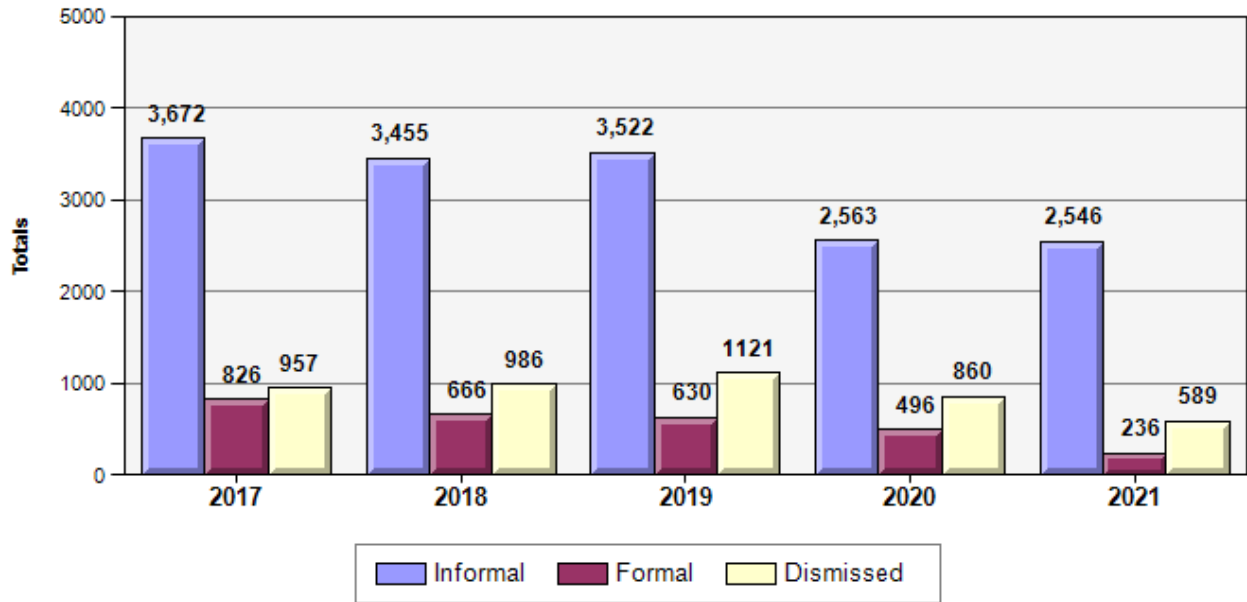
NUMBER OF REFERRALS PER YOUTH



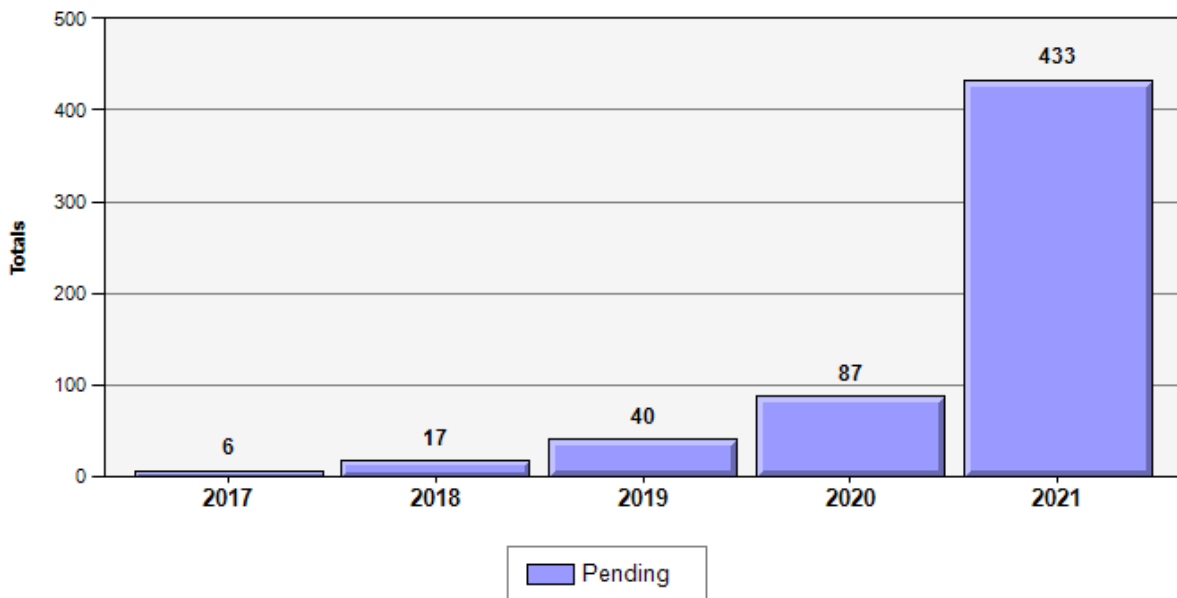
OFFENSE CLASSIFICATIONS



TYPE OF DISPOSITION USED



REFERRALS PENDING DISPOSITION



* These are referrals that are awaiting action from the county attorney's office, requires further investigation by law enforcement, or a ticket has been issued and juvenile probation is waiting to see the youth and parent(s).

YOUTH COURT CONTACTS BY JUDICIAL DISTRICT

DISTRICT #1

Lewis and Clark, Broadwater

District Court Judges: Michael McMahon, Mike Menahan, Kathy Seeley, Chris Abbott

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Leah Lindgren / Contact Number: 447-8228

DISTRICT #2

Silver Bow

District Court Judges: Kurt Krueger, Robert "Bob" Whelan

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Kelly Speer / Contact Number: 497-6375

DISTRICT #3

Deer Lodge, Powell, Granite

District Court Judge: Ray Dayton

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Daniel Blando / Contact Number: 563-4031

DISTRICT #4

Missoula, Mineral

District Court Judges: Leslie Halligan, Dusty Deschamps, Shane Vannatta, Jason Marks, John Larson

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Christine Kowalski / Contact Number: 258-4735

DISTRICT #5

Beaverhead, Jefferson, Madison

District Court Judge: Luke Berger

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Sam Stockett / Contact Number: 683-3760

DISTRICT #6

Park, Sweet Grass

District Court Judge: Brenda Gilbert

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Lesa Maher / Contact Number: 222-4162

DISTRICT #7

Dawson, Richland, McCone, Wibaux, Prairie

District Court Judges: Katherine Bidegaray, Olivia Rieger

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Lauren Weiland / Contact Number: 377-4675

DISTRICT #8

Cascade

District Court Judges: Elizabeth Best, John Kutzman, John Parker, David Grubich

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Jason Rippenburg / Contact Number: 454-6880

DISTRICT #9

Glacier, Pondera, Teton, Toole

District Court Judge: Robert "Bob" Olson

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Tasha Stiner / Contact Number: 873-3620

DISTRICT #10

Fergus, Judith Basin, Petroleum

District Court Judge: Jon Oldenburg

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Starr Brown / Contact Number: 538-9242

DISTRICT #11

Flathead

District Court Judges: Robert Allison, Heidi Ulbricht, Dan Wilson, Amy Eddy

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Nick Nyman / Contact Number: 758-5547

DISTRICT #12

Hill, Chouteau, Liberty

District Court Judge: Kaydee Snipes Ruiz

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Kevin Buerkle / Contact Number: 265-5481

DISTRICT #13

Yellowstone

District Court Judges: Jessica Fehr, Donald Harris, Michael Moses, Gregory Todd, Rod Souza, Mary Jane Knisely, Colette Davies, Ashley Harada

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Tara French / Contact Number: 256-2843

DISTRICT #14

Golden Valley, Meagher, Musselshell, Wheatland

District Court Judge: Randal Spaulding
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Andrew Koval / Contact Number: 323-1714

DISTRICT #15

Roosevelt, Sheridan, Daniels

District Court Judge: David Cybulski
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Sheana Rose / Contact Number: 653-6263

DISTRICT #16

Carter, Custer, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Rosebud, Treasure

District Court Judges: Michael Hayworth
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Sarita Fenner / Contact Number: 874-3418

DISTRICT #17

Blaine, Phillips, Valley

District Court Judge: Yvonne Laird
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Tina Mord / Contact Number: 357-2369

DISTRICT #18

Gallatin

District Court Judges: Rienne McElyea, John Brown, Andrew Breuner, Peter Ohman
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Dave Wysoski / Contact Number: 582-2180

DISTRICT #19

Lincoln

District Court Judge: Matthew Cuffe
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Kindra Hageness / Contact Number: 293-9715

DISTRICT #20

Lake, Sanders

District Court Judges: Jim Manley, Deborah Kim Christopher
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Barbara Monaco / Contact Number: 883-7264

DISTRICT #21

Ravalli

District Court Judges: Howard Recht, Jennifer Lint
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Clint Arneson / Contact Number: 375-6805

DISTRICT #22

Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater

District Court Judge: Matthew Wald
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer:
Lindsey Fox / Contact Number: 322-8046