Lost in Transition:

Program Closures Impacting Youth in Hennepin County Legal System

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Abstract (250 words or less):

Across Minnesota, Hennepin County has the state's highest rate of prosecution of youth; yet, they do not have a local, residential treatment program for their incarcerated youth. The decision to close the Hennepin County Home School in 2021 removed the one local option for treatment programming. These youth wait in the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC), with no access to this programming, until a bed becomes available outside of the metro counties. The wait can be anywhere from weeks to months long. In a system that was designed specifically to prioritize individualized treatment plans, Hennepin County's youth, particularly youth of color, are lost at a time in their lives when programming and bolstering community support can be most effective at reducing criminal behavior and recidivism. This paper critically examines the history of juvenile justice in the United States, the system within Hennepin County, the use of out-of-home placements, and the closures of these placements. Public, secondary data from the Hennepin County probation office is included to demonstrate the direct impact these decisions have on these youth, including demonstrated increase in wait times within the JDC, a breakdown of the most used placements, and the demographics of which youth are most impacted. The results along with current research studies reveal a troubling image of how youth are handled within the criminal legal system.

Introduction

Across Minnesota, Hennepin County has the highest youth arrest rates. According to data from the Minnesota Crime Data Explorer, Hennepin County's juvenile arrests account for 20% of total juvenile arrests across the state in 2023. When arrested in Hennepin County, these individuals are taken to the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC). The JDC is a jail for those under the age of 18. This is where they wait to appear in front of a judge to determine if they are allowed to return home or if they must remain in custody until an alternate plan can be established concerning the criminal case.

If youth have to remain in the JDC, there are many reasons that the judge may have ordered detention. Some of these reasons include not having a stable home environment, needing access to additional support throughout treatment, and being accused of a serious crime that poses public safety risks. Regardless of the reason, the wait inside the JDC can be anywhere from days to months before being released. More recently, these wait times have increased, which could be a result of many confounding factors. Some of these factors could be post-pandemic staffing issues or a lack of available program options.

While waiting inside the JDC, the facility is legally mandated to provide certain services. For instance, since the youth are anywhere from 10 years old to 17 years old, they are required to provide access to school classes and access to physical recreation (Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections & Rehabilitation, 2016). Like all correctional facilities, the JDC is also required to provide medical care, nutrition requirements, and hygiene care (Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections & Rehabilitation, 2016). In addition to the required services, the facility has resumed the pre-pandemic, volunteer-based services to have nonprofits and outside organizations provide additional opportunities (M. Czech, personal

communication, April 10, 2024). However, what the JDC does not provide is access to therapy, chemical dependency treatment, or treatment planning.

When these young individuals are adjudicated and need to access these other types of services, the judge orders them to be placed in an out-of-home placement that can provide these services. Historically, Hennepin County one of the residential placement options was the Hennepin County Home School based in Minnetonka. However, the Home School closed in 2021 (*Closing the Youth Residential Treatment Center*, 2021). Since its closure alongside many other placements, the youth in the criminal legal system have very few options for placements for treatment, especially within the metro area.

While these individuals could be anyone in the Hennepin County community, these youth are predominately youth of color (*Data dashboard | Hennepin County*, 2024). The racial inequities these youth face leads them to struggle more with food and shelter security, access to medical and mental health treatment, and encounter the police at higher rates. Then, once inside the system, the racism they face continues with the systems in place from centuries ago. These closures without an adequate plan of alternatives impacts these youth at higher levels than their white counterparts.

Explanation of the Problem

This issue of lack of availability may seem insignificant since the criminal legal system is built as an incarceration and monitoring system rather than a treatment system; however, as this paper will explain, the juvenile system was designed purposefully to be different than the adult system. With youth, the intent of the system is meant to treat them rather than punish them. It is meant to give them practical skills and allow their brains to develop to make better decisions. Out-of-home placements were intended to provide the structure and programming to help youth

develop and grow into adulthood with different tools to make better decisions. These could be government-run facilities or private. They could be secure placements, which means the residents are locked in the building, or unsecure, which means the doors are not locked. The purpose of having a variety of placement types is to scale the treatment to the needs of the person. Since the closures of multiple types of out-of-home placements, the ramifications on the system-involved youth aren't fully known.

Young offenders have their own set of needs that are very different from adult offenders. Biologically, they have hormones surging and changing with puberty, and the decision-making portion of their brains isn't fully developed (*The Adolescent Brain*, 2011; Abrams, 2022). These reasons for immature behavior and rash decisions are biological and more susceptible to external factors, such as peer pressure and adult influence (*The Adolescent Brain*, 2011). While psychology and neuroscience can aid in understanding the choices of some youth, it does not mean that it is universal among all youth. Studies show that these young individuals are more likely to have experienced higher rates of trauma than their non-criminally involved counterparts (Dierkhising et al., 2013; Wyrick & Atkinson, 2021), which directly impacts how their brains function (Laricchiuta et al., 2023). This does not excuse their behavior, and at the same time, it shows that they need to learn skills, receive treatment, and time to mature and grow.

Having lengthy wait times within a juvenile detention center has been a recent point of discussion by advocacy groups. Some studies suggest that the longer a young person remains in the environment, the risk of recidivism is higher (Fabelo et al., 2015; Gilman et al., 2015). An article by the Sentencing Project (2023), outlines several scientific studies showing that incarceration, whether in a detention center or a secure treatment program increases the rate of recidivism. The rates were compared to other youth with similar backgrounds and criminal

histories who were not locked into a facility. This level of incarceration has also been shown to be detrimental to mental and physical health, employment and education outcomes, and does not decrease rates of youth crime (Mendel, 2023). When compounded by the demographic information of youth involved in the criminal legal system, particularly the overrepresented youth of color, the intersectionality of barriers they must face becomes enormous.

Understanding the impacts of increased wait times within the walls of the JDC and to access treatment should be a concern to government officials and the public. The importance is not only for the sake of public safety in the future, but also to ensure these youth are receiving the care and support they deserve. By keeping them in custody, there is a standard and duty of care while the youth are under the jurisdiction of the state. It is not always met and is discriminatory, as this paper will demonstrate.

Positionality

This is not a topic that I consider, discuss, or write lightly. I have been employed by the Board of Public Defense in Hennepin County as a dispositional advisor for two years and have been training and working in the youth defense unit for almost a year. Before this direct experience within the criminal legal system, I could understand the public outrage in response to crime. I can understand the fear and anger that comes with reading another story about unfortunate circumstances. It's easy to be wrapped up in an attention-grabbing headline. It's easy to buy into the story that someone who commits a crime, regardless of age, is an evil person. However, it's important to remember that the entire story isn't being told, not in the media or the courtroom. This paper will not tell the entire story either. This paper will only provide another perspective, another piece of the picture. Some cases exist that aren't the ones being reported. They aren't the sensational stories that grab readers, and they aren't loss of life cases.

While I am still relatively new and am actively learning the ever-changing system, I have direct access to a variety of the professionals involved, their viewpoints, and insider knowledge as part of the defense team. With this access, I have a unique perspective of empathy for those who stand accused, those who have suffered from violent crimes, and those who are agents within the criminal legal system handling these matters. None of these situations are easy or have simple solutions, nor are they black and white. I will never purport that the cases handled by this system are anything but complex, heart-wrenching, and deeply tenuous. While research informs my professional opinions, my experiences through my work also color my viewpoints within Hennepin County specifically. This research aims to offer an alternate perspective that includes what happens to the youth after being arrested rather than focusing solely on public safety or recidivism.

Background & Context

To better understand the purpose, intents, and goals of the juvenile justice system, the formation and history of it becomes vital. Something obvious, but needing to be explicitly stated, is that youth committing crimes is not a new issue. Some of the issues seen today date back centuries; the crimes have just changed with the times. While it may seem pointless to know the history when the current issues seem dire, the storyline demonstrates how the U.S. has built this system and where it is today. It shows that while the system has changed over time, at the same time, our society hasn't ventured far in our opinions or options.

History of the Juvenile Justice System

Since the United States gained independence in 1776, the systems created to govern and manage its citizens were based on the government system that had previously ruled the region: the British Empire. Those designing the government system modeled the U.S. democracy from

many sources but relied on the likes and dislikes of British practices to determine which laws to adopt or change (Thompson & Morris, 2016). The criminal legal system was no exception. For example, under British rule before the Revolutionary War, youth who were charged with a crime were primarily treated as if they were an adult (Thompson & Morris, 2016). By the early 1800s under the newly established United States, the culpability (or criminal intent) a child could have when committing a criminal act was considered (Gilfoyle, 2019; Thompson & Morris, 2016). The question was how much children could understand their actions were criminal. This idea of adolescence and developing into an adult was revolutionary during this time (Kett, 2003). Age and brain development took precedence in charging, prosecuting, and housing youth (Thompson & Morris, 2016).

Practically, this conception of culpability translated to the criminal legal system granting immunity to any child under the age of seven due to their limited capacity of intention to commit a crime (Gilfoyle, 2019). Those from ages eight to fourteen were presumed to be less culpable than an adult, which meant that they were less responsible for their actions but had better understanding than the younger age groups (Gilfoyle, 2019). Those fourteen and older were to be tried as adults within the adult court system (Gilfoyle, 2019). The decision was also made to end the practice of placing children in jails and prisons with adults (Gilfoyle, 2019; Thompson & Morris, 2016). With no housing options for at-risk or convicted children, the introduction of 'houses of refuge' became the solution. They were designated placements for youth with the first established in New York in 1825 (Gilfoyle, 2019; Thompson & Morris, 2016).

Since slavery would not be abolished until 40 years later, these houses of refuge were originally intended for white children only. During this time, Black children were more likely to be killed as slaves than face any formal legal proceeding (Bell, 2016). However, by 1835, they

began opening separate sections for children of color due to the level of need in urban areas (Bell, 2016). During this time, these youth were being charged with stealing and "soliciting charity" when in reality, these kids were doing whatever they needed to survive on the streets in urban areas during the industrial revolution (Bell, 2016). While the houses of refuge provided a solution to housing poor and delinquent children, they were still operating as prisons for minors, rampant with corporal punishment and abuse (Gilfoyle, 2019; Bell, 2016). Youth, regardless of race, would die within these placements or be put back on the streets when their time was done with little to no resources (Bell, 2016). However, those of color would die at higher rates and be released with even fewer prospects than their white counterparts (Bell, 2016).

This maltreatment brought rise to a group of reformers towards the end of the 19th century referred to as the ‘child savers’ (Gilfoyle, 2019). This activist group pushed for a shift in the criminal legal system to emphasize the importance of treatment over punishment to rehabilitate children (Gilfoyle, 2019). They were credited in Chicago opening the very first court system in 1899, strictly dedicated to providing attention and services to struggling youth (Gilfoyle, 2019; Thompson & Morris, 2016). This juvenile court system emerged intending to intervene and treat youth to reduce what was deemed as deviant behavior.

More changes were needed than simply establishing a juvenile court system. During the late 19th century, no designated difference existed between youth suffering from neglect and youth involved in acts of delinquency (Gilfoyle, 2019). If a child was on the streets due to poverty or lack of a safe environment at home, they would also be sent to the houses of refuge because formalized services didn’t exist. In fact, the first version of child protection services wasn't established until 1875, fifty years after the establishment of the houses of refuge (Eide, 1990). Regardless of the reason for the youths' involvement with the legal system, they would all

be funneled into these houses of refuge. The child savers advocated to have these youth served by government welfare agencies rather than the criminal legal system (Cain, 2017). This was a radical idea as our history includes prosecuting youth well before attempting to protect them from unfair life circumstances.

The state of Minnesota mimicked much of Chicago's efforts with its first juvenile justice statute in 1905, to address both the needs of those with delinquencies as well as those neglected (Walling & Driver, 2006). Minnesota was considered to be a progressive state on juvenile matters as more laws were passed to open a reform school, a school for the deaf and blind, a hospital for children with disabilities, and the start of "mother's pensions" (Walling & Driver, 2006). While Minnesota was deemed to be progress with their efforts towards women and children, it was meant for white children, specifically. Minnesota also has a history of sixteen boarding schools for native youth during this time (Lajimodiere, 2016). These boarding schools were operated without much oversight and will extreme corporal punishment (Lajimodiere, 2016). For these new schools predominately for white children, Minnesota changed the terminology from ‘houses of refuge’ to ‘reform schools,’ but they still operated the same way. Abuse and neglect were rampant at all the correctional schools regardless of the formal title changes. The first reform school opened in St. Paul in 1868 until additional space was needed (Davey, 2024). It was in 1891 when the first buildings opened on the Red Wing campus for both boys and girls (Davey, 2024).

To date, parts of the current U.S. system still rely on decisions made more than a century ago. Certain aspects have been updated but essentially, they function the same. For example, the national terminology changed from “criminal offenders” to “juvenile delinquents” to avoid the connotation and association with adult criminal offenders, and that terminology continues to be

used today (Gilfoyle, 2019). The current Minnesota Correctional Facility in Red Wing operating under the Department of Corrections is on the same land that was used for the reform schools in the 1800s (Davey, 2024). The premise that treatment should be prioritized in juvenile cases continues to be practiced with the use of out-of-home placements (Thompson & Morris, 2016).

Despite the consistency within the system, updates have happened. However, these changes are part of more recent history. Historically, the legal realm assumed that the court would take over care of or responsibility for the youth if the parents or guardians were unable or unwilling (Gilfoyle, 2019; Thompson & Morris, 2016). The system originally designed did not include defense attorneys or prosecutors; the system relied heavily on the discretion of the judge and probation officer to advocate for the child based on the science of brain development in youth (Gilfoyle, 2019). Since youth were deemed as incapable or unable to understand their actions, they were unable to participate meaningfully in their defense. Therefore, the authority of the court acted as a “common guardian of the community” (Gilfoyle, 2019). Essentially, this meant that youth did not have the protections of an attorney or even a voice in the court process, and the power over these youth rested solely with the judges and probation officers with little to no oversight.

Youths' rights to due process and 14th Amendment protections weren't guaranteed until the first federal guidelines were established via the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967 (Thompson & Morris, 2016). This ruling changed the face of juvenile justice. It meant that moving forward, youth now have the same rights to a defense attorney as adults, as well as a fair trial, being convicted only if found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, the right to cross-examine witnesses, and all other rights that the adult criminal legal system upholds (Thompson & Morris, 2016). It

introduced more professionals to the juvenile justice system and provided a defense team to vigorously advocate and speak on the youths' behalf.

While changes have been made over time, the juvenile court system has consistently abided by two basic principles: serving youth based on age and serving them in a separate court system from the adult system (Gilfoyle, 2019). The intent was always to evaluate youths' culpability and needs for services based on what is currently known as neuroscience and brain development (Gilfoyle, 2019). However, the juvenile system is falling behind in following the science and viable service options to treat them. The history of the system has demonstrated that protecting and serving youth has been a consistent struggle, and in some cases, seemingly an afterthought. As demonstrated by the problematic practices within the houses of refuge, the intentions and actions are at odds. The goal was to protect the youth while the reality was harming them.

Juvenile Justice System in Hennepin County

Understanding the history of the system assists in understanding how the court system functions today. Minnesota's juvenile justice system involves multiple parties with a variety of purposes and intentions. While it remains separate, some of it does follow the design of the adult court system; there are judges, prosecutors, and defense teams. Other practices are different; for example, in juvenile court, a probation officer is assigned to each youth present at every hearing, which is not the same process for adults.

The juvenile court also has other complexities in how a case develops. Depending on the age of the youth, severity of the charges, and allegations in the case, the proceedings may include competency proceedings and certification hearings. While competency hearings address the concerns about the comprehension of the legal system and mounting a defense, certification

hearings are the ones to determine whether the individual should be considered an adult, even if under the age of 18. There is an incredible amount of nuances and procedures both in the legal system as a whole and within the juvenile system. This paper cannot feasibly outline the system in its entirety, so it will be limited to outlining how it may lead an individual to be recommended for out-of-home placement.

The process of figuring out what type of treatment is most appropriate is usually conducted through various evaluations and assessments. Psychological evaluations are frequently requested in juvenile cases for several purposes, but they can provide insight as to what mental health services or treatment might be beneficial for the individual. Chemical health assessments are completed to determine if they meet a need for chemical dependency treatment. The emphasis on treatment can lead to many referrals and recommendations, including out-of-home placement.

Based on these results, the assigned probation officer can bring forth the information to the screening committee (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2017). A report is produced by the committee with recommendations for specific treatment placements given the details of the case and the results of the various evaluations. From this, the probation officer makes the referral to find an accepting placement on behalf of the individual (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2017). As previously discussed, out-of-home placements can mean several things. Treatment needs may include sexual behavior therapy, mental health treatment, chemical dependency treatment, or even group home settings. The goal of the system is to evaluate each individual to determine which treatment type would serve the youth best.

This is by no means a comprehensive explanation of how a placement becomes recommended or is secured for an individual, but it serves as a basic outline to understand that

many professionals evaluate and consider the individual before proposing a placement. It is also important to note that the young person does not have a say in this entire process. They can choose to not cooperate with the evaluations or ask their attorney to fight the recommendations; however, if a judge orders the individual to go to a particular program, they are required to go. The inverse is also true. An individual can opt-in to going to a placement even if it isn't court-ordered. The judge has to allow the youth to be transferred by court order, but the individual can want to seek treatment regardless of what is going on in their case. Since these cases can take months to years, sometimes they proactively go to treatment while the charges are pending, before pleading guilty or having the case tried.

Typically, for someone to qualify for an out-of-home placement recommendation, they are in significant need of treatment. Not every young individual in the criminal legal system requires this level of care. Even with this surface-level understanding, the Hennepin County system is following the basic tenets of its founding over a century ago: youth should be treated rather than punished and youth should be considered as youth in a separate legal setting.

Out-of-Home Placements in Minnesota

The system has consistently emphasized out-of-home placements to treat youth and reduce recidivism. These placements are typically licensed as residential treatment settings as opposed to outpatient treatment, which means that youth live onsite rather than at home with appointments in the community. This type of placement is seen as a solution when youth need to be immersed in a therapeutic environment rather than continue to navigate their peer and family influences concurrently with treatment.

Out-of-home placements can serve a variety of purposes, and they are usually designed for specific populations or treatment needs. For example, Heartland Ranch in Benson serves

young girls involved in the system with the use of equine therapy alongside programming to teach different life skills and responsibilities (*Heartland Girls' Ranch*, n.d.). East Central in Lino Lakes offers specific programming for sex offenses with specialized therapy and classes (*East Central Regional Juvenile Center*, n.d.).

Programming at out-of-home placements can involve individual therapy, group therapy, chemical dependency treatment, and cognitive skills classes alongside state-mandated access to schooling, physical activity, and medical treatment. The goals of each program depend on their primary participants and the timeline of where they are in their criminal case and treatment goals. Each program utilizes different methodologies for treatment. For example, Village Ranch in Rochester emphasizes independent living skills by having responsibilities within the home to cook, clean, and maintain hygiene while continuing treatment with medications and therapies to function in early adulthood (*Village Ranch*, n.d.). The Village Ranch program in Rochester is used as a step-down program from Red Wing to assist youth in re-entry into the community and aging into early adulthood (*Village Ranch*, n.d.).

There are also different funding streams for different programming. Local governments, nonprofits, and even the Minnesota Department of Corrections all run different programs for youth. In smaller counties, government-run facilities have membership counties for which they become responsible for providing treatment for those counties' youth. For example, Clay County runs West Central, which serves the surrounding counties in the northwest region of the state. They can accept youth from other counties on a per diem basis.

Closures of Minnesota Out-of-Home Placements

Out-of-home placements exist to serve a specific vulnerable population: youth in the criminal legal system. As studies show, these youth tend to have experienced a higher rate of

childhood abuse and significant childhood trauma than their non-justice-involved counterparts, leaving them particularly vulnerable (Dierkhising et al., 2013; Wyrick & Atkinson, 2021). Unfortunately, like most states, Minnesota has a history of misconduct and abuse within the out-of-home placements. Closures within the past ten years, such as Totem Town in St. Paul and Mesabi Academy in Buhl, were directly tied to findings of inappropriate behavior between staff and residents (Scheck & Gilbert, 2019b; Xiong, 2016). Reports of abuse ranged from staff-organized fight clubs to sexual abuse (Scheck & Gilbert, 2019b; Xiong, 2016).

In the past decade, more than a dozen facilities closed within the state, and not all were related to the implications of abuse (Sawyer, et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic led to many closures on their own due to staffing shortages, reduced placement needs, and funding struggles. One of these closures previously discussed was the Hennepin County Home School based in Minnetonka. According to press releases, the decision to close stemmed from the exorbitant costs of running the facility and the lack of residents *(Closing the Youth Residential Treatment Center*, 2021). Most of these issues became prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic as out-of-home placements were used less frequently due to public health concerns. Some view this closure as detrimental to the criminal legal system while others herald it as progress in moving toward more community-based services (Sawyer, et al., 2022; *Closing the Youth Residential Treatment Center*, 2021).

While these closures can result in mixed feelings about progress in reforming the criminal legal system or risk to public safety by not having enough secured treatment options, it has created a problem that most can agree upon: youth have few options for placement. This fact has consequently impacted how youth are treated within the system. While there is constant debate on exactly how these youth should be engaged in the criminal legal system, youth are

getting lost in it during key developmental milestones in their lives, such as physical and emotional maturation (Mendel, 2023). Time and resources would be needed before any measurable, empirical data to see how these closures directly impact the youth and their development. However, previous studies in conjunction with situational data can begin to form an understanding of the potential implications. Specifically, data from Hennepin County (Appendix B) will be examined to demonstrate that some youth are being detained longer without appropriate services and programming. From this data analysis, potential solutions will be posited to mitigate further damage to both the youth and communities.

Hennepin County

All of the data is secondary, public data provided by the Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR), which can be found in Appendix B. As such, the data has limitations as it was received as summative data without information on how it was measured or collected; however, it is reliable for the analysis of trends and can provide context to what these youth face after arrest. The figures were built based on the data received from Hennepin County.

Out-of-Home Placement Options

Youth being charged with a criminal offense is a serious matter. There is a wide array of crimes they may be charged. Out-of-home placements are typically reserved for moderate to severe-level crimes, like felony-level thefts, assault, and drug charges. These particular youth typically have treatment needs for their mental health and/or chemical health, which require residential-level care. This essentially means that due to their life thus far, they have a high level of need for therapy, chemical dependency treatment, schooling, and skills classes. Throughout their case, the youth are assessed by the screening committee in Hennepin County to determine

which placements may be appropriate based on the reports from the psychological evaluation and probation. This committee's recommendations are followed up by the probation officer, who places referrals to find a placement that will accept the youth.

With the closure of the Hennepin County Home School at the end of 2021, probation officers have had to rely on placement recommendations outside of Hennepin County. Figure 1 demonstrates the distance and locations to which youth are being court-ordered for out-of-home placements. Options in Figure 1 are limited to currently operating, publicly-funded, secure treatment programs, which are directly comparable to the Home School's funding and security levels. This means that they are run by the local government and that they lock the youth in the facility.

Figure 1

Map of Minnesota's Public, Secure Out-of-Home Placements

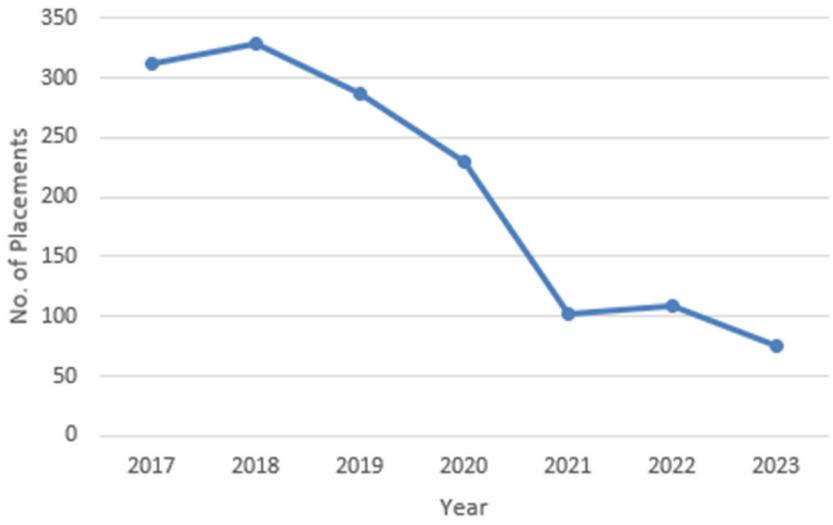
Currently, the closest facilities similar to the Home School are the Dakota County Community Corrections in Hastings and East Central in Lino Lakes. While this may not seem significant to some, if families reside in the city of Minneapolis, they would need to have a reliable form of transportation to travel over 20 miles to visit their loved ones. If the young person is placed in West Central or Arrowhead, the travel distance is roughly 230 miles or 150 miles, respectively. Comparably, Hennepin County Home School was within 15 miles of Minneapolis. While it could be interpreted as the price to pay for committing a crime, it ultimately puts a burden on the family to take off work, pay travel expenses, and arrange for the care of any other children to be involved with the recovery and rehabilitation of their loved one. While it may seem like a frivolous, temporary issue for a few families, the consequences have an impact on the rehabilitation of the youth since programming is demonstrated to be more effective with family involvement and community support (Garfinkel, 2010; Dempsey, et al., 2021). This should be considered as youth continue to be placed far away from their community.

As previously stated, the COVID-19 pandemic did have an impact on the practices of using out-of-home placements. The public health crisis demanded that congregate placements were too high of a risk, so the number of youth placed in out-of-home placements quickly plummeted in 2020, as Figure 2 demonstrates. During this time, the use of home electronic monitoring with increased community support from probation officers became the primary plan for most youth coming into the JDC. Residential treatment facilities were encouraged to release youth to limit the spread of the disease unless it was absolutely necessary to keep them at the placement. The other key component that could impact these numbers is that the current Hennepin County Attorney, Mary Moriarty, was sworn into office in 2023 after running her

campaign on the promise to reform the juvenile justice system practices. Her practices surrounding charging and offering plea deals are frequently debated in the public sphere.

Figure 2

Hennepin County Number of Out-of-Home Placements

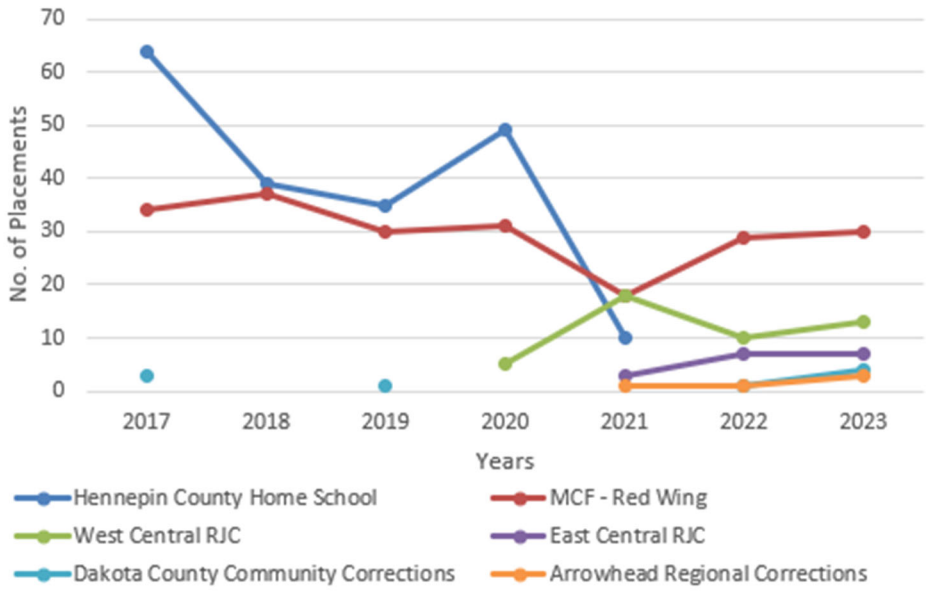


Note: Data used from "JP Out of Home Placement Data Request" (Appendix B)

When examining Figure 3, it clearly indicates when the Hennepin County Home School closed its doors. Suddenly, placement locations start to include West Central, East Central, Arrowhead, and Dakota County Community Corrections with more regularity. Again, this Figure only includes secure, public placements; however, the clear shift in secure options means that more and more youth have been transferred further away from their homes and support systems to seek treatment.

Figure 3

Hennepin County Out-of-Home Placement by Location



Note: Data used from "JP Out of Home Placement Data Request" (Appendix B)

The data shows a clear shift in Hennepin County's treatment of youth who are involved in the legal system. Instead of having a local option, they fall into another county's care. This inherently requires trust between the systems that these nonlocal options will care for the youth like their own community. With this distance, there are fewer eyes on the individual from both their family and from within the Hennepin County court system. These youth have little to no say in where they go, and for some, it can be devastating to not be able to see their family for months. In fact, multiple studies suggest that the best factors to reduce the chances of recidivism are family involvement in their care (Garfinkel, 2010; Dempsey, et al., 2021) and active probation involvement to provide community-based support (Mooney & Bala, 2020). With potential hours-long commute times, neither the family nor probation officers can frequently and actively be involved at the same level if the youth were kept closer.

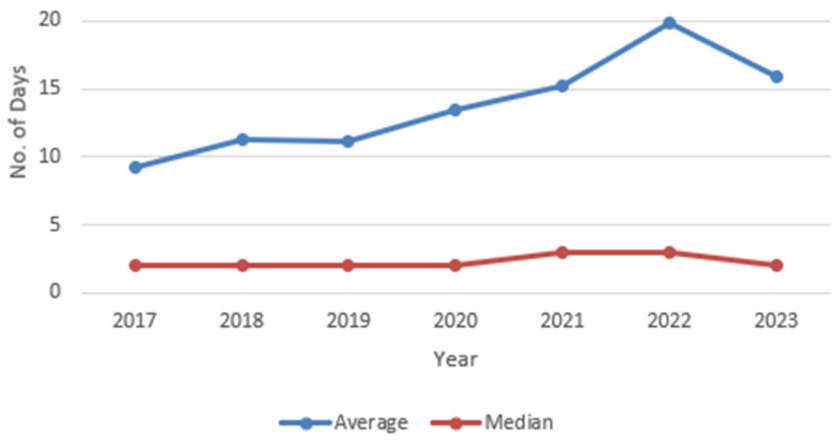
Lengths of Stay in the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC)

With the placement options decreasing, issues arise in even securing a bed within one of these treatment facilities. With limited capacities and requirements to serve their communities first, waitlists can be weeks to months before someone can be transferred. These programs are funded locally by county governments and have no obligation to accept youth outside of their partnering counties. For example, Dakota County Community Corrections must provide services to residents of Dakota County before considering referrals from outside of the district. These long waitlists and difficulty finding appropriate placements result in a dramatic increase in lengths of stay within the JDC, which again have been shown nationally to increase mental and physical health issues, delay prosocial development, and increase recidivism rates (Mendel, 2023).

To try to capture these wait times, Figure 4 shows both the median and average length of stay in days at the JDC, which is not limited to youth sent to out-of-home placements. The data reflects how long all youth who enter the JDC have to wait before being released. Most notably, the average spikes both during the COVID-19 pandemic and after the Hennepin County Home School closure. The median remaining stagnant is reflective of how many individuals only need to stay for a couple of days before being released. When taking both data points into consideration, the average reflects that there is youth skewing the results to increase the length of stay into weeks rather than days. This indicates that there are youth who are in the JDC for much longer than the median length of stay to increase the averages so heavily. This may be because of wait times for placement or it could be delays in their legal case. There is no way to tell with the data Hennepin County provided, which is a significant limitation to understanding potential delays in release.

Figure 4

Hennepin County Length of Stay in JDC



Note: Data used from "JP Out of Home Placement Data Request" (Appendix B)

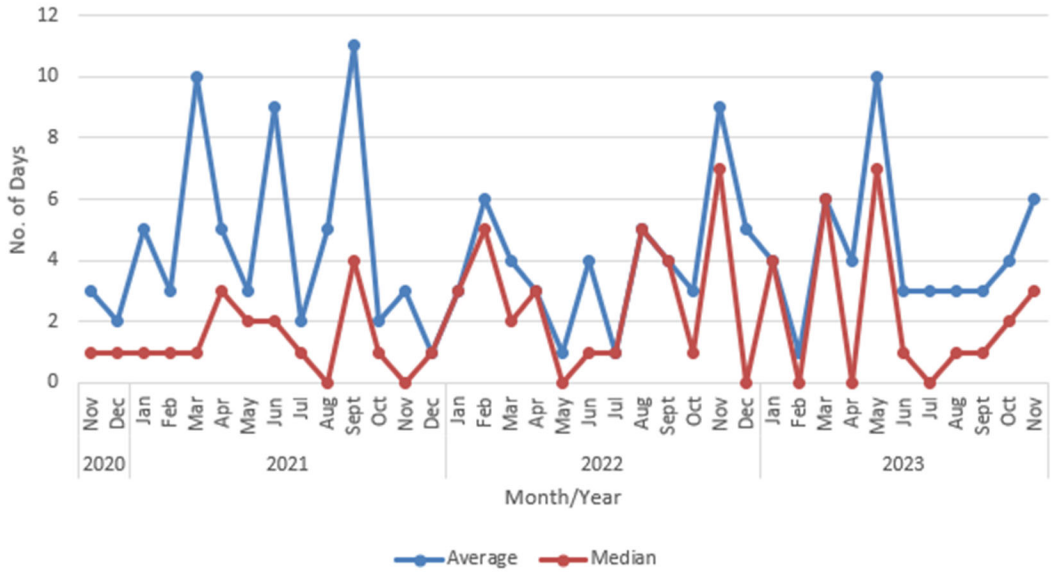
To attempt to have a better understanding of these waitlist delays, additional data was requested from Hennepin County DOCCR, reflected in Figure 5. The data provided only included the youth who were court-ordered to an out-of-home placement. It again reflects both the median and average lengths of stay in days; however, this data came with two significant limitations. First, due to a system change, they could only provide information from the end of 2020 onward. While it isn't a major setback, it means that up until 2020 Hennepin County might not have been tracking these lengths of stay at all. Meaning, that pre-COVID-19 pandemic baseline information may not exist to ever be compared to current times. Second, Hennepin County was only able to use the date the judge either ordered for the youth to go to the placement or ordered for the release to a voluntary placement as the start date. These orders account for both court-mandated treatment and release from the JDC for voluntary treatment. Therefore, these lengths of stay only measure from the court-ordered date to the day that the youth physically left the JDC. When requested to use another point in time, such as when the screening committee made a recommendation or when probation sent the first referral as the

initial start date, the county was unable to process the request due to "no reliable way to pull the information" with a different start date (DOCCR Administrative Services, personal communication, March 5, 2024).

The reason the start date is vital to having an accurate understanding of the wait times for placement is because of how the legal system functions. The court does not issue an order for a youth to go to a placement setting until the placement has already accepted the referral, whether it is mandated or voluntary. This means that any delays with the referral process or acceptance process is not reflected in this data. For an anecdotal example, West Central will review any violent offenses prior to accepting a youth. There are youth who have been denied because of the charges they face or because of how the police officers chose to write the complaint. This time it takes between this particular referral and denial is not reflected in this data because the judge didn't have the opportunity to sign an order for the release.

Figure 5

Hennepin County Length of JDC Stay to Out-of-Home Placement



Note: Data used from "Hennepin County JDC Length of Stay Data Request" (Appendix B)

So, while the data could be useful in certain contexts, the limitations are too large to be insightful in how long youth stay in the JDC to the point of being transferred to a placement. Ultimately, there is no clear data to support how long someone might stay in the JDC waiting for a placement. Anecdotally, finding an accepting placement can take anywhere from days to months depending on the individual and the case. Understanding these potential delays can help inform policy decisions and court decisions for the youth of Hennepin County.

Closures & Reputations of Out-of-Home Placements

The concerns of abuse and neglect inside these facilities haven't changed over the centuries. From the data gathered by the Hennepin County DOCCR, Figure 6 shows a concerning trend. Listed below are the top 10 placement sites that were used between 2017-2023. This chart includes the non-secure, non-profit, and for-profit facilities since these are the most common placements used. It includes the name of the facility, the number of times the placement was used, the current status of the facility, and the type of management. Two points should cause concern: (1) four of the ten are permanently closed and (2) four of the ten have been accused of neglect and/or abuse, which are indicated with the asterisks.

Figure 6

Hennepin County's Top 10 Utilized Out-of-Home Placements

Out of Home Placement	Total no.	Status	Management Type
Red Wing**	209	Open	State
Hennepin County Home School	197	Closed 2021	Hennepin County
The Hills Youth & Family Services**	177	Closed 2021	Non-profit
The Bridge for Youth	172	Open	Non-profit
Volunteers of America**	93	Partially closed 2019	Non-profit
Rebound, Inc.	66	Open	Non-profit
Village Range	66	Open	Non-profit
Sequel Youth and Family Services**	57	Closed 2020	For profit
Catholic Charities: St. Joseph's	50	Closed 2020	Non-profit
West Central	46	Open	Clay County

Note: Data used from "JP Out of Home Placement Data Request" (Appendix B)

*** Abuse/Neglect Accusation or Confirmed Cases*

The only reason West Central even made the top ten is because the system had to find an alternative to the Home School, as demonstrated previously in Figure 2. Again, the closures of these facilities have forced the court to send youth further and further away to receive treatment. While the closures themselves are concerning, two of the four closures faced abuse allegations: The Hills and Sequel. The Hills Youth & Family Services was based in Duluth, and some young people came forward in 2018 accusing a staff member of sexually assaulting them. These accusations resulted in criminal charges (Olsen, 2018). Ultimately, it was reported that The Hills closed in 2021 due to financial reasons (Slater, 2021). The second facility, Sequel, had locations in Iowa and Michigan. They are a national for-profit organization that still operates today; however, it took a youth dying as a result of the staff restraints for Hennepin County to terminate their contract (Schnek & Gilbert, 2019a; Gilbert, 2020). Eventually, with the sheer number of abuse and neglect complaints and repeated safety concerns, the facilities based in Iowa closed (Gilbert, 2022).

Even the Minnesota Department of Corrections facility, Red Wing, has faced allegations of abuse and neglect. In 2019, there was a lawsuit against a guard engaging in sexual misconduct with a youth (*"A Real Systemic Failure,"* 2019). In 2023, Kare11 ran an investigative report on the facility's use of disciplinary room time, more commonly known as DRT. It is essentially solitary confinement with only an hour or two out of their cell per day for physical activity. Before the ban on using DRT, Red Wing was one of the top facilities utilizing it (Stahl et al., 2023). In the adult legal system, this is typically referred to as solitary confinement, which has been internationally considered to be a form of torture (Conley, 2013).

With the partially closed Volunteers of America program of Bar None, there isn't much in the way of public information or media coverage. However, what is known is that Bar None

faced an unprecedented suspension of their Department of Corrections license due to failed inspections (*Treatment Center for At-Risk Youth Facing Suspension of License*, 2019). In reviewing a copy of the inspection report, one of their locations failed many statutory requirements for inappropriate use of DRT, pressing on the neck of a resident while pinned in a prone position, and lack of intervention by staff as a youth acted out aggressively on the unit (Becking, 2019). Volunteers of America closed several of their locations, but they still run an emergency shelter and a couple of residential treatment facilities only through the Department of Human Services (DHS) (*Licensing Info Lookup*, n.d.). The locations do not have a DOC license.

While out-of-home placements intend to treat youth and provide them with skills to mature and grow in prosocial ways, it is equally important to question if they are serving that objective. In a report from 2019, Hennepin County looked at the statistics of youth recidivism rates after being sent to an out-of-home placement in 2016 (*OHP Recidivism by Program*, 2019). The results demonstrate virtually no difference between those sent to a placement and those who remained in the community. It also concluded Bar None, Mesabi, and Red Wing had the highest rates of recidivism for those who were placed (*OHP Recidivism by Program*, 2019). All three of these facilities had substantiated abuse and neglect claims. If the goal is to provide some form of public safety, it is evident these allegations show that the facilities may not even be able to provide protection and safety to the youth they are supposed to be rehabilitating. This isn't to say that all facilities are guilty of abusing the youth in their charge; however, the more the county is sending its youth out of their sight, the more questions should be asked.

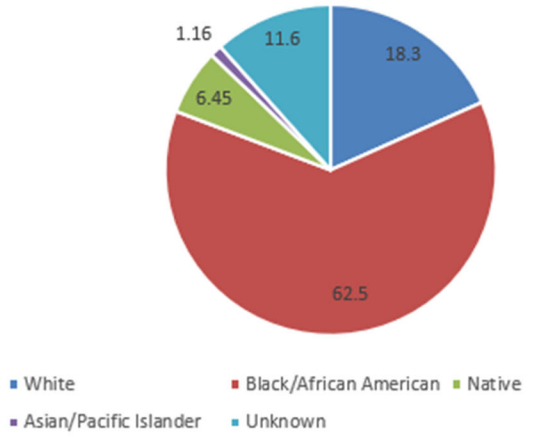
Race & Out-of-Home Placements

While framing this new perspective with youth in the criminal legal system, it would be blatantly negligent to exclude the topic of race. Nationally, Black youth are overrepresented in

the criminal legal system, and Hennepin County is no exception (*Literature Review*, n.d.). Figure 7 is a breakdown from 2023 U.S. Census Bureau information for Hennepin County while Figure 8 is a representation of Hennepin County criminal cases from 2023 (*Data Dashboard | Hennepin County*, 2024). When comparing the two, the differences in representation are obvious. While white individuals make up nearly three-quarters of the population, less than a quarter of the cases were against white youth. Whereas Black individuals make up only about 15% of Hennepin County's residents with over 62% of cases brought against Black youth.

Figure 7

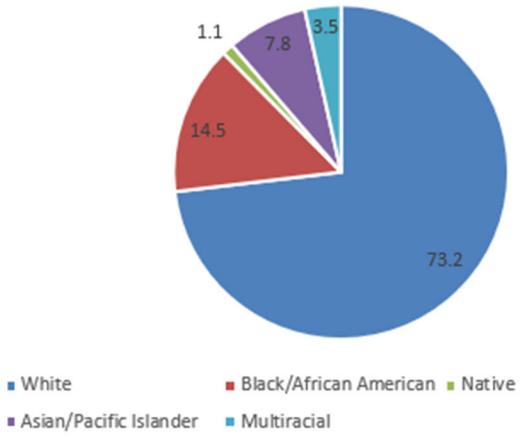
Hennepin County Prosecution Cases by Race



Note: Data used from Data Dashboard from Hennepin County

Figure 8

Hennepin County General Population by Race



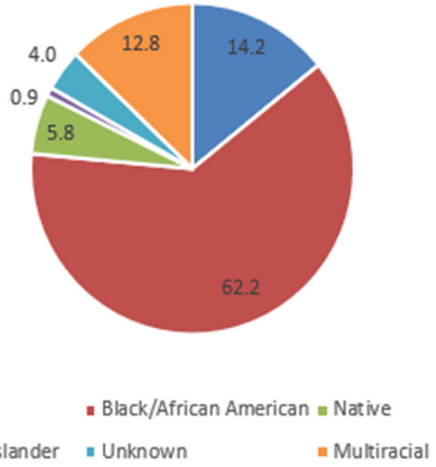
Note: Data used from US Census Bureau

With the fact that Black youth are overrepresented in the criminal legal system, logically the conclusion that they overrepresent the number of youth requiring out-of-home placement is sound. Figure 9 demonstrates just how overrepresented Black youth are in this facet of the system. The trends in the racial breakdown of cases brought against youth are representative of the requirement for out-of-home placements. Almost two-thirds of the entire population

requiring out-of-home placement from 2017-2023 are for Black youth, with only 14% of placements for white youth.

Figure 9

Hennepin County Out-of-Home Placements by Race from 2017-2023

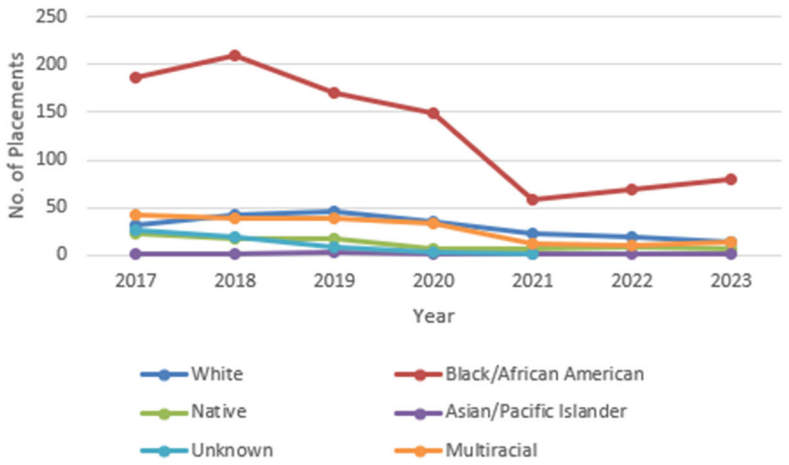


Note: Data used from "JP Out of Home Placement Data Request" (Appendix B)

When the data of out-of-home placements by race is broken down by year, Figure 10 shows the population of youth most impacted by the reduction in out-of-home placements are Black youth. While there are some visual declines across all races, a drop of over 100 placements from 2019 to 2021 is significant in comparison to all other racial groups. The decline is over four times greater than their white counterparts, who only saw a drop of about 25 placements.

Figure 10

Hennepin County Number of Out-of-Home Placements by Race



Note: Data used from "JP Out of Home Placement Data Request" (Appendix B)

Considering race with the practices of utilizing out-of-home placement has a significant gravitas that goes beyond treatment needs. Throughout history, Black and African American individuals have faced worse conditions than their white counterparts. Historically, the death rate within houses of refuge was higher for Black youth than white youth (Bell, 2016). When released, they didn't have the same advantages as white youth when seeking employment or housing on the streets (Bell, 2016). In the current times, Black youth continue to face higher rates of involvement in the criminal legal system and out-of-home placements. They are sent dozens to hundreds of miles away to programs run by predominantly white administrators. Similarities and comparisons can be drawn to the practices of slavery.

The abuse, neglect, and poor outcomes could realistically happen to any youth. Everything outlined so far demonstrates that out-of-home placements are detrimental to youth in Hennepin County. However, it predominately happens to youth of color, particularly Black youth. The disparities from becoming system involved to the treatment within the system are evidence of continued societal neglect and indifference from over a century ago.

Discussion

The current legal system that is in place in the U.S. claims to protect the public and reduce recidivism by keeping people locked away, but with youth, the intent of the system is meant to treat them rather than punish them. It is meant to give them practical skills and allow their minds to develop to make better decisions. The consequences of the closures without a shift in the system practices are more substantial than anyone understands. These new circumstances force youth into unfortunate situations that may not serve their best interest or the best interest of public safety.

Taken individually, these key points in the recent closures of out-of-home placements may seem like a minor inconvenience to most. Since there are alternative placements outside of the Home School, youth are being transferred to other government-run facilities for their benefit to learn and grow into fully formed adults. The legal system has been able to continue without interruption. However, under that narrative lies a more troubling one. Youth are sent across the state for their treatment programming. They are separated from their support systems, families, and home community. They are sent to placements where the county system cannot feasibly have routine visits for the welfare of the youth. And inevitably, these young individuals still have to return home and face the same external influences.

The overall efficacy of removing youth from their community to seek treatment all over the state is a point of concern. As stated previously, multiple studies have suggested that family involvement is a key indicator of youth being successful with treatment and community re-entry (Garfinkel, 2010; Dempsey et al., 2021; Mooney & Bala, 2020). Some of these placements have adapted as best as they can to fulfill this need across distances, such as virtual visits and phone calls; however, it is unknown if the level of involvement is effective for this purpose.

During the time of adolescence, physical, mental, and emotional development through social connections and familial support are vital to influencing decision-making and thought processes into adulthood. It is during this key time in lifespan development that these youth are sent to a new place with new people under lock and key. When they are sent beyond the reach of their family and support system, they don't have the same access as other, local youth in the program. While their counterparts have the privilege of family visits, the Hennepin County youth don't even know when they will be able see their family next. The duration of the program depends on their level of involvement with the treatment plan and how quickly they can move through it. Treatment plans can span anywhere from a few months to close to a year.

All the while, the professionals based in a separate county trust these programs to provide the appropriate treatment and services. Questioning the practices within the programs is warranted given the accusations and proven cases of neglect and abuse. However, these questions should go beyond issues with the staff and should include examining the programming itself. A Minnesota study found that youth of color with emotional disturbance disorders were less likely to be placed in the appropriate cognitive skills programming compared to their white counterparts (Strassfeld & Cherng, 2022). They have significantly higher rates of recidivism, which the study suggests is due to the practices of those running secure placements (Strassfeld & Cherng, 2022).

In a system that is steeped in racism and classism, Hennepin County struggles with Black youth and youth of color being overrepresented from the point of arrest to the point of placement. In the name of public safety, judges, prosecutors, and defense teams come together to send youth across the state to programs that are based in cities with low diversity. However, as demonstrated with several placements, the system repeatedly fails to protect the youth from the

very people who are supposed to be helping. The issues of abuse and neglect within placements will continue to be a problem, and it is a disservice to ignore them.

Recommendations

As outlined several times with multiple examples, the practices of how youth are handled within the juvenile justice system need to be examined closely. While some recommend that a local option should be reopened, these issues existed even when the Home School was running. Out-of-home placements are meant to be one alternative to sentencing youth; so potentially, there could be better alternatives if they are invested in. The practice of releasing youth during the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible with shifts in the practices of probation demonstrated that there are other options (Mooney & Bala, 2020). By releasing many of them early, it suggests that they may not have needed to be there in the first place. The system was adapted during the pandemic to bolster community-based services, and these practices should be examined for their successes and failures. The conversation needs to move beyond returning the system to the pre-pandemic practices.

Many will say that they do not want violent youth back on the streets and that locking them up will be necessary. However, as previously stated, there are a wide variety of cases that are brought against youth in Hennepin County. Not all cases are violent. Some will say there are established procedures to release some while systematically detaining others. However, the pandemic challenged these practices to keep youth at home while engaging in programming and community support. Narratives include that out-of-home placements have been used consistently across the nation as a primary source of emphasizing treatment over punishment. However, these facilities have demonstrated over and over that they cannot be trusted with the people in their care. If a new facility or program was opened, the risks would be the same. The only benefit of

having a local option would be to have better access to the individuals to watch for the signs of abuse and neglect. However, this still doesn't prevent it from happening. It only allows the potential to catch it earlier.

As a society, we must decide what we are willing to tolerate when it comes to future generations. These practices of the criminal legal system are simply unacceptable. Public safety is not being served by exposing youth to more trauma. Rehabilitation and treatment can be accomplished through other means as the pandemic has shown us. In the end, the system needs to commit to the well-being of its youth to seek solutions that foster healing, growth, and resilience, rather than perpetuating a cycle of trauma and harm.

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Appendix A

Definitions

Delinquency	Criminal charges against anyone under the age of 18 (*US Legal*, n.d.)
Adjudication	Judge rules that the youth committed the act - not the same as a guilty conviction (*US Legal*, n.d.)
Out-of-home placement (OHP)	A setting where a child is living separate from family for protection, treatment, or corrections (*US Legal*, n.d.)
Disposition	Similar to sentencing in adult cases, the final judge orders where the youth should serve disciplinary time (*US Legal*, n.d.)
Public Safety	Welfare and protection of the general community (*US Legal*, n.d.)
Culpability	Blameworthiness of the accused for the criminal act (*US Legal*, n.d.)
Recidivism	Relapse into previous behaviors, such as criminal activity (*US Legal*, n.d.)

Appendix B

JP Out of Home Placement Data Request

About the Data

Data was pulled for out of home placements started between 2017 and 2023. This includes any out of home placement (e.g., foster care, shelter, group home, residential treatment, inpatient treatment). Youth may have multiple placements during this time and be reflected more than once in the data. This includes both juveniles and extended jurisdiction juvenile (EJJ) clients that can be under juvenile court and probation jurisdiction until age 21.

Out of Home Placements by Race

Race	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
American Indian/Alaskan Native	23	18	18	6	7	8	6	86
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	1	4	2	1	1	2	13
Black/African American	186	210	171	149	57	69	80	922
Multiracial	42	39	39	33	13	11	13	190
Unknown	27	19	9	4	1			60
White	31	42	46	35	23	20	14	211
Grand Total	**311**	**329**	**287**	**229**	**102**	**109**	**115**	**1,482**

Age at Start of Placement

Age	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
12	3	3	3	2				11
13	8	18	16	6	1	3	3	55
14	33	49	31	31	12	6	14	176
15	67	67	49	39	15	11	15	263
16	72	70	75	55	18	32	30	352
17	92	81	79	65	30	36	30	413
18	26	34	25	25	24	15	19	168
19	8	7	8	5	2	5	4	39
20	2		1	1		1		5
Grand Total	**311**	**329**	**287**	**229**	**102**	**109**	**115**	**1,482**

Placement Programs

Agency-Program Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total

Minnesota Department of Corrections	**34**	**37**	**30**	**31**	**18**	**29**	**30**	**209**
MCF - Red Wing	33	36	27	27	16	26	29	194
MCF - Red Wing - Juvenile Sex Offender Treatment Program	1	1	3	4	2	3	1	15
Hennepin County Home School	**64**	**39**	**35**	**49**	**10**			**197**
AFSHS Long Term Program	11	4	4	6				25
AFSHS Residential				1	2			3

Agency-Program Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
AFSHS Short Term Program	1	1						2
Focus Program	5	5						10
Focus Short Term Program	2	1						3
STAMP	10	8	7	5				30
STAMP Plus	35	20	24	32				111
START				5	8			13
The Hills Youth and Family Services	**57**	**54**	**41**	**21**	**4**			**177**
Cambia Hills Mental Health Services	3							3
Semi-Independent Living Program/Community Transition Program	10	10	3					23
Woodland Hills Juvenile Justice	43	44	38	21	4			150
Woodland Hills Juvenile Justice - 90/120 Program	1							1
The Bridge for Youth	**10**	**54**	**71**	**30**	**3**	**1**	**3**	**172**
24-7 Program		1						1
Domestic Diversion Program	8	53	69	29	2		1	162
Resilience House					1	1	2	4
The Bridge for Youth	2		2	1				5
Volunteers of America	**34**	**31**	**10**	**7**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**93**
Bar None - Evergreen	17	20	5					42
Bar None - Shelter Plus				2	4	2	3	11
Bar None - Shelter/Evaluation	1	5						6
Bar None - Stabilization Unit	6	4	3	1				14
Bar None - Stepping Stone	1							1
Bar None - Sunrise			1					1

Children's Residential Treatment Center (CRTC)	1	1						2
Omegon Residential Treatment Center	2			4	1	1		8
Volunteers of America	6	1	1					8
Rebound, Inc.	**15**	**15**	**8**	**4**	**9**	**8**	**7**	**66**
Jelani House						2	3	5
Jordan House	15	9	6	3	9	2	1	45
Naima House		6	2	1		4	3	16
Village Ranch	**4**	**11**	**16**	**6**	**8**	**10**	**11**	**66**
Annandale					1	1		2
Cokato				1	2		4	7
Cokato - Sexuality-Specific Treatment				1	1	1	3	6
Hutchinson					2	5	2	9
Rochester					2	3	2	7
Village Ranch	4	11	16	4				35
Sequel Youth and Family Services	**19**	**21**	**13**	**4**				**57**
Clarinda Academy	7	4						11
Lakeside Academy - Adolescent Sexual Offender Treatment Prog		1	1					2
Lakeside Academy - Boys Residential Program	5	13	6	3				27
Mingus Mountain	1							1

Agency-Program Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Woodward Academy - Community Residential	2	3	6	1				12
Woodward Academy - Sex Offender	4							4
Catholic Charities	**16**	**18**	**5**	**11**				**50**
St. Joseph's Home for Children	15	6						21
St. Joseph's Home for Children - Intake	1	12	5	11				29
Clay County				**5**	**18**	**10**	**13**	**46**
West Central CLIPS					3	1		4
West Central Regional Juvenile Center				5	15	9	13	42
Kadiri House			**13**	**11**	**4**	**3**	**5**	**36**
Kadiri House			13	11	4	3	5	36
Nexus Youth and Family Solutions	**6**	**3**	**9**	**6**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**28**

Aspen House							1	1
Gerard Academy	3	1	1	2				7
Mille Lacs Academy			5					5
Mille Lacs Academy - New Trails	1			2				3
Mille Lacs Academy - Unhealthy Sexual Behaviors Program	2	2	3	2	1	2		12
Lutheran Social Service of MN	**3**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**24**
LifeHaven Transitional Living							1	1
Portland House	3	1	4	1	4	5	5	23
On-Belay of Minnesota	**5**	**6**	**1**	**2**	**3**		**4**	**21**
Anthony Lewis Center - Blaine	1	3						4
On Belay House - Plymouth	4	3	1	2	3		4	17
REM Minnesota				**16**	**2**			**18**
Cedar Heights				16	2			18
Braza Home	**7**	**6**	**4**					**17**
Braza Home	7	6	4					17
Anoka County					**3**	**7**	**7**	**17**
Sex Specific Program					2	4	5	11
Short Term Secure Program					1	3	2	6
The Link	**5**	**2**	**2**			**2**		**11**
Passageways Shelter and Housing Program	5	2	2			2		11
Mapletree Group Home	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**			**11**
Mapletree Group Home	4	2	2	2	1			11
Northwestern Minnesota Juvenile Center						**5**	**5**	**10**
Residential Treatment Program						5	5	10
Clinicare Corporation	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**				**10**
Aurora Plains Academy	1							1
Eau Claire Academy	2	2	1	2				7
Milwaukee Academy		1	1					2
180 Degrees	**1**			**5**	**1**	**3**		**10**
180 Degrees				2				2
Brittany's Place	1			3		2		6
Hope House					1	1		2
Benchmark Behavioral Health Systems		**2**	**2**	**3**	**2**			**9**

Agency-Program Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Behavioral Misconduct				2				2
Benchmark Behavioral Health Systems		2	2	1				5
Sexual Misconduct					2			2
Dakota County Community Corrections	**3**		**1**			**1**	**4**	**9**
Juvenile Gender Specific Program	3		1			1	4	9
Hennepin County		**4**	**2**	**2**				**8**
HSPHD/HHS		4	2	2				8
Steps of Success	**4**		**3**					**7**
Andover	3		3					6
Grand Rapids	1							1
Adult & Teen Challenge - Minnesota		**1**		**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**6**
Adult & Teen Challenge - Minnesota		1		2	1	1	1	6
Prairie Lakes						**3**	**3**	**6**
Captain's Academy						3	2	5
Integrity House							1	1
Harbor Shelter	**2**	**1**	**3**					**6**
Hastings	1	1	3					5
Stillwater	1							1
United Hospital District	**2**	**2**	**1**					**5**
Adolescent Treatment Center of Winnebago	2	2	1					5
Leo A. Hoffmann Center		**4**					**1**	**5**
Evergreen Cottage							1	1
Leo A. Hoffmann Center		4						4
Phoenix Recovery Programs	**1**	**2**		**2**				**5**
North Maplewood				1				1
Phoenix Recovery Programs	1	2		1				4
Heartland Girls' Ranch		**3**	**1**		**1**			**5**
Heartland Girls' Ranch		3	1		1			5
DIVINE Institute			**3**	**2**				**5**
DIVINE Intervention			3	2				5
Arrowhead Regional Corrections					**1**	**1**	**3**	**5**
Boys Residential Treatment					1	1	3	5

Wings						**1**	**3**	**4**
Wings						1	3	4
Maple Lake Recovery Centers	**2**			**1**		**1**		**4**
Maple Lake Recovery Center	2			1				3
Maple Lake Recovery Centers						1		1
North Homes Children and Family Services		**2**	**1**		**1**			**4**
Evaluation Program		1			1			2
Shelter		1						1
Teens in Transition			1					1
Meridian Behavioral Health						**3**		**3**
Lake Shore						2		2
Twin Town						1		1
M Health Fairview						**3**		**3**

Agency-Program Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Adolescent Residential Program						3		3
RS Eden	**3**							**3**
Reentry Metro	1							1
Reentry West	2							2
Northwood Children's Services		**1**		**1**		**1**		**3**
Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility						1		1
Residential Treatment		1		1				2
Vinland National Center			**1**	**1**	**1**			**3**
Drug and Alcohol Addiction Treatment			1	1	1			3
McLeod Treatment Programs		**2**						**2**
Sheppard House		2						2
Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation	**1**					**1**		**2**
Inpatient Drug and Alcohol Treatment	1					1		2
New Beginnings Minnesota					**1**		**1**	**2**
Waverly					1		1	2
Mash-Ka-Wisen Treatment Center			**1**	**1**				**2**
Mash-Ka-Wisen Treatment Center			1	1				2
Other County License		**1**		**1**				**2**
Other County License		1		1				2

Forest Ridge Youth Services	**2**							**2**
Comprehensive Level Residential Treatment	2							2
Tasks Unlimited							**1**	**1**
Tasks Unlimited							1	1
Northstar Behavioral Health						**1**		**1**
Residential - Water Street						1		1
Endeavor Place	**1**							**1**
Endeavor Place	1							1
Crossing Home			**1**					**1**
St. Cloud			1					1
Kindred Family Services		**1**						**1**
Kindred Family Services		1						1
Red River Valley Juvenile Center							**1**	**1**
Red River Valley Juvenile Center							1	1
Division of Indian Work	**1**							**1**
Healing Spirit House - Boys	1							1
NuWay						**1**		**1**
NuWay I						1		1
Fairview Health Services			**1**					**1**
Children's Mental Health Inpatient Services			1					1
CentraCare						**1**		**1**
Recovery Plus						1		1
Family Alternatives							**1**	**1**
Family Alternatives							1	1
Lutheran Social Service of WI						**1**		**1**
Homme Youth and Family Programs						1		1
Agency-Program Name	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**Total**
ALPHA Human Services	**1**							**1**
Adult Residential	1							1
Keystone Treatment Center	**1**							**1**
Keystone Treatment Center	1							1
Oshki Manidoo Center						**1**		**1**
Oshki Manidoo Center						1		1
NorthStar Regional							**1**	**1**

Residential Treatment Center - Men's							1	1
Grand Total	**311**	**329**	**287**	**229**	**102**	**109**	**115**	**1482**

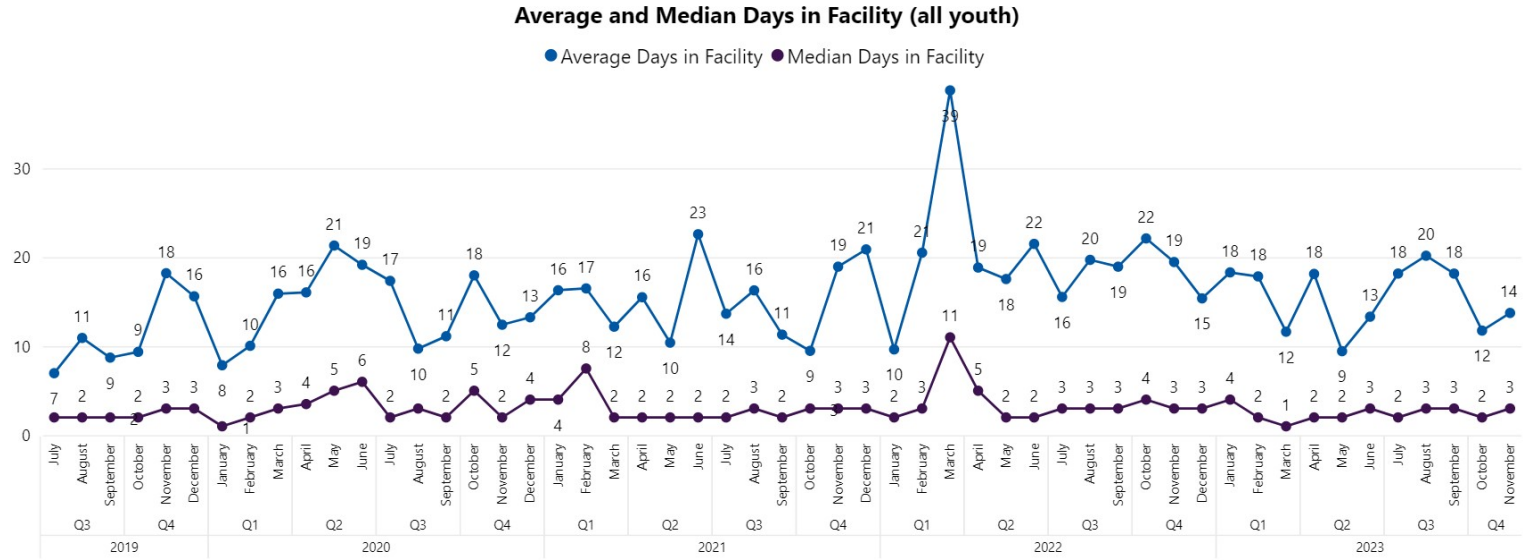
JDC Length of Stay

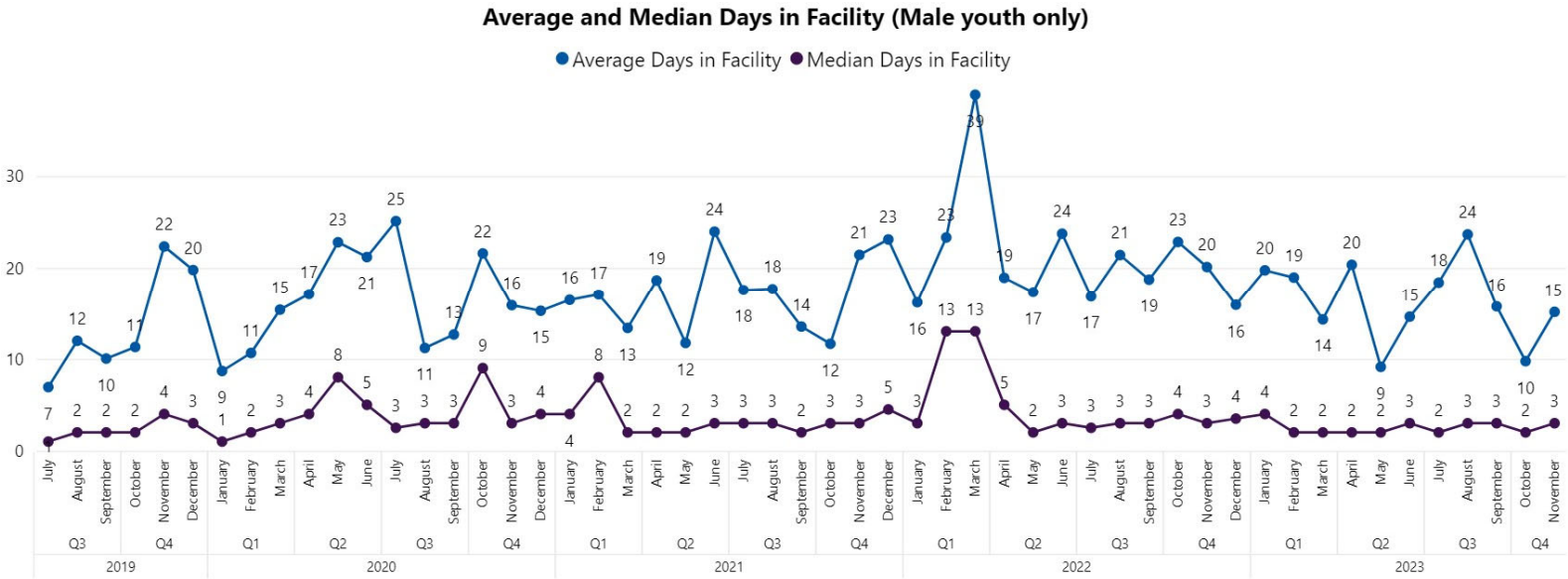
The information below is not specific to youth in out of home placements, but those in Hennepin County juvenile detention. This includes youth released from the JDC between 2017 and 2023. Youth may be depicted in these totals more than once if they had multiple bookings to the JDC during this time.

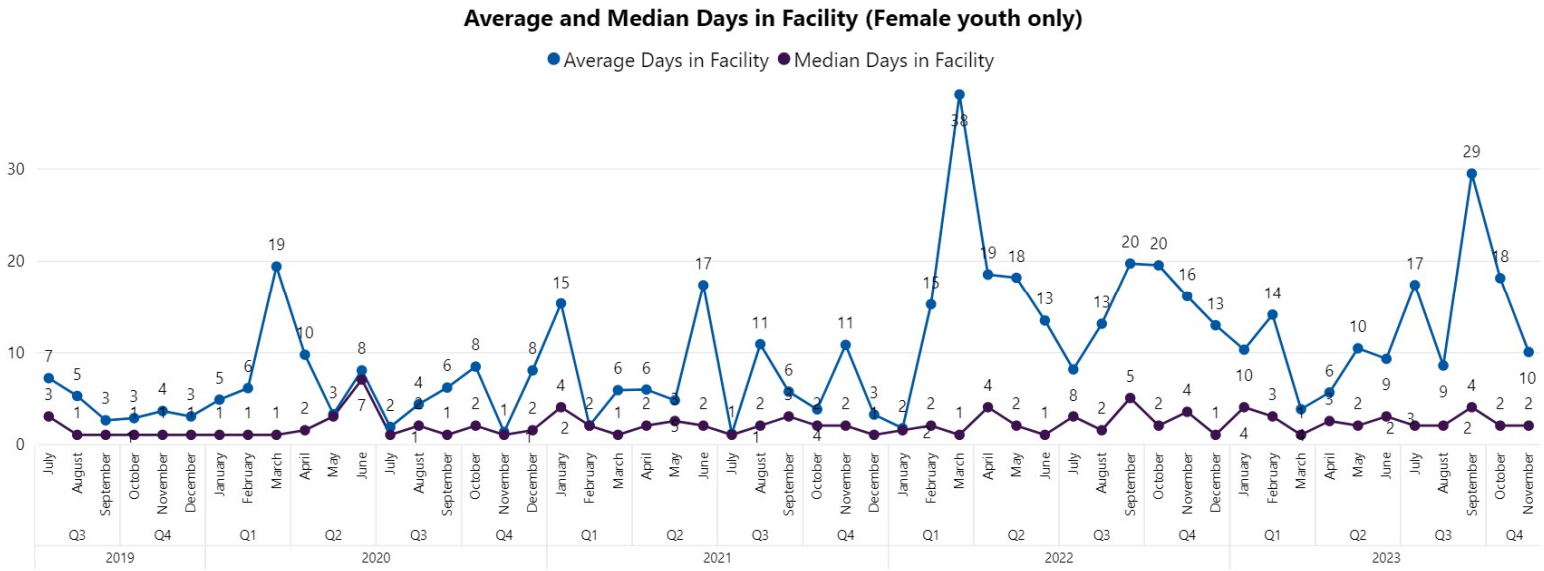
Year	Average Days in Facility	Median Days in Facility	Total Clients Released
2017	9.17	2.00	1,475
2018	11.25	2.00	1,279
2019	11.08	2.00	1,227
2020	13.41	2.00	912
2021	15.27	3.00	573
2022	19.83	3.00	629
2023	15.95	2.00	926

Hennepin County JDC Length of Stay Data Request

The information below pertains to the request for JDC length of stay (in days) for all youth released by month from July 2019 – November 2023. This includes all youth released from the facility during this time regardless of their release location (e.g. home, placement, etc.). Information for youth released to placement will be included following this section.

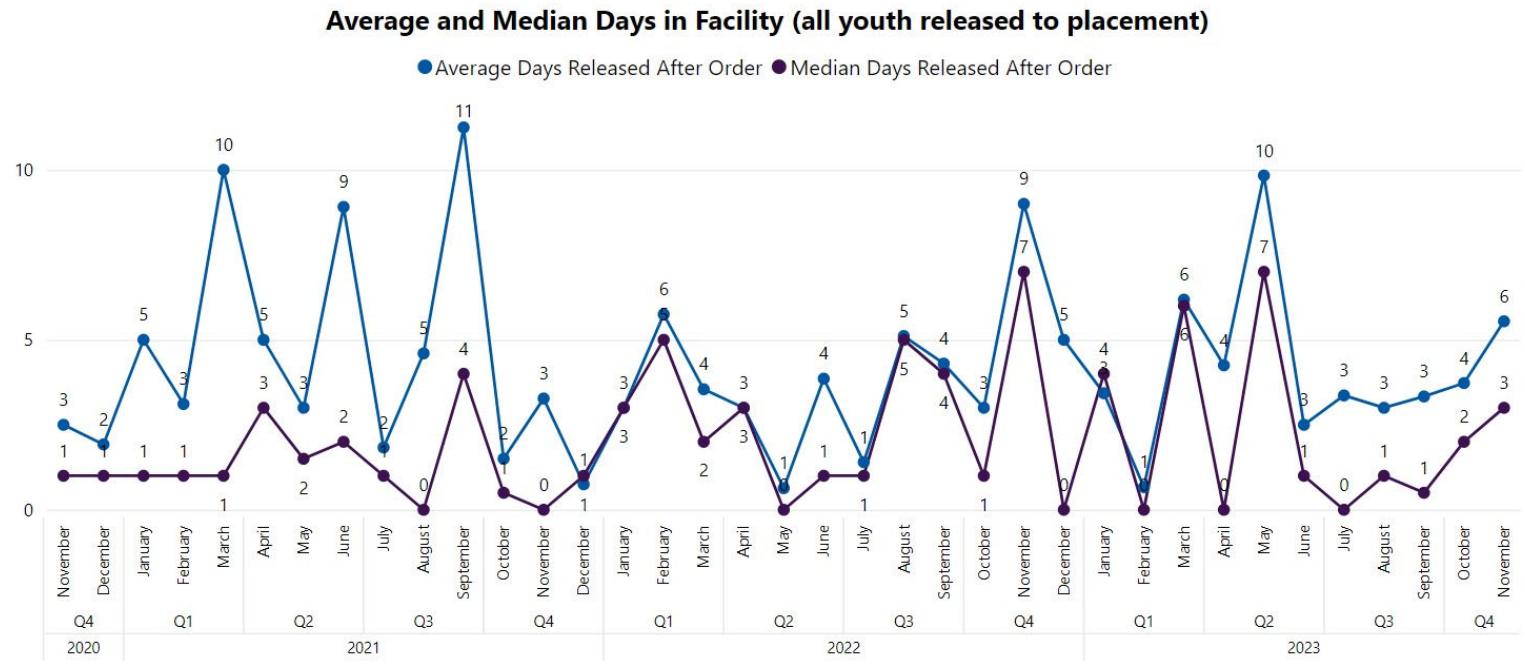


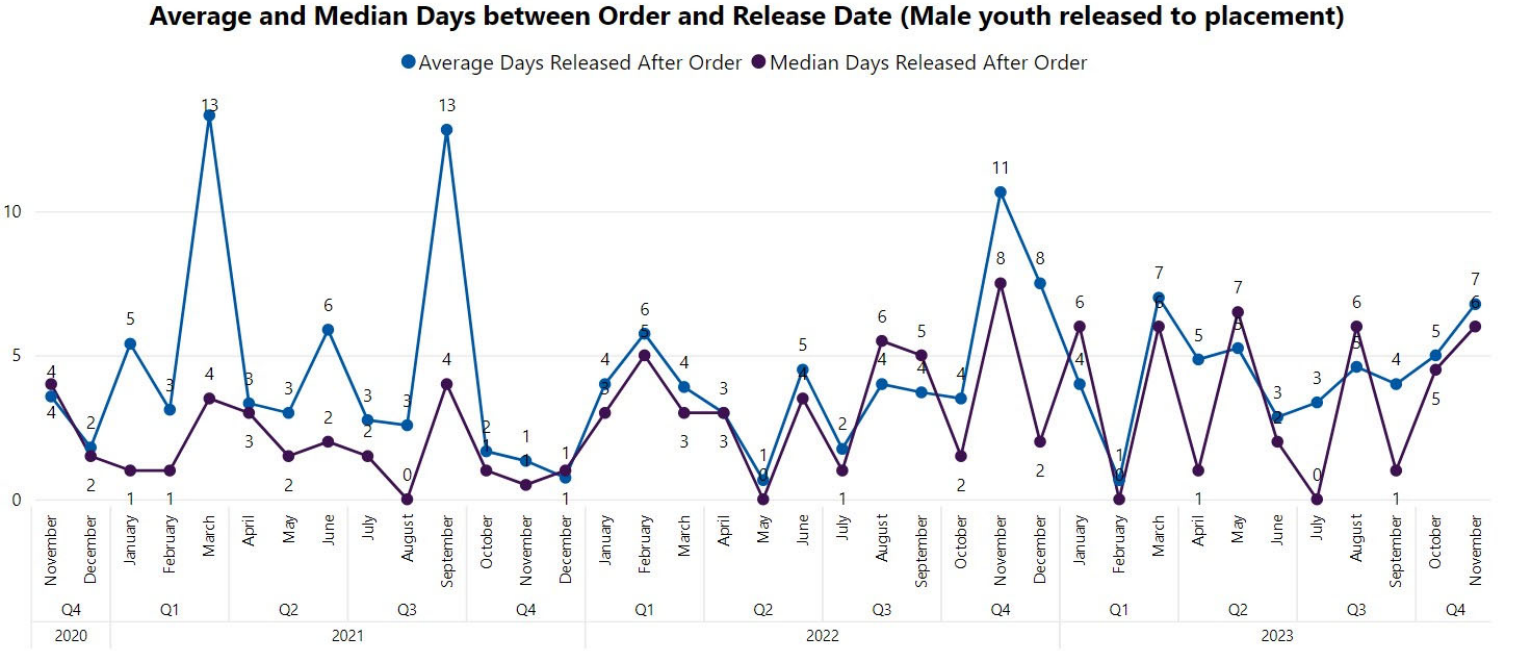




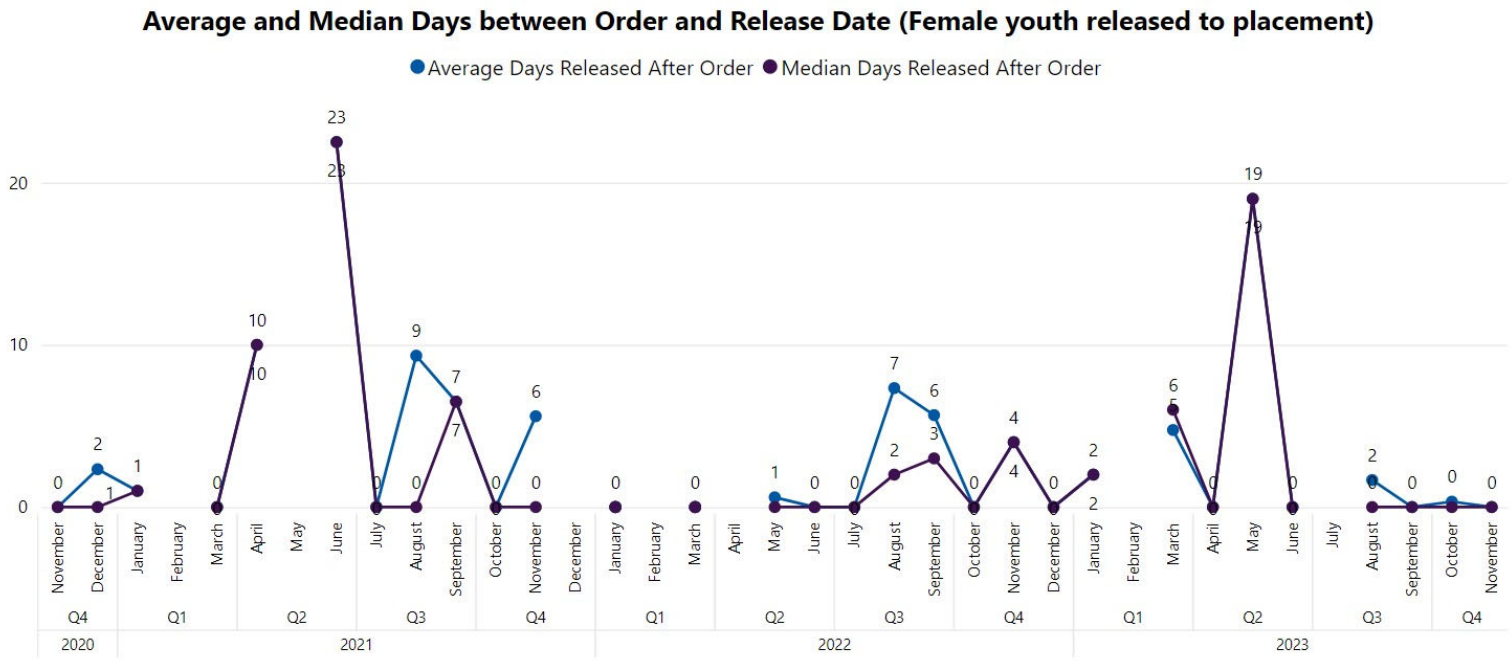
Releases to Placement Only

The following includes the average and median number of days youth remained in detention after being ordered for release to placement. This information is only available starting in November of 2020 due to data system changes and the order date may differ from their disposition date if they were ordered for release prior to disposition (e.g., shelter releases). There are approximately 60 releases from the JDC with an average of 9 releases to placement each month. Months with no information indicates instances when there were no releases to placement during that month, so a length of stay of 0 in a particular month indicates that those released during that month remained in the JDC for 0 additional days after being ordered for release to placement.





Note: There were two peaks in the data for female youth that were due to small samples sizes and two outliers in the length of stay data.


Average and Median Days between Order and Release Date (Female youth released to placement)
Average Days Released After Order
Median Days Released After Order
20
10
0
November
December
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
Q4
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
2020
2021
2022
2023