

Shootings

Department of Juvenile Services

January 2026



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE SERVICES

Introduction

During the 2024 Legislative Session, the Maryland General Assembly passed, and Governor Wes Moore signed into law, SB 652, Chapter 736 “ Department of Juvenile Services - Report on Shooting”. The legislation requires the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) report on the number of youth who were nonfatally shot, shot another individual, or were victims of a homicide. The reports must also include the youths' age and the county of residence, and provide information about agency actions.

DJS approaches incidents involving youth who are victims or perpetrators of homicides or shootings with the utmost seriousness and urgency. Each case is treated as a critical event requiring immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of the youth, their families, and the community. DJS prioritizes swift responses, including convening safety plan meetings, coordinating with law enforcement and community partners, and providing trauma-informed support services. Comprehensive case management reviews are conducted to assess risks, address underlying issues, and adjust supervision or intervention plans as needed. Additionally, DJS works diligently to understand and mitigate the root causes of violence through collaboration with community organizations and strengthened partnerships with law enforcement. These measures reflect DJS’s commitment to protecting and rehabilitating youth while promoting public safety.

Data

To provide context, Table 1 summarizes the statewide total of non-fatally shot victims and homicide victims from January 1 to November 30, 2025¹. As shown, youth constitute a very small percentage of the total in each category. Moreover, youth known to the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) represent an even smaller proportion.

Category	Statewide Total	Adults	Youth	DJS* youth	Percent youth comprise of total statewide victims	Percent DJS youth comprise of total statewide victims
Non-fatal Shooting Victims	588	510	78	20	13%	3%
Homicide Victims	305	284	21	4	6.8%	1.31%
Suspected of Shooting another Individual	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	N/A	N/A

*DJS Youth" includes youth over 18 still under supervision

** These data are not available at this time

¹ Maryland Department of State Police, Criminal Intelligence Section | MCAC

Table 2 shows the change in DJS’ caseload from the last two years to this year, as well as the change in non-fatal shooting and homicide victimizations and shooting suspects among DJS-supervised youth. While the number of youth under DJS supervision increased 14.46% this year compared to 2024 and 27% compared to 2023, there has been a 25% decline in DJS youth who were the victims of non-fatal shootings (15 in 2025, down from 16 in 2024, down from 20 in 2023), a 50% decrease in DJS youth who were homicide victims (4 in 2025, 4 in 2024, down from 8 in 2023), and a 67% drop from in arrests of DJS-supervised youth for gun violence, with 2% of our youth suspected in a shooting in 2023 (n=29) and 1.9% suspected in a shooting in 2024 (n=31) and 0.54% suspected in a shooting in 2025 (n=10).

Despite the increase in youth under DJS supervision, a minimal and declining percentage of these youth were involved in gun violence – either as victims or as suspects – in 2024 and 2025.

Table 2								
Category	2025	2024	2023	Change from 2024 to 2025	Change from 2023 to 2025	% category youth of total Supervised		
						2025	2024	2023
Non-fatal Shooting Victims	15	16	20	-6.25%	-25%	0.8%	1%	1.40%
Homicide Victims	4	4	8	0%	-50%	0.22%	0.25%	0.60%
Suspected of Shooting another Individual**	10	31	29	-67.74%	-65.5%	0.54%	1.90%	2%
Total Supervised Youth	1844	1,611	1,452	+14.46%	+27%			

Table 3 reflects the age distribution of juveniles involved in firearm-related incidents and homicides. The data is categorized by age groups ranging from 10–12 years to 19–21 years, providing insights into the prevalence of these incidents within different age brackets.

Table 3				
Category	Ages 10-12	Ages 13-15	Ages 16-18	Ages 19-21
Non-fatal Shooting Victims 2025	5	24	48	1
Homicide Victims 2025	4	3	14	0

Table 4 breaks down firearm-related incidents and homicides by the counties of residence for the juveniles involved. The data highlights where these incidents occurred most frequently, with Baltimore City and Prince George's County showing the highest numbers.

Table 4			
County	Non- fatal Shooting Victims	Homicide Victims	Shot Another Individual
Anne Arundel	5	1	0
Dorchester	1	0	0
Baltimore City	40	3	4
Baltimore	6	5	2
Cecil	0	1	0
Howard	0	3	0
Frederick	0	0	0
St. Mary's	0	1	0
Montgomery	8	1	2
Prince George's	16	6	2
Washington	0	0	0

Actions Taken by DJS

DJS takes a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to prevent and disrupt youth involvement in gun violence. While only a small percentage of youth supervised by DJS are involved in such incidents, the consequences are profound for youth, families, staff, and communities. DJS combines targeted interventions for high-risk youth, evidence-informed behavioral programming, credible messenger support, family and community engagement, staff training, and post-incident responses to create safer environments and support long-term behavior change. These efforts include programs like Thrive Academy, cognitive-behavioral and restorative interventions, integration of trauma-informed practices, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

The Thrive Academy:

The Thrive Academy acts as a framework for DJS's broader gun violence reduction strategy. Rather than operating as a stand-alone program, Thrive concentrates enhanced supervision, credible messenger engagement, and flexible supports on a narrowly defined population of youth identified through data analysis and professional judgment as being at the greatest risk of involvement in gun violence.

Under the leadership of Secretary Betsy Fox Tolentino, DJS has emphasized strengthening implementation, improving consistency, and expanding access to Thrive Academy supports while maintaining fidelity to the model. Thrive Academy participants are assigned a specialized DJS case manager and a life coach who serves as a credible messenger. Life coaches work intensively with youth and their families to reinforce clear expectations, communicate the real and lasting consequences of gun violence, and support behavior change. Engagement is frequent and proactive, with an emphasis on responsiveness during moments of heightened risk.

Each youth receives an individualized set of supports designed to reduce immediate risk and promote long-term stability. These supports may include paid employment or service opportunities, educational or vocational assistance, trauma-informed behavioral health services, structured pro-social activities, and, when necessary, confidential relocation assistance to address acute safety concerns. Financial incentives may be used strategically to reinforce participation and achievement of agreed-upon goals.

Over the past year, DJS has focused on expanding the Thrive Academy's reach by increasing the number of qualified, credible messenger providers and extending services to additional jurisdictions, including Montgomery County. Credible Messenger programs will be required to

ensure they have the skills to equip youth with the tools to change their behavior. Additionally, DJS is looking to expand the program to youth who are charged with gun possession.

Early outcomes continue to suggest that intensive, targeted intervention with the highest-risk youth can reduce involvement in gun violence. To date, five out of six Thrive Academy participants have not been arrested for gun offenses. Victimization rates of Thrive Academy participants also remain low, with 5 participant victims of non-fatal shootings, and 0 participant victims of homicide, over the lifetime administration of Thrive Academy. Simultaneously, DJS recognizes that sustained reductions in violence require ongoing evaluation, refinement, and partnership.

DJS remains committed to using data, evidence, and transparent review to guide its efforts, recognizing that preventing serious violence among youth requires both focused intervention and sustained system-wide coordination.

After Incident Actions:

Following any incident in which a youth under DJS supervision is a victim of a non-fatal shooting, DJS takes immediate and coordinated action. A safety planning meeting is convened as quickly as possible and includes the youth, parents or guardians, DJS case managers, local law enforcement, and relevant community service providers. The purpose of the meeting is to establish a clear and actionable safety plan to protect the youth and their family. Crisis intervention services and immediate access to trauma-informed mental health supports are offered to both the youth and family members.

DJS also conducts a comprehensive case management review for each youth involved. This review assesses risk factors, service needs, and supervision levels, and results in adjustments to the youth's case plan as warranted. Enhanced monitoring and supervision strategies may be implemented based on the severity and circumstances of the incident. DJS further collaborates with community-based organizations and law enforcement partners to address immediate safety concerns and underlying drivers of violence.

DJS follows a defined timeline for responses: an initial response occurs within 24 hours of the incident, with case reviews and updates completed within 5 business days. Follow-up services are ongoing and tailored to the specific needs of the youth and family.

When a youth is an alleged perpetrator of gun violence, DJS works closely with law enforcement and the courts, sharing information as permitted by law. Depending on the youth's age and charges, cases may proceed in either the juvenile or adult justice system. DJS continues to provide relevant information to justice system partners as the case progresses.

In the tragic event that a youth under DJS supervision is the victim of a homicide, DJS connects families with grief counseling, victim services, and support groups. Based on family needs, DJS may also assist with funeral-related expenses. DJS ensures that staff who work with the youth, both in the community and in residential settings, have access to mental health support. A full internal case review is conducted to assess DJS actions, identify lessons learned, and determine opportunities for improvement.

Established External Review Processes:

In 2024, the DJS State Advisory Board was merged into the Commission on Juvenile Justice and Emerging Best Practices (the Commission), which is staffed by the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Policy. With this transition, responsibility for reviewing cases involving youth fatalities under DJS supervision, as well as cases in which a youth under DJS supervision caused a fatality, moved to the Commission.

The Commission established a Fatality Review Workgroup (FRW) to conduct multi-agency analysis of these cases and present findings to the full Commission. In recognition that youth fatalities are complex and multidimensional, these reviews emphasize a systems-level understanding of contributing factors across agencies.

DJS has established an internal Fatality Review Team (FRT), coordinated by Department staff, which is notified directly by law enforcement when a youth under DJS supervision experiences a fatality. The FRT:

- Develops comprehensive timelines and case summaries of each youth’s involvement with DJS
- Provides staff support, documentation, and data to the Commission’s FRW
- Maintains ongoing communication regarding case status and findings

The FRW met once during calendar year 2025 and will move to a quarterly meeting schedule beginning in January 2026. The FRW will report its findings and recommendations in the Commission’s annual report, due in October of 2026.

Conclusion

DJS remains committed to preventing and reducing gun violence among youth under its supervision. The 2025 data show that only a very small and declining percentage of youth have been involved in gun violence—either as victims or as perpetrators. These outcomes reflect the

effectiveness of targeted interventions like Thrive Academy, individualized supports, credible messenger engagement, and comprehensive case management practices.

Looking ahead to FY 2026, DJS will continue to strengthen its efforts to support youth and communities by:

- **Expanding Cognitive Behavior Theory training and coaching** for staff to equip youth with practical skills to manage behavior, resolve conflicts, and achieve positive outcomes;
- **Strengthening collaboration and relationships with law enforcement**, including expanding the Police Liaison Program to support effective sharing of information and coordinated responses to youth at risk of involvement in gun violence; and
- **Integrating evidence-informed violence prevention programs** to work directly with youth while detained, complementing existing behavioral and educational supports.

DJS will maintain its commitment to **data-driven oversight, continuous evaluation, and collaboration with families, community partners, and justice system stakeholders**. By combining proactive interventions, responsive post-incident actions, and system-wide coordination, DJS aims to sustain reductions in gun violence, support positive youth development, and promote safety for all Maryland communities.