



**NORTH DAKOTA JUVENILE COURT  
ANNUAL REPORT 2018**





# CONTENTS

**03**

THE FUTURE OF THE  
JUVENILE COURT

**05**

MISSION STATEMENT

**6**

ORGANIZATIONAL  
STRUCTURE

**7**

NORTH DAKOTA  
JUVENILE COURT  
JURISDICTION

**8**

2018 REFERRALS TO  
JUVENILE COURT

**19**

2018 JUVENILE COURT  
DISPOSTIONS

**20**

DEPRIVED CHILD CASES

**21**

DUAL STATUS YOUTH  
PROJECT

**22**

COMMUNITY  
SUPERVISION

**24**

RESTORING JUSTICE  
TO VICTIMS AND  
COMMUNITIES


**25**

DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY





# THE FUTURE OF THE JUVENILE COURT



**Courts exist to do justice, to guarantee liberty, to enhance social order, to resolve disputes, to maintain rule of law, to provide for equal protection and to ensure due process of law.**

Fundamental to the work of the judiciary is doing individual justice in individual cases, providing a forum for the resolution of legal disputes, deterring criminal behavior and helping to rehabilitate those found responsible for crimes. The work of the juvenile court aligns perfectly with those goals. We are a subset of the district court and our work is critical to the overall mission and core purpose of the judicial branch.

We know that the most important work we perform each day is assessing youth by risk level, assessing individual needs, building a continuum of evidence-based services that can be delivered across urban and rural North Dakota communities, and matching youth with the programs that will benefit them, and their communities. We are relied upon by local law enforcement, county prosecutors, social service workers and school teachers to identify root causes of societal issues such as opioid use, child trafficking, and family violence and seek ways to prevent these societal problems from damaging lives and communities.

High performance courts are always looking to identify problems, collect and analyze data and take action. The juvenile court must be flexible, creative and open to new evidence-based solutions such as

early assessments, structured decision-making tools and community-based supervision and delivery of services.

North Dakota Juvenile Court is on the front line of societal issues such as child abuse and neglect, addiction, behavioral health and delinquency prevention. The dedicated work of juvenile court staff protects communities, saves lives and saves taxpayer dollars that would otherwise be spent on expensive residential treatment or correction confinement. Investing “upstream”, in the juvenile court process of youth assessment, service delivery and supervision that keeps youth out of the correction system altogether makes good sense. We know that keeping youth at home and engaged in school and family life produces better outcomes for youth, families and our communities.

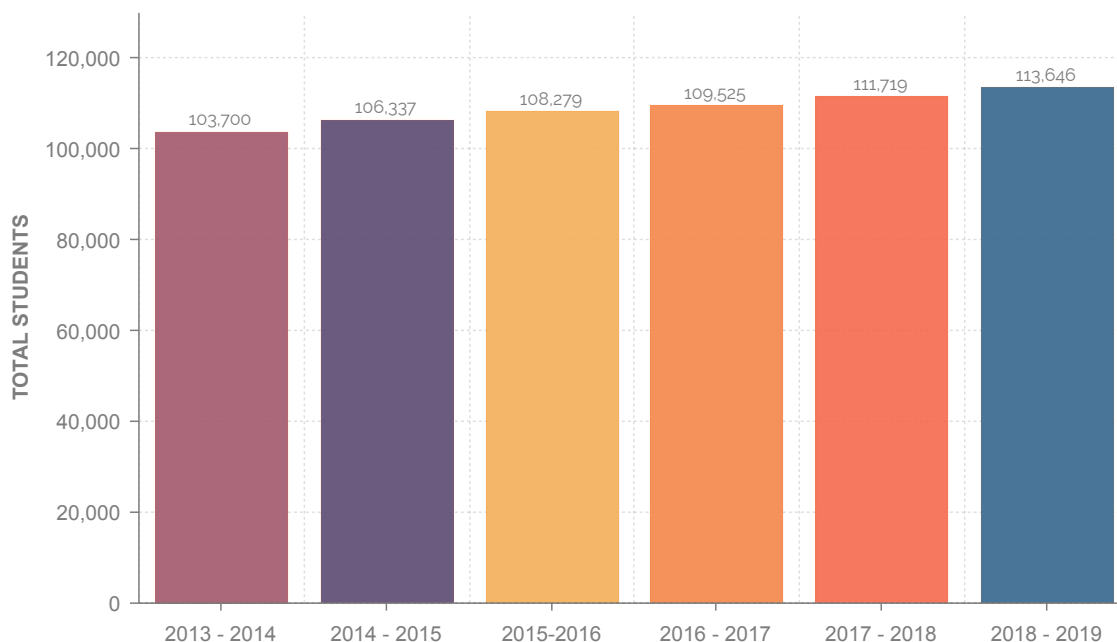
Past data indicates that approximately 14% of all youth are referred to juvenile court for delinquent and unruly behavior. According to US Census data, North Dakota is currently experiencing one



of the highest growth rates in the United States, second only to the District of Columbia. Estimates show that North Dakota's population will finally break 800,000 by 2020, hitting the 1 million mark by 2040. This growth is reflected in the steady increase in school enrollment shown below. These steady increases will play a part in planning for the future of the juvenile court and the resources needed to address the needs of youth, families, victims, and communities.

**Most youth who run afoul of the law are not on a pathway that leads to adult criminal careers. Most delinquency is self-correcting as youth age and juvenile court intake must assess the likelihood that a youth will become a serious, violent, or chronic offender, identify those pathways early and seek to interrupt them.**

## ND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION ENROLLMENT NUMBERS



# MISSION STATEMENT

The Juvenile Court protects the best interests of children and addresses the unique characteristics and needs of children that come before the court as deprived, unruly and delinquent matters. Following the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice, the mission of the North Dakota Juvenile Court is to promote public safety, hold juvenile offenders accountable, and increase the capacity of juveniles to contribute productively to their community. The courts empower victims, encourage community participation, and support parental responsibility.

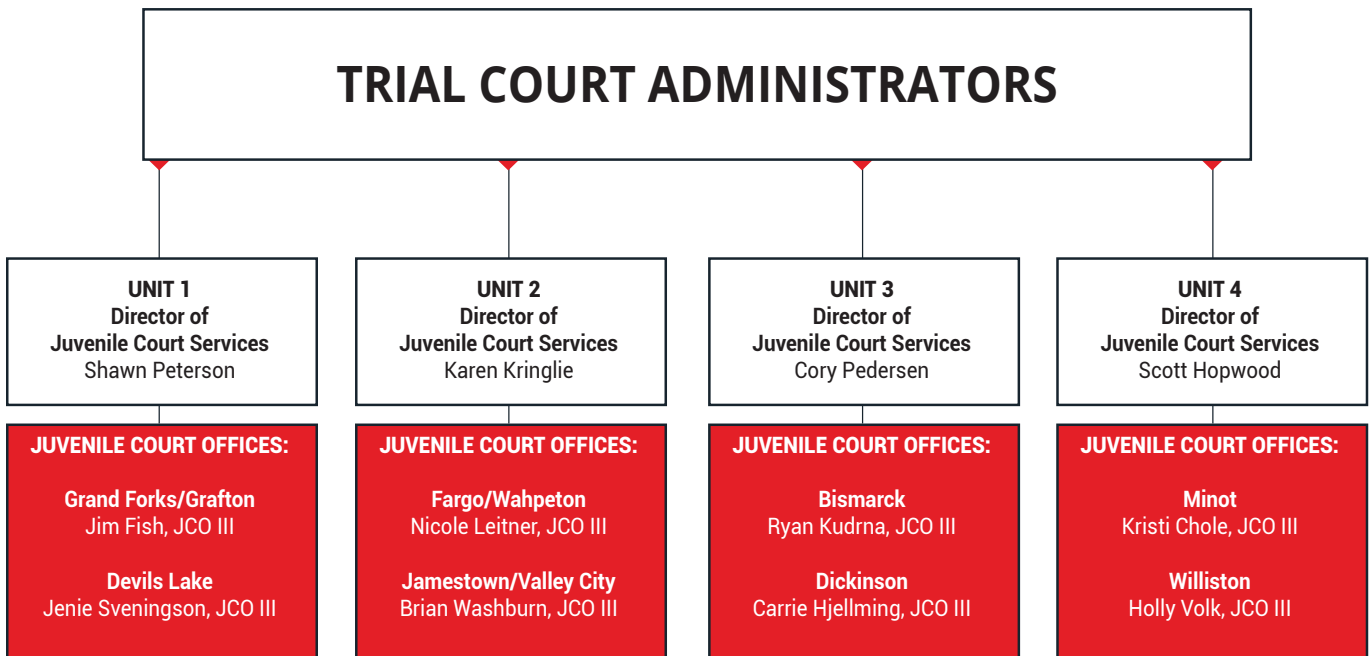


## REPAIRING HARM, REDUCING RISK AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Within each unit, there is a Director of Juvenile Court who supervises the juvenile court staff and is responsible for the planning and directing of all juvenile court services in the unit. Under the direction of the Director of Juvenile Court, the JCO III assists in providing advanced investigative, diagnostic, supervisory, and probation services in their designated juvenile court office as well as provides supervision of juvenile court officers and staff.





# NORTH DAKOTA JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION



---

**Deprived Case Referrals:** The Juvenile Court also has exclusive jurisdiction over children from birth until age seventeen who are alleged to be deprived of proper care or control by their parent, guardian, or other custodian. More commonly known as child abuse and neglect, these cases are referred to the courts by the county social service agencies after a child abuse and neglect investigation. These cases can also include petitions to establish a guardianship of a minor brought by a relative or other caretaker.

---

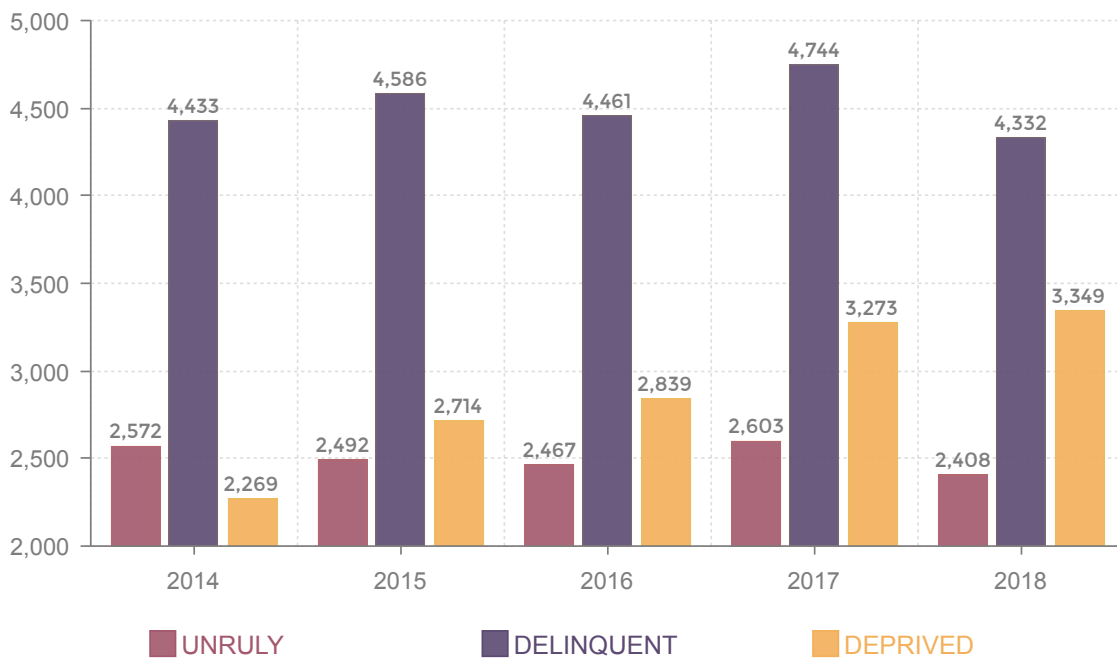
**Delinquent and Unruly Case Referrals:** In North Dakota, the Juvenile Court has exclusive jurisdiction over youth ages seven to seventeen who are alleged to have committed a delinquent or an unruly act. A delinquent act would be a crime if committed by an adult, while an unruly act is behavior such as truancy from school, runaway, ungovernable behavior, or minor consuming alcohol, all of which are based on age.

# 2018 REFERRALS TO JUVENILE COURT

Juvenile Court referrals are received from law enforcement, schools, social services agencies, parents, and people seeking guardianship of a minor child. Juvenile Court Officers screen referrals from law enforcement, schools, and agencies determining how they should be processed; making detention or emergency shelter care decisions on some of them, preparing court recommendations on those that proceed to the formal courts, and processing the vast majority of the cases via an informal adjustment conference or diversion.

Total referrals to the North Dakota Juvenile Courts showed a slight decrease from the previous year, decreasing by 531 referrals (5%) to 10,089. Nationally, both adult and juvenile crime is at an all-time low. North Dakota has seen similar decreases in unruly and delinquent referrals over the past several years. However, deprived referrals remain at high levels and the 2% increase from 2017 to 2018 is noted. Over the past five years, North Dakota has seen an increase of 48% in deprivation referrals. The chart below reflects the total number of charges referred to the juvenile courts over the past five years in the three legal categories of unruly, delinquent, and deprived.

## TOTAL REFERRALS BY YEAR



\*note that referral data in this chart changed slightly as compared to prior ND Juvenile Court Annual Reports due to a change in the way the data was categorized.




A black and white photograph of a person in a suit and tie, holding a pen over a document. The image is partially obscured by a large red rectangular overlay on the right side, which contains white text.

# INTAKE DECISIONS ARE A CRITICAL FUNCTION OF THE JUVENILE COURT:

---

Intake of all juvenile referrals is required by North Dakota law to be conducted by the Director of Juvenile Court. Juvenile Court intake staff is knowledgeable about North Dakota criminal and juvenile law as well as the techniques of juvenile treatment and rehabilitation. They examine for legal sufficiency and make decisions regarding the appropriate manner to handle the case by the use of diversion to services, informal adjustment or the formal court process. Whether to detain or release from detention a delinquent youth or take an unruly or deprived child into protective custody are statutory duties of the Juvenile Court directors and assigned staff.



# 2018 JUVENILE REFERRALS BY CASE TYPE



---

**Delinquent Referrals:** Of all the delinquent referrals received in 2018, 84% were misdemeanors, 14% were felonies, and 2% were infractions. The most common delinquent referrals received by the Juvenile Courts were Simple Assault 14% followed by Theft of Property Shoplifting and Disorderly Conduct which each made up 11% of referrals, Possession of Controlled Substance 9%, and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia 8%, rounded out the five most common delinquent referrals.

---

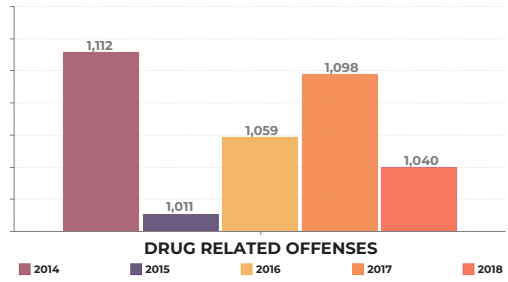
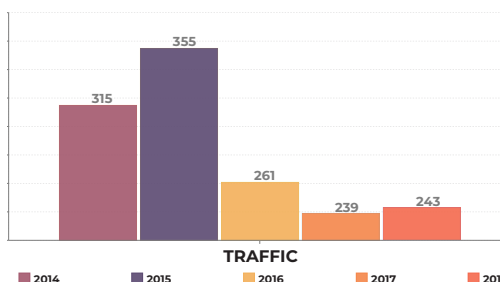
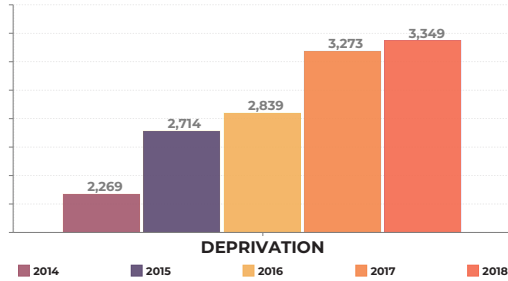
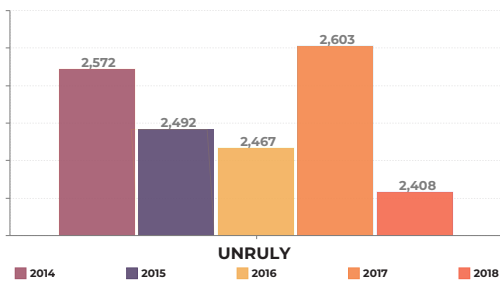
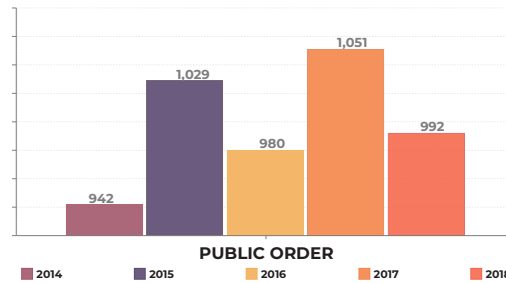
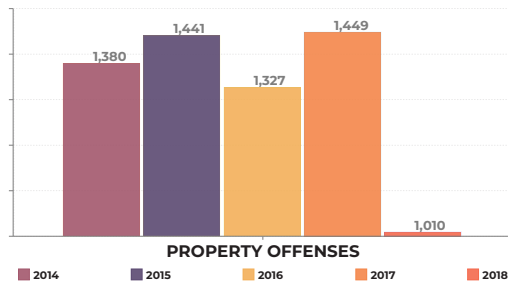
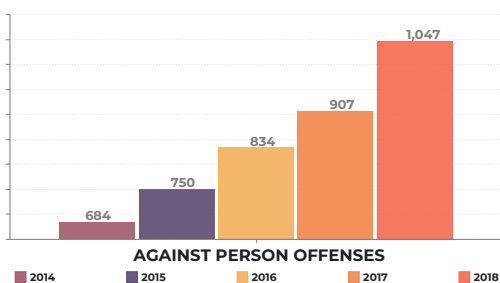
**Unruly Referrals:** Of all the unruly referrals received in 2018, 25% were for runaway, 23% were referrals of unlawful possession/consumption of alcohol, 27% were for ungovernable behavior, 14% were for school truancy, and 11% were for other unruly referrals including tobacco and curfew violations.

---

**Deprivation Referrals:** 45% of deprivation referrals resulted in a formal petition to the Court, 7% involved the filing of a termination of parental rights petition, less than 1% of cases were youth 18 years and older who chose to remain in foster care or re-enter foster care, and 55% involved cases where the families cooperated with services or the matter was otherwise diverted by social services from the formal court system. There were 63 private guardianships filed in 2018.

# TOTAL REFERRALS BY CASE TYPE

The chart below reflects the total number of charges referred to the juvenile courts, grouped by case type over the past five years. In 2018, Deprivation referrals made up 33% of the total referrals to the Juvenile Court, while Unruly offenses (offenses which only a child can commit) made up 24% of referrals. Delinquent offenses made up 43% of referrals and are broken down into the following case types: Property Offenses 23%, Drug-related Offenses 24%, Public Order Offenses 23%, Offenses Against Persons 24%, and Traffic Offenses 6% of the total delinquent referrals to juvenile courts.



## Referral Types

**Against Person Offenses** – all assaults, menacing, harassment, terrorizing, gross sexual imposition, robbery

**Property Offenses** – shoplifting, burglary, criminal mischief/vandalism, criminal trespass, all thefts,

**Public Order** - disorderly conduct, disturbance of a public school, failure to appear, resisting arrest

**Unruly** - curfew, runaway, tobacco, truancy, ungovernable behavior, minor in possession/consumption of alcohol

**Deprivation** - abuse/neglect of a child, deprived, services required informational only, termination of parental rights, guardianship of a minor

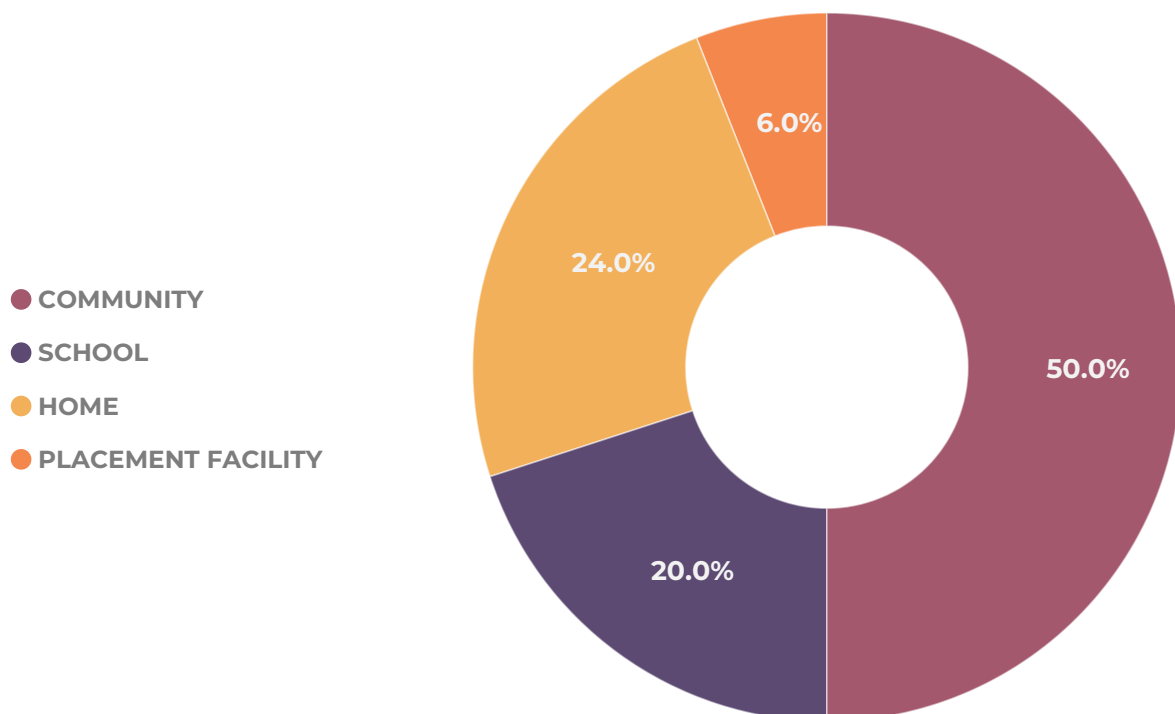
**Traffic** - driving without a license, driving without liability, leaving the scene of an accident

# DELINQUENT OR UNRULY REFERRALS TO COURT BY LOCATION



Starting in 2018, the juvenile court began to capture data regarding the location of where the delinquent or unruly offense occurred. It was found that in 2018, half of all delinquent and unruly referrals were the result of law violations that occurred out in the community such as stores, streets, parks etc., 20% were from acts reported to have occurred at a school building or grounds, 24% occurred at family homes, and 6% occurred at juvenile placement facilities located in the state.

## LOCATION WHERE THE DELINQUENT OR UNRULY ACT OCCURRED



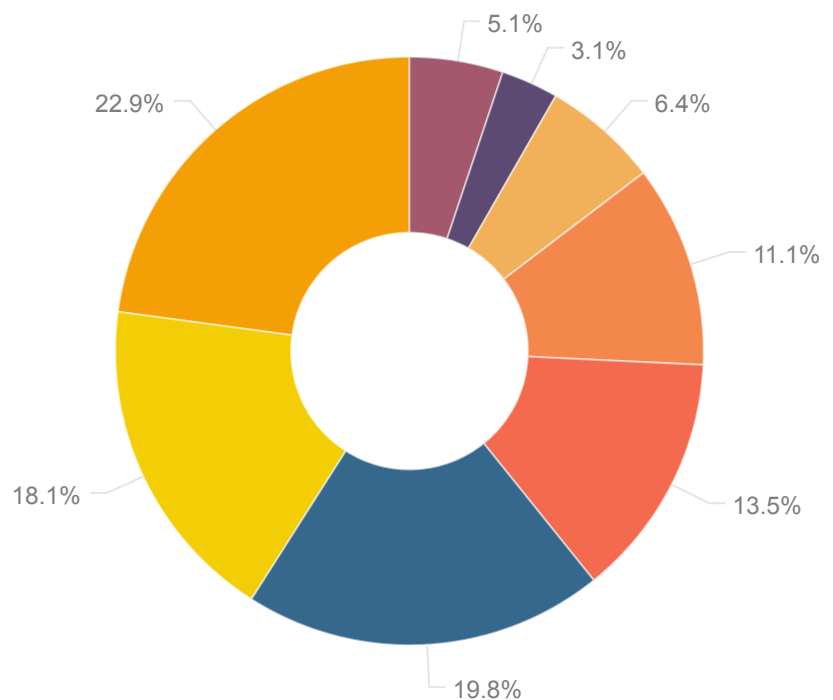
# ANALYSIS OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS

The age of criminal responsibility in North Dakota currently is deemed by the law to begin at 7 years of age. This statute dates back to 1973 and most recently a 2017-2018 legislative interim committee studying juvenile justice recommended that the age be raised to ten in order to better reflect the current science and understanding of the adolescent brain when it comes to criminal culpability.

In 2018, the most common age of youth referred to the juvenile courts for delinquent or unruly behavior was 17 years of age. Juveniles age 13 and younger accounted for 23% of all referrals to the courts, a percentage that remained consistent from the previous year.

## AGE AT TIME OF REFERRAL TO JUVENILE COURT AND NUMBER OF REFERRALS RECEIVED IN 2018

10 AND UNDER	255
11 YEARS	156
12 YEARS	315
13 YEARS	551
14 YEARS	668
15 YEARS	982
16 YEARS	898
17 YEARS	1,134



# PRIMARY CHARGE DELINQUENT & UNRULY REFERRALS % BY GENDER 2018

In 2018, males committed 60% of delinquent and unruly acts referred to the juvenile courts, while females accounted for 40% of referrals.



MALE  
**3,008**


FEMALE  
**2,009**



# COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Detention Screening Tool:** The detention risk screening tool is an objective checklist of criteria that are applied to each youth brought to or considered for secure detention. It is used to assess if the risk to community safety is so high as to warrant use of secure detention. The overall score guides the law enforcement officer or the intake court officer in making the critical decision of whether to securely detain the youth. The purpose is to ensure release of appropriate youth back into the community with the minimum risk of re-offending or not appearing for a scheduled hearing. The score of the detention screen does not tell the user exactly what course of action should be taken but rather provides objective information, grounded in research, to enhance the decision-making process.

**Alternatives to Detention:** It is important to establish and maintain viable alternatives to detention that are available in communities to maintain community safety and assure that youth will appear for future court hearings on the pending charge or charges. In addition to simple release to parent or non-secure attendant care, another alternative to pre-adjudicatory detention is the use of house arrest either monitored by a Juvenile Court Officer using a voice verification system to confirm a youth's location or in conjunction with GPS electronic monitoring systems. Electronic monitoring is a continuous monitoring device that attaches around a youth's ankle and allows them to stay at home pending further court hearing. Voice monitoring and GPS electronic monitoring have been increasingly used by North Dakota Juvenile Court staff as an alternative to detention. Electronic monitoring can cost as little as seven dollars per day which is much lower than the cost of secure detention and allows the youth to remain in their home and in their community.



**North Dakota law requires that youth securely detained have a detention hearing held within twenty-four hours, excluding weekends and holidays, and on average, most youth spend only hours to a few days in secure detention before lesser restrictive options are achieved.**

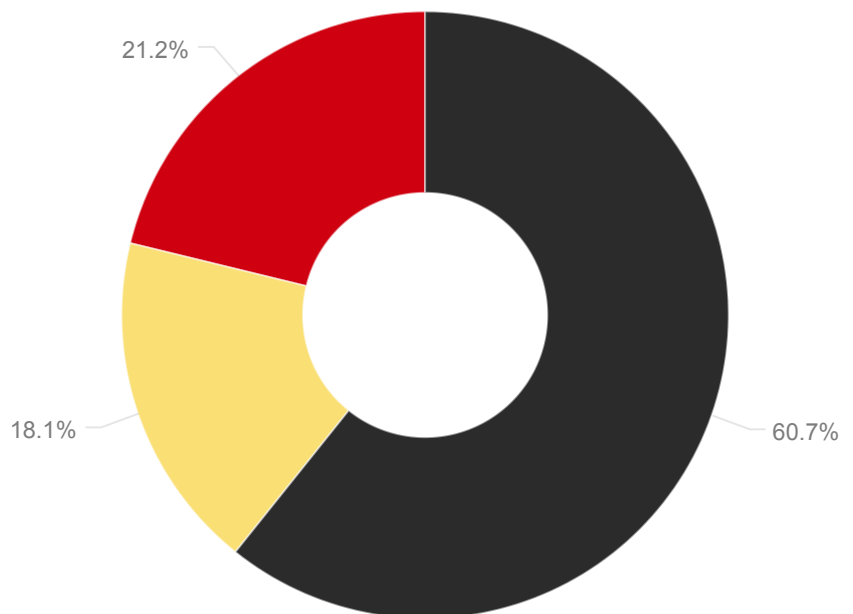
# 2018 JUVENILE COURT DISPOSITIONS FOR DELINQUENT AND UNRULY CASE TYPES

North Dakota law provides a system where the vast majority of juvenile cases are handled quickly and efficiently by juvenile court officers. All juvenile referrals are screened using an intake matrix for diversion to a program such as an educational class or counseling, informal adjustment (a meeting of the youth, parents, court officer and victim, if the victim so chooses), or for formal court processing by referring the matter to the States Attorney for the filing of a petition and proceedings before a judge. Most low-level offenses and early offenders are handled via diversion or informal adjustment. This is an advantage for the youth, family and victim as diversion and the consent-driven informal adjustment process can address the matter quickly and effectively after an offense occurs. Intake occurs consistently across the state as decisions about diversion or use of informal adjustment are guided by adopted state-wide criteria. Typically, felony-level cases, youth requiring placement, and contested matters are heard by a District Court Judge or Judicial Referee.

**79% of all juvenile cases were handled outside of the courtroom through either a diversion to programming or an informal adjustment conference conducted by a juvenile court officer.**

## JUVENILE COURT PROCESSES FOR DELINQUENT & UNRULY CASE TYPES

● DIVERSION TO PROGRAMS	2,717
● INFORMAL ADJUSTMENT	808
● FORMAL COURT PROCESS	948

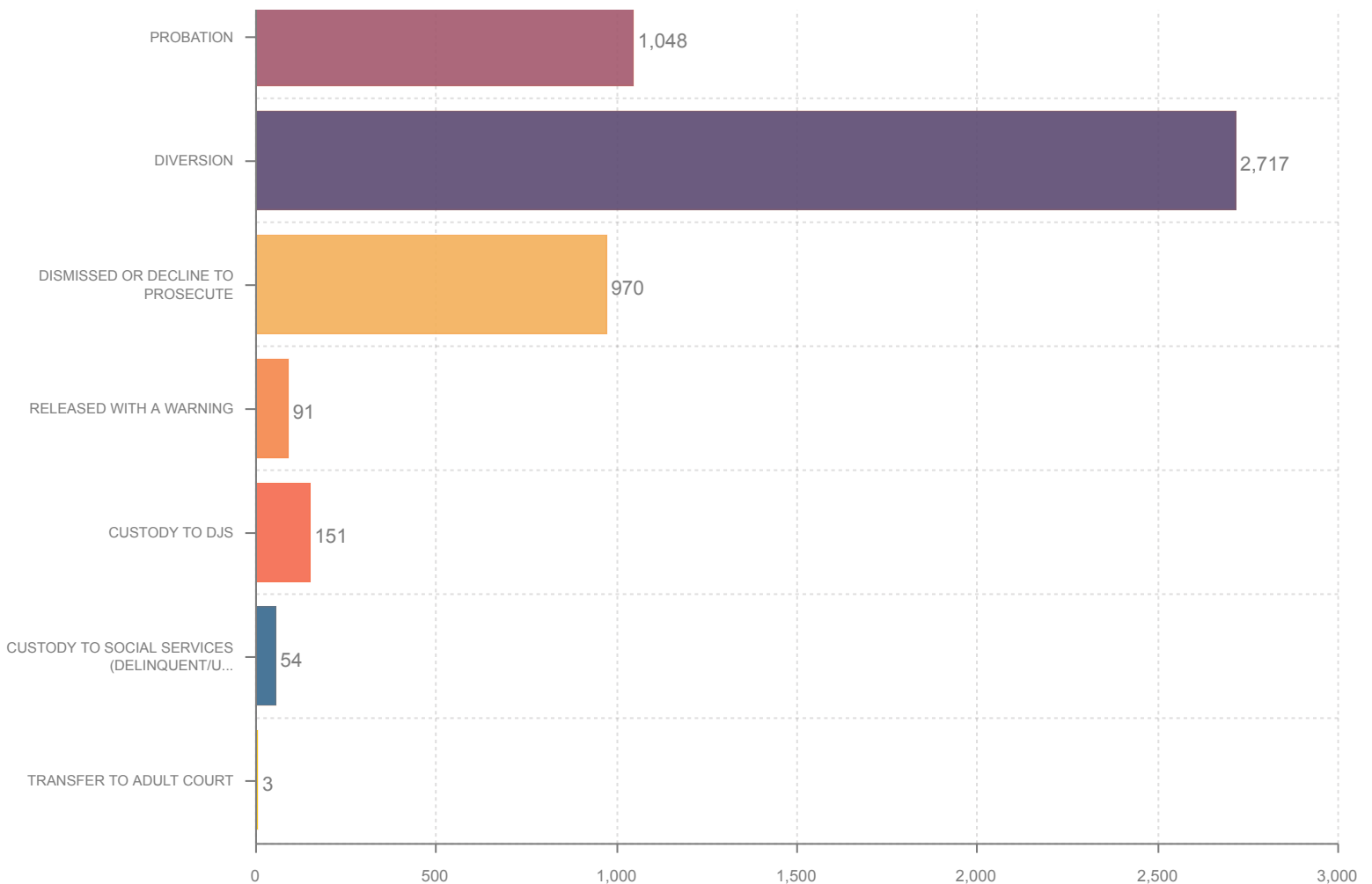




**Disposition Types:** North Dakota law allows flexibility in disposition outcomes once a juvenile has admitted or been found to have committed a delinquent or unruly offense. This allows justice to be administered on an individual, case-by-case, basis depending on the child's needs and risks as well as the needs of the victim and community. Custody is removed from a parent only as a last resort or when public safety requires such a measure.



## DELINQUENT/UNRULY DISPOSITIONS 2018





**Community Supervision:** Juvenile probation is the most widely used means of delivering a range of court-ordered services while supervising the youth within the community. Staff promote behavior change, hold the youth accountable, and increase offender competency at one-tenth of the cost of out-of-home placements. For youth whose primary issue is with addiction, Juvenile Drug Court is an option in six North Dakota cities and the youth are supervised by juvenile court staff.

**Transfer to Adult Court:** Studies have shown that transferred youth quickly reoffend and at much higher rates than juveniles kept in the juvenile system. Further, national studies have shown that transferred youth detained pretrial in adult jails are at serious risk of rape, assault, death or suicide. Transfer is an option of last resort but some youth do request transfer to adult court as a matter of legal strategy.

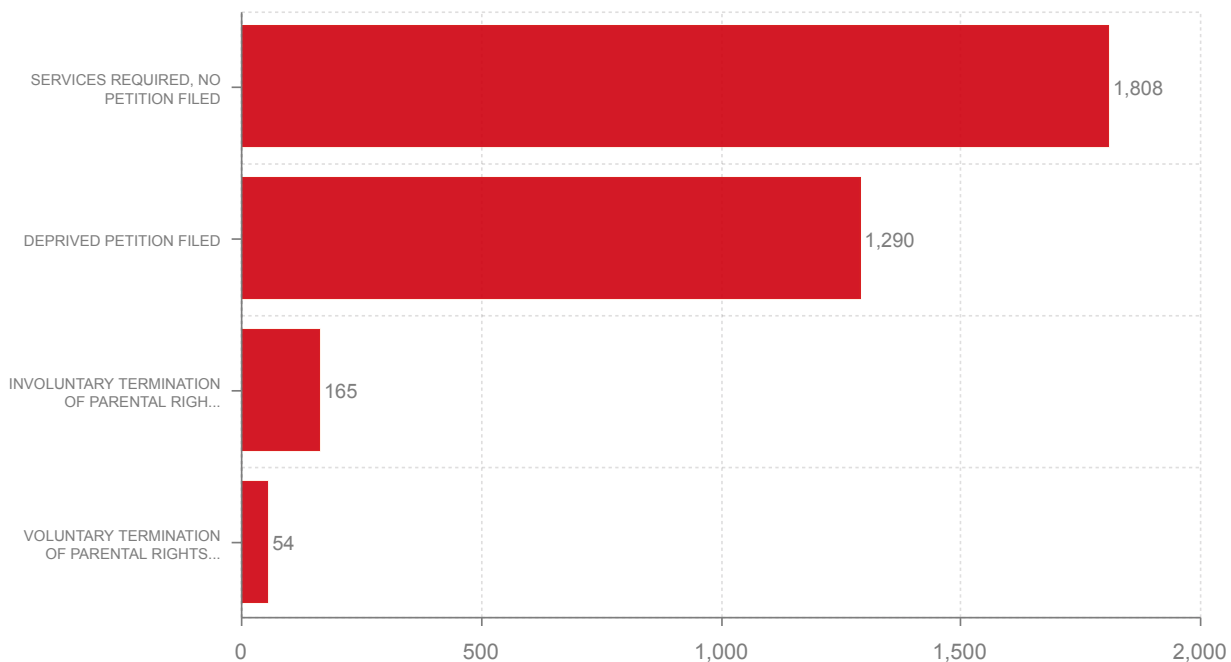
**In 2018, only three (3) youth were transferred to adult court involuntarily. Two of the cases involved serious charges of against person felonies and one case involved felony methamphetamine drug charges. In 2017, there was only one (1) transfer to adult court in North Dakota and the charge involved a felony gross sexual imposition offense.**

# 2018 JUVENILE COURT DISPOSITIONS IN DEPRIVED CHILD CASES

**Deprivation Cases Referred:** In North Dakota, deprivation cases are referred to the Juvenile Court by local county social service departments. The referrals are received after a child abuse or neglect investigation is conducted by a child protective worker. If services are found to be required, the case is referred to Juvenile Court and a decision whether to file a petition is made by the County State's Attorney's office based on information gathered in the investigation. In 2018, 54% of all deprivation cases referred to the juvenile court did not result in a petition for a variety of reasons such as the family was already cooperating with services or the State's Attorney declined to file a petition. In 39% of the cases referred, the States Attorney determined it necessary to file a deprivation petition and a court hearing was scheduled and held before the court. In 7% of all 2018 cases, a termination of parental rights petition was filed, and of those, 25% were at the request of the parents or child's legal custodian (voluntary), while 75% were brought by the State (involuntary).



## DEPRIVED CASES 2018



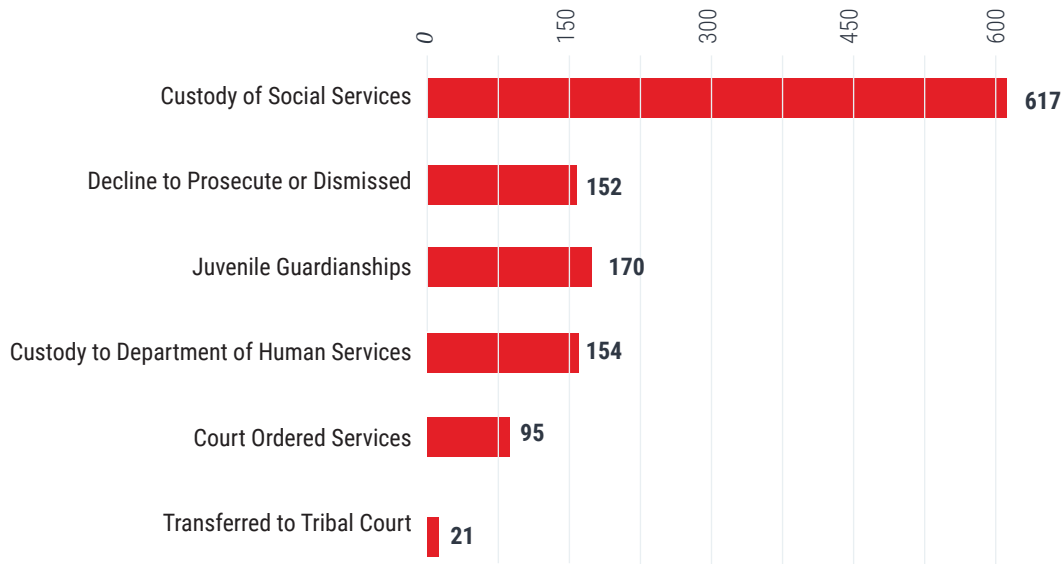
**Continued Foster Care:** Since 2011, youth ages 18 to 21 who currently or have previously been in foster care may choose to stay in foster care. The goal is to support them in continuing with education and make a successful transition to adulthood. In 2017, there were 33 continued foster cases filed in North Dakota, and in 2018 there were 37 cases.

**Disposition Types:** Under North Dakota law, if a child is found to be deprived, the court may order services for the family, place the child with a willing relative or guardian, or place the child with a local county social services agency for foster care placement.



**North Dakota law defines a deprived child as a child who is without proper parental care or control necessary for the child’s physical, mental or emotional health, or morals, and the deprivation is not due primarily to the lack of financial means of the child’s parents, guardian or other custodian. §27-20-02(8) N.D.C.C.**

## DEPRIVED DISPOSITIONS 2018



# DUAL STATUS YOUTH INITIATIVE

In July 2017, stakeholders including the North Dakota Supreme Court, the North Dakota Department of Human Services' (DHS) Children and Family Services Division, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (DOCR) Division of Juvenile Services, and the North Dakota Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group agreed to partner on dual status system improvements efforts. The group then contacted the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice to assist in developing a plan to better serve children and families in those systems.

This past fall the plan was finalized. In preparation for the statewide launch of the initiative, over 130 county and juvenile court case managers and supervisors participated in four training sessions held in Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks and Minot. Additional trainings will be offered in 2019, and an online training is under development.

One of the keys to improving services to families in both systems was the development of a memorandum of understanding between the North Dakota Supreme Court and DHS to create technology infrastructure that allows secure data and information sharing. Another key to the Dual Status Youth Initiative involves the use of a multi-disciplinary team that brings together a variety of people who have a relationship with a child to make decisions with the child's family to improve child outcomes.

North Dakota is the only state to implement this type of multi-systems work statewide with families involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Other states have focused their efforts on a select county or region. An evaluation of the initiative will be conducted by Greacen Associates in order to ensure the plan is successfully implemented, to measure outcomes, and to make improvements where necessary.





# COMMUNITY SUPERVISION


**Probation** is the most widely-used community-based juvenile court program. During the period of probation supervision, a juvenile offender remains in the community and continues normal activities such as school and work while complying with individualized probation rules such as curfew, community service, payment of restitution, and attendance at classes or counseling. The supervision of offenders in their communities enhances community safety and prevents the need for costly out-of-home placement. Juvenile court officers use a system of graduated responses to ensure compliance with informal adjustment agreements or formal court orders and treatment goals. In addition to monitoring compliance, court officers coordinate rehabilitative and treatment services for youth and families. Court officers evaluate the youth's progress toward achieving probation goals and recommend release from probation at the appropriate time.

North Dakota juvenile court officers are dedicated professionals who believe that all young persons who break the law have the ability to change their behavior. They are dedicated to protecting the safety of the public, while holding youth accountable and restoring them and their families as strong, productive individuals who contribute to the strength of their communities.

**Risk and Needs Assessments:** Effective community supervision requires a reliable and valid offender assessment to assist the court officer in determining appropriate supervision level, supervision strategy and ensuring proper matching of treatment programming. North Dakota Juvenile Court adopted the Youth Assessment Screening Inventory (YASI) in 2002 to assess the likelihood of recidivism and the specific needs of each child. By using the YASI, court officers make decisions about supervision levels, programs, and treatment needs. Based on each youth's risks and needs, the juvenile court officer develops a case plan in order to focus resources on the area(s) most likely to cause the youth to reoffend and to refer youth to appropriate programming.

**Behavioral Health Assessments:** A mental health assessment called the MAYSI-2 is used to assess a broad scope of possible mental health needs. These assessments are conducted immediately upon entry into probation and re-administered as needed. Referrals to behavioral health services, including crisis intervention, are made as appropriate. Court officers also assess for signs of sex or labor trafficking and make referrals to appropriate services. In 2018, a trauma screening was added to assess youth for trauma histories and trauma symptoms in order to connect them with appropriate trauma-based therapy.

**Competency Development:** In addition to contracted programs available to youth, North Dakota Juvenile Court Officers teach skills and cognitive restructuring programming to probation youth and their families. Examples of some of the staff facilitated cognitive restructuring programming include: Decision Making 101, Risks and Decisions, Anger Management, Relationships & Communication Group, Boundaries Classes, Girls and Boys Groups, and SPARCS, a trauma-based program. Court officers also use one-on-one coaching interactions with youth on probation through use of the Carey Guides, a skills and tool-based youth curriculum.



**Making smart choices means providing the right sanctions and services to the right juveniles at the right time without regard to biases or prejudices but based upon each child's unique risks and needs.**

# COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

**Youth Cultural Achievement Programs:** North Dakota Juvenile Court contracts with different agencies in Bismarck, Fargo, and Devils Lake to provide cultural liaison services for youth and families. The purpose of these programs is to provide services and programming aimed at supporting youth and family success in culturally relevant ways. Each YCAP has a unique focus depending on the needs of youth and families in their community.

**Bismarck:** The Bismarck YCAP program began in 2010 with local focus on providing cultural supports and services to keep children in their homes and reduce out of home placements including detention and foster care. The services include crisis intervention, prevention, diversion, educational tutoring, mentoring, and parent and child support groups. In 2018 the program serviced 53 youth and a total of 173 family members with a wide variety of services including Keeping the Culture Alive monthly activities. Also, in 2018 an increased collaboration with schools yielded Implicit Bias training to the Bismarck Public School District staff.

**Fargo:** The Fargo YCAP program began in 2015 and the local focus is on reduction of disproportionate contact at the decision points of arrest and detention. In 2018, 107 youth received case specific services such as system navigation, court reminders, transportation to court or court required programs, and connections to culturally relevant programs in the community. Barriers to successful completion of court orders are identified on a case-by-case basis and case plans developed to address those barriers. The coordinator worked with juvenile court staff and the Fargo Police Department on a new police diversion program. The program also provides Implicit Bias training to court staff, law enforcement, school staff, and other professionals who work in the system.

**Devils Lake:** The Youth Cultural Liaison Program (YCLP) started accepting referrals in April 2018. The program provides culturally relevant services including crisis intervention, diversion, case management, mentoring.

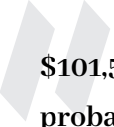




# RESTORING JUSTICE TO VICTIMS AND COMMUNITIES

**Victim Rights in Juvenile Cases:** Although Juvenile Court cases are closed to the general public, state law allows victims of juvenile crime the same rights as victims of adult crimes. In petitioned proceedings, it is the state's attorney who is tasked with giving all victims notice of the charges filed, hearings scheduled, and their right to give input as to the disposition. Non-petitioned proceedings result in the juvenile court staff contacting victims, informing them of their rights, and seeking their active input in the resolution of a case. Victims are invited to attend the Informal Adjustment conference. Some cases are referred to an offender accountability conference for resolution.


**Restitution:** Youth are required by the Court to pay for the harm they have caused their victims. In 2018, \$195,525 was ordered as restitution. The total amount of restitution collected by juvenile court staff and returned to the victims at the end of the calendar year was \$101,549. Restitution collection is challenging with young people as some are unable to work due to age or placement out of the home. In some cases, victims elect to pursue a civil action against parents as a more viable means of being repaid for losses.



**\$101,549 in restitution was collected by probation staff and returned to victims**

**Community Service:** Offenders may also be required to perform community service as a way to repay the victims and the community for any harm suffered because of the youth's behavior. The amount of community service hours completed by youth referred to juvenile courts in 2018 was 4,918 hours.

**Victim Empathy Seminars and Offender Accountability Conferences:** In support of the balanced and restorative justice mission, the courts contract with Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota to provide victim empathy classes, offender accountability conferences, and community circles. The four-hour victim empathy class is educational and helps juveniles and their parents to understand how delinquent behavior impacts others. Accountability Conferences bring together the offender, victim, key supporters and a trained facilitator to discuss the impact of the juvenile's behavior and ways to repair the harm caused. The City of Fargo has a Youth Court that receives diversion referrals from the court. A panel of trained teenagers act as the court staff and jury for each youth referred.



**In 2018, 239 juveniles were referred to participate in an Offender Accountability Conference, and 187 juveniles completed a Victim Empathy Seminar in their community.**







# 2018 DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

Over the past year, a significant statewide initiative, The Dual Status Youth Initiative, brought together multiple systems to review and revise practice in order to improve outcomes for children and families in both the child welfare and juvenile justice system. The Initiative completed its work in the fall of 2018 and is implementing new case protocols in 2019. An evaluation of the Initiative is underway to ensure successful implementation and is production of the intended outcomes. Though several other groups have addressed effective practices with dual status youth locally, North Dakota is the first state to look at this issue at a statewide level.

The North Dakota Juvenile Court System also participated in a study of the YASI risk assessment tool. This study was conducted by the criminal justice department at the University of North Dakota and will provide information on the validity of the tool in assessing risk.

These and all of the accomplishments below have helped the juvenile court system find new and improved ways to address the needs of youth, families, and communities.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. In response to recommendations from the RFK Dual Status Initiative developed an implementation and evaluation plan set to take place in 2019.
2. Implemented the use of the YASI risk assessment tool during the pre-screen at the informal adjustment and ensured that formal dispositional recommendations and probation case plans are tied directly to a child's individual assessment of risks and needs.
3. Participated in a study of North Dakota's use of the YASI risk and needs assessment. The study was conducted by the University of North Dakota, Department of Criminal Justice. A final report and recommendation will be presented to the juvenile court in March of 2019.
4. Worked to implement the Families First Preventions Service Act beginning in October 2019.
5. Assisted the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Committee of the North Dakota Legislature as they explored raising the age of criminal responsibility from the age of seven to the age of 10 or 12. Legislation raising the age of culpability to age 10 was enacted effective 8/1/2019.
6. Created a recidivism report for the juvenile court system to measure re-offense rates at three time periods and data reports in order to inform the policies and practices of juvenile court.
7. Reapplied and received the Court Improvement Basic, Training and Data Grants.
8. Implemented a statewide childhood trauma checklist for all youth on probation.
9. Assisted the Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division, to address the loss of residential youth treatment services.





# 2018 DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

## 2019 Goals:

1. Develop a best practice protocol for pre-release investigation with conditions for juveniles taken into custody.
2. Develop a method to record technical violations of probation by category and track use of the graduated responses to violations
3. Conduct an evaluation of the Dual Status Youth Initiative to ensure it was implemented successfully and is producing positive outcomes
4. Review and develop a plan to implement recommendations from the YASI Validation Study conducted by the Criminal Justice Department at UND. Participate in a study of incarcerated girls in North Dakota conducted by VERA Institute of Justice.
5. Improve data collection and use to inform policy and practice.