



Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE SERVICES



THRIVE ACADEMY UPDATE

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY YOUTH
VIOLENCE STAT

April 9, 2025

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MD Department of Juvenile Services

UN VIOLENCE REDUCTION STAGES



1 INTERVENTION



2 PREVENTION



3 COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION



TIMELINE

NEAR-TERM VIOLENCE REDUCTION

- Intensive Case Management
- Life Coaches/Credible Messengers
- Violence Mediation Strategies

LONG-TERM VIOLENCE REDUCTION

- Mentoring
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- Positive Youth Development Skills

TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES TO NOT INDUCE VIOLENCE

- Education Reform and Investment
- Economic Development
- Neighborhood Revitalization



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What is THE THRIVE ACADEMY?



- DJS' **Gun Violence Reduction Strategy**
- Serves **probation and aftercare youth** identified to be at the highest risk of gun violence as either victim or perpetrator
- **Intensive case management model** using "Credible Messengers" (persons with lived experience) as Life Coaches paired with specialized Case Managers
- Youth and families **participate voluntarily**, thus the intervention is not court-ordered but incentivized
- Youth selected using a **combination of research-based predictive factors and human intelligence** about individual cases, risk and relevant community factors



Credible Messengers are the Heart of Thrive

- Similar life experiences and circumstances with young people and families they help
- Services include mentoring, life-coaching, peer-based supports, and immediate intervention to disrupt and mediate community violence incidents;
- Help youth and families navigate complex public systems
- Fulfill needed connections with positive adults, peers, and pro-social activities that correlate with long-term positive youth development;
- Represent the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the communities they serve

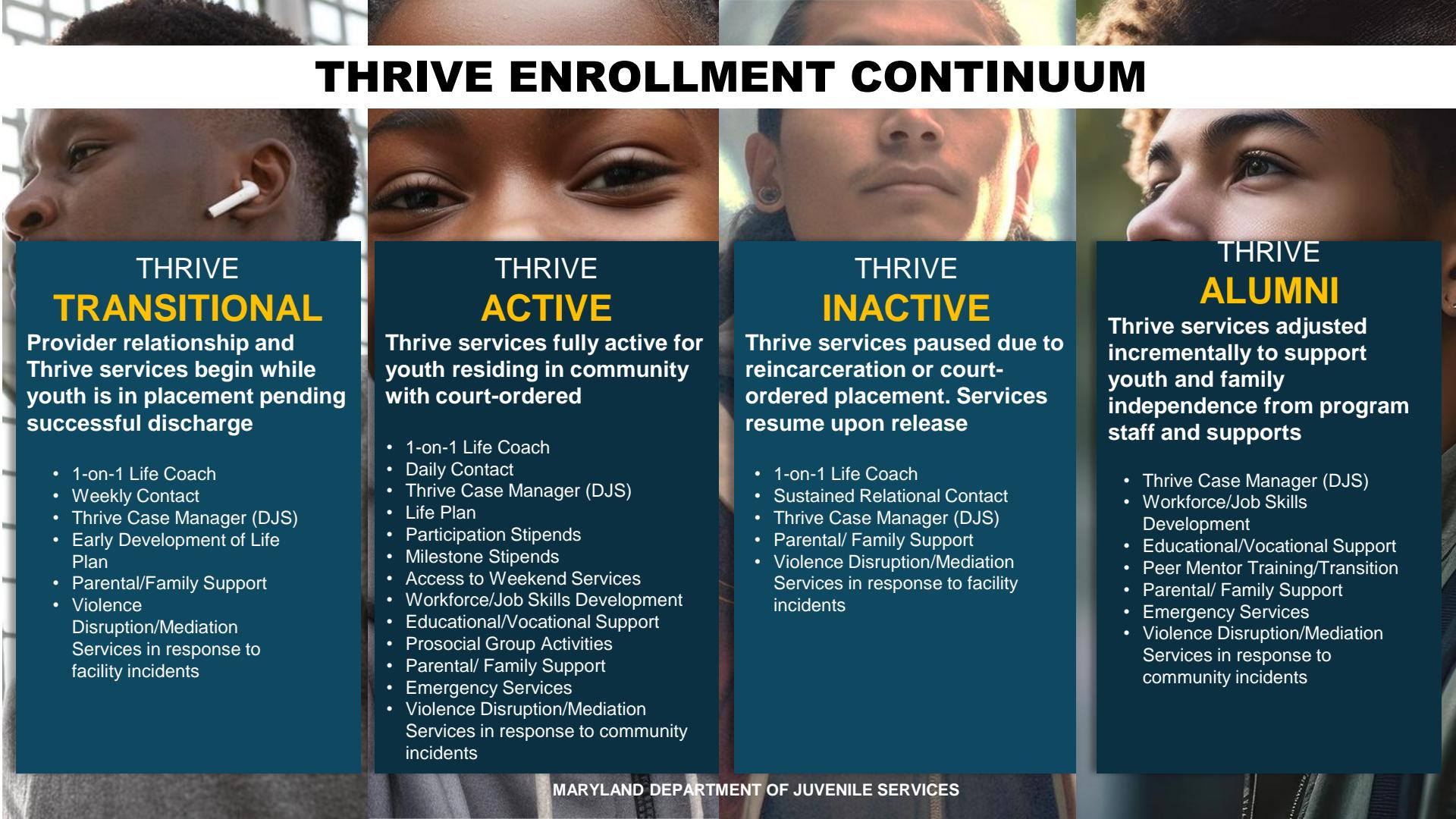
Credible Messenger programs create career pathways into public sector and private, non-profit organizations for persons with lived experience, including young people as peer mentors

SUITCASE OF SUPPORTS

Thrive youth receive a “Suitcase of Supports,” dependent upon individual needs, strengths, and life goals, such as:

- Fiscal Incentives for Participation
- Work and/or Service Stipends
- College/Vocational Training tuition
- Family/Youth relocation assistance
- Group activities to build pro-social skills, fellowship, group learning, and to expand youth’s exposure to new opportunities
- Trauma-informed therapy and family support services





THRIVE ENROLLMENT CONTINUUM

THRIVE

TRANSITIONAL

Provider relationship and Thrive services begin while youth is in placement pending successful discharge

- 1-on-1 Life Coach
- Weekly Contact
- Thrive Case Manager (DJS)
- Early Development of Life Plan
- Parental/Family Support
- Violence Disruption/Mediation Services in response to facility incidents

THRIVE

ACTIVE

Thrive services fully active for youth residing in community with court-ordered

- 1-on-1 Life Coach
- Daily Contact
- Thrive Case Manager (DJS)
- Life Plan
- Participation Stipends
- Milestone Stipends
- Access to Weekend Services
- Workforce/Job Skills Development
- Educational/Vocational Support
- Prosocial Group Activities
- Parental/ Family Support
- Emergency Services
- Violence Disruption/Mediation Services in response to community incidents

THRIVE

INACTIVE

Thrive services paused due to reincarceration or court-ordered placement. Services resume upon release

- 1-on-1 Life Coach
- Sustained Relational Contact
- Thrive Case Manager (DJS)
- Parental/ Family Support
- Violence Disruption/Mediation Services in response to facility incidents

THRIVE

ALUMNI

Thrive services adjusted incrementally to support youth and family independence from program staff and supports

- Thrive Case Manager (DJS)
- Workforce/Job Skills Development
- Educational/Vocational Support
- Peer Mentor Training/Transition
- Parental/ Family Support
- Emergency Services
- Violence Disruption/Mediation Services in response to community incidents

Range of Selective Criteria

- 1** Youth with an active order of probation or aftercare who live in a high violence neighborhood in a Thrive County;
- 2** Youth who have 3 prior referrals, including at least 1 for a crime of violence;
- 3** Youth who meet the aforementioned criteria as well as at least one of the following criteria:
 - Youth is not engaged in school, vocational or workforce training (e.g., non-attendance, failure to complete grade level, etc)
 - Youth has an existing behavioral health diagnosis
 - Youth has a close personal friend or relative/person in the household has been the victim of gun violence OR the youth has been a first-hand witness to gun violence;
- 4** ANY youth who has previously been the victim or target of gun violence or who has a close friend or family member that has recently been the victim of gun violence will automatically be referred, regardless of whether they meet the above criteria
- 5** Youth who are referred by external sources (e.g., law enforcement, case managers, etc.) based upon human intelligence about gun activity



RANGE OF SELECTIVE CRITERIA BASED UPON GUN VIOLENCE PROBLEM ANALYSIS (OCTOBER 2023)

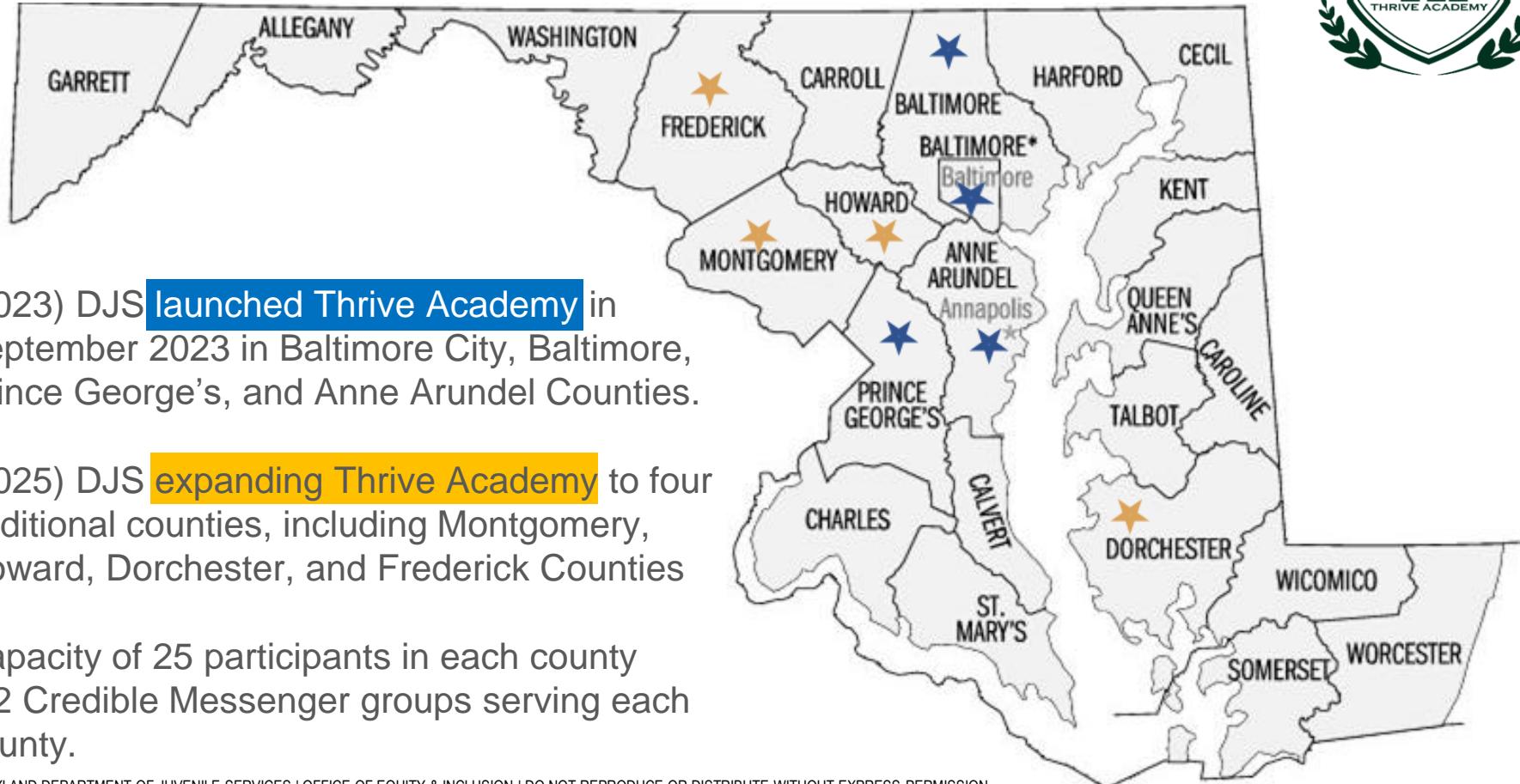
National Institute for Criminal Justice
Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)
Maryland Department of Juvenile Services



NICJR
National Institute for
Criminal Justice Reform

With funding from
ABELL
FOUNDATION

Thrive Academy Jurisdictions



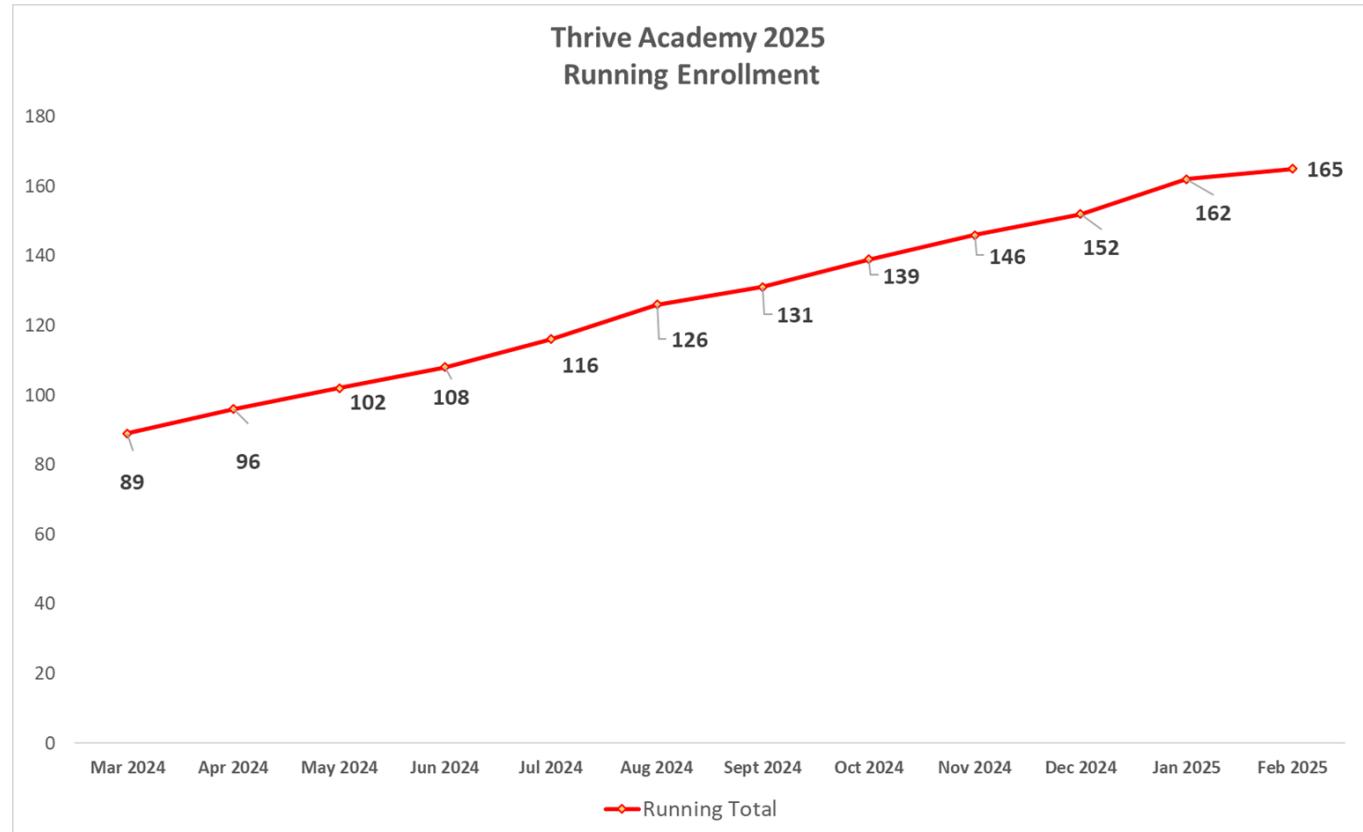
(2023) DJS **launched Thrive Academy** in September 2023 in Baltimore City, Baltimore, Prince George's, and Anne Arundel Counties.

(2025) DJS **expanding Thrive Academy** to four additional counties, including Montgomery, Howard, Dorchester, and Frederick Counties

Capacity of 25 participants in each county
1-2 Credible Messenger groups serving each county.



Thrive: At a Glance



- 165 youth have been served in Thrive since September 2023.
- 5 (3.03%) Thrive-enrolled youth have been victims of Non-Fatal shootings. 0 Thrive-enrolled youth have been Homicide victims
- 31 (18.78%) Thrive Academy youth have been arrested for handgun possession or use while enrolled.

Key Performance Indicators

Gun Crime Arrest

Gun Violence Victimization

Employment/
Education Outcomes

Positive Youth Development Experiences



Targets

Gun Crime Arrests

Less than 10% of participants will have gun crime arrests, monthly

Gun Victimization

Less than 5% of Thrive Participants will experience gun victimization monthly

School/Workforce

85% of participants will be enrolled in school or workforce development, monthly

Prosocial Activities

At least 2 monthly provider-led civic engagement opportunities, with 8-10 Thrive Participants present at each



Inputs

- Frequent Contacts/Visits with Life Coach and Case Manager
- Relocation Assistance
- Education Enrollment and Assistance; College, GED, Day School
- Participation Stipends and Incentives



Outcomes to Date (Statewide)

- ✓ **78%** of active status participants currently enrolled in a traditional school
- ✓ **16%** of participants have graduated traditional school or completed GED
- ✓ **9%** of participants enrolled in vocational programs
- ✓ **24%** of Thrive participants are currently employed
- ✓ **Gun arrests trending downward** since 11/2024
- ✓ **Gun victimization below __ %**

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY THRIVE ACADEMY OVERVIEW



Provider:

Credible Messenger Mentoring, Inc.

Serves youth and families in:

- Prince George's County
- Montgomery County
- Anne Arundel County

39

Total Prince George's
County youth and
families served
as of 02/28/2025

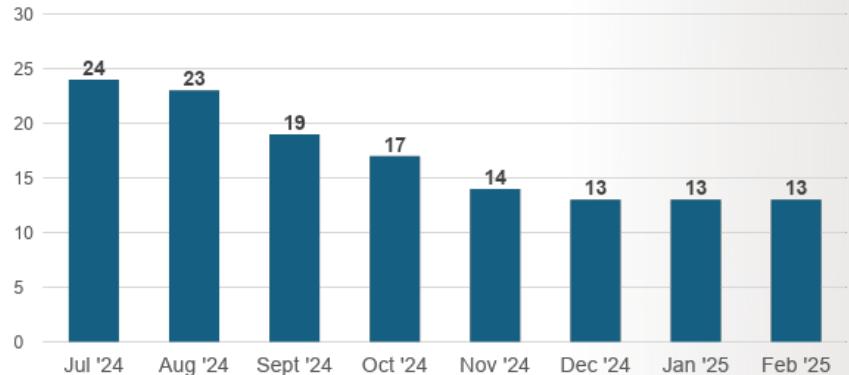


DJS Thrive Team

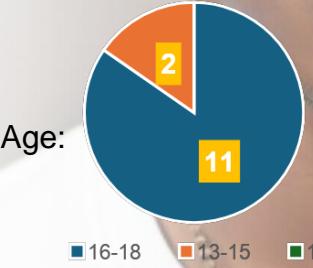
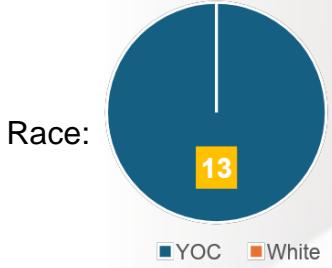
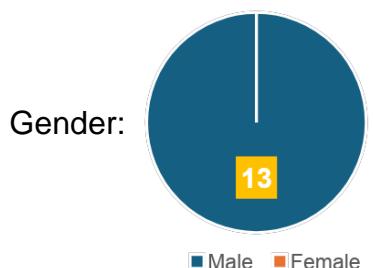
- Olusola Ogunranti, Executive Director of Safety Services
- Mercedes Upshur, Thrive Program Manager
- Thrive Case Management Team (4)

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY THRIVE ACADEMY DEMOGRAPHICS

TOTAL YOUTH ENROLLED BY MONTH



MONTH OF February, 2025:

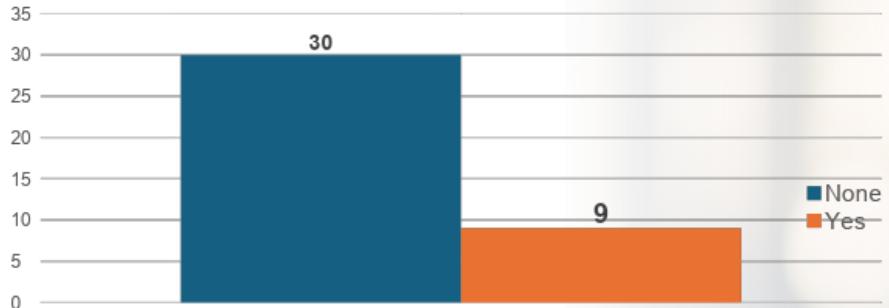


PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY THRIVE ACADEMY

Gun Violence Outcomes To Date

January 2024 through February 28, 2025

TOTAL YOUTH RE-ARRESTED FOR OFFENSE
THAT OCCURRED POST-ENROLLMENT ¹



5%
Victim of
Gun Violence
N= 2/39

77%
No New
Gun-Related
Offense Post-
enrollment
N= 35/39

10%
New Offense
Post-enrollment
(Gun-Related)
N= 4/39

13%
New Offense
Post-Enrollment
(non-gun-related)
N= 5/39

