

2025 Annual Report | Highland Juvenile Detention Center

1.15.2026

Purpose

This document, prepared by Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS), is largely a synthesis of key information and data from the “Monthly Anonymized Statistical Report” provided to ACDHS by Adelphoi, with the exception of the initial “2025 Key Data” section, which is drawn from [the County’s public dashboard](#). Adelphoi is contracted operator of Highland Juvenile Detention Center.

This document was prepared for the purpose of providing this information to the County’s Juvenile Detention Board of Advisors and, by extension, to the public. Additional data is available on [the County’s public dashboard](#).

2025 Key Data

Admissions and Discharges

- 220 unique (unduplicated) youth were detained at Highland Juvenile Detention Center (Highland) in 2025. This includes youth who entered before 2025, but whose stay extended into 2025.
- Those 220 youth had 260 stays at Highland (youth may be detained more than one time at Highland).
- 249 entries and 252 exits occurred in 2025.
- Among youth who exited Highland in 2025, 50% went to another detention center, 31% returned home, 15% went to a juvenile placement, 2% transferred out of our jurisdiction, and 2% went to a child welfare placement.
 - Beds at Highland are “no eject/no reject,” whereas beds at other providers JPO contracts with can eject/reject. Therefore, JPO often tries to keep some beds open at Highland in case there’s a youth other providers have ejected or rejected from their facility (ex: a youth with more complex medical and/or behavioral needs). There are also cases where a youth may need to be separated (victim/offender, or co-defendants).
 - JPO currently has contracts with George Junior Republic, Jefferson County Detention Center, and Adelphoi Village.
- The median length of stay was 10 days and the average length of stay was 14 days. The longest 1% stayers (n=3) were in Highland for 61 days or more; 10% of stayers (n=26) were in Highland for 29-60 days; 13% of stayers (n=34) were in Highland for 15-21 days.

Demographics

- 100% of youth were male (Highland only admits males, and only legal sex is recorded).
- 86% of youth were Black and 14% were White.
- 35% of youth detentions were among youth age 17, and 23% were among youth age 16. Only 7% of youth entering Highland were under the age 14.

Education

- Of youth who matched to school enrollment data held by DHS¹, 59% had been enrolled recently in the Pittsburgh Public School District.
- Of youth who matched to school enrollment data held by DHS, 41% had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) during a recent school year and 55% had an IEP ever during their education.
- Of youth who matched to school enrollment data held by DHS, 2% had a 504 Plan during a recent school year and 3% had a 504 plan ever during their education.

Open Charges

- Youth may enter Highland with multiple open charges. Analysis refers to the most serious open charges associated with the youth at the time of detention. For example, if a youth had open charges of vandalism, stealing a camera, and assault, the assault charge would be identified as the most serious charge.
 - The most serious open charge is almost always a felony (n=228) with a small number of misdemeanors (n=16).
 - The most serious open charges were categorized based on whether they are crimes against people, property, or firearms related.
- 97 youth detentions had a firearms charge as the most serious open charge.
- 65 youth detentions had charges associated with a crime against a person (ex: assault).
- 62 youth detentions had charges associated with a crime against property (ex. arson, burglary).
- 172 youth detained had used a weapon on any (not just the most serious) open charge at time of detention.
- 86 youth detentions had an open warrant at the time of detention. (Some youth may enter detention due to a warrant that was issued for noncompliance with the terms of their release or not appearing in court.)

Program and Service Involvement

Timeframes ranging from 1 month prior to detention to any time prior to detention were used to identify which services were received by youth before detention. If someone had multiple detentions in a year, the earliest detention date was used.

One Month Before Detention

- The most common services related to income-based entitlements:
 - HealthChoices (Medicaid)(82%)²
 - Income supports (60%) including SNAP, SSI, and TANF
 - Subsidized housing (27%)
 - Child welfare involvement:
 - 16% had an open child welfare case
 - 10% had been the subject of an allegation of child abuse or neglect³

¹ DHS holds enrollment data from the following districts from August 2023 to present: Clairton City School District, Cornell School District, Elizabeth Forward School District, Highlands School District, McKeesport Area School District, Moon Area School District, Penn Hills School District, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Propel Charter School, South Allegheny School District, South Park School District, Sto-Rox School District, West Mifflin Area School District, and Woodland Hills School District

² HealthChoices is Pennsylvania's managed care program for behavioral health for Medicaid beneficiaries. DHS is only able to observe behavioral health care for those enrolled in this program.

³ These two figures capture active child welfare cases and active child welfare investigations. Cases are not necessarily a subset of investigations. The case figures include cases that were already open prior to the period of detention. While there are far more investigations than cases in child welfare, investigations can only last up to 60 days. And while there are fewer cases than investigations, they tend to stay open for a longer period. When we filter for a longer period (12 months prior to detention), 36% of youth at Highland in 2025 were the child in an investigation of child abuse/neglect while 24% had been the child in an open child welfare case.

- 6% had been in a child welfare placement
- Mental Health:
 - DHS is only able to observe behavioral health care for those enrolled in HealthChoices, PA's managed care program for behavioral health for Medicaid beneficiaries
 - 17% of these youth received a mental health service

Any Time Before Detention

- The most common services related to income-based entitlements:
 - HealthChoices (Medicaid) (94%)
 - Income supports (88%) including SNAP, SSI, and TANF
 - Subsidized housing (60%)
 - Child welfare involvement:
 - 62% had an open child welfare case
 - 80% had been the subject of an allegation of child abuse or neglect
 - 31% had been in a child welfare placement
 - Mental Health:
 - 82% of those enrolled in HealthChoices received a mental health service
 - 72% received a crisis mental health service
 - Substance Use:
 - 20% of those enrolled in HealthChoices who were 14 or older had received a substance use disorder service
 - Intellectual Disability Services:
 - 2% (n=5) of youth received a service for intellectual disability at any time before entering detention.

Time frames ranging from 1 month after exiting Highland to anytime after exiting Highland were used to identify services. If someone had multiple detentions in a year, the earliest detention date was used. To be included in this analysis a youth must have exited Highland at least one month ago to be included in the 'one month' period, at least 3 months ago to be included in the 'three months' period, etc.

One Month After Release from Detention

- The most common services related to income-based entitlements:
 - HealthChoices (Medicaid) (76%)
 - Income supports (46%) including SNAP, SSI, and TANF⁴
 - Subsidized housing (22%)
 - Child welfare involvement:
 - 18% had an open child welfare case
 - 10% had been the subject of an allegation of child abuse or neglect
 - 3% had been in a child welfare placement
 - Mental Health:
 - 20% of those enrolled in HealthChoices received a mental health service
 - 7% received a crisis mental health service
 - Substance Use:
 - 10% of those enrolled in HealthChoices who were 14 or older had received a substance use disorder service

⁴ The differences in pre- and post-detention income support rates are likely because when a youth is in an out-of-home placement (such as Highland), the County Assistance Office (CAO) is notified that the child should be removed from the family's benefit calculation. When a youth returns home, the CAO is notified and, if the family's case is open, the child is automatically added back to the family's household to receive benefits. However, the youth who leave Highland for another out-of-home placement, they still do not receive benefits until they are back home. Of the 36 youth exits, for example, who had income support in the month before detention and who did *not* have them in the month after exiting Highland, 27 continued to a different out-of-home placement.

Any Time After Release from Detention

- The most common services related to income-based entitlements:
 - HealthChoices (Medicaid) (77%)
 - Income supports (46%) including SNAP, SSI, and TANF
 - Subsidized housing (21%)
 - Child welfare involvement:
 - 16% had an open child welfare case
 - 15% had been the subject of an allegation of child abuse or neglect
 - 3% had been in a child welfare placement
- Mental Health:
 - 36% of those enrolled in HealthChoices received a mental health service
 - 15% received a crisis mental health service
- Allegheny County Jail (ACJ): Of youth released from Highland in 2025, 4% (n=8) were booked into ACJ at any point since their release from Highland.
- Of the youth who exited in 2025, 7% (n= 15) had new criminal filings after leaving Highland. 12% of youth who exited (n=26) had some involvement with adult criminal court (this includes ongoing court events for offenses committed prior to entering Highland).
- Substance Use:
 - 12% of those enrolled in HealthChoices who were 14 or older had received a substance use disorder service

Staffing

Each month, Adelphoi provides the following data on new hires, termination, and vacancies:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
New hires	4	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	26
Terminations	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	1	0	0	10
Vacancies	7	5	2	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	2	3	27

Safety and Security

In most months there were “no major incidents or disruptions to programming and operations ... no escape attempts or AWOLs reported ... no unannounced or unwanted visitors on the property” and “no police intervention to secured or stabilize the program.”

The following safety and security incidents and disruptions were noted in Adelphoi’s reports; Adelphoi reports incidents to the state Department of Human Services; incidents, citations, and no licensing concerns from 2025 are listed below:

January

Reportable incident: “Incident Requiring Fire or Police Departments”

- “The fire department arrived to the program as a result of low water pressure reading on the fire panel. Result of a nearby water main break.”

February

Reportable incident: “Incident Requiring Fire or Police Departments”

- “The fire department arrived to the program as a result of a client intentionally pulling the alarm.”

April

“During the month of April 2025, there was a significant event which occurred on April 29, 2025 where the building was impacted by severe weather. Specifically, Highland Detention

experienced a total loss of power. All youth were safe during the event and there were no disturbances within the program."

June

Reportable incident: “Additional Requirements for Secure Care”

- “A staff member fell and hit his head while intervening with an aggressive client.”

Reportable incident: "Violation of a Child's Rights/Treated Without Respect"

- “Staff acted outside the scope of SCM training to initiate an emergency physical intervention.”

July

Reportable incident: "Incident Requiring Fire or Police Departments"

- “Allergic reaction to onions.”

Reportable incident: "Incident Requiring Fire or Police Departments"

- “A staff member fell and was injured while intervening with an several aggressive clients”

Reportable incident: “Violation of a Child’s Rights”

- Staff acted outside the scope of SCM training to initiate an emergency physical intervention which resulted in the staff being removed from a childcare role.”

Reportable incident: "Incident Requiring Fire or Police Departments"

- “Alleged allergic reaction to onions – [youth] did not consume though.”

August

Reportable incident: "Incident Requiring Fire or Police Departments"

- “Fire alarm was falsely triggered in an unoccupied section of the building.”

Medical and Dental

While DHS plans to work with Adelphoi to deepen the medical and dental data the department receives, these figures provide important data on medical and dental services at the facility.

Adelphoi reported in each month that “all youth who were admitted to Highland Detention ... received a timely medical assessment and physical within the required 96-hour time period, as per regulation.”

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Medical appointments with UPMC	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	63	71	75	44	46

**Adelphoi began including this information as of its August 2025 report.*

“In regards to dental care, any youth who has not had a documented examination and teeth cleaning within six months from their date of admission is required to have an examination and teeth cleaning within 30 days from admission.”

appointments											
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Behavioral Health

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of assessments completed by UPMC Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine	18	18	16	22	23	17	25	14	21	15	20	16
Voluntary follow-up meetings with a Licensed Clinical Social Worker	11	10	6	7	4	7	7	7	2	8	4	9
Number of youth [who] refused to be assessed by UPMC during their stay"									7*	1	0	**
Number of youth who "refused follow up appointments by UPMC during their stay"												8**

*Adelphoi began reporting this figure in their September 2025 report.

**Beginning in December 2025, Adelphoi changed their reporting language from "youth [who] refused to be assessed by UPMC during their stay" to you who "refused follow up appointments by UPMC during their stay."

Education

Each month, specialized educational groups are facilitated at the Center on a variety of topics (ex: Preparing for Treatment in a Residential Program, Introduction to Conflict Resolution, Procedures that Lead to Change (Reality Therapy-WDEP).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of specialized educational groups	46	42	44	46	46	46	46	44	46	46	44	46

Additionally, ongoing education is provided by the Pittsburgh Public School District with specific instruction provided by Pittsburgh - Mt. Oliver Intermediate Unit 2.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of days of educational instruction	16	19	20	19.5	20	5	19	21	21	22	17	16

Staff from the intermediate unit report that they're beginning to "see kids [in the facility] for the second and third time" and can "get to know these kids and better understand what they need." They report that each youth is tested "as soon as we see them so [that] we can work with them at the correct grade level." Staff from the intermediate unit were trained in therapeutic crisis intervention in summer 2025 given that most youth "arrive with special education needs and require emotional support." The unit reports that collaboration with Adelphoi has been positive ("they're supportive of anything we need").

Recreation

Per Adelphoi, "youth at Highland... have the opportunity to participate in, at minimum, one hour of recreation per day. Staff members will always make every attempt to incorporate additional opportunities for recreation as circumstances permit."

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Documented activities in the gymnasium	64	56	64	60	60	68	73	68	64	68	66	68
Individual gym sessions during school days	38	38	40	40	40	10	38	12	42	44	34	32
Scheduled arts and craft sessions	N/A*	N/A*	8	8	10	10	10	14	5	5	4	6

**Adelphoi began reporting on arts and craft sessions as of March 2025.*

Family Visitation

"Adelphoi Western Region encourages family engagement and permits family members who are approved by the Allegheny County Juvenile Probation Department and/or the Allegheny County Juvenile Court to visit their child while in detention. Visitation times are available on a daily basis, and families are required to schedule visits ahead of time."

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
In-person family visits	8	13	12	25	25	20	10	12	9	10	13	6

Grievances

Grievances filed by youth are "reviewed internally by program leadership;" "this review [includes] interviewing any youth who would have been in the program at time of the grievance as well as staff members working at the time of the grievance." Grievances "and the subsequent findings" are "reported to Allegheny Probation, their administration and Adelphoi Western Region Administration."

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Grievances filed by youth	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Facility Issues

A section of Adelphoi's monthly report offers "highlights and challenges," including reflections on notable facility issues, including these:

January

"... there were three major sewage backups that occurred in January. County representatives have suggested that these problems will be corrected by February 14, 2025."

February

"... due to extreme temperatures during the month, the program experienced water lines and pipes that were frozen. Living space and bedrooms were also much colder compared to other months which have been worked on closely with county facilities and assigned vendors."

March

"The program continues to experience plumbing issues on occasion, and these issues are addressed."

April

"Several doors appear to be out of alignment or have hardware issues. These issues have been raised with the county and steps to remedy the concerns are ongoing. Additionally, as previously mentioned in this report, the region experienced a significant weather event on April 29, 2025. This event caused extensive damage to the facility including HVAC and IT components."

May

"There were numerous follow up items that need to be address as a result of the storm damage from April 29, 2025. Most of those items have been rectified, however there are still some outstanding items. One in particular pertains to notification programing which needs to be done by the approved and contracted vendor. This work when completed will allow both the County and Adelphoi to have better access to real-time information regarding sensitive mechanical and security functionality."

June

"There were numerous follow up items that [needed] to be addressed as a result of the storm damage from April 29, 2025. Most of those items have been rectified, however there are still some outstanding items. One in particular pertains to notification programing which needs to be done by the approved and contracted vendor. This work when completed will allow both the County and Adelphoi to have better access to real-time information regarding sensitive mechanical and security functionality."

Lastly, overgrowth of vegetation in vacant areas of the property as well as along existing fencing have been raised on several occasions."

July

"Overgrowth of vegetation in vacant areas of the property as well as along existing fencing have been raised on numerous occasions."

"Additionally, there are numerous window bolts that were installed incorrectly at the time of construction. Many of these bolts can be loosened and removed by youth. Plans to remedy this issue have been discussed, however the work has not commenced at this time."

November

"Lastly, a persistent challenge over the past year involves recurring sewage backups within the facility's operational areas. In November alone, five separate incidents required mitigation and cleanup."

"Another ongoing issue involves the electrical service running from the main power supply to the program equipment that supports network and security functions. While Adelphoi has continued to address this matter internally, support from the County will be essential to ensure safe and secure operations."

December

"In December, there were two instances of sewage backup in the intake/admissions bathroom."

"... one ongoing issue involves the driveway leading to the secured entrance, currently in use as a temporary access point until Phase II construction is complete. The area experiences heavy use by delivery and transport vehicles, and its condition continues to deteriorate. With the winter season upon us, wear and tear are expected to increase."

Additionally, weather-related impacts to the driveway, parking lot, and adjacent areas often result in mud being tracked into the facility, creating added cleaning demands and affecting the overall cleanliness of the interior."

Youth Engagement

In 2025 DHS team members facilitated three on-site focus group and engagement sessions with youth at Highland; two as part of the facility redesign process and one as part of the quarterly listening sessions DHS began in Fall 2025.

In the redesign sessions, we heard from youth on aspects of the current facility and on potential designs for areas of the redesigned facility. In the listening session, we heard from youth on aspects of their daily experience that could potentially be improved.