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## Poor Outcomes Continue in Maryland's Juvenile System

*Despite Large Investment, Low Success Rates, Even At Model New Facility*

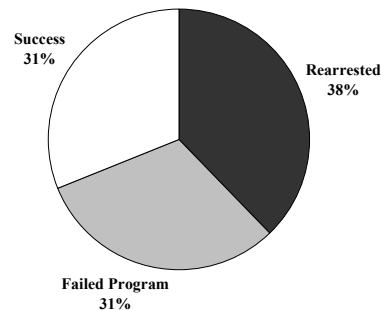
### Executive Summary

Despite an infusion of more than \$100 million in additional funding—an increase of nearly 60 percent—the success of Maryland's juvenile justice system has not improved and remains poor. There are cost-effective strategies that can significantly improve public safety. First, the State can implement the critical elements of the nationally acclaimed Missouri Model for youth in residential facilities and after release. Second, the State can serve many more children through Multi-Systemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy, two evidence-based community programs.

rate remained virtually unchanged between FY 2003 and FY 2008, moving from 49 to 50 percent.<sup>1</sup>

In July 2007, the Department opened the Victor Cullen Center, a new state-run residential facility designed to serve as the model for future facilities. As of December 2008, 45 youth were admitted and discharged; 31 were discharged after successfully completing the program; another 14 were discharged before completing the program. Of the successful completions, only 14 of these youth have not been rearrested. As shown below, this represents a success rate of 31 percent.<sup>2</sup>

### Success Rate At Victor Cullen



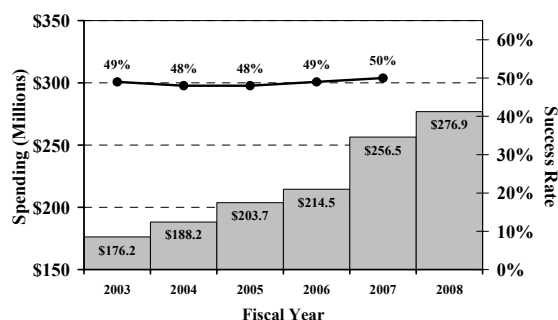
### Overview

The ultimate goals of a juvenile justice system are rehabilitation and public safety. One of the clearest indicators of success is whether, a year after release from a residential facility, a youth has not been re-arrested. The best systems in the country have very high success rates. This analysis looks at success rates in Maryland.

### Analysis

As shown below, spending by the Department of Juvenile Services increased from \$176.2 million in FY 2003 to \$276.9 million in FY 2008. This is an increase of \$100.7 million, or 57.1 percent.

### Spending and Success in Maryland



The same chart shows the success rate, i.e., the percentage of youth who were not rearrested in the year following their release. Maryland's success

### Discussion & Recommendations

Ideally, young people who require out-of-home placements will receive the right combination of therapeutic, educational, vocational and aftercare services that ensure they will not return to a life of delinquency and criminal activity upon release. Missouri has come closest to perfecting an effective residential model, and the State should implement the critical elements of this model.<sup>3</sup>

Another key strategy is treating as many youth through effective community-based programs. Multi-Systemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy have reduced rearrest rates at a fraction of the cost of residential programs, and the State must move urgently to build much-needed capacity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See state budget books.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit, *2008 Annual Report*.

<sup>3</sup> Advocates for Children and Youth, *Maryland Deviates from Best Practice in Juvenile Justice Reform*.

<sup>4</sup> Advocates for Children and Youth, *Expanding Multi-Systemic Therapy Rapidly, Effectively and Affordably*.