Implementation of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET Screener Across Michigan

Final Evaluation Report

Prepared by: University of Michigan Program Evaluation Group

November 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

In December 2023, the Michigan legislature passed into law a package of bills titled ”Michigan Justice for Kids and Community”, with an effective date of October 1, 2024. One component of the new legislation requires jurisdictions to utilize a validated detention screening tool at the time of juvenile arrest to determine whether the youth needs to be held in secure custody in a juvenile facility pending the 24-hour hearing. The Michigan Juvenile Justice Assessment System/Ohio Youth Assessment System-Detention (MJJAS/OYAS-DET) is based on the Ohio Youth Assessment System, a tool developed by the University of Cincinnati, and was selected by Michigan’s State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) after convening a stakeholder workgroup for 12-18 months.

In collaboration with our evaluation workgroup made up of juvenile justice practitioners and representatives from the Michigan Association for Family Court Administration (MAFCA), the Michigan Juvenile Detention Association (MJDA), Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Program Evaluation Group (PEG) at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, we conducted an evaluation to learn more about the implementation process of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET as well as practitioners’ perceptions of the screening tool. See box 1 for an overview of our evaluation approach. Below we provide a summary of the key findings from this evaluation effort.

Box 1. Evaluation Overview

Evaluation Approach

Overall Description: The purpose of this process evaluation was to understand and describe the juvenile detention screening process across the state of Michigan before and after the MJJAS/OYAS-DET screener was implemented. This project also aimed to understand current perceptions of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET as well as successes and challenges in implementing the tool.

Data Sources: This report includes results from a statewide survey of Michigan family court administration teams and/or juvenile detention leadership teams (n= 60; 72.3% response rate) and a sample of group interviews with select jurisdictions (5).

Methods: Our analysis included descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis of qualitative data.

Summary of Key Findings: Detention Decision-Making Process

- ★ Detention decision-making processes stayed relatively consistent across a majority of Michigan counties that participated.
- ★ There has been an increased use of formal screening tools to make detention decisions with many counties reporting using multiple tools post mandate–possibly related to expressed concerns among practitioners regarding the MJJAS/OYAS-DET.
- ★ The mandate played a role in counties clarifying their detention decision-making process, with some developing their own local tool.
- ★ The factors that influence detention decisions remained consistent pre to post mandate.

Summary of Key Findings: Administration and Perceptions of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET

- ★ Jurisdictions are administering the MJJAS/OYAS-DET as mandated, however, many are not relying heavily on the results.
- ★ While some questions on the detention screener were reported as helpful, respondents consistently reported concerns that many of the questions are biased and “static”.
- ★ Some jurisdictions have found the detention screener and the mandate overall helpful for formalizing their policies and improving relationships with law enforcement.
- ★ Jurisdictions reported difficulty implementing the tool with fidelity (in person, face-to-face with the youth) due to operational realities.



Summary of Key Findings: Recommendations from Practitioners

- ★ **Training:** There is a need for more training opportunities to ensure all staff who need to administer the tool are properly trained. Additionally, recommendations were made for a shorter training format as well as refreshers and technical assistance. A train-the-trainer model may be considered as a useful approach for future training processes.

- ★ **Remove Biased & Static Questions**: There is a desire for questions in the screener to focus on assessing real-time safety risks. Additionally, questions should be relevant to information needed to make detention decisions.

- ★ **Flexible Administration Process:** Allow for counties to administer the detention screener in a manner that best aligns with their operational realities. Face-to-Face administration is not always possible and the tool should allow for multiple administration formats.

- ★ **Provide Clearer Guidance:** Respondents appreciated that the tool provides a risk assessment score, however, there is a desire for more guidance on what the score means in terms of detention decisions. Additionally, a clearer definition of what constitutes an override of the tool was requested.

- ★ **Continue to Allow for the Use of Multiple Tools:** Respondents appreciated that they are able to use other tools and consider other factors beyond the detention screener when making detention decisions.



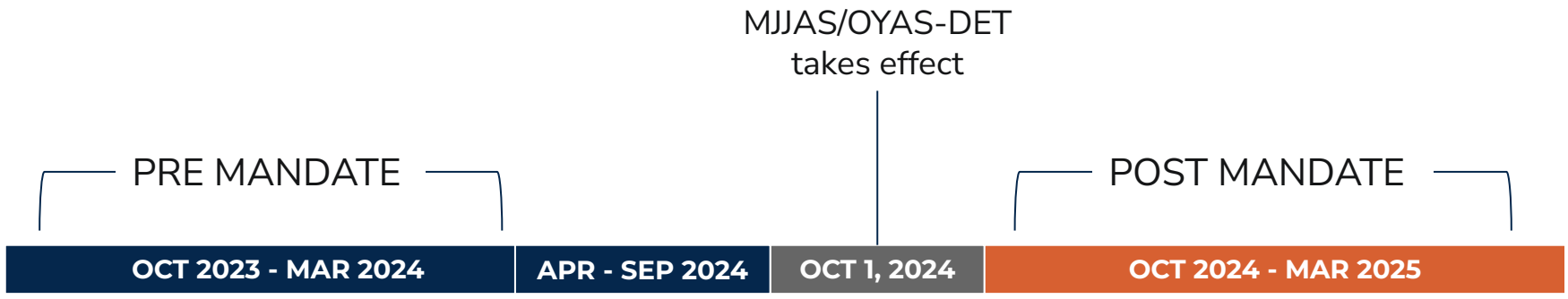
KEY TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this report we utilize several terms that we have defined here for clarity.

- **Pre mandate:** 10/1/2023 - 3/31/2024. This refers to the time period prior to the implementation of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET detention screener mandated by the State of Michigan and the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). This six month period corresponds with the selected measurement period for the pre mandate data.

- **Post mandate:** 10/1/2024 - 3/31/2025. This refers to the six month time period immediately after the newly mandated detention screening tool was required to take effect. This six month period corresponds with the selected measurement period for the post mandate data.

- **Override:** While we understand that the detention screener does not provide a standard definition of what an override is or what it means, for the purposes of this survey we utilize "override" to refer to any time you make a decision about whether or not to detain a youth that differs from the implied interpretation of the screening tool (i.e., a youth scored HIGH on the screener but you decided not to detain the youth because of other circumstances or information).



1 INTRODUCTION

Background

In December 2023, the Michigan legislature passed into law a package of bills titled ”Michigan Justice for Kids and Community”, with an effective date of October 1, 2024. One component of the new legislation requires jurisdictions to utilize a validated detention screening tool at the time of juvenile arrest to determine whether the youth needs to be held in secure custody in a juvenile facility pending the 24-hour hearing.

A validated tool, the Michigan Juvenile Justice Assessment System/Ohio Youth Assessment System-Detention (MJJAS/OYAS-DET), was selected by Michigan' State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) after convening a stakeholder workgroup for 12-18 months. The MJJAS/OYAS-DET (hereafter referred to as “detention screener”, “detention screening tool”, or “MJJAS”) is based on the Ohio Youth Assessment System, a tool developed by the University of Cincinnati.[1] The detention screener consists of 6 risk assessment questions in addition to youth demographic information. Youth responses are calculated into a summed score. Their total score corresponds to a risk level of low, moderate, or high.

The detention screener is intended to be administered in-person, face-to-face with the youth and away from law enforcement, however, it is possible to administer the detention screener over the phone when in person administration is not feasible. Those who administer the detention screener are required to be trained and certified by the tool developers. The tool developers have offered a series of training sessions for end users responsible for administering the detention screening tool to support successful implementation.

SCAO has also advised that while the detention screener should be used to inform initial placement and/or release decisions, it should not be used in isolation. Jurisdictions are encouraged to utilize other assessment tools and consider additional factors when making the decision about placement of youth in secure detention.

[1] Latessa, E., Lovins, B., & Ostrowski, K. (2009). *The Ohio youth assessment system final report*. Center for Criminal Justice Research, University of Cincinnati. https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project_reports/OYAS_final_report.pdf

Evaluation Overview

The purpose of this evaluation project was to a) understand the detention screening process across the state of Michigan before and after the implementation of the detention screener; b) understand the extent to which the detention screening tool has contributed to changes in the detention screening process; and c) capture current perceptions of the detention screener.

This evaluation project was guided by the following key evaluation questions:

1. What was the detention screening process prior to the mandate?
2. To what extent has implementation of the tool contributed to changes in the detention decision process?
3. How are select sites implementing the MJJAS/OYAS-DET screening tool?
4. To what extent has there been a change in detention admission decisions and rates in the 6 months post implementation of the MJJAS?
5. To what extent has there been a change in 24-hour release decisions and rates in the 6 months post implementation of the MJJAS?

Data Collection

Data collection efforts consisted of a survey administered to all 83 counties in Michigan as well as individual interviews with a sample of jurisdictions. The survey received a 72.3% response rate (n=60) and 5 jurisdictions completed a group interview with the PEG team. For a more detailed description of our methodology, see appendix A. Results of these data collection efforts are presented next.

Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure successful implementation of the project, PEG convened a workgroup of juvenile justice practitioners that included family court and juvenile detention leadership teams to guide the planning, design, and survey administration process. This work group met regularly throughout the project and was actively involved in reviewing and providing feedback on data collection tools as well as making meaning of the findings.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to summarize the key findings regarding the detention screening process in Michigan from the statewide survey and interviews.

II FINDINGS

Respondent Overview

Surveys and interviews were completed by a combination of family court administrators, juvenile services division leaders, juvenile detention administrators, and juvenile probation leaders across the state of Michigan.

As shown in figures 1 and 2, a majority of respondents reported they do not have a detention facility in their jurisdiction (63%). Of respondents who reported that their jurisdiction has a detention facility, a majority are licensed as court operated facilities (COF; 67%).

Figure 1.

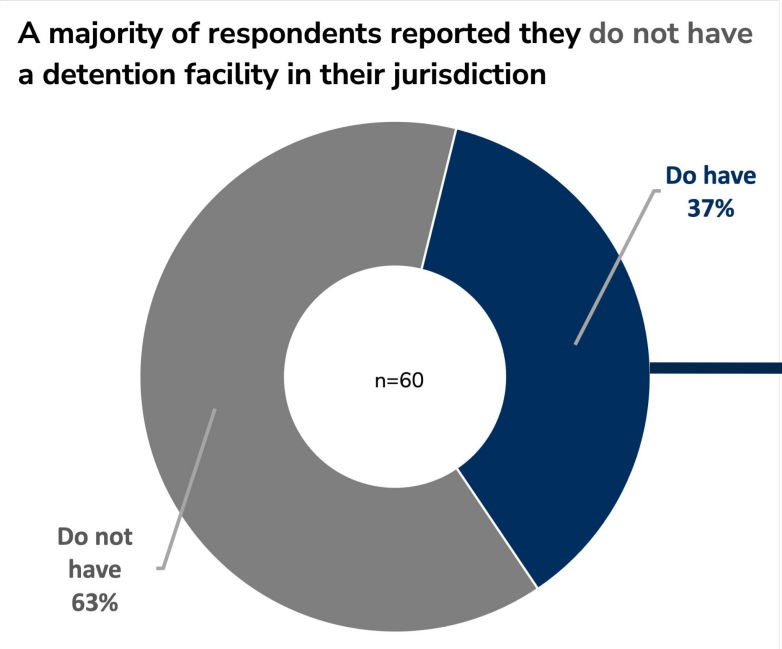
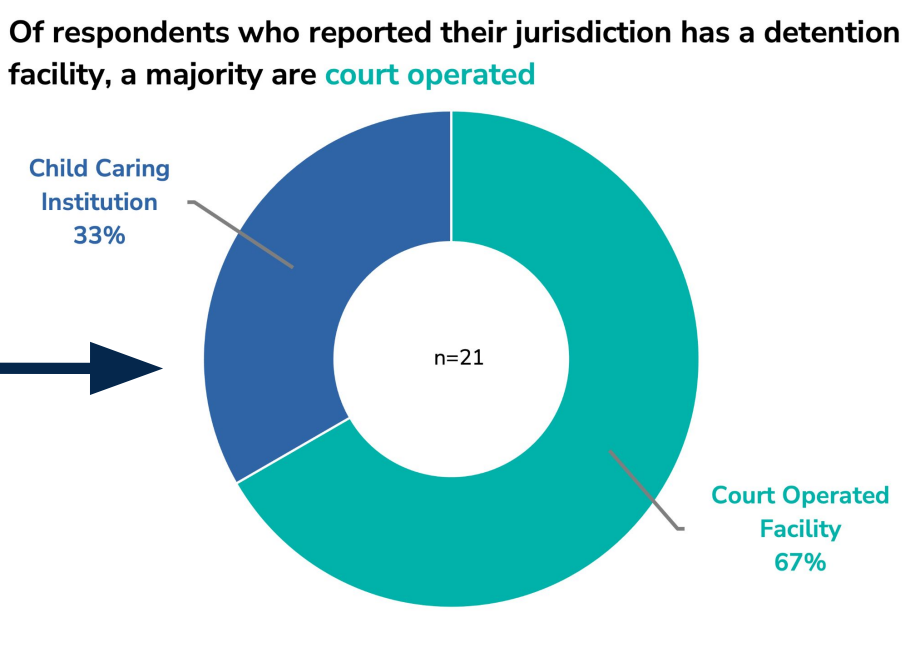


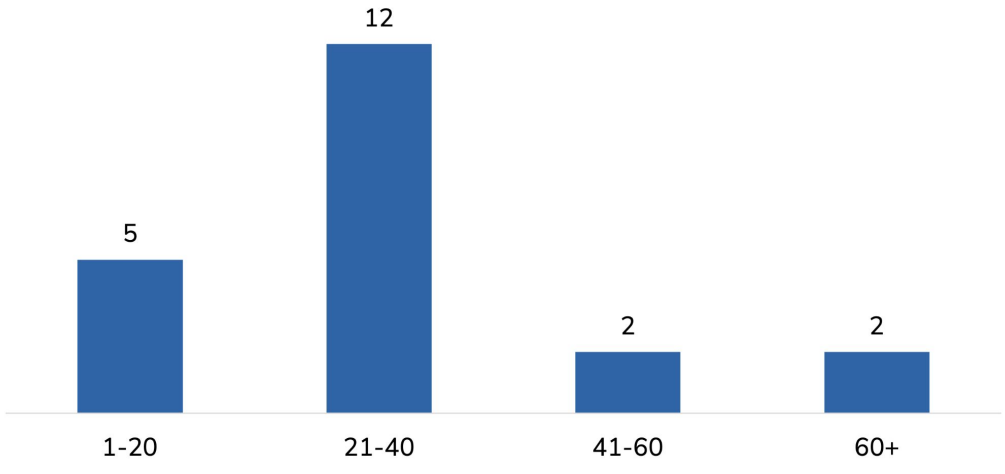
Figure 2.



For jurisdictions with a detention facility, most indicated a staffed capacity for 21-40 detention beds (see figure 3).

Figure 3.

Respondents with detention facilities in their jurisdiction maintain staffing for an average of 32.5 beds



n=21



Pre-Post Detention Decision-Making Process

Remained consistent pre to post

As shown in figure 4, the court is responsible for making the decision of whether or not to lodge a youth in juvenile detention for a majority of jurisdictions who completed the survey. Results indicate that there has been little change in the entity that makes the detention decision pre-post mandate.

Respondents reported that youth may be in a variety of locations during the detention decision-making process (e.g., court, detention facility, hold over site). However, respondents reported that youth are most often in the community (93%), and most likely in police custody during the decision making process a majority of the time (figure 5).

Figure 4.

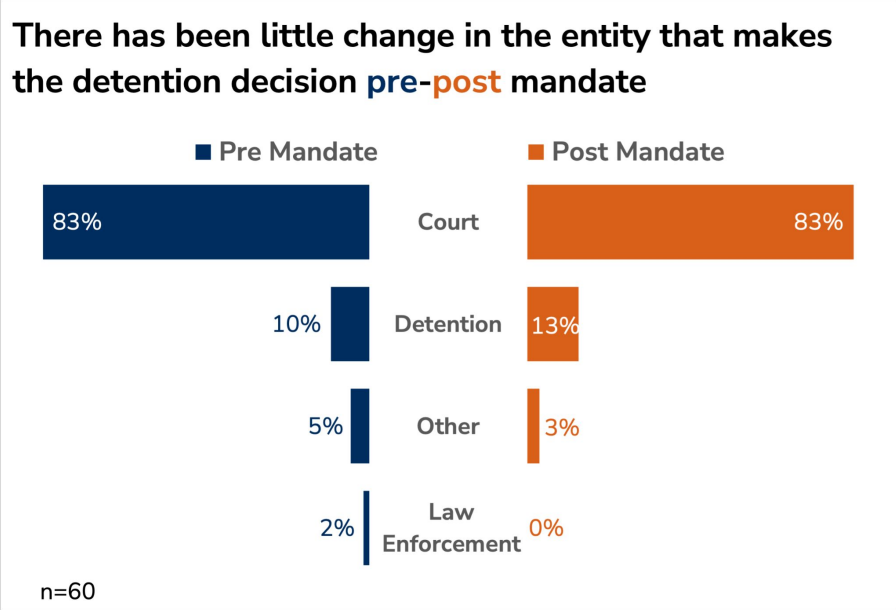
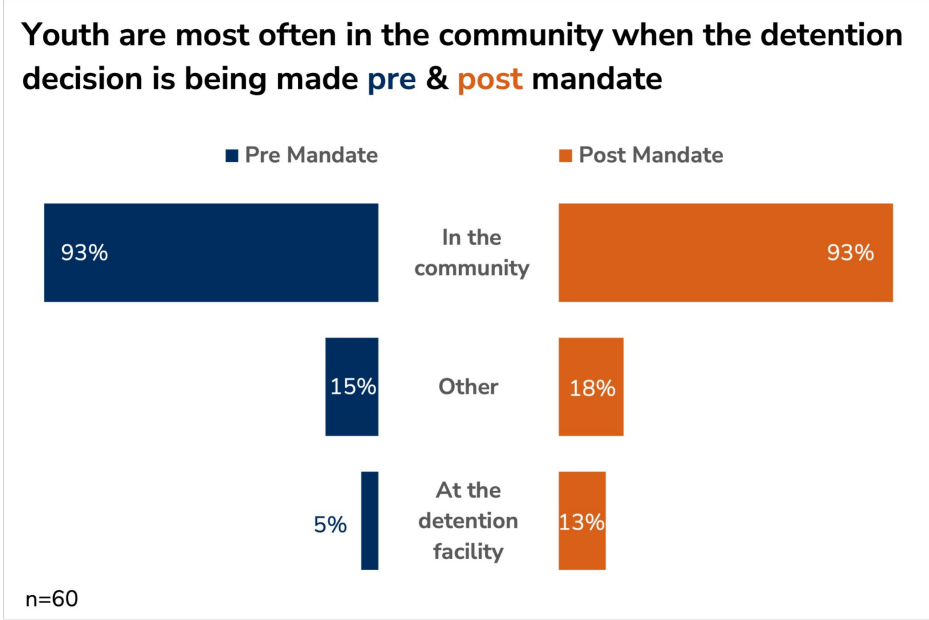


Figure 5.



Select all that apply - will not add up to 100%

"[Detention decision] process is very similar. Jurist was asking nearly the same questions."

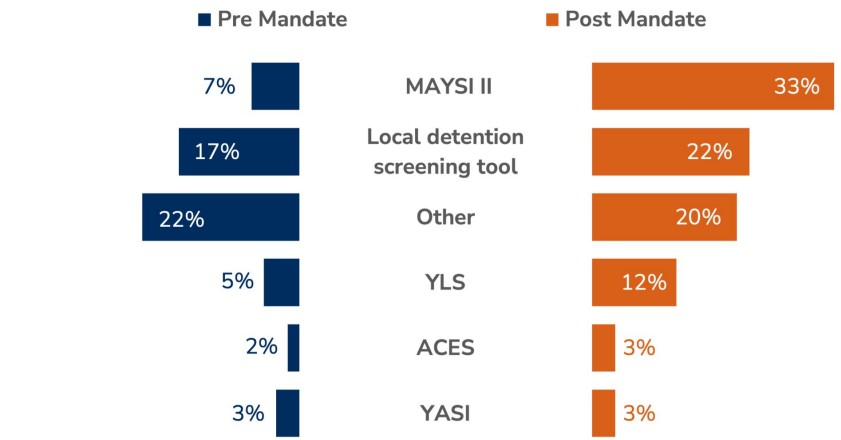
Screening Tools Utilized

Increased from pre to post

With respect to screening tools being utilized in the decision making process, 60% reported that they utilized no detention screening tool prior to the mandate taking effect. Post mandate, 62% of respondents reported utilizing *multiple* formal screening tools in addition to the detention screener. As shown in figure 6, results indicate that there was an increase in the use of the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI) II, locally developed detention screening tools, the Youth Level of Service (YLS), and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) assessment tools. Additionally, participants reported that they follow the criteria outlined in Michigan Court Rule 3.935 (MCR 3.935) when making detention decisions.

Figure 6.

Post mandate there has been an increased use of formal screening tools in addition to the MJJAS/OYAS-DET



n=60

Pre Mandate

60%

Reported **no formal screening tools** were utilized in the detention decision-making process

Post Mandate

62%

Reported **utilizing multiple formal screening** tools in addition to the MJJAS/OYAS-DET

"We developed a secondary screening instrument based on factors in MCR 3.935. The two main questions we consider are 1) Is the youth a substantial risk to himself or others? 2) Is the youth at substantial risk of flight?"

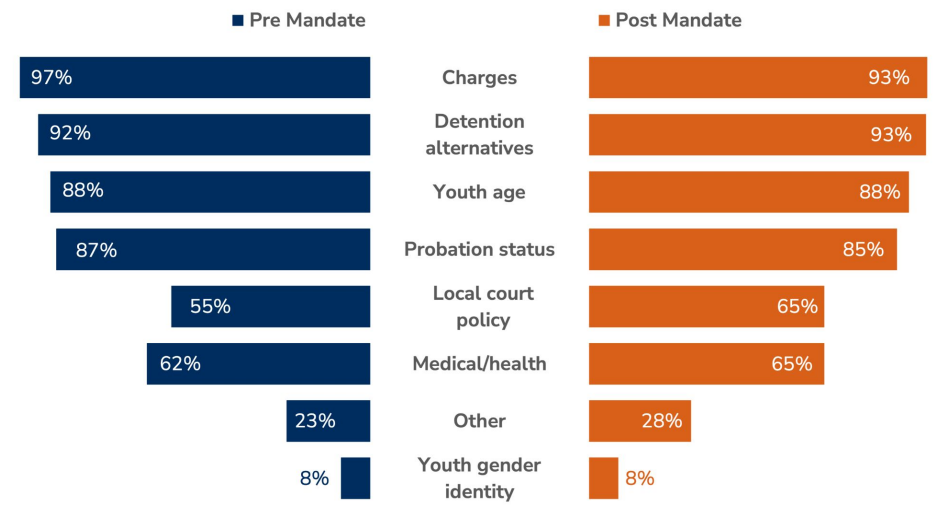
Remained consistent pre to post

Additional Factors Influencing Detention Decisions

Lastly, respondents reported that similar information is being utilized in the decision-making process pre-post mandate. As shown in figure 7, the top 3 factors that influence detention decision making include youth charges, detention alternatives, and youth age. These additional factors being considered in determining whether or not a youth should be held in detention can be both aggravating and mitigating factors for detention depending on the circumstances.

Figure 7.

The additional factors influencing detention decisions remained consistent pre-post mandate



n=60

Select all that apply - will not add up to 100%

Consistent with survey results, interview participants reported that their detention screening process has stayed relatively consistent from pre to post mandate with the exception of adding the detention screener. Two of the five jurisdictions interviewed reported that their locally developed detention screener tool remains their primary tool for making detention decisions. While they administer the detention screener in alignment with the mandate and noted that the detention screener results can help with making a final detention decision, the score may not be the primary driver of detention decision making. As one interviewee noted,

> *"I would say we have had at least 10 cases where we are on the fence about whether or not detention is appropriate. And we've been able to use the MJJAS to kind of tip the scale. I think [the MJJAS] has been something that can influence and inform [the decision], but it's not the driving factor."*

"More attention system-wide on the use of detention leads to more deliberate and knowledgeable decisions."



Summary

For a majority of participants, their detention decision-making process has stayed relatively consistent pre-post mandate. Results indicate that there has been an increased use of formal screening tools to make detention decisions with many counties reporting that they now utilize multiple tools post mandate. This is likely due to feedback participants shared regarding their lack of confidence in the detention screener score and concerns about the validity of the tool for this specific decision point.

For some jurisdictions, the mandate played a significant role in clarifying their detention decision-making process, with some developing their own local tool and many developing formal decision making policies. For those jurisdictions, the mandate was described as being helpful.

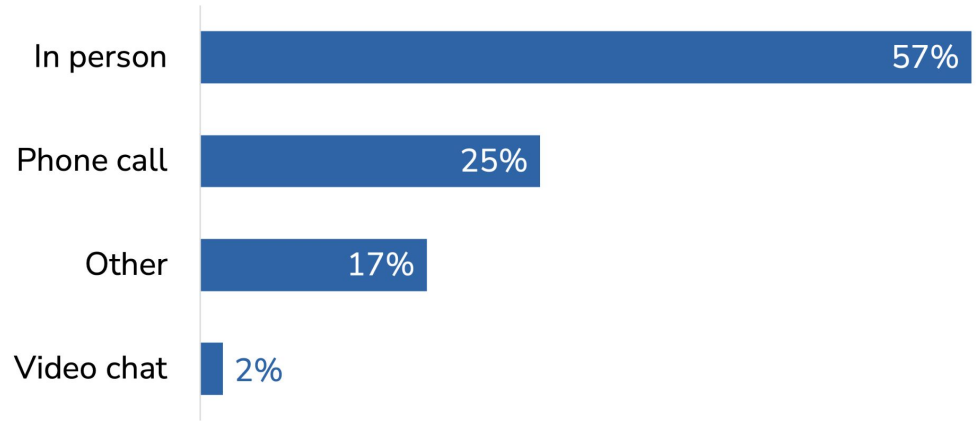
Administration and Perceptions of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET

Administration of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET

As shown in figure 8, survey data indicate that the detention screener is administered in person by more than half of jurisdictions (57%). However, interview participants indicated that they frequently need to administer the screener over the phone during after hours and emergency situations. As one participant said, "*it is virtually impossible to conduct the screener with fidelity during non court hours*". Another reported, "*we do allow verbal screenings to take place. We inform the officers they can call us and some do. Some still bring them in after hours or during the weekends*". Results indicate that jurisdictions are being responsive to their operational realities and administering the detention screener in a manner that makes the most sense for the current situation.

Figure 8.

A majority reported that they administer the detention screener in person





"So, after hours, we do allow verbal screenings to take place. We inform the officers they can call us, and some do. Some still bring them in after hours, or during the weekends."

"It is virtually impossible to conduct the screener with fidelity during non-court hours."

Additionally, a majority of survey respondents reported that they do administer the detention screener when a youth is ordered to detention directly from a court hearing (86.7%) as well as when there is a pick up order, order to apprehend, or JC05 (63.3%). Some noted that they are administering the detention screening tool during the intake process at the detention center given that the decision to lodge has already been made by the court. Participants also noted that when feasible, the detention screener score is included in the request for a pick up order or during a scheduled review hearing if detention is being recommended by a juvenile probation officer. When asked if jurisdictions record an override of the tool in situations where the youth's score does not align with the mandated detention order, about a quarter of respondents reported they do not record those instances as a judicial override.

"If we believe detention is a possibility, we complete the screener and submit the recommendation to the Judge at the hearing."

"MJJAS would occur prior to entry of an order to apprehend and detain/pick up order."

86.7%

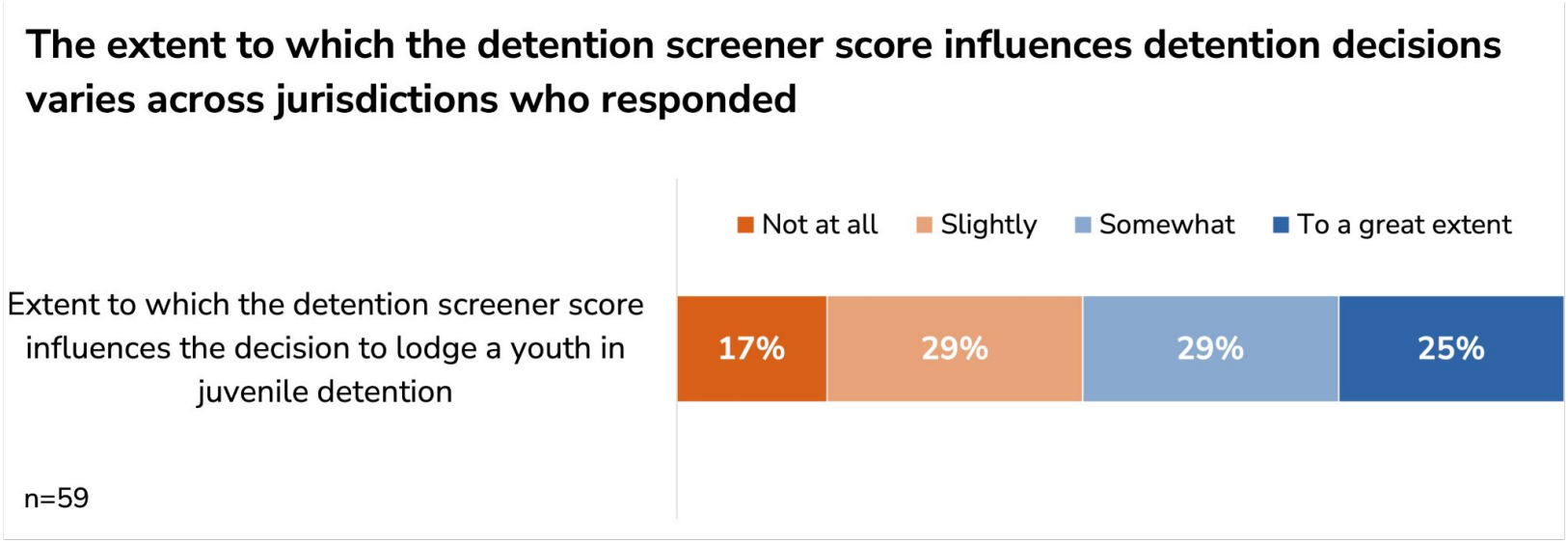
Administer the detention screener when a youth is **ordered to detention directly from a court hearing**

63.3%

Administer the detention screener when there is a **pick up order/order to apprehend or JC05**

When asked to what extent the detention screener score influences the decision to lodge a youth in juvenile detention, results varied across respondents. A quarter of respondents indicated that the detention screener score influences the decision to a great extent, whereas over half indicated that the score only slightly or somewhat influences the decision (see figure 9).

Figure 9.



"We use the locally developed protocol and detention screening tool and local court policy. The MJJAS Detention Tool is also conducted but it is not determinative."

"The Court uses the MJJAS detention screening tool to decide whether a juvenile should be lodged in a detention center or not."



"If a kid is moderate risk, just use more discretion. (...) Having a moderate risk kid literally doesn't change anything or any decision that's being made"

To better understand how counties in Michigan are making detention decisions based on the detention screener score, we asked survey respondents how their jurisdiction *typically* proceeds with youth scores of low, moderate, and high. This was important to try and understand because the detention screener currently does not provide guidance on what a low, moderate, or high score means in terms of detention decision-making.

Based on respondents' subjective knowledge and experience, we learned that factors other than the detention screener score influence the decision regarding detention regardless of the score. As shown in figure 10, respondents largely reported that the detention decision depends on other factors rather than the detention screener score itself. However, we do see that respondents perceive that generally youth who score high are being detained and those who score low are being released. This is aligned with the *implied* recommendation of the detention screening tool (i.e., low score=release; high score=detain).

Figure 10.

Results indicate that factors other than the detention screener score influence detention decisions.



Respondents reported that when youth score 'moderate' they need to rely more heavily on other factors.

Note: These results are based on subjective experience rather than actual data!

Overriding the MJJAS/OYAS-DET

The survey also sought to understand what jurisdictions constitute as an "override" of the tool. In other words, what factors contribute to jurisdictions making detention decisions that are not aligned with the *implied* recommendation of the detention screening tool. When asked who has the authority to override results of the detention screener, a majority of respondents (53%) reported that the judicial officer/jurist has the authority. Below we describe the top 3 factors for overriding the detention screener score as reported by survey respondents.

Top 3 factors for **overriding** a score from survey respondents:

HIGH SCORE

(Override = do not detain)



Lack of available detention beds



Mental health factors



Need for psychiatric care

MODERATE SCORE

(Override not applicable)



Mental health factors



Need for psychiatric care



Age of youth

LOW SCORE

(Override = detain)



Charges



Youth likely to flee



Knowledge of community risk

A majority of survey respondents (53%) reported the judicial officer/jurist has the authority to override the score.

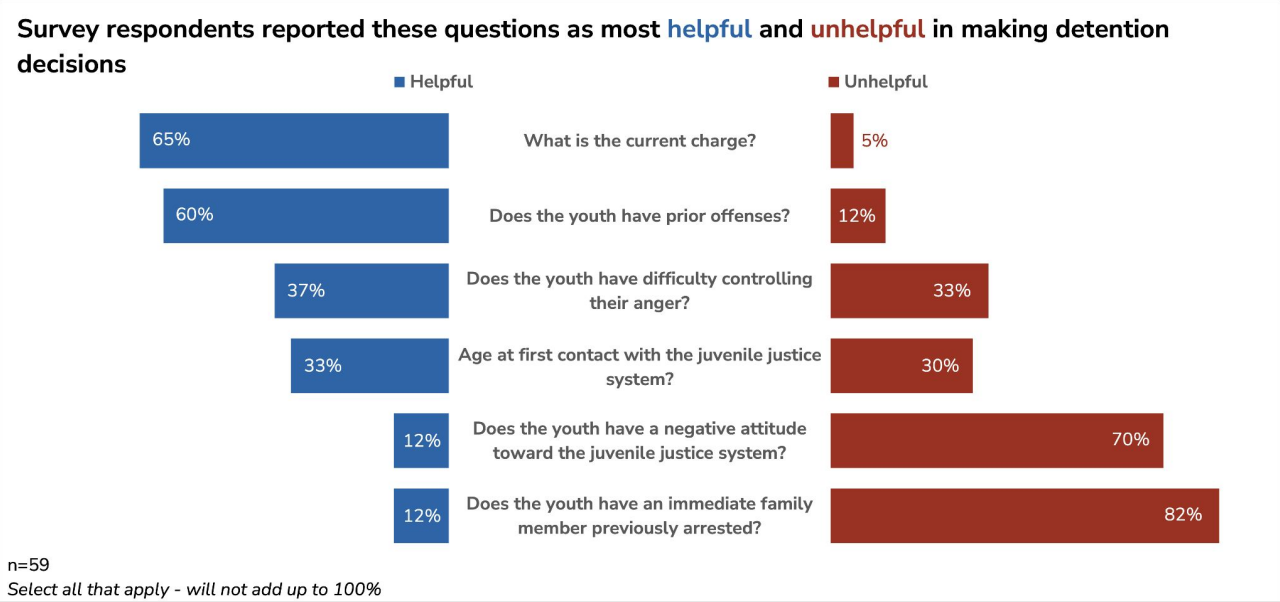
Perceptions of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET

To better understand current perceptions of the detention screener, participants were asked which questions on the MJJAS/OYAS-DET they believe to be most helpful and unhelpful for making detention decisions. As shown in figure 11, respondents indicated that the following questions are most helpful in making detention decisions: 1) What is the current charge?; and 2) Does the youth have prior offenses? This aligns with what participants shared during individual interviews regarding the information they believe to be the most important when considering detention for youth.

However, a large majority of participants reported that questions about family arrest history and youth's negative attitude toward the juvenile justice system are unhelpful in making detention decisions (see figure 11).

Respondents expressed concerns that answers to these questions will not change over time. The "static" nature of these questions was noted by participants as unhelpful in assessing a youth's current and immediate risk to themselves, others, and/or the community. Participants also expressed concerns that youth who score high on the detention screener will always score high due to these questions. Additionally, participants shared that asking youth about their attitude toward the juvenile justice system and their ability to control their anger at the time of arrest may lead to skewed responses. When asked how jurisdictions handle questions they find unhelpful, a majority (65%) of respondents reported that they still ask these questions, but do not rely heavily on the youth's response.

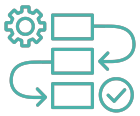
Figure 11.



"Objective factors are relevant and helpful when determining risk to the community. We use this information when making detention decisions."

"Decisions of your family should not influence whether or not you should be lodged in detention."

Implementation Benefits



Helped some jurisdictions **formalize** their detention screening process

"We actually have a written procedure in place. We hadn't had a written procedure around detention and our full policy around detention."



Helped some jurisdictions **improve relationships** with law enforcement

"Overall our relationship with law enforcement has been pretty positive. I think they really understand the purpose of it (...) It has been an opportunity to educate [them]."



Some reported decreased detentions for non-serious offenses

"The screener has resulted in less detentions. This is generally a good result, overall. There are decreased instances of detention for non-serious offenses."



Enhanced structured decision-making processes

"Gives legal support for decisions not to detain youth. This helps with parents who want their kids locked up."



Provides some level of objectivity when making detention decisions

"Having a numerical value / risk score to guide decision making [is helpful]."

Implementation Barriers



Limited access to training and inability to get all necessary staff trained

"Getting all the required people trained on [the tool] continues to be a barrier."



Difficulty implementing the tool in person after hours

"It is virtually impossible to conduct the screener with fidelity during non-court hours."



Difficult to administer the tool in situations where youth are in crisis

"Youth escalation makes it difficult/impossible to ask questions. Some youth have become increasingly agitated when asked questions, especially those questions that do not pertain to the situation at hand."



Several questions in the tool are "static" and potentially biased creating concern

"I don't like how there's so many static variables. It feels like if a kid scores high they're always going to be high risk, right?"



Difficulty developing buy-in with a new process

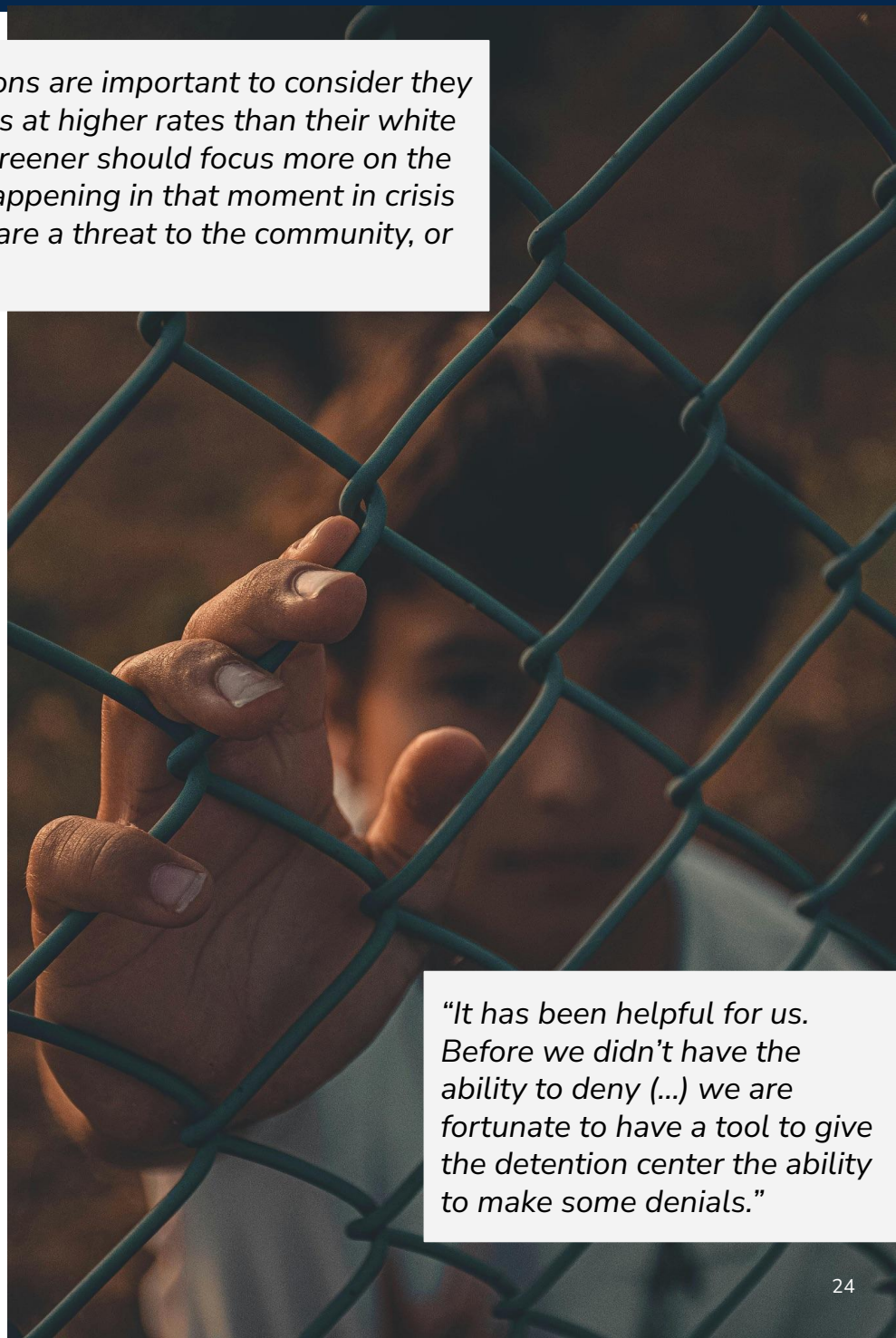
"Law enforcement does not like the process of having our staff screen the youth, especially when they are found to be low risk and will require the police to transport them home."

"While these questions are important to consider they will impact minorities at higher rates than their white counterparts. The screener should focus more on the youth and what is happening in that moment in crisis to determine if they are a threat to the community, or themselves."

Summary

Overall, results indicate that jurisdictions are administering the detention screener as mandated, however, many reported they do not rely heavily on the results for detention decision-making. While some questions on the detention screener were reported as helpful, participants raised concerns about the biased and static nature of some of the questions. Additionally, participants reported that they do not believe that some of the questions on the detention screener are relevant for assessing risk level and making detention decisions.

Some jurisdictions have found the detention screener and the mandate overall to be helpful for formalizing their policies and improving relationships with law enforcement, however, this is not the case for all with many indicating that the detention screener has not changed their current practices significantly. Additionally, jurisdictions have had difficulty implementing the detention screener with fidelity due to operational realities.



"It has been helpful for us. Before we didn't have the ability to deny (...) we are fortunate to have a tool to give the detention center the ability to make some denials."

Pre-Post Detention Admission and Release Data

In addition to capturing jurisdictions' detention decision-making process and perceptions of the detention screener, we also utilized the survey to try and capture high level data from participants regarding their detention admission and release rates. As shown in the images included here, the survey asked jurisdictions to provide detention data pre mandate (October 1, 2023-March 31, 2024) and post mandate (October 1, 2024-March 31, 2025).

Pre-Mandate

For the period of October 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

Total number of referrals	**Total #**
Not detained	#
Detained	#
For those detained	
Released on first court appearance	#
Continued in detention on first court appearance	#

Post-Mandate

For the period of October 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

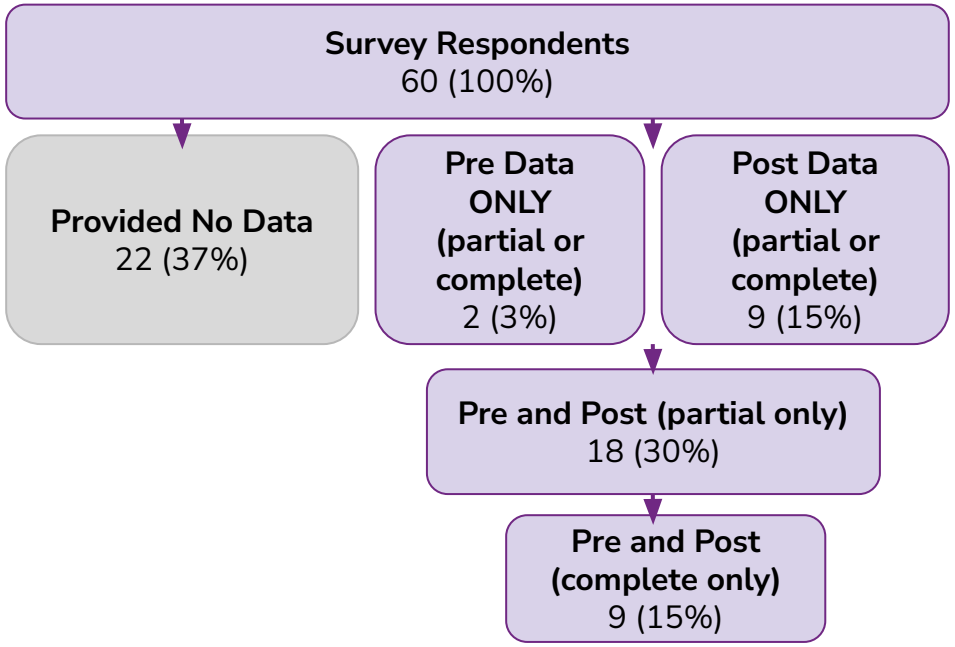
		Screening Tool Score		
	NOT SCREENED	**LOW**	**MODERATE**	**HIGH**
For all referrals				
Not detained	#	#	#	#
Detained	#	#	#	#
For those detained				
Released on first court appearance	#	#	#	#
Continued in detention on first court appearance	#	#	#	#

Sample

As shown in figure 12, we did not receive complete pre and post data from all survey respondents. Of the 60 counties that completed a survey, 22 did not provide any pre or post mandate detention data. 18 counties provided both pre and post data, however, this data was incomplete. Only 9 counties (15%) provided *complete* pre and post mandate data. Therefore, our analysis of this data **only includes the 9 counties** who provided complete pre and post mandate detention data. It is important to note that results presented in this section of the report are only representative of a subset of the larger data sample.

The 9 counties who provided complete pre and post data represent a range of county population sizes and include one large county and eight small/medium counties. Additionally, these counties represent a range of geographic locations across the state of Michigan including the Upper Peninsula. In terms of the extent to which the detention screener influences their detention decision, about half reported it does not influence their decision at all while the other half reported that it influences their decision to a great extent. Therefore, despite these results representing a small sample of counties, there is some degree of variation in their geographic location, size, and perceptions of the detention screener.

Figure 12.



Limitations

Before diving into the findings of this data, it is important to first note several limitations that should be considered when interpreting this data and using results. Below we outline the major limitations of the detention data:

- **Small sample size:** We only received complete pre and post mandate data from 9 counties, therefore, our analysis is limited to a very small sample of counties and is not representative for the state of Michigan.
- **Snapshot:** The data represent a point in time (6 months post mandate), which means we cannot determine if the observed changes are *caused* by the detention screener. **We cannot establish cause and effect.**
- **Other external factors:** External factors or other changes in process may influence the results we see in the survey that we are not able to control for.
- **Operational Limitations:** Information management systems and data collection practices vary widely across jurisdictions; many jurisdictions do not have an easy way to count requests for detention that were denied (no detention admission occurred). Not all counties have the current capacity to track all of the data we requested.
- **Aggregate data:** Our analysis relies on aggregate, secondary data rather than youth-level data.
- **Outlier effect:** One of the 9 counties that provided data was large which represents an outlier in this small data set and could be skewing the results.



There are several limitations to be aware of when interpreting this data and using results.

Findings

As shown in figure 13, the rate of detention pre-post mandate did not change. Of the 9 counties included in our sample, 88% of youth were detained pre and post mandate. This high rate of detention did not change in the wake of the mandate for these 9 counties. Additionally, as shown in figure 14, among detained youth considered for release at their 24-hour hearing, a majority are continued in detention both pre and post mandate. Furthermore, the rate of continuance actually increased from pre to post mandate (74% and 85% respectively). Despite seeing a slight increase in detention continuation from pre to post mandate, our results do not indicate that the detention screening tool has contributed directly to this increase nor did it mitigate it.

Figure 13.

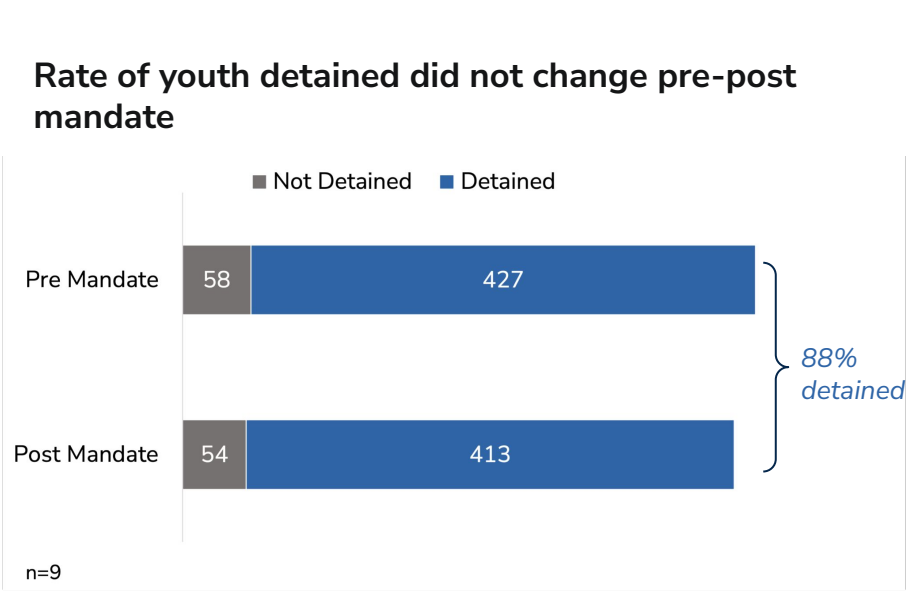
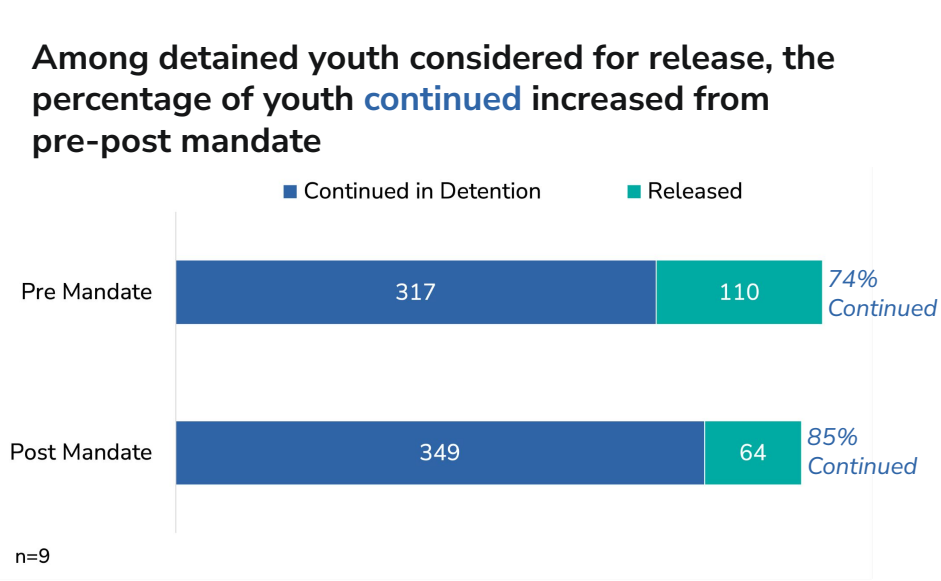


Figure 14.



POST ONLY DATA

When examining only the post mandate data, this finding becomes more clear. Regardless of youth score on the detention screener, a majority of youth were detained and continued in detention for these 9 counties. As shown in figure 15, very few youth scored low on the detention screener and nearly half score moderate, a classification that does not provide the decision-maker with any particular guidance on what to do with respect to detention. Additionally, a majority of youth were detained in these 9 counties regardless of their detention screening score. This is also the case for youth who were continued in detention (see figure 16). Examining the release decisions by youth score on the detention screener further indicates that there was no relationship between the youth's score on the detention screener and whether or not they were continued in detention.

Figure 15.

The tool does not appear to have a significant impact on detention decision making for these counties.

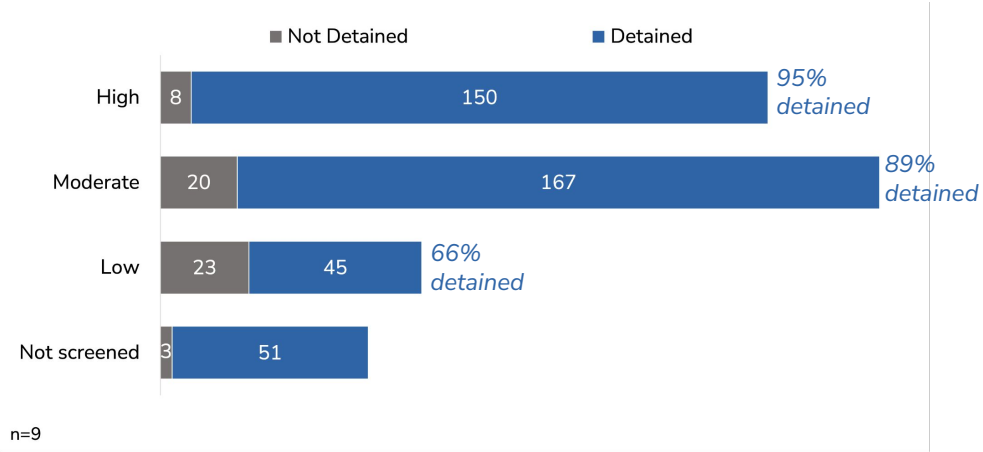
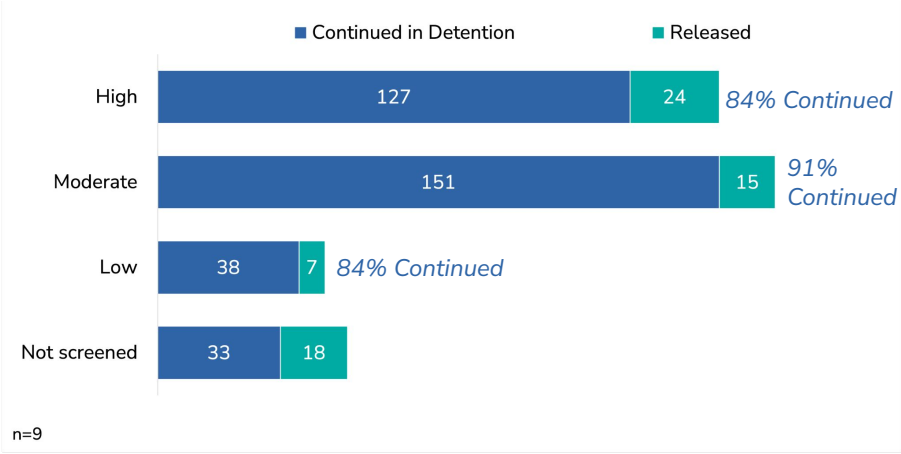


Figure 16.

No relationship between youth's score on the tool and whether or not they continued in detention for these counties.



Summary

Data from the 9 counties shows that there was no change in the rate of youth being placed in detention pre-post mandate, yet there was a higher percentage of youth being continued in detention at the 24 hour hearing. This combined with the finding that there appears to be no significant relationship between the screening tool score and the detention decision indicates that youth are being detained *regardless* of their screening score and remaining in detention longer. Longer stays in detention may point to a lack of community-based alternatives to detention[2]. Additionally, when a screening tool produces a majority of moderate or middle value scores, as our findings for the 9 counties presented above indicates, the tool being utilized may be limited in its ability to differentiate between effective scoring cutoffs for decision-making[3].

Given the limitations described above, the conclusions we are able to draw from this data are *very* limited. We cannot say that any changes in detention admission and releases are *caused* by the addition of the detention screener. Incomplete data indicates a barrier to being able to evaluate the implementation of any detention screening tool and how the tool might impact decision-making in the future. More robust data collection and analysis are needed to determine the extent to which detention admission and release rates have changed since the implementation of the mandated detention screener.



[2] Labriola, M. M., Peterson, S., Woods, D., Vermeer, M. J. D., & Jackson, B. A. (2024). *Community-Based Alternatives to Youth Incarceration* (RR-A108-25). RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA108-25.html

[3] Boateng, G. O., Neilands, T. B., Frongillo, E. A., Melgar-Quiñonez, H. R., & Young, S. L. (2018). Best practices for developing and validating scales for health, social, and behavioral research: A primer. *Frontiers in Public Health, 6*, Article 149. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00149

III RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PRACTITIONERS

"Availability of training- they are always full and the training is worthless."

★ **Training:** There is a need for more training opportunities to ensure all staff who need to administer the tool are properly trained. Additionally, recommendation for shorter trainings as well as refreshers and technical assistance.

"Some of the questions are biased and results do not reflect risk to the community."

★ **Remove Biased & Static Questions**: There is a desire for questions in the screener to focus on assessing real-time safety risks. Additionally, questions should be relevant to information needed to make detention decisions.

We heard that the most important information for detention decision-making includes:

- Youth charges
- Youth age
- Risk to the community or themselves
- Risk of flight
- Availability of alternative placement

"It is sometimes difficult to administer the screening immediately following youth contact with law enforcement as the youth is often agitated and may be uncooperative."

★ **Flexible Administration Process:** Allow for counties to administer the detention screener in a manner that best aligns with their operational realities. Face-to-Face administration is not always possible and the tool should allow for multiple administration formats.

"The screener is left to determine whether to admit or release, there are no concrete guidelines for determination."

"It is a tool that can be used along with other criteria"

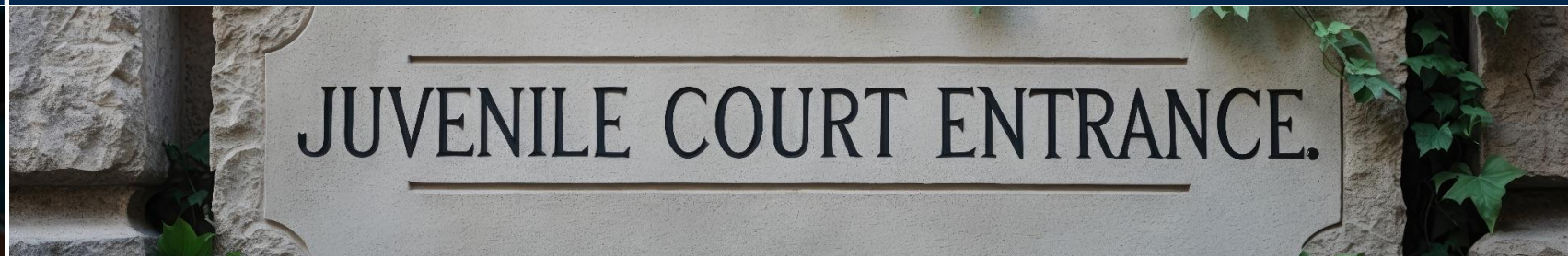
- **Provide Clearer Guidance:** Respondents appreciated that the tool provides a risk assessment score, however, there is a desire for more guidance on what the score means in terms of detention decisions. Additionally, clearer definitions of what constitutes an override of the tool was requested.
- **Continue to Allow for the Use of Multiple Tools:** Respondents appreciated that they are able to use other tools and consider other factors beyond the detention screener when making detention decisions.





IV SUMMARY





- ★ Overall, participants reported that they appreciated the intention of the mandate and efforts to provide some standardization to detention decision-making across the state of Michigan.
- ★ For some, the addition of the MJJAS/OYES-DET offered an opportunity to implement a formal tool for the first time which helped to establish more structured decision making around detention.
- ★ For others, the addition of the MJJAS/OYES-DET formalized their existing process and detention policies.
- ★ While there was agreement that some questions on the MJJAS/OYES-DET are helpful, most agreed that many of the questions are “static” and introduce a great degree of bias. This potential for bias has caused a lot of concern.
- ★ Results indicate that there is a desire for improvements and a shared belief that there may be better tools and/or processes for the State of Michigan.

Appendix A.

Methodology

Evaluation Approach

This process evaluation utilized a mixed-methods approach with an aim to a) understand the detention screening process across the state of Michigan before and after the implementation of the detention screener; b) understand the extent to which the detention screening tool has contributed to changes in the detention screening process; and c) capture current perceptions of the detention screener. Table 1 on the next page outlines our methodology matrix which includes the key evaluation questions, data collection methods, and analysis plan.

Given our interest in understanding changes in the detention screening and decision-making process pre and post mandate, we asked participants to report on two distinct time periods: October 1, 2023-March 31, 2024 (pre) and October 1, 2024-March 31, 2025 (post). Therefore, results included in this report are reflective of those two time periods.

Data Collection

To address the key evaluation questions, a mixed-methods approach was utilized. A survey was developed collaboratively with the evaluation workgroup to capture jurisdictions' detention screening process pre-post mandate and current perceptions of the detention screener. Additionally, the survey was utilized to collect aggregate-level detention admission and release data. This survey was administered via qualtrics, an online survey platform to all 83 counties in Michigan.

Tribal communities were not included in our sample given they operate independently of Michigan court rules. The survey received a 72.3% response rate (n=60). In addition to a survey, the PEG team conducted a sample of group interviews with select jurisdictions (n=5) to capture more in depth information regarding survey findings. A randomly selected, convenience sample of jurisdictions were invited to participate in an interview. Sampling procedures for interviews aimed to capture a diversity of counties and experiences.

Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed using SPSS v. 29. Univariate analyses included calculating frequencies and means and were used to summarize key measures. Key measures from the survey included: pre-post mandate detention decision-making process, administration process of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET, perceptions of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET, and aggregate secondary detention data.

Qualitative data including open-ended survey responses and interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Table 1. Methodology Matrix

Evaluation Question	Construct	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Plan
What was the detention screening process prior to the mandate?	Description of the detention screening process (pre mandate)	Survey Review of secondary data collected by MDHHS Sample of interviews informed by survey results	Descriptive statistics; Thematic analysis of qualitative data
To what extent has implementation of the tool contributed to changes in the detention decision process?	Description of the detention screening process (post mandate) Changes in the process	Survey Sample of interviews informed by survey results	Descriptive statistics; Thematic analysis for qualitative data
How are select sites implementing the MJJAS/OYAS-DET screening tool?	Implementation Process	Review of training materials/key documents Survey Sample of interviews informed by survey results	Thematic qualitative analysis
To what extent has there been a change in detention admission decisions and rates in the 6 months post implementation of the MJJAS? To what extent has there been a change in 24-hour release decisions and rates in the 6 months post implementation of the MJJAS?	Volume of referrals Detention population Youth detention admission Youth detention release	Aggregate data from sites	Descriptive statistics; descriptively compare rates 6 months post (Oct 24-Mar 25) and same period 6 months pre (Oct 23-Mar 24).

Limitations of Survey Data

As with all surveys, there are several limitations to be aware of when interpreting and using results.

- **Sampling:** While we achieved a very strong response rate on the survey, we are still missing 23 counties, therefore this data may not be representative of all counties in Michigan. Additionally, this survey did not include the tribal communities and therefore our results do not speak to their process.
- **Point-in-Time:** The data represent a point in time. Detention screening processes may change and the use of the MJJAS/OYAS-DET may also change. Therefore, these results are only representative of the time point at which they were collected.
- **Potential for Response Bias**: Given that use of the detention screener is mandated by the state of Michigan, respondents may not have felt comfortable answering honestly about their use and perceptions of the detention screener.
- **Duplicate Responses:** Some counties submitted duplicate survey responses which were then combined and cleaned during analysis to achieve one response per county. Perspectives within the county may differ depending on who the respondent was.

Limitations of Secondary Detention Data Request

There are several limitations to be aware of when interpreting results of the aggregate detention data and using these results.

- **Small sample size:** We only received complete pre and post mandate data from 9 counties, therefore, our analysis is limited to a very small sample of counties and is not representative for the state of Michigan.
- **Point-in-Time:** The data represent a very limited point in time (6 months post mandate), which means we cannot determine if the observed changes are *caused* by the detention screener. **We cannot establish cause and effect.**
- **Other external factors:** External factors or other changes in process may influence the results we see in the survey. Without controlling for these other influences, these survey results cannot establish a true cause-and-effect relationship between the detention screener and changes in detention data.
- **Operational Limitations:** Information management systems and data collection practices vary widely across jurisdictions; many jurisdictions do not have an easy way to count requests for detention that were denied (no detention admission occurred). Not all counties have the current capacity to track all of the data we requested.
- **Aggregate data:** Our analysis relies on aggregate, secondary data rather than youth-level data.
- **Outlier effect:** One of the 9 counties that provided data was large which represents an outlier in this small data set and could be skewing the results.