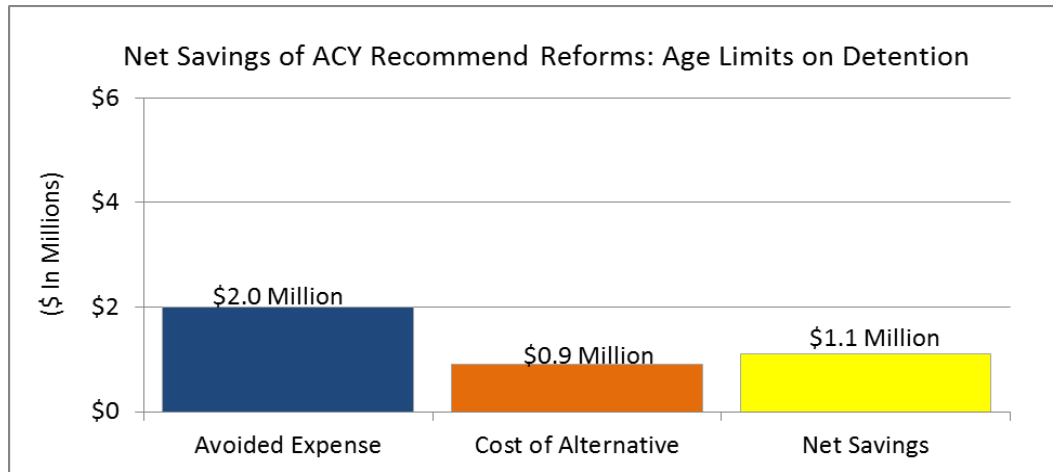


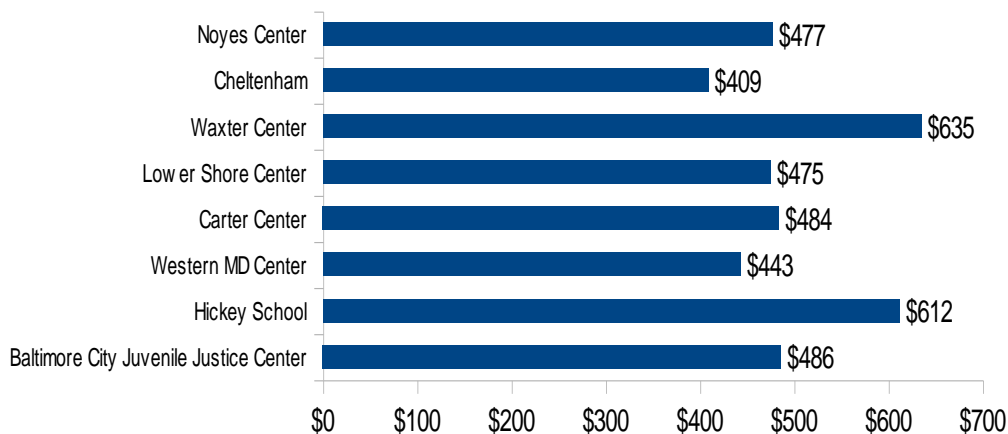
## The High Cost of Detaining Youth: A Juvenile Services Challenge & Opportunity

To supplement the ongoing reform efforts and to help ease the deep-end fiscal pressures, Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) recommends an age limit of 14 for pre-trial detention. Most importantly, this specific reform will keep the youngest, most vulnerable youth out of detention facilities. Accounting for the cost of alternative programs related to the mandated age limits for detention this reform could produce a net savings of about \$1.1 million in the first year alone.

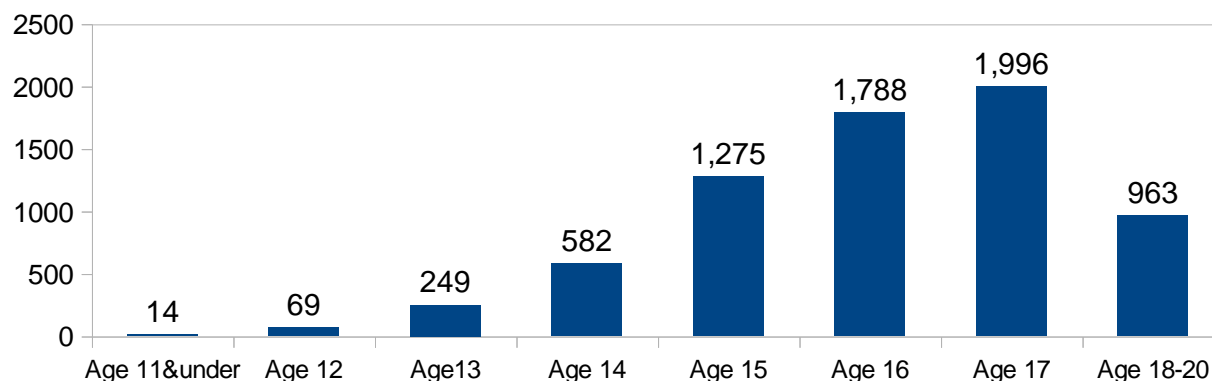


While awaiting trial, youth in the Maryland juvenile justice system—a few as young as 11 years old—spend more than two weeks on average locked up in a state-operated detention facility. State detention facilities are very expensive to operate with an average cost of more than \$500 per youth for each day (Exhibit 2)

### State Operated Facilities - FY 2013 Per Diem Cost



## FY 2011 Placements in State Juvenile Detention Facilities By Age



In FY 2011, Maryland spent \$44 million on pre-trial detention for juvenile youth. About 332 youth under the age of 14 were placed in a state facility, either in pre-trial detention or pending placement. About 305 of these youth under 14 were detained pre-trial.

### Legislative Solutions

Senate Bill 732 (cross-filed as House Bill 711) in the 2013 Legislative Session would prohibit placement of these youth in detention, except on an emergency basis or for certain youth convicted of very serious crimes. The large majority of youth under 14 would safely return to their communities and be referred to alternatives to detention programs. ACY supports these bills and continues to recommend that juvenile youth under the age of 14 are not appropriate for placement in state detention facilities. ACY estimates that Maryland would save \$1.1 million a year by diverting these youth under age 14 from detention to a community-based alternative.

Over recent years, Maryland has boosted investment in detention alternatives and expanded capacity of these programs. As the FY 2011 DJS Data Resource Guide states, the state benefits from a “variety of programs to safely supervise youth in the community as an alternative to secure detention pending adjudication.” These alternatives could more appropriately serve these youngest of juvenile youth. In FY 2011, 6,638 youth statewide returned to their community and were referred to alternatives to detention programs, including Community Detention/Electronic Monitoring (CD/EM), Day-Evening Reporting Centers, Pre-Adjudication Coordination and Treatment Center (PACT), and Shelter Care. By allowing juveniles to remain in the community and in school and to maintain their ties with family, these programs benefit Maryland's youth. They also save the state money, as detention alternatives have a per diem cost less than \$80, compared to a statewide average per diem cost for detention facilities of \$500.

These youth under age 14 awaiting trial would be diverted into pre-trial detention alternatives; and not an evidence-based practice (EBP) that serves post-adjudication youth, like Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) or Family Functional Therapy (FFT). Indeed, as the DJS FY 2011 Data Resource Guide reports, “The FFT and MST programs are primarily alternatives to group homes.” Diverting 305 youth from detention would save just under \$2 million per year. About 80% of the detention alternatives population is referred to the CD/EM program, so increased utilization of that program would cost about \$750,000; and increased use of the other three alternatives would add about \$150,000, for a total cost of about \$900,000 in additional use of detention alternatives for children under the age of 14. The youngest juveniles can remain in school and with family; and the state could save more than \$1.1 million a year.

### Net Savings - Age-Limited Detention Under Age 14

