

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/juvenile-justice-advocates-express-concern-about-youth-shelter-care-non-secure>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

[Skip to main content](#)

COLUMBUS The ACLU of Ohio, Center for Children's Law and Policy, Children's Law Center, Juvenile Justice Coalition, National Association of Social Workers-Ohio Chapter, and Policy Matters Ohio sent a letter to Director Gies of the Ohio Department of Youth Services, Director Hall of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, juvenile judges, and court administrators to express concern about youth in shelter care and non-secure residential facilities being unnecessarily exposed to COVID-19. The organizations acknowledged and thanked Director Gies for recent transparency efforts to publicize information about youth in detention and correctional facilities across the state, but urge immediate action steps for all-systems involved youth.

Youth in shelter care and non-secure residential facilities may live in close quarters, be required to congregate in groups, and experience unsanitary conditions. To prevent the disastrous spread of COVID-19, Ohio must be transparent about policies to protect all systems-involved youth, not just those in secure detention facilities, noted Claire Chevrier, Policy Counsel for the ACLU of Ohio.

The juvenile justice organizations recommended that DYS emergency policies include each of the following measures: population reduction, education, programming and social connections, staffing plans, hygiene, screenings, housing and treatment, data, and legal contacts.

Each of our recommendations are necessary to preserve the lives of youth, staff, and members of our communities. Most importantly, youth in delinquency proceedings must be released, there must be ready access to adequate hygiene supplies, courses of treatment must be evidence-based, and the collection of data regarding COVID-19 in these facilities must be made public, concluded Chevrier.

[A copy of the letter is available.](#)

Stay informed

2022 ACLU of Ohio