

MPIA 25-120

Jennifer Gruskin & Bailey Templeton

Dear Ms. Gruskin and Ms. Templeton:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (“the Department”) received your letter dated September 18, 2025, in which you request certain records under the Public Information Act (“PIA”), Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article (“GP”), § § 4-101, et seq. Specifically, you requested data related to children in out-of-home care who were reported as “missing” for the period of calendar year 2020 through the present.

The Department has reviewed its records and fulfilled your request with any available records.

RECORDS REQUESTED:

- **Annual totals of children in Maryland foster care placements reported missing each year. A breakdown by category of missing status, including (but not limited):**
 - **Children who ran away from foster care placements**
 - **Children abducted from foster care placements**
 - **Children with unknown whereabouts (location not determined at time of report)**
 - **Any other classification of missing status tracked by the Department**
- **Information, where available, on the duration of missing status (for example, average or median length of time before a child was located or remains missing).**

Response: We are able to present information based on what workers select in our system of record, the Child, Juvenile, and Adult Management System (CJAMS). The CJAMS options for the categories of youth you requested initially included two choices, 1) “runaway” and 2) “unknown whereabouts.” In 2021, the agency discontinued the “unknown whereabouts” category, resulting in these categories of children all being captured under “runaway.” Thus, this category could include:

1. Youth who have run away from their placement.
2. Youth who have been abducted by a parent (e.g., a parent has visitation with their child and takes the child from a visit in violation of a court order).
3. Youth who are sheltered before they are physically located by the Local Department of Social Services and police.

Please note that the count of youth by year will not equal the total count of youth since a youth may have entered a runaway status multiple times across years. All categories count the number of youth, not the number of incidents. If a child runs away more than once, the data only counts them once. However, the “year status began” data may include the same youth more than once if they were on runaway or whereabouts unknown status in multiple and different years. Data is as of August 17, 2025. Data for 2025 is a partial year.

	Youth with status marked as “Runaway” or “Unknown Whereabouts” (see explanatory note above)
Unique count of youth who have been on runaway status for the entire period (calendar year 2020 through the present)	990
Median length of status (days)	26

Year status began	Youth with status marked as “Runaway” or “Unknown Whereabouts” (see explanatory note above)
2020	301
2021	266
2022	226
2023	254

2024	274
2025	166

- For each category, if available, a breakdown by age group, gender, and county of jurisdiction

Response: Please see below:

Age group	Youth with status marked as “Runaway” or “Unknown Whereabouts” (see explanatory note above)
0-9 yrs	29
10-13 yrs	66
14-17 yrs	585
18+ yrs	310
Total	990

Gender	Youth with status marked as “Runaway” or “Unknown Whereabouts” (see explanatory note above)
Female	562
Male	417
Transgender	11

Total	990
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LDSS	Youth with status marked as “Runaway” or “Unknown Whereabouts” (see explanatory note above)
Allegany	*
Anne Arundel	42
Baltimore City	411
Baltimore County	181
Calvert	12
Caroline	*
Carroll	*
Cecil	23
Charles	11
Dorchester	*
Frederick	14
Garrett	*

Harford	31
Howard	29
Kent	*
Montgomery	43
Prince George's	97
Queen Anne's	*
Somerset	*
St. Mary's	14
Talbot	*
Washington	33
Wicomico	10
Worcester	10
Total	990

**Counts under 10, including 0, are not shown to protect individual privacy.*

- **Copies of any policies, procedures, or guidelines that DHS and/or local child welfare agencies follow when a foster child is reported missing.**

Response: Please see COMAR [07.02.11.18](#) and Policy [#23-01](#)- Children and Young Adults in State Care or Under State Supervision Who are Missing.

All responsive records have been released, and your request has been fulfilled. Anyone who has the link can access the document. No sign-in is required. Links expire after one month.

Pursuant to GP § 4-362, you are entitled to seek judicial review of this decision. Alternatively, you may file a request for mediation with the Public Access Ombudsman and, if the Ombudsman is unable to resolve the matter, you may subsequently seek a resolution from the Public Information Act Compliance Board for matters within the Compliance Board's jurisdiction. See GP §§ 4-1A-01, et seq. and 4-1B-01, et seq. You may also contact us via the agency PIA web portal with any questions you have about this letter.

For further information about the Public Information Act, please view the Maryland Office of the Attorney General - [Public Information Act Manual](#).

Sincerely,
Maryland Department of Human Services
PIA Coordinator