

Final Report

Senate Bill 25-151 Residential Child Care Facility Survey Results: Physical Infrastructure to Prevent Young People from Running Away from Care.

Colorado provides out-of-home care to some of the state's most vulnerable young people. When young people run from out-of-home care, they can be subjected to a number of dangerous circumstances including drug use, human trafficking, attempted suicide and exposure to unsafe surroundings such as traffic and unfamiliar areas.¹ According to the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), more than 1,000 young people have run from care since 2020.² Many of these young people have run from safe facilities into dangerous, and sometimes even fatal, environments.

To prevent the dangers of running, some residential child care facilities have physical infrastructure in place – such as fencing, alarms and delayed locks – to prevent or discourage young people from running from care. However, it is not clear how many facilities in Colorado have such infrastructure in place, how effective they are at preventing runs and whether facility leadership feel additional infrastructure is necessary to prevent future runs. In 2022, the Colorado General Assembly created the Timothy Montoya Task Force to Prevent Children from Running Away from Out-of-Home Placement in House Bill 22-1375.³ This task force was charged with studying related issues and developing recommendations. One recommendation called for surveying residential child care facilities about physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running.⁴

In 2025, the Colorado legislature enacted Senate Bill 25-151⁵ which created a requirement for the Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) to conduct a survey of the physical infrastructure of residential child care facilities, including both what facilities currently have and what they feel they need in order to prevent young people from running. As required in the bill, this document summarizes the results of that survey. The following sections of this report will provide information on the origin and context of this survey, describe how the survey was created, summarize the results of the survey and offer some concluding thoughts.

Overall, survey results demonstrated the following:

- No clear consensus emerged regarding the types of physical infrastructure facilities currently have in place nor was there consensus regarding what facility leaders felt would be effective at preventing or reducing incidents of young people running away.
- Facility leaders want to create therapeutic environments for young people in their care while also ensuring their safety – and are often open to considering new options for doing so.

- The unique circumstances and settings at each facility – including the individual needs of the young people being served – suggest against adopting a one-size-fits-all solution.

SURVEY BACKGROUND

The Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman

The CPO is an independent state agency charged with monitoring the state's child protection system, listening to the public about their experiences with and helping to resolve concerns about that system and addressing systemic issues in order to ensure all young people and their families receive high-quality services.⁶ For nearly a decade, the agency has closely monitored the services offered at residential child care facilities, studied the laws and regulations that guide how such placements are monitored and managed and engaged with families that have experienced placements at these facilities. The CPO's unique position as an independent state agency led to its selection as the entity to conduct both the Timothy Montoya Task Force and the resulting survey of residential child care facilities.

The Timothy Montoya Task Force to Prevent Youth from Running Away from Out-of-Home Placement

In 2020, 12-year-old Timothy Montoya was hit and killed by a car after he ran away from a residential child care facility. In response to this tragedy and to prevent others like it, the Colorado legislature passed HB 22-1375, which established the Timothy Montoya Task Force to Prevent Youth from Running from Out-of-Home Placement. This task force was tasked with analyzing – and potentially developing recommendations regarding – eight directives from the legislature. During a two-year period, the task force met 23 times and had 57 hours of nuanced and thoughtful discussion on this important topic. In 2024, it released its final report which contained recommendations to improve systems and practices in Colorado to reduce and carefully respond to incidents of young people running from care.⁷

Task force discussions often highlighted the tensions felt by residential child care facility leadership between potentially or seemingly competing ideals. Facilities want to provide therapeutic, home-like environments for young people on one hand, while also wanting to ensure they do not run away on the other. The task force spent a significant amount of time discussing physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running from care, such as locked doors, alarms or lighting systems.⁸ In these discussions, task force members often voiced concerns about not wanting to create a prison-like environment for the young people in the care of these facilities who are there through no fault of their own, while also acknowledging the potential dangers that exist if they were to run from care. Task force members were interested to learn about the full range of physical hardware options. For instance, instead of the extreme options of either having all doors locked or unlocked, some facilities employ delayed egress locks which open after a set amount of time has passed, often triggering an alarm in order to alert staff that somebody is attempting to open the door.

¹ Branscum, Caralin and Tara N. Richards. ["An updated examination of the predictors of running away from foster care in the United States and trends over ten years \(2010-2019\)."](#) Child Abuse & Neglect, vol. 129, 2022.

² See CDHS website, ["Children Currently in Out of Home Placement"](#) page for quarterly data on young people who run from care. As of June 29, 2026, this website reported that 1,117 young people had run from care between January 2020 and March 31, 2026.

³ See [House Bill 22-1375](#), Child Residential Treatment and Runaway Youth, codified in C.R.S. 19-3.3-111. See CPO website, [Timothy Montoya Task Force](#) page for additional information.

⁴ See ["Timothy Montoya Task Force Final Report"](#), ["Final Report Snapshot"](#) and ["Executive Summary"](#). See Recommendation 6(A).

⁵ See [Senate Bill 25-151](#), Measures to Prevent Youth from Running Away, with survey provisions codified in C.R.S. 19-3.3-112. The full text of this bill can also be found in ["Appendix A: Senate Bill 25-151"](#).

⁶ See § C.R.S. 19-3.3-101 – 113 for the CPO's enabling statute

⁷ See ["Timothy Montoya Task Force Final Report"](#), ["Final Report Snapshot"](#) and ["Executive Summary"](#).

⁸ See ["Appendix B: State Policies Regarding Hardware Use to Prevent Children from Running from Care"](#), a research document created by the CPO for the task force compiling related policies in other states.

Task force members often cautioned against developing one-size-fits-all policies, in recognition that facilities can operate in very different ways, serve very different populations and exist in very different parts of the state. What works for a small, rural facility with plenty of open space surrounding its structure may not be appropriate or necessary for a large, urban facility located right next to a high-traffic major road. The physical environment immediately outside of a facility, such as a busy thoroughfare, may bring extra urgency to efforts to prevent young people from running, as traffic would pose a particularly high danger to those young people. Similarly, if a young person were to run away from a facility located in a remote location, that setting would bring about its own set of unique and potential dangers.

Although there was disagreement among task force members about how to best solve the problem of young people running from care, a consensus emerged that more information was needed regarding what types of physical infrastructure facilities currently have and what they feel they need in order to prevent young people from running. This led to the development of Recommendation 6(A), Additional Assessment of Physical Infrastructure Needs:

“The Colorado General Assembly should fund a statewide assessment of additional physical infrastructure within residential facilities to help prevent children and youth from running from out-of-home care. This study should include the use of delayed locks, fencing and alarms. Funding should also be provided for the implementation of these mechanisms, if the study finds their use to be appropriate.”

Senate Bill 25-151

Senate Bill 25-151 was introduced to implement some of the recommendations issued by the task force – including Recommendation 6(A) – and was signed into law on April 10, 2025. That bill created a requirement for the CPO to do the following:

Conduct a statewide inventory survey of the physical infrastructure of residential child care facilities to address, at a minimum:

- i) The physical infrastructure currently in place to deter children and youth from running away; and
- ii) The physical infrastructure needed to deter children and youth from running away.

The bill also requires the CPO to submit a report *“that summarizes the results of the physical infrastructure survey of residential child care facilities.”*

State and Facility Fiscal Constraints

The CPO acknowledges that recent state budget shortfalls have limited the ability of the state to take on large new projects or investments. In both the 2025 and 2026 legislative sessions, many bills were amended or reconfigured so as to reduce costs and improve the likelihood that they would be enacted. Similarly, residential child care facility leaders have made it clear that many facilities are also facing tightened budgets. One facility leader told the CPO that if the state were to require facilities to pay for the installation of physical infrastructure such as a perimeter fence, that facility would be forced to shut down. These financial constraints should be carefully considered when weighing options regarding physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Development and Outreach

Drawing from the requirements of SB 25-151, and reflective of the discussions held by the task force, the CPO drafted a 45-question survey for residential child care facilities.⁹ The agency distributed a draft to members of the task force with direct experience providing services in residential settings, the executive director of the Colorado Association of Family & Children’s Agencies (CAFCA), facility leadership, senior members of CDHS and young people with lived experience through the CPO Youth Collective.¹⁰ These individuals provided helpful feedback, and

⁹ See [“Appendix C: Statewide Physical Infrastructure Survey”](#).

¹⁰ The CPO Youth Collective is dedicated to helping the agency with children, youth and young adults who have experience with the child protection system in Colorado. This program works to integrate the expertise and perspectives of those with lived experience into the CPO’s efforts to address systemic issues impacting the child protection system in the state.

the CPO adjusted the survey to incorporate suggestions. The CPO created an internal database with contact information for every facility, and confirmed with CDHS that the contact list was appropriate.

One month prior to survey release, the CPO sent an email to all facility leadership figures announcing the upcoming survey and describing efforts and events to support survey completion. These supports included the CPO hosting two virtual kickoff meetings describing the survey and answering any questions, as well as four virtual open office hour sessions answering questions and offering guidance to attendees throughout the state. Finally, the agency contacted each facility that did not complete the survey encouraging their participation. The CPO also worked with CAFCA and CDHS to aid with survey completion promotion and extended the completion deadline by a month. Ultimately, the CPO received responses from leaders representing 34 residential child care facilities throughout the state.

Survey Analysis and Interpretation

The CPO acknowledges that this survey only includes the perspectives of residential child care facility leaders and does not incorporate the perspective of young people with lived experience. Readers interested in understanding the experience and expertise of young people who have lived in residential child care facilities and have experience with running from care should view the article commissioned by the CPO and authored by the University of Denver's Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab. That report incorporates the voices of young people from focus groups to better understand runs from care.¹¹

Throughout this report, survey results will be presented in writing and portrayed using charts. Although these survey responses do not represent the entirety of facilities in the state, the CPO exercised due diligence in accumulating as many and as diverse a range of survey responses as possible, as described above.

Readers are advised to keep in mind that charts generally show a smaller subset of responses. For example, only three respondent facilities reported currently using locked fences, so the corresponding chart only reflects the viewpoint of those three facilities, rather than all facilities in Colorado or all of the respondents to this survey. Rounding was used in these charts, so all values may not add up to 100 percent.

Each section of the survey also invited respondents to provide comments in an open-text box, allowing for a more descriptive, qualitative understanding of facility circumstances and needs. As they are relevant or reflective of survey result trends, anonymized quotes from these open-text survey questions are presented.

Differentiating Survey Results by Capacity

The task force frequently discussed the potential for elements such as facility size and number of residents to impact whether a facility might currently make use of or desire to make use of physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running from care. For instance, perhaps a smaller facility with a maximum capacity of five young people would not be as interested in installing alarms as a larger facility with a capacity of 50 young people. To explore this possible connection, the CPO categorized each survey response with whether the facility has a capacity for 0-9, 10-19 or 20+ young people. Throughout this report those categories will be referred to as facilities that are small, medium or large, respectively. In the following sections, survey results are presented for all respondent facilities, and then presented by facilities across those small, medium and large capacity categories.

¹¹ See ["Strengthening Connections: Youth and Provider Perspectives on Youth Running from Out-of-Home Placements"](#).

SURVEY RESULTS

The following section provides summaries of survey responses. Respondents were asked questions falling within the following categories:

- What type of physical infrastructure does your facility currently have to prevent young people from running?
- What is your assessment of the effectiveness of each infrastructure type in preventing young people from running?
- What additional physical infrastructure do you feel your facility needs in order to prevent young people from running?

The survey specifically inquired about the following types of physical infrastructure:

- Delayed egress locks
- Alarms
- Unlocked fencing
- Locked fencing
- Signs
- Lighting systems

The survey included open-text questions offering participants the ability to provide more context or explanations about their answers. A high-level summary of the physical infrastructure use and effectiveness responses is presented in Table 1. A more detailed and descriptive summary of each type may be found in the following sections.

Table 1 Physical Infrastructure Use and Effectiveness Overview

Type of physical infrastructure	Respondent facilities using this type	Rated as effective or very effective
Delayed Egress Locks	7 of 34 (21%)	4 of 7 (57%)
Alarms	21 of 34 (62%)	9 of 21 (43%)
Unlocked Fencing	14 of 34 (41%)	0 of 14 (0%)
Locked Fencing	3 of 34 (9%)	2 of 3 (67%)
Signs	0 of 34 (0%)	0 of 0 (0%)
Lighting	16 of 34 (47%)	5 of 16 (31%)

Delayed Egress Locks

Use of Delayed Egress Locks

A door or gate equipped with a delayed egress lock will open after a set amount of time has passed, often setting off an alarm in order to alert staff that somebody is attempting to open the door. Seven of the 34 facilities reported using delayed egress locks. Of these seven facilities, three facilities reported having one delayed egress lock in place, two facilities had two in place and two facilities had 12 in place.

Facilities with larger capacity were more likely to have delayed egress locks in place than smaller facilities. Specifically, the survey results showed:

- 5 of the 11 facilities with a capacity of 20 or more young people have delayed egress locks.
- 1 of 13 facilities with a capacity of 0-9 young people have delayed egress locks.
- 1 of 10 facilities with a capacity of 10-19 young people have delayed egress locks.

Effectiveness of Delayed Egress Locks

As represented in Figure 1, a slight majority of the seven facilities with delayed egress locks believed they were either effective or very effective. One respondent believed they were very ineffective, one thought they were ineffective, another had a neutral take, two thought they were

effective and two thought they were very effective.

Provided comments reflected this mix of feedback. One respondent who believes delayed egress locks were very effective stated that delayed egress “allows for verbal de-escalation to take place in order to help regulate the client and deter from the initial desire to elope from the facility.” In contrast, another respondent who believes delayed egress locks are ineffective reported that “the youth who have been set on absconding wait the time of the delay on the egress gate.” Another facility leader, whose small facility does not use delayed egress locks, wrote that “we don’t lock the doors because they are kids” and stressed a concern for their safety if there were to be a fire as a reason for not installing any delayed egress doors or gates.

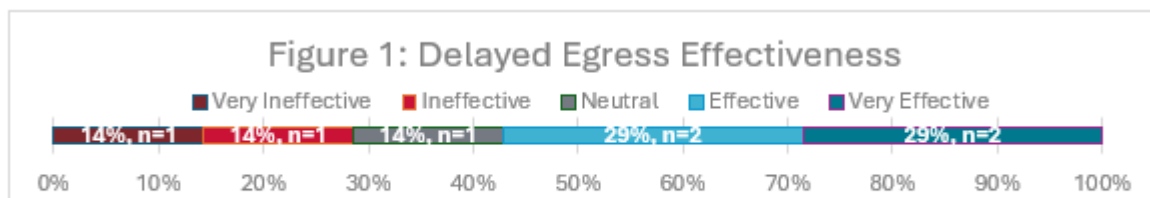


Figure 1 Note: Twenty-seven of the 34 facilities did not report having delayed egress locks and are not represented in this chart.

Perceived Need for Delayed Egress Locks

Nine of the 34 facilities reported that they believed they needed additional delayed egress locks. Twenty-three survey respondents stated that their facility did not need any and two said they would be open to using delayed egress locks if their effectiveness was confirmed. One respondent, who expressed a desire to obtain delayed egress locks, questioned whether or not funding would be provided to assist procurement. The issue of funding for physical infrastructure came up repeatedly throughout the survey and support process, with one respondent advising that if expensive infrastructure such as locked gates were to be made mandatory, they would have no choice but to shut down due to unbearable costs. Another respondent stated they were not aware that delayed egress locks could be used by their facility, suggesting a possible need for clarity from CDHS regarding the permissibility of the use of physical infrastructure to prevent runs.

Alarms

Use of Alarms

Alarms are often used in residential child care facilities to deter young people from running. There is a broad range of alarm types that may be used. For instance, alarms may be silent and only alert staff, or they may be audible and heard throughout a facility. Twenty-one of the 34 facilities reported using alarms to deter young people from running. Large and medium sized facilities used alarms more often than smaller facilities. Specifically, results showed:

- 8 of the 11 facilities with a capacity for 20 or more young people use alarms.
- 7 of the 10 facilities with a capacity of 10-19 young people use alarms.
- 6 of the 13 facilities with a capacity of 10-19 young people use alarms.

Effectiveness of Alarms

As portrayed in Figure 2, neither positive nor negative responses about the effectiveness of alarms made up the majority of answers from the 21 respondents with alarms.

- 1 respondent stated alarms are very ineffective.
- 7 respondents said they are ineffective.
- 4 respondents had neutral responses.
- 6 respondents found they are effective.
- 3 respondents stated they are very effective.

Several respondents noted that the alarms do not stop young people from leaving. For instance,

one respondent stated that “youth will leave the home without permission and do not appear to be influenced by the presence of alarms.” Other respondents pointed out that, although they may not stop a young person from running, alarms can serve the helpful purpose of notifying staff. One stated that “alarms provide immediate auditory notification to staff when exterior doors are opened, allowing for prompt response.” One respondent shared a successful account, stating that “youth were prone to sneak out and runaway far more frequently prior to installing the alarms.” Finally, one respondent described how alarms interacted with other reasons young people choose not to run. That respondent answered that they thought the alarms were effective, “but our very remote location is far more of a deterrent than the alarm.” This acknowledgement that unique circumstances and settings can play a significant role in run likelihood echoed themes discussed in the task force and may highlight a need for the consideration of local circumstances in determining the appropriateness of physical infrastructure use.

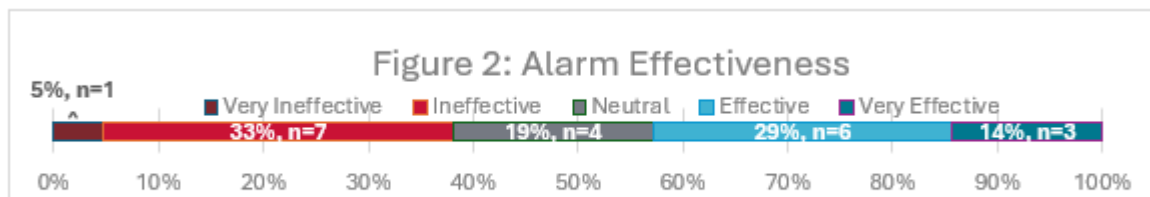


Figure 2 Note: Thirteen of the 34 facilities did not report having alarms and are not represented in this chart.

Perceived Need for Alarms

Regardless of whether alarms are seen as an effective option to deter young people from running, not many facilities expressed an interest in adding more. Only three facilities said their facility did need additional alarms, and one respondent stated that they would be “open to attempting the use of alarms if efficacy has been demonstrated.” The remaining 30 of the 34 facilities reported that they did not feel their facility needed additional alarms.

Unlocked Fencing

Use of Unlocked Fencing

Some facilities have unlocked fencing in place to partially restrict the movement of young people or deter them from running away from the facility without utilizing locks. Fourteen of the 34 facilities reported using unlocked fencing. This includes two survey respondents who reported having locked fencing with a delayed egress option – given the ability of young people to still leave using a delayed egress lock, the CPO categorized these as unlocked fencing for survey result reporting purposes.

Smaller facilities were more likely to have unlocked fencing in place than larger facilities, Specifically, the survey results showed:

- 8 of the 13 facilities with a capacity of 0-9 young people have unlocked fencing in place.
- 4 of the 10 facilities with a capacity of 10-19 young people have unlocked fencing in place.
- 2 of the 11 facilities with a capacity for 20 or more young people have unlocked fencing in place.

Effectiveness of Unlocked Fencing

As Figure 3 demonstrates, no respondent with unlocked fencing in place believed it was an effective way to prevent young people from running from care. Five respondents reported that unlocked fencing is very ineffective, an equal amount of respondents said it is ineffective and four respondents provided a neutral response. No respondents selected the effective or very effective option.

Comments reflected these sentiments, with several responses stating that unlocked fencing has not helped to prevent elopement. A few respondents described the barrier as standard fencing surrounding a backyard that one might expect to find in a suburban residential setting. One

respondent said that “the fencing provides a visual boundary but does not fully prevent youth from leaving the property.” Another respondent identified a benefit of unlocked fencing even if it does not prevent a young person from leaving: “the unlocked fences do not prevent elopement, but they do slow the youth so that staff are able to call for support and follow the youth without losing sight of them.”

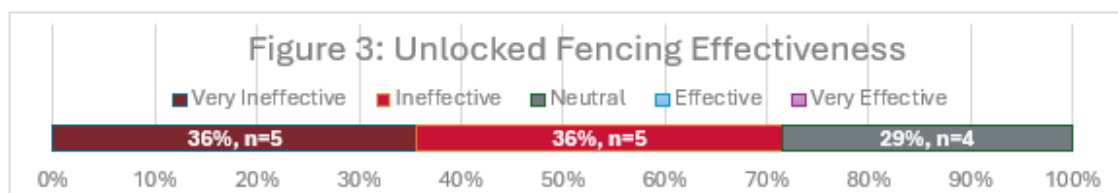


Figure 3 Note: No respondents selected the “Effective” or “Very Effective” options. Twenty of the 34 facilities did not have unlocked fencing and are not represented in this chart.

Perceived Need for Unlocked Fencing

Only one respondent saw a need to add additional unlocked fencing to their facility, whereas 33 said there was no such need. Some respondents stated that their current set-up is sufficient, while others elaborated that unlocked fencing is not an effective deterrent.

Locked Fencing

Use of Locked Fencing

Three of the 34 facilities reported using locked fencing to prevent young people from running from care. All three of these facilities have the capacity to serve 20 or more young people, with none of the small or medium facilities reporting locked fencing use.

Effectiveness of Locked Fencing

One of the three respondents with locked fencing specified that although their fencing is locked, “it is not to deter youth from running away. It is for safety, and youth and young adults lock their bikes up in the backyard.” This respondent then provided a “not applicable” response when asked about locked fencing’s effectiveness. Of the remaining two facilities reporting locked fencing use, one stated they believed it was effective, with the other indicating it was very effective.

Perceived Need for Locked Fencing

Five of the 34 respondents reported that they had a need for additional locked fencing at their facility, with the remaining 29 stating that they did not. One respondent who did see a need for locked fencing described the tension between wanting to ensure safety while also maintaining a therapeutic environment that was often discussed in the task force: “While we certainly do not want youth to feel as though they are in detention, facilities are not able to protect youth that have eloped from campus. As a result, additional harm is possible. It is believed that locked perimeters may provide a greater ability for us to protect the vulnerable youth in our care.”

Two other respondents, who do not see a need for locked fencing, emphasized their reasons for stating no: “the current environment supports a balance between safety and a least-restrictive, home like setting,” with another stating that “we believe youth need to want to be at our facility” to work through treatment.

Beyond concerns around creating the right environment for young people, one respondent pointed to logistical and financial issues: “It would not be logistically or financially realistic to fence our campus whether locked or unlocked due to location and layout.” This respondent stated that, although they do not have fencing, they do believe fencing “could be a deterrent for other sites without logistical barriers.” This range of responses again highlights a lack of consensus among facility leadership as to the desirability or feasibility of physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running.

The survey also asked questions about perimeter fencing which would surround an entire facility, though it should be noted that this likely overlaps with responses about locked and unlocked fencing. Seven survey respondents stated they saw a need for new perimeter fencing at their facility, with six respondents reporting they already have perimeter fencing in place and 21 respondents saying they did not believe it was needed.

Signs

Use and Effectiveness of Signs

Signs were discussed by the task force as another type of physical infrastructure that could be used by residential child care facilities to deter or dissuade young people from running away from care. For instance, external signs may be posted in an area around a facility to ask the larger community to watch out for young people who have run from care or posted within the facility to inform residents of the dangers of running from care. Zero of the 34 facilities reported using signs in this way. Two respondents pointed out privacy concerns as their reason for not using signs. For instance, one respondent wrote that *“we try to protect our youth while they are working through their treatment issues, and don’t feel signs are appropriate to alert people about the youth we are treating.”* In contrast, one respondent stated that *“signs in the neighborhood or near the building would be helpful.”*

Perceived Need for Signs

Six of the 34 respondents saw a need for additional signage, while the remaining 28 did not. Comments were mixed, with some respondents stating they believed signs could help, with others saying signs would not help reduce young people leaving care.

Lighting Systems

Use of Lighting Systems

Lighting systems, such as motion-activated lights, can also be used by residential child care facilities to stop or deter young people from running. Sixteen of the 34 facilities reported using lighting systems to deter young people from running from care, while 18 did not. Smaller facilities were slightly more likely to use lighting systems than larger facilities. Specifically, the survey results showed:

- 7 of the 13 smaller facilities use lighting to deter young people from running away.
- 5 of the 10 medium sized facilities use lighting to deter young people from running away.
- 4 of the 11 larger facilities use lighting to deter young people from running away.

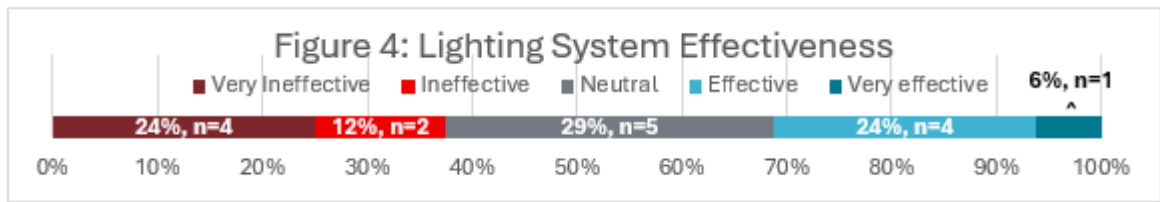
Several respondents described lighting systems that turn on when motion is detected, as well as floodlights and camera systems. A few specified that lighting systems are more in play to alert staff if somebody is approaching the home than if somebody is leaving the home.

Effectiveness of Lighting Systems

As portrayed in Figure 4, no consensus emerged on the effectiveness of lighting systems to deter young people from running from care. Respondents assessed the effectiveness of lighting systems at preventing runs as follows:

- 4 respondents said they are very ineffective.
- 2 respondents said they are ineffective.
- 5 respondents selected a neutral response.
- 4 respondents said they are effective.
- 1 respondent said they are very effective.

One respondent stated that their *“security system has motion sensors”* but that it has *“never prevented youth from leaving, if they intend to leave.”* Another wrote that they had *“just one outdoor”* light, but *“if we had more it may be beneficial.”* One respondent summed up their experience with lighting systems overall: *“historically, clients do not seem deterred by the presence of lighting systems.”*



Overall Respondent Commentary

Respondents were also asked to describe any types of physical infrastructure not covered elsewhere in the survey. Mentions included lighting placed in extended property line areas, multiple check-point areas requiring a badge for access and exterior cameras. One facility described their use of “proximity-based monitoring” enabled by an unremovable “beacon” device on the wrist or ankle. These beacons connect to tablets and allow for quick referencing of resident locations by staff. Although not within the scope of the survey questions or addressed within SB 25-151, one respondent repeatedly called attention to the possible use of restraint to keep young people from running from care.

Facility leaders responding to the survey also had the opportunity to offer comments on physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running in general. Some responses reflected the overall themes discussed at length during the task force, including a tension between the desire to ensure safety, perhaps through more extensive use of physical infrastructure on one hand and the desire to create trauma-informed, comfortable environments for young people on the other.

Several respondents emphasized that, while physical infrastructure can be helpful, it must be used alongside care and practice considerations. For instance, one respondent wrote that “*staff supervision, engagement, and individualized interventions are the primary strategies used to prevent elopement. While physical infrastructure provides support, increasing restrictive measures may not be as effective as maintaining a trauma-informed, least restrictive environment.*” Another respondent stated that their facility “*prioritizes youth agency and autonomy whenever possible*” which “*is a more effective deterrent than many things listed above...we have still invested in a number of the items above and do not plan to change that anytime soon, but our focus on trauma-responsive procedures and person-centered approaches I believe is the most effective deterrent.*”

CONCLUSION

This survey revealed that no single type of physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running was universally revered as effective at preventing runs, nor was any single type desired by all facilities. However, there are common beliefs and objectives upheld by many facility leaders. By and large, facility leaders want to create therapeutic environments for the young people in their care while ensuring their safety. Many are open to considering new options for doing so, which could include physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running. However, unique facility circumstances, settings and the distinct individual needs of the young people being served prompt many facility leaders to caution against one-size-fits-all mandates regarding physical infrastructure to prevent young people from running away from care. One respondent exemplified these concerns concisely: “*I think it is great you guys are doing this, we see a lot of runaways and do not agree with fencing. I hope some of these methods help lessen runs.*”

The CPO remains committed to ensuring that all system-impacted young people – particularly those in residential child care facilities – receive high quality services. The agency will continue to support the ongoing work of facility leaders, policymakers, young people in care and their families in finding the right balance between ensuring resident safety and providing them with an appropriate therapeutic environment in residential child care facilities.

The CPO would like to thank the facilities that participated in this survey and the community partners who worked with the CPO to prepare and distribute the survey.

Information on forthcoming events to review and discuss this summary can be found at <https://coloradocpo.org/special-initiative/timothy-montoya-task-force/>.

The CPO proudly presents this summary of the physical infrastructure survey of residential child care facilities to the Colorado General Assembly and the people of Colorado as required by SB 25-151.

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read "Bryan Kelley".

Bryan Kelley
Public Policy Manager

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read "Jordan Steffen".

Jordan Steffen
Child Protection Ombudsman