

Reentry Services Project

Process and Outcome Evaluation – Final 2 Year Report

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Executive Summary

Background on RSP: In July 2003, the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative (CCJPC) was awarded funding by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention to develop and implement a Reentry Services Project (RSP). The CCJPC also provided matching funds to begin the RSP program. Two Transitional Coordinators began providing Reentry Services in July of 2003, and evaluation of the program by the North Dakota State University evaluation team began in September of 2003.

RSP Goals: In general, the RSP prepares juvenile offenders for successful reentry to the Clay County community after returning from various out-of-home placements. The program aims to achieve its goal by assisting youthful offenders in becoming productive, responsible, and law abiding citizens through strategic and comprehensive reentry plans. These plans address the following Reentry components:

1. Obtaining and retaining long term employment, if appropriate;
2. Maintaining a stable residence by providing intensive services to high risk juvenile offenders leaving out-of-home placements, with an emphasis on seamless and comprehensive treatment, intensive case management, and the involvement of local communities;
3. Successfully addressing substance abuse issues;
4. Successfully addressing physical and mental health issues; and
5. Establishing a meaningful and supportive role in the community.

RSP Phases: In order to accomplish these tasks the program employed three stages of service.

The first, the Placement phase involves services and reentry planning while the juvenile is still in an out-of-home placement. The second, the Reentry Preparation phase TCs are responsible for facilitating the transition to the home community, initiating restorative justice and other community services, providing support during the transition, and developing an individualized “transitional case plan.” Finally, in the Community-based Services phase TCs identify relevant service providers in the community, provide case management services, plan and manage the use of flex funds to purchase services/supplies consistent with transitional case plans, and serve in a tracking and informal ‘mentoring’ capacity. The entire program is designed to last approximately six months.

RSP Benchmarks: Specific benchmarks for program performance were established early in the program design including; a 75 percent compliance rate with tasks as outlined in both treatment and transitional case plans, a 20 percent reduction of risk/need levels as measured by the YLS/CMI, and a 20 percent increase in strengths identified by the YLS/CMI. These intermediate outcomes are thought to lead to reduced rates of rearrest and need for additional out-of-home placement.

Evaluation Timeframe: The initial funding for the RSP allowed for two years of program operation. In 2005, the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative applied for, and received, a two year funding renewal for the RSP program. In addition, since funds from the first two years were not completely spent during the original 2-year period, an extension was allowed for the original grant funding period. This report documents implementation and outcome analyses for

the time period covering the first two years of grant funding, plus the 2 month extension period granted in the summer of 2005 (July 2003 to August 2005).

Summary of Evaluation Methods and Design: Data used in the evaluation of program processes were generated through several techniques, including stakeholder interviews and surveys, a thorough review of program materials, and an examination of service-related data from the Court Services Tracking System (CSTS) and paper files maintained by probation officers and Transitional Coordinators. Information related to intermediate outcomes (e.g., changes in Risk/Need scores) is compared among the RSP clients at various points before, during and after program participation. Information on long-term (e.g., recidivism outcomes) are compared between the RSP participants and a similar sample of juvenile offenders from Becker County, MN.

RSP Client Description: This report includes information on 52 RSP clients served during the evaluation period, and another 52 juvenile probationers from Becker County, MN. The typical RSP client is a 16 year old, male juvenile offender. Many of the clients are either White (48%) or Native American (35%). RSP clients averaged 4.7 prior official contacts with police, 44 percent have a prior felony charge and 58 percent have a prior 'persons-crime' (i.e., violent offense) charge. These clients have experienced an average of three prior out-of-home placements prior to participating in the RSP and spent an average of 186 days in out-of-home placement, including 160 days in restrictive out-of-home placement. All of these RSP clients were on indefinite probation. Sixty-five percent of the clients were on maximum or intensive supervision upon return to the community. Many RSP clients have extensive histories of problems in various

domains, such as substance abuse, histories of violence, mental health issues and school problems.

RSP and Comparison Sample: In general the RSP clients are similar to those in the comparison sample from Becker County, although some differences do exist between the two groups (e.g., the comparison sample has more extensive offending histories and more previous out-of-home placements). As such, the comparison group may include more serious offenders than the RSP sample, potentially biasing the evaluation toward finding beneficial effects of participation in the RSP. Multivariate statistical procedures are employed where appropriate to control for these initial group differences.

Conclusions for Program Implementation: The results of this process and outcome evaluation indicate that the RSP program was successful in implementing most aspects of the program as designed. Specifically, the program:

- Serviced a target population for which it was designed.
- Created collaboration between TCs and probation officers which improved service to clients, their parents, and agency partners, and increased supervision and support for youthful offenders.
- Created individualized transitional case plans and successfully referred offenders to appropriate services.
- Created an advisory committee which met quarterly and managed a successful transition when the Collaborative restructured.

- Cultivated a solid working relationship with probation officers and agency partners in the community.

Conclusions for Program Outcomes: The RSP was also successful in each of the following areas:

- Achieved all of the intermediate goals set by program designers, including a 75 percent compliance rate with case plan tasks, a 24 percent improvement in risk/needs, and a more than 50 percent improvement in strengths scores.
- Resulted in better long-term outcomes than comparison clients on at least one measure of recidivism (the number of new charges among those who did recidivate). While this limited impact on recidivism may be disappointing, it is consistent with existing research on similar programs. Several reasons, both methodological and theoretical, for the lack of more robust findings are presented in the main text of the evaluation report.

RSP Recommendations: In light of the generally positive findings in terms of RSP program implementation, improvements in intermediate outcomes, and at least some modest indicators of success on longer-term outcomes, the evaluators have provided a few suggestions for ‘fine-tuning’ the program in order to provide RSP staff with an opportunity to build on the knowledge they have acquired during the past two years.

- Reduce some paperwork. RSP staff and probation officers agree that YLS/CMI assessments are currently excessive. The evaluators recommend the elimination of the 60/90 day reassessment. In addition, the evaluators recommend the elimination of the 60 day TC social factors update.

- Earlier Transitional Coordinator assignment to allow for improved coordination of services and transitional case planning to occur prior to release from placement.
- Tracking services received while in out-of-home placement. Currently the evaluators have little information regarding the type or quality of services received during placement, however recording of this information would allow for an examination of the extent to which these services address client risks and needs and are followed up with appropriate aftercare in the community.
- Increased focus on cognitive-behavioral treatment (CBT) both in the out-of-home placement and the community. Little is known about the content or quality of the services that clients are actually receiving once referred by TCs. If the content or quality of these services is not appropriate, referrals to those services and ensuring that offenders participate in those services will not likely provide benefit to the youth. This recommendation is already being addressed to some extent (e.g. in recent months TCs have prepared an EQUIP program for youth), however efforts to ensure that “appropriate” types of services (e.g., structured, skills-based, CBT-style) are used as much as possible should continue.
- Efforts to maintain contact with RSP clients once they have completed the program, especially among those juveniles who are not continued on probation after RSP may help improve not only important data collection efforts, but also to increase the chances that clients continue to participate in needed services (like drug treatment and family services) and other prosocial activities which will help them consolidate and maintain the improvements they make while actively involved in the RSP. Exactly how to accomplish this with limited resources (particularly TCs’ time) will have to be explored by program staff.

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1 Introduction

In July 2003, the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative (CCJPC) was awarded funding by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention to develop and implement a Reentry Services Project (RSP), an ambitious effort to improve public safety by preparing juvenile offenders for successful reentry to communities after returning from out-of-home placements. The CCJPC also provided matching funds to begin the RSP program. The RSP aims to affect change in the lives of juveniles by providing comprehensive reentry case management to aid youth in (1) obtaining and maintaining long-term employment, if appropriate; (2) maintaining a stable residence; (3) addressing substance abuse issues; (4) addressing physical and mental health issues; and (5) establishing a meaningful and supportive role in the community. Addressing these reentry issues is expected to result in changes to the juveniles participating in the program, particularly in terms of their likelihood of engaging in further crime and delinquency, which will ultimately improve public safety for the Clay County Community.

Evaluators from North Dakota State University's Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science were contracted to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the RSP program. The evaluation includes an examination of program processes, outcomes (including a preliminary assessment of the relative costs and benefits associated with the program). The process evaluation is designed to examine the implementation of the program – specifically to address to the extent to which various program elements have been implemented as intended. The outcome evaluation is designed to identify the impact of the program on intermediate (e.g. change in risk/need and case plan compliance) and longer term (e.g. rearrest) outcomes. The cost-effectiveness component of the evaluation is designed to consider those outcomes in relation to program costs; however as of the writing of this report too few cases have been processed to

allow credible conclusions regarding the cost-effectiveness of the RSP. In addition, preliminary analyses reveal limited impacts of RSP participation on long-term outcomes (particularly recidivism and repeat out of home placements). As such, attempts to examine the costs of program delivery relative to the small program impacts observed in relation to these outcomes would likely be fruitless. Attempts at cost-effectiveness assessment will be completed in subsequent reports when more cases have been served by the RSP and hopefully when more readily monetized reductions in these long-term outcomes have been realized.

The initial funding for the RSP allowed for two years of program operation. In 2005, the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative applied for, and received, a two year funding renewal for the RSP program. In addition, since funds from the first two years were not completely spent during the original 2-year period, an extension was allowed for the original grant funding period. This report documents implementation and outcome analyses for the time period covering the first two years of grant funding, plus the 2 month extension period granted in the summer of 2005 (July 2003 to August 2005).

This section provides background on the reentry and aftercare services provided by the RSP, a description of the Reentry Services Project, and an overview of the evaluation design. Section two provides a profile of the clients served during the first two year grant cycle. Results from the process evaluation (Section 3), and outcome evaluation (4) are provided in subsequent sections.

1.1 Background: Rationale for Reentry Services

While nation-wide the overall and violent crime rates have declined significantly since the mid-1990s and 2003 juvenile arrest rates for violent and property index crimes were the lowest in decades (Snyder, 2005), caseloads in juvenile court have generally increased, formal

processing has become more common (Sickmund, 2003), and the proportion of delinquency cases involving detention has increased (Harms, 2002). In addition there is growing awareness of a small population of serious and violent juvenile offenders (Loeber, Farrington & Waschbush, 1998); of the impact of chronic youthful offenders; and of the problems faced by youth as they exit correctional placements (Snyder, 2004), all of which have led to calls for improved practices in correctional placement and aftercare with youthful offenders.

The number of juvenile offenders in placement facilities increased 43 percent between 1991 and 1999 (Sickmund, 2004). The approximately 100,000 youth who are released from placement each year are primarily male, minority, nonviolent offenders with lengthy placement histories who come from single parent families, and who have a history of low educational attainment, early and frequent drug use, and a high rate of mental health problems (Snyder, 2004). Large follow-up studies of incarcerated youthful offenders find high recidivism and reincarceration rates, including recidivism rates of 50 to 70 percent among parolees (Beck & Shipley, 1987) and violent youthful offenders (Hamparian et al, 1985) and reincarceration rates of 25 to 50 percent or more depending on follow-up length (Beck & Shipley, 1987; Krisberg, Austin, & Steele, 1991). Juvenile aftercare or reentry programs have emerged to address the unique needs of these youth and the risk they pose to public safety upon return to the community. In recognition of the impact of chronic youthful offenders (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999), and the significant impact of the release of serious and violent offenders on public safety, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and other federal agencies began funding program development and evaluation efforts to increase public safety by addressing reintegration issues related to youthful reentry.

Current aftercare or reintegration models call for the combination of surveillance or “community restraint” and services or “intervention” approaches (Gies, 2003). Community restraint elements include the control of offenders through probation or parole contacts, urine testing, electronic monitoring or other means to ensure public safety, while interventions include employment, CBT, academic, and other services aimed at changing individual behavior. While youthful aftercare programs began to receive attention in the early 1990s, increased interest in recent years has led to the development of two primary aftercare or reentry models including multi-site demonstration programs to determine best practices in juvenile offender placement and reintegration. The Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP; Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994) includes demonstration programs in three states, and the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) includes both youthful and adult reintegration programs with 37 programs specifically targeting youthful offenders.

Developed with OJJDP funding, the IAP model incorporates past research on aftercare and juvenile ISP programs in a theory-driven design including graduated reintegration and overarching case management processes to ensure both supervision and services for youthful offenders while in confinement and upon release to the community (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1999). The IAP model calls for improved integration of in-placement and post-release services, and targeting high risk offenders through individualized case planning, continuity in case management, a combination of surveillance and services, and improved linkages between corrections and community resources. Like the IAP model, SVORI programs incorporate needs assessment, a three-phase design, and individualized, coordinated case management, however broad program guidelines allow for greater variety in programmatic characteristics (Winterfield & Brumbaugh, 2005). Characteristics common to the two current aftercare models include a

three-phase program design, needs assessment, and coordinated case management. Each model calls for the coordination of case management and rehabilitative/reintegrative services over 1) an institutional or pre-release planning and services phase, 2) a reentry preparation or short term post-release phase, and 3) a community-based services phase after release from placement. Client assessment allows for the development of individualized case plans and the identification of services both during placement and in the community to address the unique needs of the offender. Coordinated case management is an attempt to ensure continuity in services, improved matching of placement services to real-world problems faced by the offender, and to ensure that treatment services during placement are followed by aftercare in the community (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1999). By identifying and addressing the needs of the offender and improving support networks upon return to the community, both models attempt to affect short and long term changes in offenders to improve public safety.

While there is agreement that control or “community restraint” alone is largely ineffective at reducing recidivism in intensive supervision probation/parole, there are indications that supervision combined with increased treatment can reduce recidivism (Petersilia & Turner, 1993). Much less is known about the effectiveness of intensive supervision combined with services as an aftercare strategy. While most studies find no difference in prevalence of reoffending between treatment and control or comparison groups, a few evaluations have found an impact on offending prevalence (Land, McCall, & Williams, 1990), frequency (Sontheimer & Goodstein, 1993) and frequency and seriousness of later offending, especially among program sites with strong implementation (Fagan, 1990).

While SVORI programs are in their infancy, the IAP model demonstration sites in Colorado, Nevada, and Virginia began randomized studies in the late 1990s (Wiebush, Wagner,

McNulty, Wang, & Le, 2005). Wiebush and colleagues (2005) examined recidivism for experimental and control groups in the IAP demonstration sites over a 12 month follow-up and found few significant differences between treatment and controls using a variety of outcome measures, including offending prevalence, frequency, seriousness, and time to new arrest. On the other hand, Wiebush and colleagues (2005) do find some evidence of improvements in intermediate outcomes, including shorter institutional stays and lower probability of testing positive for illicit substances. In addition, these authors found implementation difficulties including system-wide changes which blurred service differentiation among treatment and control groups (Colorado), high staff turnover and late implementation of some program components (Nevada), and problems implementing treatment components in the institutional phase (Virginia), and ultimately no difference between groups in terms of frequency and participation in vocational or education services in during aftercare (Weibush, et al., 2005). The authors conclude that these implementation difficulties, coupled with small sample sizes (and the related issue of little statistical power) preclude definitive conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the IAP model (Wiebush, et. al., 2005).

Research on juvenile aftercare has been plagued by predominantly null findings for program effect, small sample sizes, implementation difficulties, and little consistency across studies. In explaining the null findings, researchers generally point to implementation difficulties, particularly shortcomings related to the implementation of treatment or service aspects of the programs. Like the study conducted by Wiebush and his colleagues (2005), the majority of aftercare or ISP studies that examine service delivery components find little to no difference in services received between treatment and control/comparison groups (Mackenzie, 1999), once again supporting the idea that “community restraint” alone is not enough (Gies,

2003). While research to date has yet to demonstrate reduced recidivism, many cite the problems with current research (e.g., rigor and small sample sizes), implementation deficiencies related to service-delivery components, and the fact that results of meta-analyses support the individual “service” related components of aftercare programs, and conclude that aftercare and reintegration programs hold promise (Gies, 2003), that continued research is necessary to tease out community restraint and service components (MacKenzie, 1999) in an attempt to determine what goes on in the “black box” of reentry programming (Petersilia, 2004). For example, meta-analyses of rehabilitative efforts indicate that treatments that target high risk offenders, which address dynamic risk factors, and that employ the appropriate treatment style (e.g. cognitive-behavioral treatment) can reduce recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 1990; Lipsey, 1992) and there is some evidence that treatment in the community is more effective than treatment within correctional facilities. That aftercare programs employ assessment of dynamic client risk factors, individualized case planning to address those factors, and treatment in a community setting is encouraging for the potential of reentry program to be effective, in light of the findings of meta-analyses.

The problems of service provision, reintegration, recidivism, and reincarceration that plague juvenile justice systems across the nation also apply to juvenile justice in Minnesota. While the Minnesota juvenile custody rate in 1999 was lower (290 per 100,000) than the rate nationally (371), youth in placement in Minnesota are demographically similar to the national profile (Sickmund, 2004). Minnesota youth in placements are generally minority (52%) male (83%) offenders held for nonviolent (67%) crimes. Like youthful offenders in other areas, Minnesota youth returning from out of home placements frequently experience new arrests and incarcerations. Between 53 and 77 percent of more than 1,000 youth released from seven

Minnesota juvenile facilities in 1991 were rearrested within two years (37-62% for felonies), and 69 percent of youth released from two facilities in 1985 had served time in an adult prison by age 23 (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 1995).

The Reentry Services Project is an aftercare program in Clay County Minnesota which is similar in many ways to the IAP or SVORI models. The RSP program includes the three-phase design, offender assessment, individualized case planning, and overarching case management components, and most importantly, calls for the integration of supervision and treatment services to reduce later offending among high-risk youth. Specifically, the addition of Transitional Coordinators is intended to allow for the combination of services and support with the community restraint functions of traditional probation. While the model is similar to IAP in terms of overall goals, phases, and case planning some differences exist. For example, IAP demonstration sites included youth placed at specific facilities, while RSP youth may come from any number of placements used by Clay County. In addition, a specific focus of the RSP program is on a mentoring function to be served by the TCs, in addition to the service brokerage, community networking and surveillance functions.

1.2 The Reentry Services Project

RSP was implemented in 2003 by the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative in Clay County, Minnesota. The Collaborative is a partnership of multiple agencies in the community working to address issues related to children or adolescents and their families. The Collaborative oversees the program, which is implemented primarily by the Clay County Department of Corrections/Court Services Office staff and two Transitional Coordinators who were initially hired as Collaborative employees.

The program was designed to address a need identified in the community – that the community was lacking a coordinated response to juvenile offenders returning from out-of-home placement. While program organizers believed that there were ample services available in the community (e.g., Restorative Justice, truancy intervention, and Wraparound services), a need to assess youth, coordinate access to services, and assist youth in making a seamless transition from out-of-home placement back to the community setting was identified. The Reentry Services Project was created to address this need. Program funding allowed for the creation of two full-time positions (Transitional Coordinators or “TCs”) to work with youth returning from three or more weeks of out-of-home placement. The target population included youth aged 14-19 returning to Clay County from such out-of home placements.

1.2.1 Program Design

The program is designed to include three phases during which juveniles’ risks and needs are assessed on a regular basis, comprehensive case plans are developed and monitored, and services are identified which target individual risks and needs.

The Placement phase is designed to begin upon placement in an out-of-home placement facility. During this phase, a comprehensive assessment using the YLS/CMI (Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory) and MAYSI-2 (Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument) is conducted, and a case plan developed to meet specific needs identified. The YLS/CMI is conducted within 30 days of placement.

The Reentry Preparation Phase is designed to begin at least thirty days prior to release to the community. During this phase Transitional Coordinators (TCs) are assigned to juvenile offenders. During this phase the TCs are responsible for facilitating the transition to the home community, initiating restorative justice and other community services, providing support during

the transition. A transitional case plan is developed in cooperation with the offender, the offender's family, community members, probation officers, and out-of-home placement staff.

In the Community-Based Services Phase, Transitional Coordinators are to (1) identify providers in the community who could provide programming for offenders, (2) provide case management services, (3) plan and manage the use of flex funds to purchase services/supplies consistent with transitional case plans, and (4) serve in a tracking or mentoring capacity. The types of community-based services which might be accessed on behalf of the juveniles include employment and training, chemical dependency or substance abuse treatment, life skills development, education, and mental health. Transitional Coordinators are expected to identify appropriate services, make referrals to those programs, and monitor client progress in service receipt. YLS/CMI reassessments are to be completed at 60 days and 180 days after return to the community, and case plans are to be updated appropriately. Due to the age of the target population, specific emphasis is placed on the completion of high school level education (or attainment of the GED) and improvement of any assessed family issues.

The program is designed to last for approximately six months after return from out-of-home placement. During this time, YLS/CMI assessments occur at regular intervals (upon placement, 60 days post return to the community, 180 days post return to the community), transitional case plans are developed and monitored to address individual risks/needs and strengths, and Transitional Coordinators work with probation officers to provide additional tracking and mentoring services. The juveniles have completed the program once they successfully complete the conditions of their transitional plan and establish a community network to provide ongoing support, mentoring, and services.

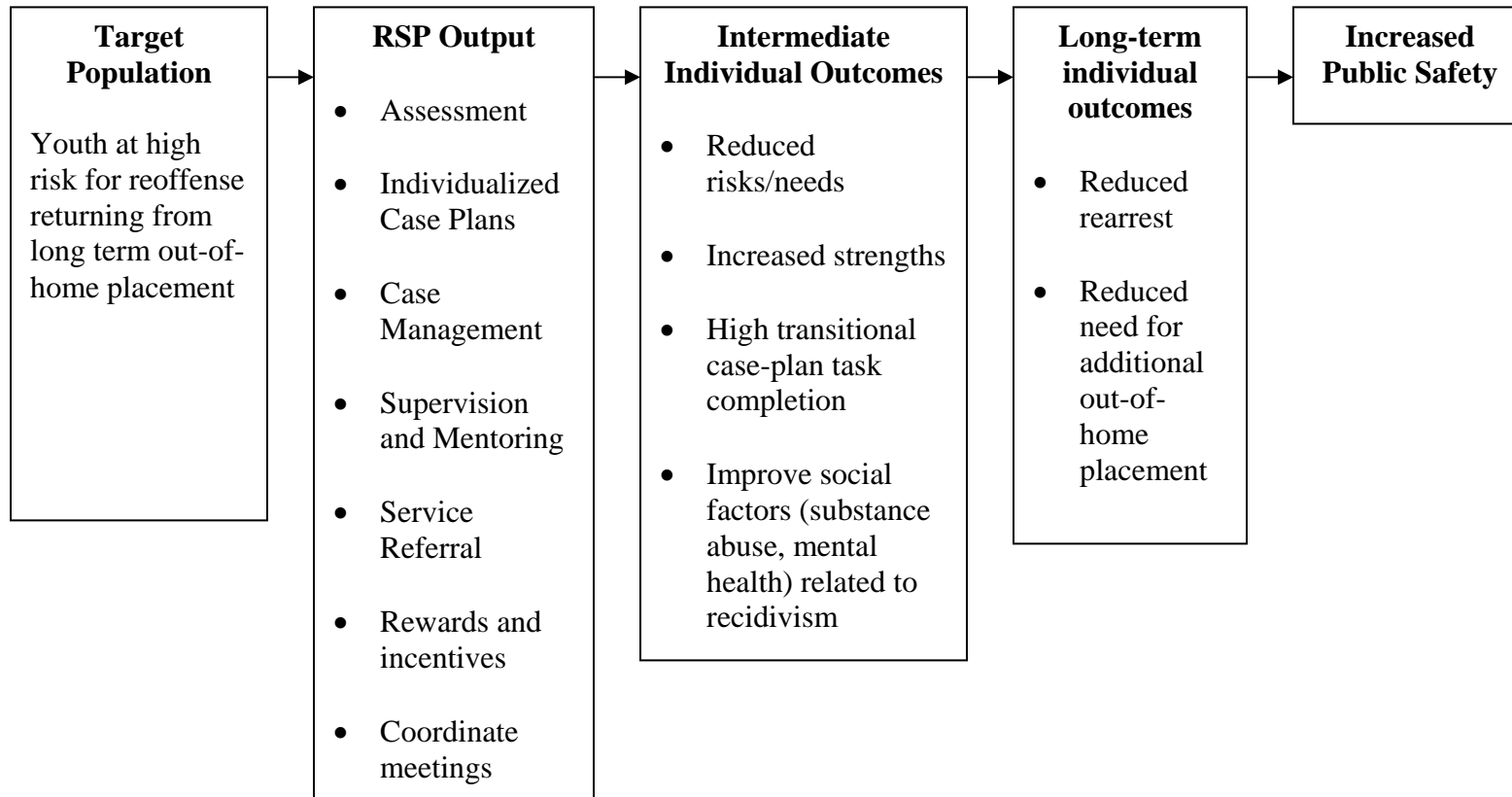
In summary, the RSP attempts to improve public safety by affecting change in the lives of high risk juvenile offenders returning from three or more weeks of out-of-home placement by improving this transition through the creation of individualized case plans, by coordinating access to services available in the community, by providing mentoring and support services, and by providing increased monitoring upon return to the community. Regular YLS/CMI assessments should facilitate change by allowing TCs to identify appropriate treatment and transitional strategies (transitional plans) for each offender. The coordination of services in the community should improve outcomes for these clients by increasing participation in those services, and aiding the client in developing a support network in the community. Mentoring and support services should affect change by exposing clients to prosocial influences and activities, and by widening their support network. Increased monitoring should contribute to more positive outcomes as TCs are able to closely monitor client progress on transitional case plans, identify and address potential problems, and aid probation officers in providing pressure for prosocial behavior in the community.

1.2.2 RSP Goals

Intermediate individual outcome goals identified by program designers include a 75 percent compliance rate with tasks as outlined in both treatment and transitional case plans, a 20 percent reduction of risk/need levels as measured by the YLS/CMI, and a 20 percent increase in strengths identified by the YLS/CMI. According to the program model, these intermediate outcomes should lead to long-term improvements in behavior (reduced rearrest and need for additional out-of-home placement) as case plan tasks are completed, risk/needs are reduced, strengths are developed, and social factors related to recidivism are improved. Long term individual outcomes also addressed in the evaluation of the program include rearrest for new

charges and additional time spent in out-of-home placement, which ultimate result in increased public safety. Exhibit 1 provides the program summary model whereby RSP outputs are linked to intermediate and long term individual outcomes, with the ultimate goal of increased public safety.

Exhibit 1. Reentry Services Project Program Summary Model



1.3 Evaluation Overview

The process and outcome analyses that follow were designed to assess the extent to which the RSP program was implemented as designed, the extent to which the program was successful in impacting individual intermediate outcomes (reduced risks/needs, improved strengths, case plan compliance, and social factors), and ultimately in improving long-term individual outcomes (reduced rearrest and need for additional out-of-home placement).

1.3.1 Process Evaluation

The process evaluation examines the extent to which the RSP program was implemented as designed. Section two examines program implementation in each of the three phases (placement, reentry preparation, and community based services) of the RSP program. Specific evaluation questions to be answered include:

Target population

- Did the RSP program serve the intended population (youth aged 11-19 returning from three or more weeks of out-of-home placement)?

Phase 1: Placement

- Were the YLS/CMI assessments completed as intended?
- Were case plans developed as intended?

Phase 2: Reentry Preparation

- Were Transitional Coordinators assigned at least 30 days prior to release to the community?
- Were transitional case plans developed as intended?
- Were case plans developed with input of the offender, the offender's family, community members, probation agents, and out-of-home placement staff?

Phase 3: Community-Based Services

- Did YLS/CMI reassessments take place for all clients at 60 and 180 days after release as intended?
- How frequently were Transitional Coordinators in contact with clients?
- What was the nature of contacts between Transitional Coordinators and clients?
- Were the Transitional Coordinators successful in identifying and referring clients to services?
- How frequently were rewards/sanctions implemented, and for what types of behavior?
- Did clients complete all case plan requirements prior to having their case closed, as intended?
- Did clients successfully establish a community network of ongoing support prior to case closure?

Additional program process questions include:

- What was the role of the advisory committee?
- What was the internal organizational structure of the RSP?
- What was the overall organization of the program, including interactions with other agencies?
- Were agency partners satisfied with the program?
- Were Clay County Court Services/Department of Corrections personnel (Probation Officers) satisfied with the program?
- Were clients and their parents satisfied with the RSP program?

1.3.2 Outcome Evaluation

The outcome evaluation employs a quasi-experimental design comparing RSP clients to a group of similar juveniles returning from out-of-home placement in neighboring Becker County, MN. Outcomes to be examined in this portion of the evaluation include intermediate and long term program goals.

Specific outcome evaluation questions include:

- Did RSP program clients complete at least a 75 percent of the tasks outlined in their transitional case plans?
- Did RSP program clients exhibit at least 20 percent lower YLS/CMI risk/needs scores after participating in the program?
- Did RSP program clients exhibit at least a 20 percent increase in YLS/CMI strengths scores after participating in the program?
- Were RSP clients less likely to be charged with a new offense than comparison group clients?
- Were RSP clients charged with fewer new offenses than comparison group clients?
- Did RSP clients spend less time in additional out-of-home placement than comparison clients?

1.3.3 Methods

Data used in the evaluation of program processes were generated through several techniques, including stakeholder interviews and surveys, a thorough review of program materials, and an examination of service-related data from the Court Services Tracking System (CSTS) and paper files maintained by probation officers and Transitional Coordinators. The

outcome evaluation is based largely on data collected from Court Services Tracking System (CSTS) and probation officer and Transitional Coordinator paper files. Table 1 provides the details of the interview and survey data sources employed in the process evaluation.

Data Collection	Timing	Source	Administration	Objective
1. Program Theory Interviews	Fall 2003 and Winter 2004	Clay County Collaborative Coordinator, Transitional Coordinators, Lead Clay and Becker County Probation Agents	Face-to-face interview	Develop RSP logic model
2. Program Theory Survey	Fall 2003	Clay County Probation officers; identified agency partners.	Mail Survey	Develop RSP logic model
3. Program Implementation Survey	Summer 2004	Clay County Probation officers, agency partners.	Mail Survey	Assess implementation of the RSP model
4. Program Implementation Survey	Summer 2005	Clay County Probation officers, agency partners.	Mail Survey	Assess implementation of the RSP model

Data collection for the evaluation of intermediate outcomes included in-depth coding of each RSP case file for information related to transitional case plan compliance and YLS/CMI risk/need and strength scores. In addition, the evaluators developed surveys which were completed by transitional coordinators, clients, and parents who provide information regarding social factors related to recidivism risk (e.g., housing and family stability, education, employment, substance abuse, mental/physical health and participation in prosocial support networks and activities). Surveys were designed to be completed by TCs upon the clients' return to the community, at 60 days post return to the community, and at six months post return to the

community. Surveys were designed to be completed by clients and their parents upon return to the community and at six months post return to the community. Additional tracking forms were developed for use by probation officers/Transitional Coordinators to assess changes in these social factors at six and 12 months post-program completion.

Data on long-term individual outcomes (e.g., rearrests and new out-of-home placement) were gathered primarily through CSTS and paper files maintained by probation officers. The long-term outcome analysis employs a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent comparison group of youth returning from three or more weeks of out-of-home placement in neighboring Becker County, MN. The two counties employ similar probation processes and procedures, use similar (and sometimes the same) out-of-home placement facilities, and have similar services available in their communities. The key difference between the groups is that RSP clients receive both probation and RSP services upon release from out-of-home placement, whereas comparison clients receive only traditional (and similar) probation services.

While the original evaluation plan called for analysis of differences between RSP and comparison group clients in terms of intermediate (e.g., case plan compliance, YLSI scores) as well as long-term outcomes (e.g., recidivism), relevant data reflecting the intermediate outcomes of interest to this evaluation were of limited availability for the comparison group from Becker County. Specifically, information on comparison group clients is limited to CSTS records and occasional notations in probation officers' paper files. These data limitations reduced the confidence in the information available for comparison of these two samples on several process (e.g., treatment services received) and intermediate outcomes of interest (e.g., transitional case plan compliance). CSTS information does provide information on new charges and additional out-of-home placements, however, and this information is incorporated to compare long-term

outcomes of RSP clients to a group of similar clients in the comparison county to assess the impact of RSP services, while statistically controlling for several demographic and other individual-level differences between the two groups.

The RSP program began servicing clients in July of 2003. Between July of 2003 and August 2005 the program had served a total of 78 clients, including 8 clients who were served more than once. Cases were coded by the evaluators approximately one month after closure of RSP case files to allow time for computerized CSTS files to be updated. Between November of 2003 and August 2005 the evaluators coded information on the first 52 closed cases in the RSP program. This report focuses on the services delivered (process), and intermediate outcomes (e.g. case plan compliance rates) for those 52 clients. During that same period, the evaluators identified and coded CSTS information on 52 comparison group clients. The long-term outcome evaluation includes a comparison of outcomes of the first 52 RSP clients and the 52 comparison clients over an average follow-up period of 4.5 to 30 months post-release.

2 Client Profile

During the first two years of program funding (July 2003 to August 2005), the Reentry Services Project served a total of seventy-eight clients, including eight clients who were served more than one time. Fifty two of these client files have since been closed and coded by the evaluators, and are the subject of this report. The remaining clients' cases are currently open or were closed after August 2005 (the cutoff date for coding of information included in this report). These additional cases will be included in subsequent analyses and reports on the progress of the program. This report focuses on the 52 clients who were served during the first two year grant cycle and whose cases were closed by RSP prior to August 31, 2005.

2.1 Demographics

The average age of clients served during this period is 16.3 years upon return to the community following their most recent out-of-home placement. Seventy-three percent of the clients are male. Forty-eight percent of the clients are White, 35 percent Native American or Alaskan Native, 15 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent African American. The demographic breakdown of other clients served during this period whose cases have not been closed/coded is similar to those included in this report. Specifically, these currently active or recently completed cases are 75 percent male; 33 percent White, 17 percent Native American, 42 percent Hispanic, and for 8 percent of clients their race/ethnicity was "unknown."

2.2 Prior Offenses and Out-of-Home Placement History

On average these 52 clients have 4.7 prior official contacts, including 5.4 charges prior to their most recent out-of-home placement. Forty-four percent have a prior felony charge and 58 percent have a prior ‘persons-crime’ (i.e., violent offense) charge.

The average number of placements these clients have experienced prior to service in the program is three. They have spent an average of 186 days in out-of-home placement, including 160 days in restrictive out-of-home placement.

On average these clients spent 19.5 months on probation prior to return to the community. All of these clients were on indefinite probation. Sixty-five percent of the clients were on maximum or intensive supervision upon return to the community.

2.3 Most Recent Offense and Out-of-Home Placement

Twenty-one percent of these clients’ most recent charge was a felony offense (77% misdemeanor). Thirty-one percent of the clients’ most recent charge was a ‘persons-related’ charge (e.g., assault), 42 percent a property offense, two percent an illegal drugs offense, 19 percent a public order offense (e.g., disorderly conduct), and six percent an alcohol, tobacco, or traffic-related offense.

These clients most recent placement averaged 160 days (132 days restrictive out-of-home placement), and was most commonly in a residential treatment facility (e.g. Thistledeew), detention (detention or sheltercare), or treatment center (e.g. substance abuse treatment) Seventy-five percent of these clients’ most recent placement was the result of a probation violation.

2.4 Additional Background Information

Sixty-seven percent of these clients have a history of violence, 75 percent have a history of substance abuse, 83 percent have a history of school problems, and 73 percent have a history of mental health problems. Clients can exhibit more than one type of past problem behavior. More specifically, among the 35 (67%) clients who have a history of violence, 74% of these files indicate assaultive behavior or assault charges, with another 31% of these “violent” clients with a recorded history of “fighting”. Other recorded indicators of violence were less common, such as other past violent charges (e.g., arson, robbery), use of threats, use of weapons in relation to past violent charges, or reports of “anger problems”.

In terms of substance abuse histories, among the 39 (75%) clients with this type of problem behavior, the most commonly reported drugs are marijuana and alcohol, with some smaller proportions of clients recorded as having used methamphetamines, inhalants, cocaine, and psychedelics. Among the 43 (82.7%) clients with a recorded history of school problems, a large portion of the clients’ files indicated problems with attendance/truancy (67%). Thirty percent of these clients had recorded behavior problems, fighting (24%), and past participation in special education/IEP services (16%). Other specific problems which occurred less frequently among this sample included notations of suspensions, expulsions, not doing school work, commission of crimes on school property, and so on.

Among the 38 (73%) clients with a recorded history mental health problems, the most common diagnoses included: ADHD or ADD (42%), depression (37%), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (34%), bipolar mood disorder (29%), mood disorder (21%), and anxiety disorder (13%). Other less commonly reported diagnoses included psychosis, emotional disturbance,

cognitive disorder, conduct disorder or antisocial, borderline traits, low mental functioning, and suicide/self injurious behavior.

Considering the proportion of clients recorded as exhibiting a history of problems in more than one of these areas, data reveal that 4% of the RSP clients have 2 or more of these problems, 44% have 3 or more, and 33% have all four. Only 4% of the RSP clients have past problems in none of these areas, while 54% of these clients are “dual diagnosis”, exhibiting histories of both mental health and substance abuse needs.

3 Evaluation of Program Processes

This section provides the results of the process evaluation conducted to examine the extent to which RSP services were implemented as designed. This process evaluation relies on data gathered through interviews and surveys with key stakeholders and agency partners, as well as data gathered from CSTS and program documents related to service provision. As indicated in Exhibit 1, the logic model for the RSP program calls for program outputs including client assessment (YLS/CMI), individualized case plans, case management services, supervision and mentoring, service referral, rewards/incentives.

3.1 Target Population and Referral Process

The target population for the RSP program was defined as Clay County youth aged 11-19 returning from out-of-home placement of three or more weeks. Program design calls for identification and referral by probation officers of eligible clients during out of home placement. Probation officers fill out a referral form, and the lead probation agent in Clay County coordinates assignment of cases to RSP TCs.

The average age of the clients served in the first two years of the grant period was 16.5. The youngest client served by the program was 11 years old upon return to the community, and the oldest client was 19. The average length most recent placement for clients served in the first two years of program operation was 160 days (132 days restrictive). Length of placement ranged from four to 802 days. The length of the most recent placement was less than 21 days (3 weeks) for five clients, of which three had spent 20 days in out-of-home placement.

3.2 Placement Phase

The two main program process evaluation questions related to the placement phase involve client assessment and case plan development. The RSP program documents call for YLS/CMI assessment with each client within 30 days of placement. In addition, each client should receive a case plan based on identified, individual needs.

The RSP program design called for three YLS/CMI assessments to be conducted with each participant. Early data analysis indicated large differences in YLS/CMI changes between the intake (within 30 days of entry into placement) and later assessments. While these changes suggested promising effects from program participation, differences in these assessments could also be attributable to (1) changes in clients during placement in addition to changes resulting from the RSP program, and (2) differences in raters (the intake assessment was typically completed by probation officers or placement staff, while later assessments were completed by TCs). In April of 2004 an additional assessment using the YLS/CMI was added to help to separate these impacts. This new assessment occurs upon return to the community, and is generally completed by Transitional Coordinators. This additional assessment helps reduce both possible sources of error, since TC's complete all assessments in the community (reducing inter-rater error) and assessments within the community setting are compared to one another (isolating changes while in the community from any changes occurring while in out-of-home placement).

The addition of this assessment means that the timing of the four YLS/CMI assessments should be: (1) within 30 days of placement (intake), (2) upon return to the community (return), (3) 60/90 days after return to the community (60/90 days), (4) six months after return to the community (6 months post-program). The evaluators attempt to place each of the YLS/CMI

assessments into the most appropriate time frame (intake, return, 60/90 day, 6 months) based on the date of assessment and date of placement and release.

3.2.1 YLS/CMI Assessment

The initial YLS/CMI assessment should occur within 30 days of placement. Seventy-seven percent of clients served in the first two years of the program received an assessment that could be considered an “intake” assessment. Of the clients who received this assessment only 33 percent received the assessment “on time” (+/- 30 days of placement). For the clients who received this assessment, the timing related to placement ranged from 148 days prior to placement to 232 days after placement.

3.2.2 Case Plan Development

The initial program design called for the development and monitoring of treatment case plans during the Placement Phase by probation officers, TCs, placement staff, youth, parents and other service providers and a 75 percent compliance rate on these treatment case plans. In the fall of 2003 programmatic changes were made to focus more on transitional case plans and transitional case plan compliance. While treatment case plans were developed for clients during placement, these case plans were created primarily by placement staff and were inconsistent in format (e.g. each facility uses a unique format) and content. The evaluators were unable to gather sufficient information from these case plans for in-depth analysis in this report.

3.3 Reentry Preparation Phase

Process evaluation questions related to the reentry preparation phase include timing of TC assignment and the development of transitional case plans.

3.3.1 Transitional Coordinator Assignment

Transitional Coordinators should be assigned at least 30 days prior to return to the community. On average, RSP clients were assigned TCs 22 days prior to release (range 213 days prior to return to 19 days post-return). While timing of this assignment is intended to allow for TCs to develop a relationship with the client, assess the clients' risks/needs and develop a transitional case plan, it should be noted that the goal of assignment 30 days prior to return to the community is impractical for clients who are in out-of-home placement for 30 days or less (15 % of RSP clients spent 30 days or less in the most recent out-of-home placement)

3.3.2 Transitional Case Plan Development

Transitional case plans were developed for ninety-eight percent of the RSP clients. Ideally these case plans should be created 30 days prior to release, however only four percent of transitional case plans were created within this time frame (range 105 days prior to return to 127 days post return). On average transitional case plans were created six days after release. Again, transitional case plan development 30 days prior to release is impractical for clients who spend less than 30 days or less in placement (15% of clients spent 30 days or less in their most recent out-of-home placement)

The RSP program design calls for transitional case plan goal/task assignment in three case plan categories: 1) Competency Development, 2) Restorative Accountability, and 3)

Community Safety. The majority of goals and tasks assigned were assigned in the area of Competency Development. Of the average 5.2 goals and 19 tasks assigned to each client, 45 percent of goals (average 2.35 per client) and 53 percent of tasks (average 10.1 per client) were assigned in the area of competency development. Restorative Accountability represented 19 percent of goals (average 1 per client) and 14 percent of tasks (average 2.6 per client), while Community Safety accounted for 36 percent of goals (average 1.9 per client) and 33 percent of tasks (average 6.4 per client).

The most common domains of task assignment were employment, education, substance abuse, and personality or behavior (e.g., community service involvement). In all, 77 percent of clients were assigned at least one task in the area of education, while 65 percent received tasks in the areas of education, substance abuse, and personality or behavior. Additional domains for task assignment included leisure or recreation (e.g. pursue a hobby, 48% of clients assigned at least one task), social or life skills (27% assigned at least one task), and attitudes or orientation (e.g., cultural awareness), peer relations, family or parenting, and housing (each with 10% or fewer clients assigned at least one task).

Of the 996 tasks assigned to these 52 clients, the primary domains were employment (25% of tasks), education (17%) personality or behavior (14%), leisure or recreation (14%), and substance abuse (14%). Social or life skills, attitudes or orientation, peer relations, family or parenting, and housing domains each accounted for less than 10 percent of all transitional case plan tasks.

The evaluators subjectively assess whether transitional case plans appear to be matched with the risks/needs identified on intake or return YLS/CMI assessments. This judgment is made by examining the domains of highest risk/need on the YLS/CMI and whether or not transitional

case plans include goals and tasks related to those domains. This judgment is not possible for all clients, as some clients have no intake or return YLS/CMI (or no case plan), evaluators were able to make this assessment for the vast majority (92%) of clients. Of those, 92 percent of transitional case plans were matched to client risk/needs.

3.3.3 Participants in Transitional Case Planning

Transitional case plans are intended to be a collaborative effort between the TCs, out-of-home placement staff, probation officers, parents/guardians, community members or service providers, and the individual youth involved in the program. Of the 49 case plans for which participation information is available, Transitional Coordinator records indicate that the vast majority involved input from probation officers (92%), TCs (90%), the youth involved (90%), and the youths' mother (69%). In addition, 18 percent of case plans involved input from the father and six percent involved input from another guardian. Out of home placement staff was involved in the creation of 29 percent of transitional case plans, and case plans less frequently involved the participation of other service providers including treatment providers (8%) and social services agencies (4%).

3.4 Community Based Services Phase

Process evaluation questions related to the community based services phase concern YLS/CMI assessments and timing, TC contacts with clients, service referral, the use of sanctions and rewards, completion of case plan requirements, and the establishment of a supportive network prior to case closure.

3.4.1 YLS/CMI Reassessment

The Program design calls for reassessments at 60 and 180 days post release. An additional assessment, upon return to the community, was added in April of 2004 (see section 3.2). The average number of YLS/CMI assessments for the RSP clients was 2.90 (range 1 to 4). Five clients (10%) received only one assessment, eight clients (15%) received two assessments, 26 clients (50%) received three assessments, and 13 clients (25%) received all four YLS assessments.

Fifty-eight percent of the clients received the “return” assessment (added in April of 2004). Of clients receiving this assessment, 93 percent received the assessment “on time” (+/- 30 days of return). On average, clients received this assessment eight days after return to the community. Eighty-three percent of clients received the 60/90 day assessment. Of those receiving this assessment, 77 percent received the assessment “on-time” (53-97 days after release). On average, clients received this assessment 75 days after release. Seventy-three percent of clients received the 180 day (6 month) assessment. Of those receiving this assessment, 16 percent received it “on-time” (173 to 187 days post release). On average, clients received this assessment 192 days post release.

3.4.2 Frequency of Transitional Coordinator Contact with Clients

RSP clients spent an average of 6.5 months in the Reentry Services Program. During this time Transitional Coordinators averaged 30 contacts with clients, 10 parent contacts, and 11 agency partner contacts. Probation Officers averaged 10 contacts with clients, 7 parent contacts, and 12 agency partner contacts.

3.4.3 Nature of Transitional Coordinator Contact with Clients

On average, the Transitional Coordinators spent 45 hours with each of the clients during program participation, and an additional hour after the clients had completed the program. The majority (61%) of TC time spent with clients was spent in home, field, school, and office visits, which likely combine formal surveillance and informal mentoring functions. Seven percent of TC time spent with clients is involved directly in treatment activities (e.g. attending AA/NA meetings with clients). Approximately 15 percent of TC time spent with clients was spent in vocation, education, or life-skills related activities (e.g. touring or enrolling in schools, obtaining ID or drivers license, job searching), and about 11 percent of TC time spent with clients was leisure or recreation time (meals, movies, other prosocial activities).

The RSP program design calls for the ongoing Transitional Coordinator involvement in Wraparound (collaborative, strengths-based process to address multiple needs) meetings. While it is difficult to differentiate meetings that can be specifically termed “Wraparound”, Probation Officers and Transitional Coordinators participated in at least one “staffing” meeting occurred for 50 percent of clients. Placement meetings occurred for 50 percent of clients, meetings to review expectations were conducted for 46 percent of clients, education related meetings were conducted for 38 percent of clients, and medication reviews and Wraparound meetings were conducted for 23 percent of clients.

Transitional Coordinators and Probation Officers participated in a total of 74 staffing meetings for RSP clients (average 1.4 per client). Staffing meeting participants included clients, parents, treatment providers, mental health service providers, and other social services personnel. Placement-related meetings account for 32 percent of all staffing meetings, while education

(22%), review expectations (18%), wraparound (16%) and medication review (12%) were less common meeting functions.

3.4.4 Service Referral

The RSP program design calls for the identification of needed services through the YLS/CMI assessment and incorporation of those services into transitional case plans. Referrals for services were to be made on an individual basis and related to identified need areas generated from these assessments.

Ninety-eight percent of RSP clients received at least one service referral. A total of 266 referrals were made for these clients (average 5 per client). The most common areas of service referral were substance abuse (62 percent of clients have at least one substance abuse referral), education (58% have at least one referral), mental health (56%), employment (56%), and family counseling (35%). Referrals to housing, cognitive behavioral programs, individual counseling, support groups, sex offender aftercare, cultural support groups, health, and life skills services were less common (less than 35% of clients received referrals to each of these types of services).

Of the 266 referrals, substance abuse (22%), mental health (17%), education (15%), and employment (12%) account for the majority of referrals. Other referrals (cognitive/behavioral programs, individual and family counseling, support group, sex offender aftercare, cultural support, health related, leisure or recreation, life skills, parenting skills, and housing) were less common, and each of these domains accounts for less than 10 percent of all referrals to services. Fifty-nine percent of the 266 referrals (average 3 per client) were considered “complete” or “ongoing” at the end of the clients’ participation in the program.

3.4.5 Rewards and Sanctions

Information related to the utilization of various rewards for RSP clients was derived from the program personnel and is limited to a total for “flex funds” spent on various activities for RSP clients. Specifically, a total of \$17,050 was spent in flex funds during the first two years of program operation. Program personnel did not maintain a detailed accounting of how and on which clients these funds were dispensed, however the funds are generally used for items, services, and activities to enhance or improve the life circumstances of youth and their family. Flex funds have been used for such things as school clothing, job interview clothing, recreational activities, bus tokens, GED testing, birth certificates, school supplies, drivers training classes, and housing assistance to prevent homelessness.

In relation to the imposition of various sanctions for non-compliance with program rules and expectations, 42.3% of clients (22 of 52) experienced at least one “informal” sanction while participating in the program. The most common reasons for the imposition of these sanctions included positive drug tests, failure to following probation/house rules, drinking, curfew violations, fighting, and being suspected of a new crime. All informal sanctions involved placement on house arrest – generally 1-2 weeks (or until the provision of a subsequent negative drug test in the case of failure of a drug test).

In examining whether the sanctioning process worked as intended, the evaluators considered whether the imposition of an informal sanction lead to a lower likelihood of the filing of formal “technical violations” against the client. Results generally reveal that 44% of clients (23 of 52) experienced a probation violation while participating in the program. The most common reasons for formally filing technical violations include chemical use (positive drug tests or drinking), absconding home, truancy, or failing school, failure to attend substance abuse or

mental health treatment/aftercare, and failure to follow probation or parent rules. Of those with a formal probation violation while participating in the program, 61% had a prior “informal” sanction (22% had more than one prior informal sanction). In general then the RSP program appears to attempt to change patterns of misbehavior by initially using informal sanctions prior to responding with formal technical violations, in a manner generally consistent with the goal of using graduated sanctions to shape client behavior. Only after continued misbehavior and the failure of the client to respond to informal sanctions (at least in 61% of the cases) does the program resort to formal sanctions.

3.4.6 Case Plan Completion Prior to Case Closure

Available descriptions of the intended program design call for the community-based services phase to end when clients have successfully complied with the conditions of their reentry plan. At the time of case closure, 80 percent of clients had completed at least 50 percent of the tasks on their case plans. In addition, 51 percent of clients had completed at least 75% of their assigned tasks, 50% had completed at least 80% of their tasks and, 28% had completed at least 90% of their case plan tasks. While only 13.7% (7) had completed 100% of their assigned case plan tasks, the data generally reveal that most (4 out of every 5) clients in RSP are completing at least half of their required tasks prior to leaving the program and having their case file closed.

3.4.7 Establishment of a Supportive Network Prior to Case Closure

Available data related to the clients’ development of a supportive network prior to program completion is provided in section 4.3.3.2. Specifically, information reported by

Transitional Coordinators regarding the clients' adjustment to the community and changes in various indicators of social adjustment (e.g., housing stability) over time, is presented in Section 4.3.3.2., as are limitations in the data that was available during the first two year period of the evaluation as it relates to this aspect of the program.

3.5 Other Process Elements

Additional process evaluation elements include an examination of the role of the advisory committee, the overall organization of the program and its relationship with other agencies, and client, parent, and agency partner satisfaction with the program.

3.5.1 Advisory Committee

Program design called for the establishment of an Advisory Committee of 10-12 members. An advisory Board consisting of 31 members was created in the fall of 2003. The Advisory Board is a shared committee (group oversees RSP and a juvenile Restorative Justice program) and includes representatives from a variety of local agencies including police departments, the Clay County court system, the City Commission, local schools, corrections, social services, victim advocacy, mental health, placement representatives placement, Restorative Justice, truancy intervention, migrant health services, and the evaluators. This group met quarterly and reviewed written reports related to program activity and outcomes provided by the evaluators, case studies shared by TCs, and program funding and management related updates. Advisory Board participants have changed through the course of the program, with a current committee consisting of 24 members.

3.5.2 Track Related Data

The program evaluators created a series of surveys and trackers to be used by TCs and probation officers to track social factors at specified intervals. In addition, surveys have been developed for clients, parents, agency partners, and probation officers to track both social factors (client and parent surveys) and satisfaction with program operations (all surveys). The surveys were designed to track changes in social factors thought to be related to recidivism over time, including housing and family stability, education, employment, substance abuse, mental/physical health and participation in prosocial support networks and activities. The schedule of surveys/tracking instruments developed by the evaluators for use by program staff is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Social Factors and Satisfaction Tracking Instruments			
Instrument	Timing	Source	Objective
TC intake tracker	Completed for each client upon intake to RSP	Transitional Coordinator	Provides history of social factors
TC 60 day tracker	Completed for each client at 60 days post-release from OHP	TC	Indicators of social factors and progress at 60 days post release
TC 6 month tracker	Completed for each client 6 months post release from OHP	TC	Indicators of social factors and progress at 6 months post release
Client survey -- intake	Completed upon intake to RSP	Client	Indicators of social factors and goals at start of program
Client survey -- completion	Completed upon program end	Client	Indicators of social factors, completion of goals, and satisfaction with the program
Parent survey -- intake	Completed upon intake to RSP	Parent/guardian	Indicators of social factors and goals at start of program
Parent survey -- completion	Completed upon program end	Parent/guardian	Indicators of social factors, changes in key areas, and satisfaction with the program
Social factors 6 months post program	Completed for each client 6 months post program	TC or PO	Indicators of social factors
Social factors 12 months post program	Completed for each client 12 months post program	TC or PO	Indicators of social factors

During the course of the evaluation low response rates have been a problem in TC surveys, parent, and client surveys. TC, parent, and client surveys were revised in July of 2004

to improve response rates. Revisions helped somewhat, but response rates for many of these surveys remain low. During the first two years of program operation all three Transitional Coordinator social factor surveys were completed for only forty percent of clients. Both client surveys were completed for only twenty-three percent of clients, and both parent surveys were completed for only ten percent of clients. All seven surveys (3 Transitional Coordinator, 2 client, 2 parent) were completed for only ten percent of clients. Additionally, much data is missing within completed surveys (questions not answered, etc.). Low response rates and missing data create problems for assessing changes in social factors over time.

3.5.3 Internal Organizational Structure

The RSP program employs two full time Transitional Coordinators who work closely with probation officers in supervision and services provision for juvenile offenders. The TCs were originally three-quarter time employees (July 2003 to December 2003) and were employees of the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative (July 2003 to May of 2005) and supervised by CCJPC staff while collaborating with Clay County Court Services (CCCS) personnel (e.g. probation officers). CCJPC reorganization and RSP program changes resulted in the current structure which includes TCs as full time employees (as of January 2004) of CCCS as of May 2005. While the RSP is still a CCJPC project, program and staff supervision is now provided by Clay County Court Services Lead Agent.

The RSP program operates outside of the probation office, in a building that also houses the community's alternative learning center. Probation officers identify clients who meet RSP eligibility requirements and complete paper referral forms for potential RSP participants.

After referral TCs and probation officers work closely in the supervision and support of clients returning to the community. While probation officer caseloads are high (80:1), TC caseloads have been limited to about 12-15:1 in order to ensure adequate support and services. TCs and probation officers work together in the establishment of transitional case plans, identification of potential services for clients, and supervision (e.g. client contact) to ensure compliance with probation conditions. Probation officers are primarily responsible for formal surveillance through probation contacts with the client and ensuring compliance with probation conditions (e.g., drug testing). Transitional Coordinators are responsible for the creation and monitoring of the transitional case plans and coordinating service receipt including referrals, providing transportation to services, and accompanying clients to services. In addition, TCs provide informal surveillance and support through participation with clients in prosocial activities in the community (e.g. bowling, movies, meals), cultivate relationships with other potential service providers (e.g., establish youth oriented substance abuse or cultural support services, establish relationships with housing or employment agents) and serve as mentors to clients.

3.5.4 Relationship of the Program to other Agencies

Program Theory surveys were distributed to agency partner sand Department of Corrections personnel (probation officers) in the fall of 2003. These surveys asked respondents to describe the relationship they expected their agency to have with RSP personnel. In all six agency partners (60 percent response rate) and four probation officers (100 percent response rate) returned completed surveys.

Program Implementation surveys were distributed to agency partners and Department of Corrections personnel (probation officers) one year after program implementation (summer 2004) and two years after program implementation (summer 2005). These surveys were designed to elicit information regarding the agencies actual relationship with RSP staff, and satisfaction with the operation of the program. Response rates for agency partner surveys have been low. Twenty-two percent of surveyed agency partners returned completed surveys in the summer of 2004 (2 of 9) and forty percent of agency partners returned completed surveys in the summer of 2005 (6 of 15). Due to the low response rate to agency partner surveys, the two rounds of surveys are combined in analyses reported. Response rates for probation officers were 75 percent in the summer of 2004 (3 of 4) and 100 percent in the summer of 2005 (4 of 4).

3.5.4.1 Relationship to Probation Officers

Probation officer responses to these two types of surveys (Program Theory vs. Program Implementation) allow for a comparison of intended and actual program operations from the perspective of probation officers. The Program Theory survey asked respondents to indicate what type of communication they expected to have with RSP personnel (e.g. in-person, email), the frequency of contact they expected, and would be involved in the RSP intake and transitional case planning processes. Program Implementation surveys ask respondents similar questions, including the nature and frequency of actual contact with RSP staff, and who regularly participates in intake and case planning processes. Comparisons of these two types of surveys (Theory vs. Implementation) allow for an examination of the extent to which probation officers feel that the program has been implemented as designed.

Program Theory Surveys (fall of 2003) indicate that probation officers expected to have in-person, email, and telephone contact with RSP staff (TCs), and they expected this contact to occur several times per week. All probation officers reported expecting the RSP intake process to involve input from probation officers, transitional coordinators, and parents/guardians, half of probation officers expected involvement from out-of-home placement staff, and one-fourth of probation agents expected involvement social services or other agency partners. All probation officers expected that probation officers, TCs, and parents/guardians would be involved in the transitional case planning process. 75 percent of the probation officers expected that out-of-home placement staff would be involved in the case planning process, and 50 percent of probation officers expected that clients and social workers would be involved in this process. Responses to related questions from Program Implementation Surveys are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Probation Officer Program Implementation Surveys		
	Summer 2004	Summer 2005
Average contacts with RSP staff per month		
In-person	12.00	9.50
Referral contacts	1.67	.88
Telephone	26.33	13.5
Total	40.00	23.88
Is regularly involved in RSP intake process (% yes)		
Probation officer	100%	100%
Transitional Coordinator	100%	100%
Parent/guardian	100%	100%
Out-of-home placement staff	33%	50%
Social worker	0%	25%
Other agency partners	33%	25%
Is regularly involved in transitional case planning (% yes)		
Probation officer	33%	75%
Transitional Coordinator	100%	100%
Parent/guardian	67%	50%
Client	33%	50%
Out-of-home placement staff	33%	25%
Social worker	0%	0%
Other agency partners	33%	0%
Original intake procedures have been followed (% yes)		
	100%	75%
Original division of responsibilities has been followed (% yes)		
	100%	100%

A comparison of Program Theory and Implementation survey results indicates that actual contact between probation officers and RSP staff and participation in the RSP intake process are largely consistent with probation officer expectations, but that transitional case planning has been less inclusive than probation officers expected. For example, probation officers expected communication with TCs several times per week, and they reported an average of 40 contacts per month (10 per week) with TCs in the summer of 2004, and 23.8 contacts per month (6 per week) in the summer of 2005. Probation officers all expected that they (probation officers), TCs, and parents would be involved in the RSP intake process, and they all reported that this was the case. On the other hand, probation officers expected involvement of many different types of participants in transitional case planning (e.g., probation officers, TCs, parents/guardians, out-of-home placement staff), but the results of Implementation Surveys indicate that transitional case plans are largely created by TCs with less frequent involvement by others. A comparison responses between the two implementation surveys (summer of 2004 vs. summer of 2005) indicates that this may be changing over time, with more inclusive case planning in 2005.

In addition, most probation officers during both follow-up surveys indicate that the original intake procedures and division of responsibilities between probation officers and TCs has been followed.

3.5.4.2 Communication with Agency Partners

Agency partner surveys include a series of questions related to the frequency and nature of contacts between RSP staff and personnel from other agencies. Agency partners report an average of 10.7 contacts between their agency and the RSP staff each month, including 4.8 in-person contacts, 0.8 email contacts, and 5 telephone contacts.

3.5.5 Agency Partner Satisfaction

Program Implementation Surveys ask agency partners to rate their satisfaction with several aspects of the RSP program using a five-point scale (1 = “not at all satisfied”, 5 = “very satisfied”). Mean scores for responses to these questions are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Reentry Services Project Agency Partner Satisfaction Surveys	
	Mean Score (1 to 5 scale)
Satisfied...	
with timing of referrals from RSP	4.00
that referrals from RSP meet program criteria	4.33
with client information received from RSP referrals	4.33
with frequency of contact with RSP staff	4.17
with type of communication with RSP staff	4.50
with quality of communication between agency and RSP staff	4.50

In addition, agency partners were asked two open-ended questions designed to elicit perceived strengths of the program and areas for improvement. The following program strengths were reported by these respondents:

Respondent A.

“1) Staff work well with their clients and parents 2) staff are well respected by other agency staff 3) research being done by NDSU has been given high regards in evaluating outcomes and has given the project a lot of credibility, 4) benefit juveniles”

Respondent B.

“They seem to be on task and work very well with the juveniles they serve. They also do a good job networking with other agencies. I have heard nothing but

positive things from the juveniles I talk to about the staff at the Reentry Services Project.”

Respondent C.

“Involvement of staff with youth and connections made with community and work.”

Respondent D.

“1) energetic, committed staff; 2) demonstrating good outcomes as a program.”

Respondent E.

“Friendly and accessible people who really like kids and want to help and teach them to be successful and expand their lives.”

Respondent F.

“Gets kids back into the community doing positive activities. Provides positive role models and support to kids.”

The following suggestions for program improvement were provided by agency partners:

- A. “Expand duration of the program from 6 months to adding potential of 6 months of follow-up upon completion of project -- regardless of successful completion.”
- B. “I hope the program is able to achieve long term funding.”
- C. “It would be interesting to see the results of those kids involved after 6-12 months out of the program (without names, of course) to see how effective it is.”

3.5.6 Probation Officer Satisfaction

Program Implementation Surveys ask probation officers to rate their satisfaction with several aspects of the RSP program using a five-point scale (1 = “not at all satisfied”, 5 = “very satisfied”). Mean scores for responses to these questions are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Reentry Services Project Probation Officer Surveys		
	Summer 2004	Summer 2005
Satisfied with...(mean score on 1-5 scale)		
intake procedures for RSP	4.67	4.00
frequency of client referrals to services made by RSP staff	4.33	4.00
types of referrals to services made by RSP staff	5.00	3.75
division of responsibilities between POs and TCs	4.67	4.50

Probation Officers were asked open ended questions regarding the strengths of the program and areas for improvement. Probation officers reported the following strengths in the first round of surveys:

Respondent A.

“1) Client supervision on an intensive basis to assist with day to day struggles; 2) providing the clients with positive activities and positive mentoring; 3) relationship building with client, family, and other agencies (school, treatment centers, etc)”

Respondent B.

“Workers seem to connect well with the kids. Have been able to provide assistance in several ways, including employment and setting up services.”

Respondent C.

“1) Providing at risk youth with additional support they often do not receive at home; 2) increased support and supervision for high risk youth; 3) flexibility; 4) helping with job searching, transportation, mentoring, etc.”

In the second round of surveys (summer 2005), Probation Officers noted the following strengths of the program:

A. "This service is a huge benefit to the kids coming home from placement. It's a great way to help ensure necessary services are being provided to the child/family and offers the necessary support to the child for a successful transition home."

B. "Client contacts and programming for the client including employment and activities, hobbies, and treatment."

C. "Helping clients develop community resources and activities. Providing a positive role model to assist with services."

D. "Provide kids with services and opportunities they never would have had without reentry (i.e. AA, jobs, drivers education, etc)"

The following areas for improvement were noted by Probation Officers in the first round of surveys (summer 2004):

A. "At present I feel the program is performing at a high level. These clients are extremely high risk for being placed again, and these services are a valuable to allow these clients to be given the opportunity to remain in their home community."

B. "It would be nice to have referrals for CD aftercare made prior to release from placement, have appointments set up within 1-2 days after returning home. Also, job applications could be filled out while in placement so less time lapse in finding a job."

The following areas for improvement were noted by Probation Officers in the second round of surveys (summer 2005):

A. "Reduce YLSI re-assessments."

3.5.7 Client and Parent Satisfaction

Parents and clients were presented with a paper-and-pencil survey regarding their satisfaction with the program at the end of the juvenile's participation in RSP. These surveys included a series of open ended questions designed to elicit feedback on these groups' experience in the program. Results presented below indicate that only 29% of clients completed the

program completion survey, as did only 19% of the parents who were asked to do so. As such the ability to generalize from the responses provided by these small percentages of clients and parents to the entire group of clients and parents involved in RSP is limited and conclusions based on this data should be treated with due caution.

3.5.7.1 Client Satisfaction

Clients were asked to rate the amount of contact they had with TCs while participating in the program. Eighty-seven percent of clients indicated their contact with TC's was "about right", 13 percent reported "too little" contact with TCs, and no clients reported "too much" TC contact. Clients were asked an open-ended question about way(s) in which the program was helpful to them, and responded in the following ways:

- A. "Keep on top of most things"
- B. "Kept me busy and on my feet"
- C. "Kept me structure"
- D. "In a lot of ways"
- E. "Kept me on track to meet my goals"
- F. "Got me out of the house"
- G. "Helped me fill out job applications"
- H. "Made me accountable"
- I. "Kept track of me"
- J. "Very many ways"

When asked in which way(s) the program was disappointing, clients responded in the following ways:

- A. "I got in trouble"
- B. "Not getting my way"
- C. "Nothing"
- D. "None"
- E. "Nothing"
- F. "Didn't help"
- G. "Didn't see you as much as I wanted"
- H. "It was gay"
- I. "All of the attention"

When asked which service was most helpful, clients responded:

- A. "Job searching"
- B. "Staying sober – made ma change a lot in attitude"
- C. "Leisure time and doing things one on one"
- D. "AA gave me something to do"
- E. "Outreach school (no more harassing)"
- F. "Got lots of information about getting a job"
- G. "AA"
- H. "AA"
- I. "Drake – I could talk to the counselor"

When asked which service was least helpful, clients responded:

- A. "None"
- B. "AA – didn't get to talk about my issues – just listening to people I don't know talk"
- C. "School – I don't like RRALC"

- D. “None”
- E. “Employment”
- F. “None”

And finally, when asked how the RSP program could have made the transition from out-of-home placement to the community easier, clients responded:

- A. “Went well. Was good”
- B. “Good as is”
- C. “Could have not placed me in Thistledeew”
- D. “More time to relax and talk about my problems”
- E. “Was fine”
- F. “Good the way they are”
- G. “Nothing”
- H. “Nothing”
- I. “It didn’t”
- J. “Couldn’t improve”
- K. “Kept it cool”

3.5.7.2 Parent Satisfaction

Nineteen percent of parents/guardians completed the program completion survey. Seventy three percent of these parents felt the amount of contact they had with the TCs was “about right”, 27 percent felt it was “too little”, and no parents felt they had “too much” contact with TCs. Similarly, 73 percent of parents felt the amount of contact between the client and the

TC was “about right”, 27 percent “too little”, and no parents felt the amount of contact was “too much”.

Parents/guardians were asked an open ended question about the way(s) the RSP program was most helpful. Their responses were:

- A. “Someone to communicate with and provide suggestions”
- B. “Another contact person for him to better interact with”
- C. “Provided outlet for various needs”
- D. “Helped with issues, jobs, meetings, etc. Kept on track”
- E. “Mentor. Outside help”
- F. “Helping when he was being incorrigible and bringing him to AA”
- G. “Liked to go bowling”
- H. “None”
- I. “Gave some healthy alternative behaviors”
- J. “Kept in check with UAs, phone calls, and visits. Was able to tell him (client) how it should be. Very honest”
- K. “Helped him do more”.

When asked the ways in which the program was disappointing, parents/guardians responded:

- A. “Too short”
- B. “Should stay in contact more when behavior is good for reinforcement”
- C. “Couldn’t have done any more (was good)”
- D. “Usually run by females”

- E. “Not at all”
- F. “None”
- G. “Too short”

When asked the ways in which the RSP program could have made the transition from out-of home placement to the community easier, parents/guardians responded:

- A. “Liked one on one contact. Could have more contact”
- B. “There was much done”
- C. “Don’t know”
- D. “Don’t judge me”
- E. “Couldn’t have been better. A great service”
- F. “Good job”
- G. “No room at home”

3.6 Process Evaluation Summary

The process evaluation reveals that RSP program staff members were successful in implementing many of the key components of the RSP program. During the first two years of operation the program served a population consistent with program plans and the majority of programmatic components envisioned by the program’s planners were implemented as intended.

Regarding the placement phase, YLS/CMI assessments are occurring for the most part, but are largely “off-schedule” when compared to the original plan of assessment within 30 days of placement. Similarly, in the reentry planning phase TC assignment and transitional case planning are occurring, but these activities are generally not occurring 30 days prior to release, as intended. Some of this is a function of the length of time clients spend in placement, and this

may also be a function of TC caseload at any given time. Transitional Coordinator records indicate that transitional case plans are generally developed with participation of probation officers, parents, and clients, while probation officer surveys indicate that these plans are largely created by TCs with less input from others. In terms of content, transitional case plans have been created as indicated in program design – with goals and tasks related to Competency Development, Restorative Accountability, and Community Safety, and with emphasis on education, employment, and family related considerations.

An examination of process-related activities in the community-based services phase indicates that TCs provide three-times as much contact with clients as probation agents, and that they spend a significant amount of time with clients focusing on areas identified by program planners (e.g., mentoring and surveillance, vocational and educational pursuits). Additionally, transitional case plan tasks and referrals to services in the community appear largely consistent with the focus of the program on education, employment, and family-related issues.

Similar to other phases, YLS/CMI assessments are generally occurring during the community-based services phase, but timing-related problems remain. Additionally, very few comparisons can currently be made from the data collected from TC, client, and parent surveys due to the large number of missing surveys and missing information within completed surveys. While program staff have experimented with several ideas to improve completion rates (e.g. shortened surveys, incentives for clients), response rates remain low.

Probation officers and agency partners appear to be pleased with the amount, nature, and content of communications with RSP staff, the qualifications and abilities of RSP staff, and the service the program provides. While the available data from client and parent surveys is limited and thus precludes generalization to all participating clients and their parents/guardians, in

general those individuals who responded to the surveys seemed relatively satisfied with the program. Whether only the most satisfied clients and parents chose to complete the surveys is unknown. As mentioned previously, additional efforts to improve the completion rate for these surveys in the upcoming years have been and will be considered.

4 Outcome Evaluation

This section includes an outcome analysis related to intermediate program goals (i.e., risk/need reduction, improvement in strengths scores and social factors, case plan task completion) and long term (i.e., reduced rearrest and need for additional out-of-home placement) outcomes. Data for the outcome analysis include information gathered from paper files maintained by probation officers and TCs, as well as coding of computerized CSTS files including new charges, later out of home placements, and electronic records of probation officer and TC “chronos” (computerized narratives related to probation agent/TC contacts with clients and collateral contacts).

The outcome analysis employs a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent comparison group. The comparison group employed is a group of youth returning from three or more weeks of out-of-home placement in a neighboring county (Becker County, MN). The juvenile probation office in Becker County was contacted in the fall of 2003 and agreed to participate in the analysis by tracking a list of juveniles returning to Becker County from out-of-home placement of three or more weeks. The evaluators then coded electronic (CSTS) files, online YLS/CMI

Unfortunately, some client information available in Clay County is not easily available for the Becker County comparison group. For example, Becker County paper probation files rarely included transitional (or aftercare) case plans used in Clay County, and Becker County staff do not specifically track service referrals, preventing comparisons of the delivery of some program elements. Comparison group computer and paper files generally included too little information related to services received (e.g., copies of referral forms) and transitional (or aftercare) case planning to allow for comparisons of these program elements. On the other hand,

an examination of differences between RSP and comparison group clients can be made for all long-term outcomes (e.g., officially recorded recidivism).

Section 4.1 provides a comparison of the demographics and probation and aftercare procedures in the two communities from which samples are drawn. Section 4.2 provides descriptive statistics for the RSP and comparison samples including client demographics, prior offending history, and prior out-of-home placement history. Subsequent sections provide an assessment of the RSP program in terms of intermediate (e.g., transitional case plan compliance, YLS/CMI changes, social factors changes; section 4.3) and long-term (recidivism and new out of home placement; section 4.4) outcomes. Where possible comparisons are made between RSP and Becker County clients and are presented in the sections that follow.

4.1 Comparison of Communities

Census data provide for an analysis of the similarity of the two communities. In addition, Program Theory Interviews were conducted with Lead Probation Agents in each community in the fall of 2003 (Clay County – treatment group) and winter of 2004 (Becker County – comparison group). These interviews were designed to elicit information about each jurisdiction’s standard probation and aftercare procedures, in an attempt to identify points of similarity and difference that may impact client outcomes.

4.1.1 Census Comparison of Communities

Table 6 provides census data on the two communities from which the treatment and comparison samples are drawn. The communities are similar in terms of percent of population

under the age of 18, percent non-white, and median household income. Overall, the treatment community (Clay County) is larger than the comparison group community (Becker County).

Table 6. Census data comparison of communities		
	Clay County (RSP)	Becker County (Comparison)
Population (2004 estimate)	52,905	31,817
% of population under 18 (2000)	25.0%	26.6%
Race/Ethnicity (2000)		
White (not Hispanic/Latino)	92.4%	89.0%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	1.4%	7.5%
Median Household Income	\$37,889	\$34,797
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2005).		

4.1.2 Comparison of Probation Procedures

Program Theory Interviews were conducted in the fall of 2003 and winter of 2004 with key staff in Clay and Becker Counties to determine the extent to which probation practices and other services were similar in the two communities. Responses from these interviews (with Lead Agents in each county) indicate that the two communities are similar in many respects, although some notable differences do exist.

Agency partners and services available are similar in the two communities. Both Lead Probation Agents identified schools, human services, mental health, social workers, and out-patient treatment providers as key agency partners. Services available in both communities include education, mental health, in- and out-patient chemical dependency treatment, in-home counseling services, and cognitive behavioral programs aimed at youthful offenders, however probation officers in Becker County are primarily involved in engaging clients in services that

are specifically included in their probation conditions (e.g. mental health or substance abuse services) while the RSP program seeks to involve juveniles in services to address probation-specified conditions, as well as other need areas identified in various assessments.

The two communities use the same out-of-home placement facilities for youthful offenders; however one key difference in the communities is the existence of the West Central Regional Juvenile Center (WCRJC), a juvenile sheltercare and detention facility, in Clay County. Both communities use this facility for the placement of youthful offenders; however Clay County probation generally uses this facility more frequently, at least partially due to the ease of access to the facility which is located in their community. No similar facility exists in Becker County, where youthful offenders are generally placed in the WCRJC or similar facilities in other counties.

In each community four probation officers are responsible for juvenile probation supervision for the county, but probation officer caseloads are larger in Clay County (80:1) than Becker County (45:1). Both communities use the YLS/CMI as their primary assessment to identify client needs and required level of supervision, but there are differences in the intended schedule for these assessments. In Becker County this assessment is designed to occur at return to the community and every six months thereafter, while assessment is designed to take place more frequently in Clay County (see section 3.2). Probation intake procedures are also similar – in both communities probation agents assigned by the juvenile court are involved with clients throughout the placement phase by participating in staff meetings at the placement facility.

Probation procedures do differ in some respects. The lead agent in Becker County indicated that no informal sanctions are imposed by probation officers for client misbehavior. Instead, clients in Becker County are brought before the court through a formal ‘violation of

probation' process initiated by probation officers upon instances of misbehavior, and these violations are primarily related to unsuccessful completion of probation conditions (e.g. restitution, community service, substance abuse or mental health evaluation). In Clay County probation officers routinely employ house arrest and curfews, restrict privileges, and short detention stays in addition to formally responding to probation violations. In both counties the specific length of probation is determined by the court and ends when clients have either completed the conditions of probation (if the term is indefinite) or when a specified probation term has expired.

4.1.3 Comparison of Aftercare Procedures

Aftercare planning (reintegration to the home community) is coordinated in both counties, but the communities differ in the aftercare process -- primarily because of the addition of the RSP program in Clay County. Becker County aftercare involves aftercare planning toward the end of placement including an aftercare plan developed by probation officers in cooperation with clients, family, placement staff, and agency partners, whereas in Clay County aftercare planning should involve the three phases identified in sections 3.2 to 3.4. In general the Clay County aftercare process (RSP) is more intensive (more client contact expected with the addition of TCs), includes service identification and receipt in addition to formal probation conditions, and attempts to address issues typically outside the purview of formal probation (e.g., housing and family factors).

4.1.4 Summary of Community Comparison

The comparison of community demographics and probation procedures indicates that both counties' probation services operate in a similar manner. Differences do exist, however, which may impact comparability of the two groups of clients and the services each have been subject to. For example, since Clay County probation officers have easy access to the WCRJC, Clay County probation officers may be more likely to use short-term (e.g. weekend) detention placements in addressing client misbehavior. In addition, Becker County agents report that they do not employ informal sanctions (e.g. curfew restrictions) for misbehavior, such that differences in the groups in terms of types of misbehavior that are brought before the court, the frequency with which issues are brought to juvenile court, and the response of the court to those issues could reasonably be expected.

While some of these differences may impact services delivered in the two communities, the communities and probation services within them generally appear more similar than different. The communities are similar in terms of general probation procedures, assessment instruments used, aftercare planning goals, nature and number of services available in the community, and placement facilities used for juvenile offenders. These consistencies allow for more confidence that differences between the groups will largely reflect differences related to the additional RSP services available in Clay county and not other differences between the two samples of juvenile offenders, the communities they come from, and the services they receive.

4.2. Sample Comparison – Client Background

This section provides background information on the total sample and each sub-sample (RSP and comparison). Background information includes demographics, most recent offense

and placement information, and prior offense and placement history. Data for these analyses was gathered primarily from paper probation and TC files and from computerized CSTS files.

Descriptive statistics are presented for the entire sample, as well as the RSP and comparison participants separately. Statistically significant differences between the samples are noted. An overall comparison of these two samples indicates that where differences exist, the comparison group of Becker county juvenile probationers has, by some indicators, higher risk levels. This is specifically the case in terms of empirical predictors of delinquency such as the seriousness of prior offending history.

4.2.1 Demographics

Table 7 provides information on the demographic characteristics of the samples analyzed in the current study. The total sample consists of 52 RSP and 52 comparison (probation) group clients (N=102). While comparison probation clients are, on average six months older than RSP clients (16.8 compared to 16.3 years), this difference is not statistically significant. Both samples are predominantly male (73.1% of RSP and 75% of comparison clients). There are marginally significant differences in the racial/ethnic composition of the groups ($\chi^2 [3, N=104] = 7.33, p=.062$) with slightly more minority clients in the comparison sample. In addition, while the predominant minority group in both samples is Native American, the RSP group includes more Hispanic clients. Thus, among both groups the typical juvenile returning from out of home placement is 16.5 years of age, male, and a member of a minority racial/ethnic group.

The average follow-up period for the overall sample is 81.9 weeks (20 months), and ranges from 4.5 to 30 months. RSP clients tend to have more time at risk following release to the

community (follow-up time not spent in restrictive placement) than comparison clients (66.4 weeks 63.9 weeks) but this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 7. Sample Demographics			
	Total Sample (N=104)	RSP (N=52)	Comparison (N=52)
Age at release (years)			
Mean	16.5	16.3	16.8
Range	(11 - 19)	(11 - 18)	(13 - 19)
Male	74%	73.1%	75%
Race / Ethnicity †			
Caucasian	42.3%	48.1%	36.5%
African American	2.9%	1.9%	3.8%
Native American	45.2%	34.6%	55.8%
Hispanic	9.6%	15.4%	3.8%
Follow-up time (weeks)			
Mean	81.8	80.9	82.7
Range	(18-121)	(35-115)	(18-121)
Time at risk (weeks)			
Mean	65.2	66.4	63.9
Risk	(1 - 121)	(7 - 115)	(1 - 121)
Two-tailed tests of significance: ***p<.000, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10			

4.2.2 Offense History

Table 8 provides offense histories for the samples analyzed in this report. On the whole, these clients most recent police contact was commonly a misdemeanor level, property-related offense. A statistically significant difference between samples exists in the level of the most recent contact ($\chi^2 [2, N=104] = 9.133, p=.01$). Specifically, the comparison group contains more clients whose most recent offense was either a status (e.g. curfew, alcohol or tobacco) offense (17.3%) or a felony-level offense (28.8%) than the RSP group (1.9% status and 21.2% felony).

On the other hand, the RSP group includes more clients whose most recent offense was a misdemeanor (58.8%) than does the comparison sample of probationers (41.2%)

On average these clients were 13.75 years of age at the time of their first official charge, and 13.87 years of age at the time of their first criminal charge (excluding status and traffic offenses). On the whole, clients included in the sample have experienced 5.82 official contacts prior to their most recent out-of-home placement and 7.36 prior official charges (range 1-30), including 5.18 prior criminal charges (excludes status and traffic). The average client has 1.9 prior status level charges, 3.84 prior misdemeanor level charges, and 1.54 prior felony level charges, including .31 charges related to status behaviors (e.g. curfew, truancy), 1.63 alcohol or tobacco related charges, .24 traffic related charges, 1.13 public order charges (e.g. disorderly conduct), .34 illegal drugs related charges, 2.8 property charges, and .92 persons related charges (e.g. assault).

Comparison group clients from Becker county have experienced significantly more prior official contacts ($F [1, 102] = 13.82, p < .000$), prior official charges ($F [1, 102] = 17.68, p = .000$), and prior criminal charges ($F [1, 102] = 10.153, p = .002$) than RSP clients. While comparison group clients have experienced an average of 6.98 official contacts, 5.79 official charges, and 5.02 criminal charges prior to their most recent placement, RSP clients have experienced on average 4.65 official contacts, 5.42 official charges, and 3.94 criminal charges. Comparison group clients have experienced significantly more status ($F [1, 102] = 13.213, p < .000$) and felony level ($F [1, 102] = 12.557, p = .001$) offenses prior to their most recent placement, and their prior offense history includes more status ($F [1, 102] = 4.548, p = .035$), alcohol and tobacco ($F [1, 102] = 8.231, p = .003$), and property offense behavior ($F [1, 102] = 9.52, p = .003$) than RSP clients. A significant difference also exists between the groups in terms of time spent on

probation prior to release ($F[1, 102] = 5.206, p=.025$) with comparison clients having spent more time on probation (average 25.93 months) than RSP clients (19.52 months).

There are no significant differences in terms of the age at first charge or age at first criminal charge, number or seriousness (behavior) of most recent charge, number of prior misdemeanor charges, and number of prior charges involving traffic, public order, illegal drugs, or persons-related behaviors. Thus, comparison sample clients appear to have a more extensive criminal history, but much of this appears to be related to relatively low level charges (e.g., minor consuming alcohol charges) and more extensive involvement in property offending. Since prior offending history is a predictor of future offending, statistical analyses of outcome variables (e.g., recidivism) will control for differences in offending history between these two samples. Specifically, outcome analyses will include controls for the number of prior charges clients have experienced, and whether the client has experienced a prior felony charge as indicators not only of prior offending frequency, but also prior offending seriousness.

Table 8. Offense History			
	Total Sample (N=104)	RSP (N=52)	Comparison (N=52)
Most recent charge level (%) **			
Status	9.6	1.9	17.3
Misdemeanor	65.4	76.9	53.9
Felony	25.0	21.2	28.8
Most recent charge behavior (%)			
Alcohol/tobacco	10.6	3.8	17.3
Traffic	3.8	1.9	5.8
Public order	18.3	19.2	17.3
Illegal drugs	1.9	1.9	1.9
Property	42.3	42.3	42.3
Persons	23.1	30.8	15.4
Age at first charge Mean years (Range)	13.75 (10 – 17)	13.85 (10 – 17)	13.75 (10 – 17)
Age at first criminal charge Mean years (Range)	13.87 (10 – 17)	13.96 (10 – 17)	13.78 (10 – 17)
Total prior contacts *** Mean # (Range)	5.82 (1 - 15)	4.65 (1 - 13)	6.98 (1 - 15)
Total prior charges*** Mean # (Range)	7.36 (1 - 30)	5.42 (1 - 14)	9.29 (1 – 30)
Total prior criminal charges** Mean # (Range)	5.18 (1 – 30)	3.94 (1 – 13)	6.42 (1 – 30)
Mean number of prior Status level***	1.9	1.19	2.62
Misdemeanor level	3.89	3.42	4.37
Felony level**	1.54	.75	2.33
Mean number of prior Status behavior*	.31	.17	.44
Alcohol/tobacco behavior**	1.63	1.08	2.17
Traffic behavior	.24	.23	.25
Public order behavior	1.13	.87	1.38
Illegal drugs behavior	.34	.31	.37
Property behavior**	2.8	1.92	3.67
Persons behavior	.92	.85	1.0
Months on probation prior to release* Mean (Range)	2.72 (0 – 57)	19.52 (1 – 57)	25.93 (0 – 55)

Two-tailed tests of significance: *** $p < .000$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$

4.2.3 Out-of-home Placement History

Table 9 provides a comparison of out-of-home placement history for the entire sample, and RSP and comparison clients separately. On the whole, juveniles in the sample were 14.93 years of age at their first placement, 15.36 years of age at their first long term (30 days or more) placement, and 16.07 years of age at their most recent placement (the placement that qualified them for inclusion in RSP or the comparison sample). In all they have experienced an average of 3.32 out-of-home placements totaling 265 days prior to release, including 1.63 short-term placements (i.e., less than 30 days), and 1.68 long-term placements.

There are some significant differences between RSP and comparison clients in terms of placement history. While comparison clients have experienced significantly more time in long-term placements ($F [1, 102] = 14.52, p < .000$), have spent more time overall in out-of-home placement ($F [1, 102] = 13.605, p < .000$) and experienced a longer most-recent placement ($F [1, 102] = 6.098, p = .015$), RSP clients have experienced significantly more short-term out of home placements ($F [1, 102] = 4.507, p = .036$). In addition, comparison clients have experienced more long-term placements, but this difference is only marginally significant ($F [1, 102] = 3.132, p = .08$). Remember that Clay County makes more frequent use of the WCRJC (detention/shelter facility) than does Becker County, due to the center's location in Clay County, which may account for some of the greater likelihood that Clay County juveniles have experienced more short-term placements.

There are no statistically significant differences in the groups in terms of age at first placement, age at first long-term placement, age at most recent placement, days in prior short-term placements, or total number of prior placements. Thus, it appears that while RSP clients have experienced more short-term placements, comparison group clients have a more extensive

placement history, including more long-term placements, and more time in those placements.

These differences are likely related to different access to placements in the communities. Clay County (RSP) has easy access to a short-term placement facility (WCRJC) while Becker County (comparison) has no such facility. It could be that this community difference results differences in placement of juvenile offenders such that Becker County appears more likely to use long-term facilities, and to place clients for longer periods of time.

Table 9. Out-of-home Placement History			
	Total Sample (N=104)	RSP (N=52)	Comparison (N=52)
Age at most recent placement (years)			
Mean	16.07	15.96	16.19
Range	(11 - 18)	(11 - 18)	(12 - 18)
Days in most recent placement*			
Mean	159.97	122.46	142.64
Range	(4 - 802)	(4 - 430)	(20 - 802)
Age at first placement (years)			
Mean	14.93	14.98	14.87
Range	(9 - 18)	(11 - 18)	(9 - 18)
Age at first long term (30+ days) placement (years)			
Mean	15.36	15.48	15.25
Range	(9 - 18)	(11 - 18)	(9 - 18)
Total # of prior short term (<30 days) placements*			
Mean	1.63	1.92	1.33
Range	(0 - 7)	(0 - 7)	(0 - 5)
Total days in prior short term (< 30 days) placements			
Mean	14.02	15.88	12.15
Range	(0 - 60)	(0 - 57)	(0 - 60)
Total # of long term (30+ days) placements †			
Mean	1.68	1.5	1.87
Range	(0 - 5)	(0 - 5)	(0 - 5)
Total days in long term (30+ days) placements***			
Mean	251.68	171.10	332.27
Range	(0 - 1004)	(0 - 522)	(0 - 1004)
Total # of prior placements			
Mean	3.32	3.44	3.19
Range	(1 - 9)	(1 - 9)	(1 - 8)
Total days in prior placements***			
Mean	265.7	186.98	344.42
Range	(8 - 1004)	(8 - 564)	(12 - 1004)
Two-tailed tests of significance: ***p<.000, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10			

4.2.4 Summary of Sample Characteristics

While the samples are similar in age, gender, and many offending history indicators, significant differences do exist between the groups. Overall the results of the sample comparisons indicate that, where differences exist, the prior offense and placement history of the comparison group is more serious than that of the RSP group. Comparison group clients have more extensive offending histories (e.g. number of charges), though much of this is accounted for by more status and alcohol or tobacco related offending in the comparison group. Comparison group clients have significantly more felony level offenses than RSP clients, an indicator of seriousness of offending, the groups are similar in terms of persons related offending (another measure of offending seriousness). Additional data analyses (not shown) indicate that most felony level offending in both groups is property-related (e.g. motor vehicle theft) and not persons-related (e.g. assault). Thus, the higher number of felony offenses in the comparison group may be more likely to reflect things like joy-riding in stolen cars than serious persons-related offending.

Comparison group clients also have more extensive out-of-home placement histories, though RSP clients have experienced significantly more short-term placements. This is consistent with the idea that easy access to the WCRJC in Clay County results in different patterns of placement for the two counties. More limited access to short term facilities (e.g. the closest are 30 to 45 miles away) may mean that clients in Becker County generally accrue more incidents of misbehavior (including charges) prior to placement for those behaviors, which may help to explain the more extensive histories of these clients when compared to the RSP group.

The long-term outcome analysis (section 4.4) will attempt to control for these differences in prior offending history by employing multivariate analyses to isolate the impact of RSP participation on recidivism (and later placement) while controlling for indicators of prior offending seriousness.

4.3 Intermediate Outcome Analysis

Program developers identified three intermediate outcome goals for the RSP: (1) 75 percent compliance with case plan tasks; (2) a 20 percent reduction in YLS/CMI risk/need scores, and; (3) a 20 percent increase in YLS/CMI strengths scores. In addition, the program aims to improve several specific social factors which are thought to be related to recidivism, including housing and family stability, education, employment, substance abuse, mental/physical health, and participation in prosocial support networks and activities.

4.3.1 Case Plan Completion

Data related to the rate at which various case plan tasks are completed is available only for RSP clients in Clay County. Transitional (RSP) and aftercare (comparison group) case plans are paper documents generally included in the juvenile clients' paper probation file. Some comparison group paper probation files were destroyed prior to evaluator coding and comparison client paper probation files that were available for coding generally did not include copies of these aftercare plans, thus precluding recording of this data in a consistent and credible manner.

Seventy-five percent of RSP clients' transitional case plan tasks were considered complete (746 of 996 tasks assigned) upon closure of RSP case files. Table 10 provides data on transitional case plans assigned and those considered complete. The majority of tasks assigned are in the areas of employment, education, leisure/recreation, substance abuse, and

personality/behavior. Task completion rates in these domains were 79 percent, 65 percent, 84 percent, 66 percent, and 72 percent respectively.

Domain	Tasks assigned	Tasks Complete	% of Tasks Complete
Employment	253	199	79%
Education	174	113	65%
Leisure/Recreation	142	119	84%
Substance Abuse	139	92	66%
Personality/Behavior	136	98	72%
Social / Life-skills	68	53	78%
Mental Health	38	32	84%
Family / Parenting	18	13	72%
Housing	18	15	94%
Attitudes / Orientation	9	9	100%
Total	996	746	75%

4.3.2 Changes in YLS/CMI Scores

With the addition of the new YLS/CMI assessment upon return to the community in April of 2004, a total of three YLS/CMI reassessments can be compared to the initial (intake) YLS/CMI assessments (see Section 3.2) to assess changes in risk/needs and strengths during RSP participation. While the initial program design called for an examination of changes from intake to 60/90 days and from intake to 180 days post-release, a more accurate estimate of the

impact of the program may be changes in risk/needs and strengths from return to the community (“return” assessment) to 60/90 (60/90 day assessment) and 180 days post-release (6 month assessment). As mentioned in Section 3.2 the return assessment helps reduce possible inter-rater error (all assessments after return to the community are generally completed by TCs) and helps to isolate changes occurring while in the RSP program from changes that may have occurred while in the out-of-home placement facility.

Seventy-seven percent of RSP clients received the intake assessment (intake to placement), 58 percent received the return assessment (upon release to the community), 83 percent received the 60/90 day assessment (60 to 90 days post-release), and 73 percent received the six month assessment (6 months post-release). In the following sections, risk/need and strengths scores are presented for all four assessments, and change scores are presented that capture changes from (1) intake into out-of-home placement to release (return), (2), intake into out-of-home placement to 180 days post-release, and (3) release to the community to 180 days post-release.

4.3.2.1 Reduction in YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores

RSP client risk/need scores by domain, as well as changes within each domain are provided in Table 11. Overall risk/needs scores declined 17 percent from the intake assessment to six month assessment (from 21.25 to 17.68) and 24 percent from the return assessment to the six month assessment (from 23.23 to 17.68)

Table 11. YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores							
Domain	Intake	Return	60/90 Day	6 Month	Change: Intake to Return	Change: Intake to 6 Months	Change: Return to 6 Months
Prior/Current Offenses	1.97	2.6	2.49	2.58	32%	31%	-1%
Family / Parenting	3.15	3.8	3.0	2.71	21%	-14%	-29%
Education / Employment	3.63	3.6	2.49	2.47	-1%	-32%	-31%
Peer Relations	2.8	3.13	2.72	2.58	12%	-8%	-18%
Substance Abuse	2.58	2.7	1.79	1.97	5%	-24%	-27%
Leisure / Recreation	1.77	1.9	1.4	1.34	7%	-24%	-29%
Personality / Behavior	3.15	2.93	2.09	2.11	-7%	-33%	-28%
Attitudes / Orientation	2.2	2.57	2.02	1.89	17%	-14%	-26%
Overall	21.25	23.23	17.95	17.68	9%	-17%	-24%

4.3.2.2. Improvement in YLS/CMI Strengths Scores

Table 12 provides details on RSP clients' average strengths scores for each domain and the percentage change from intake to return, intake to six months, and return to six months.

Overall strengths scores increased 474 percent from the intake assessment to 6 month assessment (from .88 to 5.05), and 53 percent from the return to six month assessment (from 3.3 to 5.05).

Table 12. YLS/CMI Strengths Scores							
Domain	Intake	Return	60/90 Day	6 Month	Change: Intake to Return	Change: Intake to 6 Months	Change: Return to 6 Months
Family / Parenting	0.13	0.6	0.58	0.82	362%	531%	37%
Education / Employment	0.18	0.57	0.72	0.82	217%	356%	44%
Peer Relations	0.13	0.5	0.51	0.71	285%	446%	42%
Substance Abuse	0.13	0.43	0.63	0.71	231%	446%	65%
Leisure / Recreation	0.12	0.5	0.63	0.71	317%	492%	42%
Personality / Behavior	0.08	0.43	0.58	0.68	438%	750%	58%
Attitudes / Orientation	0.13	0.23	0.47	0.61	77%	369%	165%
Overall	0.88	3.3	4.14	5.05	275%	474%	53%

4.3.3 Changes in Social Factors

Data on several specific social factors were collected for RSP clients from a variety of sources, including (1) TC surveys upon intake to the program, at 60 days post release, and at program end, (2) client surveys at program intake and program end, (3) parent surveys at program intake and program end, (4) CSTS and paper file notes related to drug tests, (5) TC case file summaries completed upon case closure, and (6) Social Factors Updates completed by probation officers/TCs at six and 12 months post program. These data sources are largely

program documents – documents created by program staff and the evaluators for the specific purpose of tracking these social factors in RSP clients. Unfortunately, similar measures are not available for comparison group clients, precluding an examination of these factors between the two groups.

As indicated in Section 3.5.2, response rates to client and parent surveys (which include measures of key social factors) have been low. At this time there is not enough data available for an analysis of change in social factors from these sources, however analyses may be available in the future as more clients are served and response rates improve. Some social factors information related to the performance of RSP clients in each of these domains while in the program is available from other sources (e.g. TC case file summaries and TC surveys), and comparison of aggregate changes in RSP clients over time can be made from these sources.

4.3.3.1 Social Factor Indicators In-Program

Seventy-five percent of RSP clients were subjected to at least one drug test during program participation and 36 percent were tested three or more times. Forty-nine percent of clients who were tested had no positive tests, while 28 percent had one positive test, and 23 percent had two or more positive tests. Nearly all of the positive tests were for marijuana, with four positive tests for methamphetamines and two positive tests for cocaine use during program participation.

Transitional Coordinators and Probation Officers provide information related to social factors and service receipt during program participation and six and 12 months after program completion. The surveys were designed to track changes in social factors thought to be related to recidivism over time, including housing and family stability, education, employment, substance

abuse, mental/physical health and participation in prosocial support networks and activities. Due to low response rates (see Section 3.5.2); analysis is limited regarding social factors. Social factors indicators are available for a limited number of clients at intake to the program (32%), program completion (23%), 6 months after program completion (21%) and 12 months after program completion (21%). The following sections illustrate the changes in social factors over time where data is available.

4.3.3.2 Changes in Social Factors Over Time

Before reviewing the available data related to indicators of adjustment in several domains over time, several issues related to the data referenced in this section should be noted. First, all of this data is based on the perception of the clients' adjustment in each of these domains as reported by either the TC or probation officer (PO). The ability of these staff members to accurately assess each of these domains after program completion (and when there is generally less frequent contact with clients) is unknown. As such, the results presented in this section must be taken for what they are, staff perceptions of adjustment. These perceptions are susceptible to bias from many sources including lack of knowledge of the clients' actual behavior and current status, staff members' knowledge of the clients' status as an RSP participant and an associated desire to have the client be a "success", deception on the part of the client and so on. Taken together with more objective measures of program success, the evaluators believe that these perceived social indicators can help underscore program achievements and failures; however they are not to be and should not be taken as the only indicators of whether the program has met its stated objectives.

In addition, a limited number of clients have this data available as it is based largely on the perceptions of TCs and probation officers as recorded on “tracking forms” after the client completes the program. Those clients who remain on probation after completing the program may be more likely to have these tracking forms completed since they are easier for TCs and POs to maintain contact with. If this is indeed the case, the information presented here may actually underestimate the improvement of those RSP clients who do not remain on probation after completing RSP, since those who do not merit continued probation supervision post-RSP may be less “serious” offenders and/or those who have less positive adjustment. In the upcoming evaluation period, it may be useful to improve efforts to track clients who do not remain on probation. In addition, it may be useful to consolidate the responsibility for completing these “tracking forms” to either the TCs or POs to minimize any differences introduced by variations in the raters themselves (i.e., TCs and POs may differ in the way in which they complete these “tracking forms”). These limitations and suggestions for future data collection methods notwithstanding the results from these indicators of social adjustment are presented in the following series of tables and text.

In terms of indicators of social adjustment in the areas of “Housing and Family” issues, results presented in Table 13 generally show that while there appear to have been fluctuations in the percent of RSP clients who were homeless at program end and up to 12 months after completing the program, in general TC rated the overall housing stability over most of the preceding six months as increasingly more “stable” (up from 52% of clients at 6 months post-program to 75% of clients at 12 months post-program). In terms of indicators of family stability, the results presented in Table 13 indicate that while the percent of families receiving services declines post-RSP, the participation of parents in prosocial activities increases. Similarly, staff

members' perception of the clients' overall family situation seems to improve from program end to the 12 month follow-up post-program (i.e., family/parenting status, housing stability, communication in the home).

Table 13. Housing and Family Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Has been homeless at some time in past 6 months/during program		23%	35%	33%
Is currently homeless		4%	9%	0%
Has had a stable residence for the most of the last 6 months			52%	75%
Family receives services		46%	13%	17%
Family regularly participates in prosocial activities		15%	17%	29%
Satisfied with family/parenting status*	2.7	2.27	2.46	2.88
Satisfied with housing stability*	3.39	3.04	3.13	3.65
Satisfied with communication in clients home*	2.48	2.22	2.25	2.53
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 14 presents related several indicators of educational adjustment during and up to 12 months after completion of the RSP. In general, these results reveal that clients are increasingly likely to have completed a GED up to 12 months post-RSP, but are less likely to be attending school once they leave the RSP (although if more clients have completed their secondary education they may also be less likely to be required to attend school). In general, TCs/POs

appear to be increasingly satisfied overall with the clients' education status as they progress through the program (comparing program intake and end ratings) and over the course of the 12 month follow-up (comparing 6 to 12 month post-program ratings).

Table 14. Education Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Highest education level				
Has earned HS diploma	0%	2%	9%	4%
Has earned GED	3%	17%	17%	25%
Attends school	85%	64%	48%	46%
Participates in adult basic education/GED	6%	2%		
Has taken GED tests		5.8%		8.3%
Not attending (no GED or diploma)	6%	7%	26%	17%
Satisfied with educational status*	2.56	2.79	2.65	3.35
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

In relation to the indicators of social adjustment in the area of employment (Table 15), it should be noted that not all clients are assessed as appropriate to engage in either work or job search activities as part of their participation in the RSP. Among those for whom it was determined that employment was appropriate, nearly 84% searched for employment during the program. While there is a decline in those who were employed 6 months post-RSP, by 12 months 82% of those for whom it was appropriate had been employed at some time in the last 6

months after leaving the RSP, however less than one-third (29%) were employed on a stable basis during that time period and the same proportion were currently employed 12 months after RSP. TCs/POs were generally more satisfied with the clients' employment status as they progressed through and after they had completed the RSP.

Table 15. Employment Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Of clients for whom employment is appropriate				
Searched for a job during program		83.7%		
Employed at some time in program / past 6 Months		60.5%	50%	82%
Currently employed	14%	34.9%	33%	29%
Stable employment in past 6 months			22%	29%
Satisfied with employment status*	2.13	2.74	2.5	2.95
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 16 presents information related to several indicators of adjustment in the area of substance abuse needs, as reported by the TCs/POs. Generally, RSP staff reported that fewer clients attended substance abuse treatment or AA/NA meetings at 6 and 12 months post-RSP than they did during their period of active participation in RSP, however the staff also reported that they perceived more of these clients to be abstaining from drug use at 12 months post-program than at earlier time periods. Staff were also generally more satisfied with clients'

current substance use status at 12 months post-RSP than at any earlier time, including during the program.

Table 16. Substance Use/Abuse Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Of clients with substance use history				
Regularly attended treatment in program or past 6 months		36%	20%	29%
Regularly attended AA/NA in program or past 6 months		49%	20%	13%
Is “clean”		36%	36%	47%
Satisfied with substance use status*	3.23	3.04	3.05	3.41
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 17 presents information related to changes in the RSP staff members’ perceptions of the clients’ mental health status during and up to 12 months after completing the RSP. In general, staff members perceived that fewer clients were receiving mental health services at six and 12 months after the RSP than did so during the program. Perceived compliance with mental health service recommendations was highest at 6 months post-RSP, while in general, staffers were more satisfied with the clients’ mental health status during the follow-up period than during the program itself.

Table 17. Mental/Physical Health Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Of clients with a history of mental health problems				
Received services in program/last 6 months		55%	39%	39%
Complied with mental health recommendations in program/last 6 months		40%	50%	42%
Satisfied with mental/physical health status*	2.91	2.65	3.29	3.12
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

In Table 18, information related to clients' prosocial supports and other community activities is presented as reported by TCs/POs. RSP staffers reported that clients were most likely to have a role model in the home at the time they were admitted to the program, rather than at any other time during or after the program, while the clients were most likely to have role model or mentor outside the home at the end of RSP participation (perhaps reflecting the perception of the TC him/herself as the external mentor). Involvement with prosocial peers appeared to increase over the follow-up time period; however participation in prosocial activities seemed relatively unchanged over the follow-up period. RSP staffers' satisfaction with the clients' peer relationships and social network also appeared to improve during the follow-up period, while satisfaction with the clients' involvement with prosocial activities was highest at program end, likely due the structure imposed by the RSP itself.

Table 18. Prosocial Support and Activities				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Has role model or mentor in home	58%	35%	26%	46%
Has role model or mentor outside the home	48%	61%	48%	38%
Is involved with prosocial peers			26%	38%
Regularly participates in prosocial activities			35%	33%
Satisfied with peer relationships*	2.16	2.17	2.18	2.29
Satisfied with involvement in prosocial activities*	2.27	2.57	2.27	2.46
Satisfied with network	2.50	2.39	2.52	3.25
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

The extent to which RSP clients participated in culturally- and/or gender-specific activities is presented in Table 19. These results are presented based on the numbers of clients who were either of minority status or where female. For the most part, large proportions of minority clients (56%) and female clients (64%) participated in culturally-/gender-specific programming during the program, and the proportion of clients regularly participating in these services increased from program end to the 12 month follow-up point (although apparently no female clients had been regularly participating in gender-specific programming at the 6 month follow-up).

Table 19. Cultural / Gender Specific Services and Support			
	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Of minority clients			
Participated in at least one culturally specific service in-program	56%		
Regularly participates in culturally specific services	19%	33%	33%
Of female clients			
Participated in at least one gender specific service in-program	64%		
Regularly participates in gender specific services	57%	0%	67%

4.3.4 Intermediate Outcomes Summary

Unfortunately comparison group aftercare and assessment procedures differ from that of the RSP and there is too much missing information to adequately assess some intermediate outcome measures (e.g. social factors changes, transitional case plan compliance). Without adequate comparison information it is difficult to know whether or not the intermediate outcomes achieved by the RSP group would be different in the absence of the program. Ideally we would have full information on both groups and be able to examine differences on all intermediate and outcome measures.

At the same time, the RSP program was successful in achieving case plan compliance goals, a significant reduction in YLS/CMI risk/needs scores, and a significant improvement in YLS/CMI strengths scores. While the risk/need change from intake to 180 days post program (17% reduction) was lower than the program goal (20% reduction), the scores reduced from

release to the community to 180 days post-release by 24 percent. To the extent that these intermediate measures are tied to long-term changes in clients, the long-term outcome analysis should reflect differences that can be attributed to RSP participation.

Similarly, there are some indicators of positive change for RSP clients both during the program and up to 12 months after completion of the RSP. These areas of improvement include family and housing stability, substance use, educational and employment activities, mental health and peer associations. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare these changes to those which may have occurred among a sample of clients who did not receive the enhanced reentry services (as previously mentioned the same type and amount of information was not readily available for comparison cases in Becker County). On the other hand, there are also indications that the extent to which RSP clients continue to participate in various services and activities after leaving the reentry program declines when the structure provided by the TCs is removed. In particular clients' appear less involved in substance abuse treatment and their families appear to receive fewer services on they have completed the RSP. If clients fail to participate in needed services when the motivation to do so is absent (post-RSP) program gains in risk factors and re-offending itself may not maintain. Additional examination of this issue may be possible during the upcoming two-year evaluation period as these early program participants' progress can be tracked over the long term, as part of the ongoing evaluation of the RSP.

4.4 Long-term Outcome Analysis

The analysis of long-term outcomes—recidivism and additional out-of-home placements in this section includes both bivariate and multivariate statistical procedures. Multivariate analysis (i.e., multiple regression) allows for a comparison of the impact of RSP services on the outcome in question, while controlling for demographic characteristics and those significant

differences between the groups identified in section 4.2. Descriptive and bivariate outcomes are provided (section 4.4.1) followed by an multivariate analyses assessing the impact of RSP services on (1) prevalence of new offending during the follow-up period (section 4.4.2.1); (2) frequency of new offending during the follow-up period (section 4.4.2.2); and, (3) number of days in new out-of-home placement (section 4.4.4.3).

4.4.1 Descriptive and Bivariate Outcomes

Table 20 provides a bivariate analysis of key outcome variables including prevalence of offending (i.e., whether the client was involved in any recidivism or not), frequency of offending (i.e., the number of new charges), and days in out-of-home placement after release from placement. Statistically significant differences between the samples are noted.

On a whole, 59.6 of the sample was rearrested at some time during the 4.5 to 30 month follow-up period, and in fact both RSP and comparison samples had identical rates of re-offending. More detailed examination of the samples' re-offending does reveal some specific differences between the two groups. Specifically, a greater proportion of comparison clients (53.8%) than RSP clients (44.2%) experienced a new criminal charge (excludes status and traffic), but this difference is not statistically significant. Comparison group clients experienced significantly more new charges ($F [1, 102] = 5.960, p=.016$) and slightly more new criminal charges ($F [1, 102] = 3.046, p=.084$) than RSP clients. Comparison clients also experienced more days in later out-of-home placements than RSP clients (134.85 vs. 109.81), but this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 20. Outcome Variables			
	Total Sample (N=104)	RSP (N=52)	Comparison (N=52)
Any new charge (%)	59.6	59.6	59.6
Any new criminal charge (%)	49.0	44.2	53.8
Number of new charges*			
Mean	1.89	1.27	2.52
Range	(0 - 14)	(0 - 6)	(0 - 14)
Number of new criminal charges†			
Mean	1.09	.75	1.42
Range	(0 - 14)	(0 - 4)	(0 - 14)
Days in later placements			
Mean	122.33	109.81	134.85
Range	(94 - 151)	(75 - 145)	(90 - 180)
Two-tailed tests of significance: ***p<.000, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10			

4.4.2 Multivariate Analyses

Background analyses between the two groups (section 4.2) indicate that comparison group clients have more serious offending and placement histories than RSP clients on some measures (e.g. number of prior official contacts and charges). Since the aim of this evaluation is to isolate the impact of RSP services on the likelihood of juvenile re-offending, and since prior offending history tends to be related to future offending, multivariate analyses are employed to control for prior offense history in our examination of the impact of RSP on long-term outcomes.

Bivariate analyses of offending and placement history (sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3) indicate that comparison clients have experienced significantly more official contacts, charges (including more status and felony level charges and more charges involving status, alcohol and tobacco, and property behavior), more criminal charges, long-term placements, days in long-term placements,

placement days overall, and more time on probation than RSP clients. Collinearity diagnostics indicate that these variables are highly related to one another (e.g. those who have more prior charges also have experienced more placements). Since controlling for all prior differences between the groups would create multicollinearity problems in a regression analysis, two variables were selected to control for differences in prior offending history between the two samples. Specifically, number of prior charges and a dichotomous variable for prior felony charge (0 = No, 1 = Yes) are included to control for differences in offending history. While both of these measures tap offending seriousness they are not highly correlated and thus will not create multicollinearity problems in the regression analyses. In addition, measures related to offense history are preferred over measures of placement history, since the later are also impacted by factors such as availability or access to placement facilities, criminal justice officials' decision-making, county budgets, and other factors.

Multivariate analyses also control for demographic characteristics of the samples including age at release, gender, and race/ethnicity (non-white) and time at risk (follow-up time minus time in later restrictive placement). Binary logistic regression was employed for dichotomous outcome variables (prevalence of reoffense) and ordinary least squares regression was employed for continuous outcome variables (number of new charges).

4.4.2.1 Prevalence of Later Offending

Table 21 provides the results of two regression analyses to examine the impact of RSP participation on (1) prevalence of any new offense after release, and (2) prevalence of a new *criminal* offense after release. Logistic regression analysis was employed to examine the relationship between RSP participation and the probability that a participant would have a new

offense or new criminal offense while controlling for age, gender, race/ethnicity, time at risk, number of prior charges, and a dichotomous variable representing prior felony level offending (1=has prior felony charge).

Employing a .05 criterion of statistical significance none of the variables significantly predict prevalence of later offending, and only age is a significant predictor of prevalence of later criminal offending. As the coefficients indicate, age is negatively related to the prevalence of later offending – youth who are older upon release were significantly less likely to have a new criminal charge post release ($p=.02$). While RSP participation is not a statistically significant predictor of the prevalence of later offending or the prevalence of later criminal offending, in both cases the sign of the coefficient is negative, as expected (RSP participation is related to lower prevalence of re-offending, although this effect is not large enough to be statistically significant).

Table 21. Logistic regression predicting prevalence of reoffending						
	Any New Charge			Any New Criminal Charge		
Predictor	B (SE)	Wald χ^2	Odds Ratio	B (SE)	Wald χ^2	Odds Ratio
Constant	4.028 (2.89)	1.944	56.151	5.673 (2.82)	4.048*	290.851
Age	-.293 (.168)	3.059 †	.746	-.381 (.164)	5.415*	.683
Nonwhite	.790 (.461)	2.934 †	2.204	.530 (.454)	1.367	1.699
Male	.917 (.562)	2.657	2.501	.650 (.551)	1.394	1.916
Time at risk	.001 (.001)	.278	1.001	.000 (.001)	.040	1.000
# of prior charges	.029 (.049)	.348	1.029	.013 (.048)	.079	1.014
Prior felony	-.521 (.515)	1.024	.594	-.218 (.499)	.190	.804
RSP	-.067 (.470)	.020	.935	-.532 (.468)	1.293	.588
	$R^2 = .119, \chi^2 (7, 104) = 9.622, p=.211$			$R^2 = .113, \chi^2 (7, 104) = 10.889, p=.114$		
Two-tailed tests of significance: *** $p < .000$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$						

4.4.2.2 Frequency of Later Offending

Table 22 provides the results of two regression analyses to examine the impact of RSP participation on (1) frequency of offending post-release and (2) frequency of criminal offending post-release. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was employed to examine the association between RSP participation and frequency of later offending and later criminal offending while controlling for age, gender, race/ethnicity, time at risk, number of prior charges, and a dichotomous variable representing prior felony level offending (1= has prior felony charge).

Employing a .05 criterion of statistical significance only the variable representing client type (RSP) is a significant predictor of the frequency of later offending. As the sign of the t-value indicates, RSP participation is related to fewer later charges ($p=.019$) and marginally significantly related to fewer later criminal charges ($p=.055$), when controlling for age, race/ethnicity, gender, time at risk, and two measures of prior offending. Thus while the results from these first two sets of multivariate models reveal no effect of RSP participation on the likelihood of re-offending (any offense or any criminal offense), RSP does appear to reduce the number of new charges brought against juvenile offenders who do re-offend.

	Number of Later Charges			Number of Later Criminal Charges		
Predictor	B (SE)	β	t	B (SE)	β	t
Constant	3.916 (3.304)		1.185	2.977 (2.525)		1.179
Age	-.194 (.191)	-.104	-1.018	-.099 (.146)	-.071	-.676
Nonwhite	.863 (.556)	.160	1.551	.149 (.425)	.037	.352
Male	1.098 (.672)	.181	1.634	.462 (.514)	.102	.900
Time at risk	.002 (.001)	.140	1.377	6.813E-05 (.001)	.007	.071
# of prior charges	-.036 (.059)	-.068	-.606	-.056 (.045)	-.143	-1.250
Prior felony	.051 (.612)	.009	.083	.195 (.468)	.048	.417
RSP	-1.368 (.572)	.257	-2.389*	-.849 (.437)	-.215	-1.941 [†]
	F (7, 96) = 1.888, $p=.08$, $R^2 = .121$			F (7, 96) = 1.035, $p=.412$, $R^2 = .07$		
Two-tailed tests of significance: *** $p<.000$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$, [†] $p<.10$						

4.4.2.3 Later Out-of-Home Placement

Table 23 provides the results of an OLS regression analysis examining the association between RSP participation and number of days in placement post release while controlling for age, gender, race/ethnicity, follow-up time, number of prior charges, and a dichotomous variable representing prior felony level offending (1= has prior felony charge).

Employing a .05 level of statistical significance, age is the only statistically significant predictor of the number of later placement days in this model. As with the prevalence of later offending (section 4.4.2.1), age is inversely related to later placement time – youth who are older upon release spend fewer days in later placement when controlling for other variables in the model. Once again the t-value indicates that RSP participation is inversely related to later placement time (RSP participation is associated with fewer later placement days), but this relationship is not strong enough to reach statistical significance.

Table 23. OLS regression predicting number of later placement days			
Predictor	B (SE)	β	t
Constant	542.9 (181.726)		2.987**
Age	-33.241 (9.908)	-.326	-3.355**
Nonwhite	25.164 (29.142)	.086	.864
Male	48.072 (34.957)	.146	1.375
Follow-up days	.122 (.077)	.151	1.581
# of prior charges	.677 (3.143)	.024	.215
Prior felony	25.72 (32.06)	.087	.802
RSP	-23.755 (29.94)	-.082	-.793
F (7, 96) = 3.060, p=.006, R ² = .182			
Two-tailed tests of significance: ***p<.000, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10			

4.4.3 Long-term Outcome Analysis Summary

RSP clients experienced significantly fewer new charges than comparison clients, even when controlling for age, gender, race/ethnicity, time at risk, and two measures of prior offending seriousness. While RSP participation was not a significant predictor of prevalence of later offending and time in later out-of-home placement, in both of these analyses the sign of the coefficients were as expected – RSP was associated with better outcomes.

4.5 Outcome Analysis Summary

The RSP program has been successful in achieving intermediate outcome goals, including transitional case plan compliance and changes in YLS/CMI risk/need and strengths scores, and in improving the perceived status of clients in several domains of social adjustment (e.g., family/housing stability, substance use, education and employment). In addition, RSP participants experienced significantly fewer new charges than comparison group clients even while controlling for a number of factors related to recidivism. Null findings regarding prevalence and later out-of-home placement could be the result of the small sample sizes (which generally require larger differences between groups in order for that difference to reach statistical significance) or it could be that RSP participation has no impact on these measures (which is consistent with some prior research). It could also be that the true impact of participation in aftercare services like the RSP program is only realized over longer periods of time. For example, while juveniles may continue misbehavior there may be longer term changes in recidivism outcomes (e.g. arrest as adults) which are simply not detectable with short follow-up periods. Ongoing data collection and analyses will allow for larger samples and longer follow-up periods, which may lead to more conclusive results in relation to these outcome measures.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The RSP program was approved for an additional two years of funding which began in August of 2005. During this next two-year grant cycle, program staff have an opportunity to fine tune the program and build on lessons learned during the initial funding period. This section summarizes the findings of this report, and offers suggestions for program improvement going forward.

5.1 Conclusions

The results of this process and outcome evaluation indicate that the RSP program was successful in implementing most aspects of the program as designed. Specifically, the program:

- Serviced a target population for which it was designed – youth aged 11 – 19 returning from three or more weeks of placement.
- Created collaboration between TCs and probation officers which allowed for increased contacts with clients, their parents, and agency partners, and increased supervision and support for youthful offenders.
- Created transitional case plans which were matched with individual client needs, and successfully referred offenders to appropriate services.
- Created an advisory committee which met quarterly to review the progress of the program, and managed a successful transition when the Collaborative restructured.
- Cultivated a solid working relationship with probation officers and agency partners in the community. Agency partner and probation officer surveys indicate high satisfaction with program operations, communication, and staff quality.

- Achieved intermediate goals set by program designers, including a 75 percent compliance rate with case plan tasks, a 24 percent improvement in risk/needs, and a more than 50 percent improvement in strengths scores.
- Resulted in better long-term outcomes than comparison clients on at least one measure of recidivism. Consistent with the existing literature on the effectiveness of similar programs, RSP participation significantly reduced the number of later charges when controlling for demographic and risk variables, but did not reduce the likelihood or seriousness of re-offending, nor did it increase the time to re-offending. Statistical analyses also indicate that RSP participation is associated with reduced prevalence of later criminal offending and fewer days in later out-of-home placement, but these differences were not statistically significant.

The results of the process and outcome evaluation also point to areas where program staff could focus to more fully implement the RSP program design, including:

- Improvements in the placement and reentry preparation phases, including earlier assignment of TCs and earlier transitional case plan creation. While the RSP program design calls for improved services from the point of out-of-home placement (start of placement phase), TCs are not assigned to the youth until much later, and generally are not assigned much prior to the juvenile's release back to the community. While it may be that more intensive services are occurring during the placement phase that are not coming to the attention of the evaluators (because placement facility records are not reviewed unless they are part of the paper or computer files), for the most part the RSP program appears to begin just prior to or

upon release. Most aftercare programs call for at least some service coordination during initial placement phases, and pre-release planning two to three months prior to release. Earlier assignment of TCs in at least a limited role (e.g. one contact per month while in initial months of placement) would allow for continuity of care and earlier transitional case planning.

- More attention to the timeliness of assessments and completion of data tracking forms. Social factors survey (TC, client, and parent) response rates have been low. This is partially due to difficulties in getting clients and parents involved, however TC surveys should be completed for each client. Increased attention to the timing of YLS/CMI assessments (especially the assessment upon placement) would improve this data and allow for better comparisons.

- While examination of information related to clients' adjustment in each of several domains (e.g., education, family/housing stability, substance use, etc) revealed some improvements in the perception of these problem areas as reported by the TCs/POs, the limitations of these sources of data were also explained. In conjunction with more objective measures of client change (including risk/needs screening scores like the YLS) these data tend to support the conclusion of improvements among RSP clients on several types of intermediate outcomes. On the other hand, it also appears that clients are somewhat less likely to continue participation in needed services/prosocial activities once the structure of the RSP itself is removed -- when clients complete and leave RSP.

5.2 Recommendations

During the first two-year funding cycle, the RSP staff was successful in implementing many aspects of the program as designed. The program was also successful in meeting its intermediate outcome goals related to case compliance and changes in risk/need and strengths scores which were designed to improve long-term outcomes. While the outcome analysis is not wholly supportive, there are indications that the program has an impact on at least some aspects of offender recidivism (e.g. frequency of later offending and later criminal offending). During the next two-year grant cycle we will have an opportunity to collect additional data to further examine service related components of the program and their relationship to key outcome measures. In addition, as the RSP sample size grows the evaluators will be able to examine whether subgroups of clients respond differently to the program. In addition, RSP program staff have the opportunity to fine-tune the program and build on the knowledge they have acquired during the past two years.

Based on the results of the process and outcome evaluations, and research in the rehabilitation, aftercare and reintegration literature, the evaluators have the following recommendations:

- Reduce some paperwork. RSP staff and probation officers agree that YLS/CMI assessments are currently excessive. The evaluators recommend the elimination of the 60/90 day reassessment. In addition, the evaluators recommend the elimination of the 60 day TC social factors update. Elimination of these two pieces can allow for increased focus on the timing and completion of the remaining assessments, and more time spent with clients.

- Earlier Transitional Coordinator assignment to allow for improved coordination of services and transitional case planning to occur prior to release from placement.

- Tracking services received while in out-of-home placement. Currently the evaluators have little information regarding the type or quality of services received during placement. Treatment case plans and service receipt during placement are key factors in the IAP and other aftercare models. Probation officer or TC recording of this information would allow for an examination of the extent to which these services address client risks and needs and are followed up with appropriate aftercare in the community.

- Increased focus on cognitive-behavioral treatment (CBT) both in the out-of-home placement and the community. While TC referrals to services in the community appear to target identified need areas, we know nothing about the content or quality of the services that clients are actually receiving. Research on services for offenders suggests that these programs need to be “appropriate” including a focus on dynamic risk factors and preference for CBT style programs (Andrews & Bonta, 1990; Lipsey, 1992) in order to be most effective. If the content or quality of services is not appropriate, referrals to those services and ensuring that offenders participate in those services will not likely provide benefit to the youth. Program staff could provide or attempt to locate/refer clients to CBT style treatment targeting not only broad issues such as “criminal thinking” or other antisocial attitudes, but also to address substance abuse and other specific need areas. This is already occurring to some extent (e.g. in recent months TCs have prepared an EQUIP program for youth),

however TCs and other staff should make sure that “appropriate” types of services (e.g., structured, skills-based, CBT-style) services are used as much as possible.

- Efforts to maintain contact with RSP clients once they have completed the program, especially among those juveniles who are not continued on probation after RSP may help improve not only important data collection efforts, but also to increase the chances that clients continue to participate in needed services (like drug treatment and family services) and other prosocial activities which will help them consolidate and maintain the improvements they make while actively involved in the RSP. Exactly how to accomplish this with limited resources (particularly TCs’ time) will have to be explored by program staff.

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Appendix A: TC Activities Aimed at 5 Reentry Components

In addition to working directly with clients, TCs network with other service providers in the community to establish programs and relationships that RSP clients can access in their transition from out-of-home placement. The following describes the efforts of the TCs in the first two years of the grant cycle. Information in this appendix was provided by the TCs, and is divided into efforts aimed at each of the five reentry components, including: a) obtaining and retaining long term employment; b) maintaining a stable residence; c) successfully addressing substance abuse issues; c) successfully addressing physical and mental health issues; d) establishing a meaningful and supportive role in the community.

Obtaining and Retaining Long Term Employment

To assist youth in obtaining and retaining employment, TCs have:

- Met with local employers to develop rapport and assist RSP youth with employment opportunities.
- Created an employment portfolio to assist youth in tracking job applications, personal contacts, and follow-ups.
- Assisted youth in completing job applications, role played interviewing skills, and provided education on proper work ethic.
- Assisted youth in obtaining Social Security identification and Birth Certificates.
- Purchased appropriate clothing for job interviews and work attire.
- Provided transportation of youth to look for jobs, and to and from work.

- Obtained educational software to enhance youths’ skills and build confidence.
- Made referrals to the Clay County independent living SELF program. Several clients were accepted into this program.
- Worked closely with the Minnesota Workforce Center and Rural MN CEP programs and referred RSP youth for placement consideration in these programs. Several clients were accepted into the CEP summer work program, and recently one client was accepted into their year-round program.
- Served as contact person for employers and assisted youth and employers when problems arose.
- Assisted clients in obtaining drivers licenses and bicycles to help them become more self sufficient in work transportation.

In addition, youth in the RSP program often need support in their school environment. To address this need, TCs have:

- Attended school meetings to assist other in developing appropriate schedules or modified educational programming (IEP).
- Transported youth to and from school, when needed.
- Acted as a contact person for schools to address concerns regarding RSP youth.
- Addressed academic or behavioral concerns with youth.
- Collaborated closely with the Truancy Intervention Program.
- Made referrals to alternative education programs.
- Taken youth on tours of local colleges.

- Accompanied youth on meetings with post-secondary school counselors and assisted youth in completing admission forms and financial aid packets.

Maintaining a Stable Residence

Some RSP youth and their families have been homeless upon entering the program. Other families have had difficulty maintaining their housing for various reasons. To address these issues, TCs have:

- Assisted families in securing housing.
- Advocated on behalf of families to local homeless shelters.
- Paid utilities bills when no other funding was available.
- Purchased car parts to prevent mothers from losing their jobs when no other funding was available.
- Provided Section 8 housing packets to eligible families and referrals to appropriate agencies.
- Advocated on behalf of clients' families with local apartment complex owners. Some families have “burned many bridges” with poor credit, prior evictions, and criminal records and thus have a difficult time finding housing. TCs have established relationships with local apartment complex owners which resulted in increased receptivity to renting to these families. These housing opportunities have allowed families to reestablish rental and credit histories and will hopefully prevent future homelessness.

Successfully Addressing Substance Abuse Issues

Transitional Coordinators have established substance abuse support for RSP youth. When the treatment/transitional plan indicate that substance abuse services are required, TCs have:

- Provided information regarding community services for aftercare to youth and their families.
- Assisted in scheduling treatment appointments.
- Provided transportation to and from treatment programs.
- Completed urinalysis testing.
- Attended weekly AA meetings with appropriate youth.
- Ordered AA treatment workbooks through the Hazelton Treatment Center in Minnesota and distributed them to appropriate youth (based on CD evaluations and current/prior CD services).
- Obtained National Drug Intelligence Center brochures detailing information on assorted drugs and distributed them to youth and their families.
- Purchased a variety of educational DVDs, brochures, and worksheets for RSP youth regarding substance abuse.
- Worked closely with chemical dependency counselors.
- Provides support for school AA/NA groups.

Successfully Address Physical Health and Mental Health Issues

Several youth involved with the RSP program are in need of physical or mental health services. In an attempt to meet these needs, TCs have:

- Assisted youth in scheduling physicals and mental health assessments.
- Transported youth and/or parents or guardians to and from health related appointments.
- Acted as a resource for doctors and therapists involved with RSP youth.
- Assisted youth and their families in completing medical paperwork.
- Collaborated with Rule 79 caseworkers to make sure that they are aware of problems with RSP youth involved with their services.
- Assisted schools in receiving the paperwork necessary to administer youth medication.
- Purchased material to provide a cognitive group (EQUIP). This program focuses on teaching youth to think and act responsibly through a peer-helping approach.

Transitional Coordinators facilitate the group, and in the future prior RSP clients will be asked to help facilitate.

Establishing a Meaningful and Supportive Role in the Community

There continue to be many families *not involved with their children, too involved with their children* and/or who *experience many of the same issues and problems as the youth*. The TCs believe that for the youth to be successful, the family's needs often also need to be addressed.

To address these needs, TCs have:

- Made referrals to local agencies qualified to assist families with their needs.
- Attended wraparound meetings and assisted families in reaching their goals.
- Transported families to appointments, when necessary.
- Encouraged family involvement in RSP by inviting family members to attend outings with their children including social activities, cultural events, and AA/NA meetings.
- Participated in crisis interventions with families.
- Attempted to keep an open line of communication with parents/guardians by encouraging them to contact TCs at any time.

In addition to addressing family issues, TCs have attempted to involve youth more in their community in an effort to create a more meaningful role for youth. Specifically, TCs have:

- Provided community volunteer opportunities including working at local homeless shelters, thrift stores, and a senior program.
- Begun the process of establishing a volunteer site at a local nursing home.