

Reentry Services Project:

Report to the

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

and the

**Joint Advisory Committee for the Restorative Justice Program & Re-entry
Services Project**



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Kathleen J. Bergseth
Thomas D. McDonald

Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science
North Dakota State University



**Reentry Services Project:
Report to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and the Joint
Advisory Committee for the Restorative Justice Program & Re-entry
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The Reentry Services Project (RSP) in Clay County, MN began in July 2003 and continues today with funding from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative. The program aims to improve public safety by assisting youthful offenders in successful community reentry following out-of-home placement. Two Transitional Coordinators (TCs) work with juvenile Probation Officers (POs) and community-based service providers to identify client specific needs and employ comprehensive case management services. The program seeks to improve public safety by preparing incarcerated juvenile offenders for successful reentry from criminal justice placements to communities. Specific program objectives include:

- 1) reducing recidivism by improving strengths and reducing risk/needs of juvenile offenders transitioning to their home communities by incorporating a three phase design to ensure continuity in services from placement to the community,
- 2) strengthening families of youthful offenders in order to facilitate youth adjustment and transition to the community, and
- 3) improving collaboration, coordination, and access to community resources for high risk youth and their families.

The RSP is designed to begin at upon entry to the placement facility and to continue for approximately six months following release to the community. As of April 1, 2009 the Reentry Services Project had 133 closed and coded case files. An additional 19 cases were currently active and 18 youth had been served more than once by the program.

During the most recent quarter (January 1, 2009 to March 31, 2009) a total of 24 youth were served by the program. Five cases were closed during this period, while 19 cases remain open. This report includes detailed information on the five cases closed during between January 1, 2009 and March 31, 2009.

I. Sociodemographic Profile

The average age upon release back to the community for the five clients was 16.4 years. Eighty percent of the clients (4 of 5) were female. Forty percent of the clients were White (2), 40 percent African American (2), and 20 percent were Native American (1).

On average, these clients had 4 prior official contacts including an average of 4.4 charges prior to their most recent out of home placement. Only one client (20%) had a prior felony charge; three (60%) had prior persons charges (e.g. misdemeanor or felony assault). On average the clients spent 18.7 months on probation prior to returning to the community after their most recent placement (range 5-28 months). All of the clients were on indefinite probation. The majority (60%) was on moderate supervision upon release back to the community; two clients (40%) were on maximum supervision.

The clients experienced an average of 3.6 out-of-home placements (1 prior long-term – 30 days or more) and had spent on average 94 days in out-of-home placement (nearly all in restrictive out-of-home placement) upon entering the Reentry Services Project.

Sixty percent (3 of 5) of these clients’ most recent charge was a misdemeanor offense; one client’s most recent offense was a felony (20%) and one client’s most recent offense was a status offense (20%). One client’s (20%) most recent charge was a persons offense, one (20%) illegal drugs, two (40%) public order (e.g. disorderly conduct), and one (20%) alcohol or tobacco related (e.g. minor consuming, possession of tobacco). The clients’ most recent placement averaged 55 days (all restrictive) and was most commonly a detention facility (80%); the remainder (20%) spent time in a residential treatment facility (e.g. Thistledeew).

Four of these clients (80%) had a history of violence (e.g., persons charge, fights), all (5) had a history of school problems, all (5) had a history of mental health problems, and 80 percent (4 of 5) had a history of substance abuse. All of these clients had a history of multiple risk factors (two or more of violence, substance abuse, school, or mental health problems). Sixty percent of these clients (3) experienced all four of these problems.

Initial YLS/CMI Scores

RSP clients are assessed regularly using the YLS/CMI diagnostic instrument. Table 1 provides the average YLS/CMI score for youth upon return to the community (N=5).

Table 1. YLS/CMI Scores upon Return to the Community			
Domain	Average Score	Risk Level (associated with Average Score)	Percent of clients with strength identified
Prior / Current Offenses	1.4	Moderate	N/A
Family / Parenting	3.2	Moderate	0%
Education / Employment	3.0	Moderate*	0%
Peer Relations	2.6	Moderate	0%
Substance Abuse	2.2	Moderate*	0%
Leisure / Recreation	1.8	Moderate*	0%
Personality / Behavior	3.6	Moderate*	0%
Attitudes / Orientation	2.6	Moderate	0%
Overall	20.4	Moderate	Average 0 per client
*While none of the averaged scores ranked “high”, the domains that were closest to scoring in the “high” range were leisure / recreation, education / employment, substance abuse, and personality / behavior.			

II. Program Activities

Case Planning

Transitional case plans were created for each of these clients. These plans included goals and tasks in three general categories (competency development, restorative accountability, and community safety). The case plans were examined to determine the average number of goals and tasks assigned in each of these categories and the distribution of tasks in each of the domains identified in YLS/CMI assessments.

Table 2 provides the average number of goals and tasks assigned to clients in the domains of competency development, restorative accountability, and community safety.

Case Plan Area	Average Number of Goals Assigned (range)	Average Number of Tasks Assigned (range)
Competency Development	9.4 (7-12)	70.4 (51-84)
Restorative Accountability	1.4 (1-2)	6.6 (4-10)
Community Safety	2.2 (1-3)	6.0 (3-9)
All	13 per client	83 per client

The following figures indicate the proportion of clients who were assigned at least one task by YLS/CMI domain (Figure 1) and the breakdown of all assigned tasks by domain (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Percent of Clients Assigned to Tasks by Domain

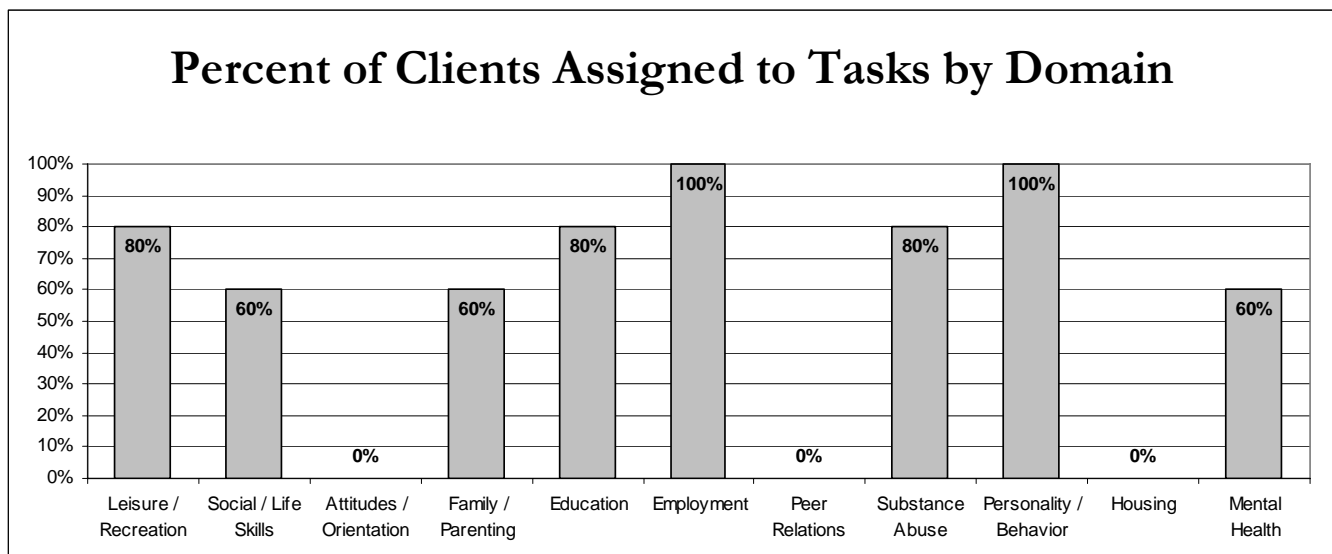
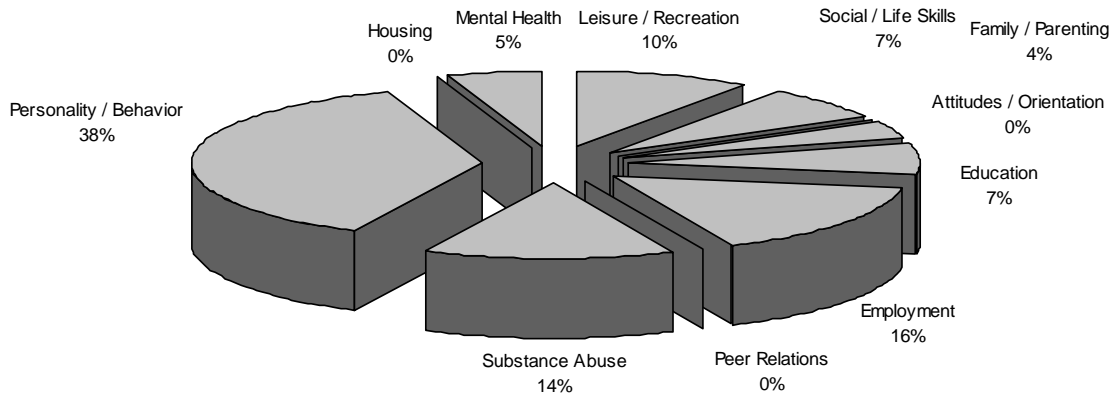


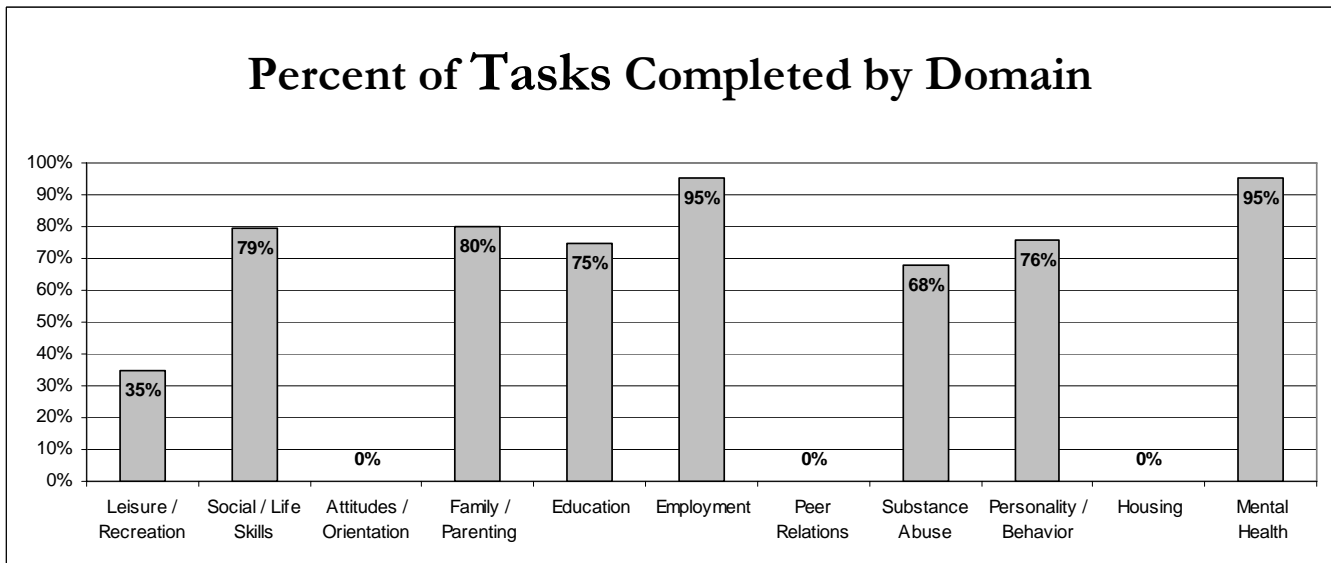
Figure 2. Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain

Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain



Seventy-five percent of clients’ case plan tasks were considered complete upon exit from the Reentry Services Project (307 of 408 tasks assigned). The remaining tasks (25%) were not completed during program participation. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of task completion rates by domain.

Figure 3. Percent of Tasks Complete by Domain



The majority of tasks assigned were in the areas of personality / behavior, employment, substance abuse, and leisure / recreation (see Figure 2.). Task completion rates in these domains were 76 percent, 95 percent, 68 percent, and 35 percent respectively.

Referrals / Services

All of these clients (5 of 5) received at least one service-related referral. A total of 56 referrals were made for these clients (an average of 11.2 per client). Figure 4 depicts the proportion of clients referred to various types of services and Figure 5 examines referrals to services by type.

Figure 4. Percent of All Clients Referred to Services

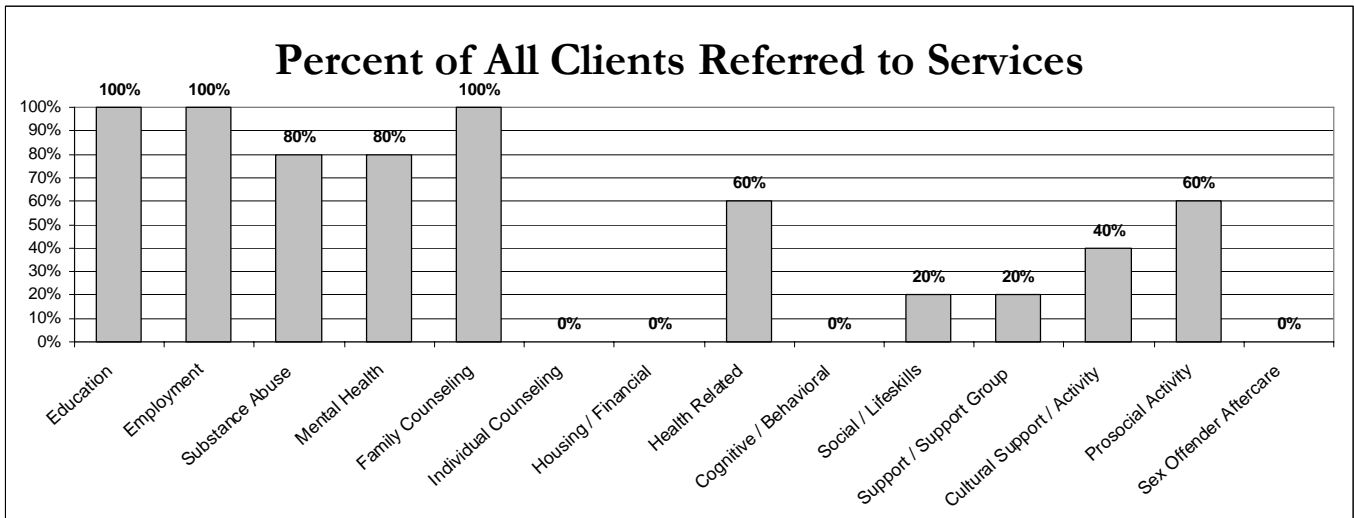
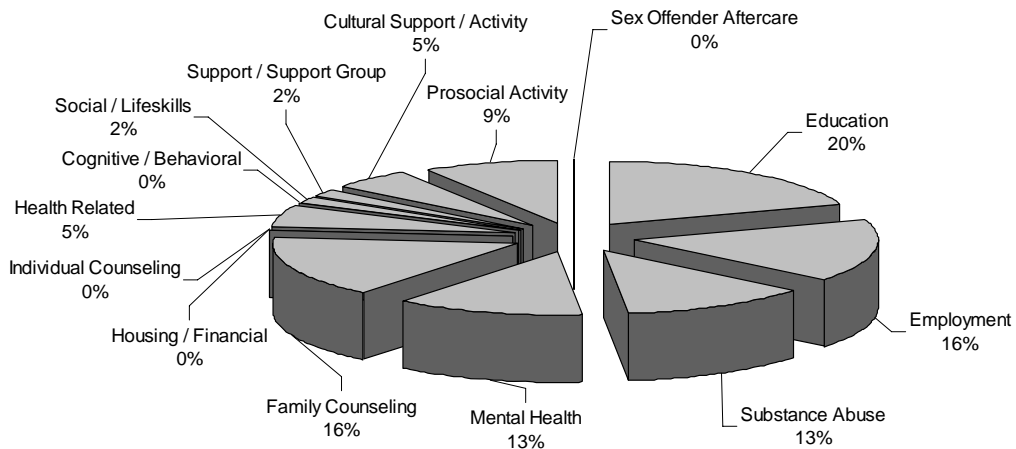


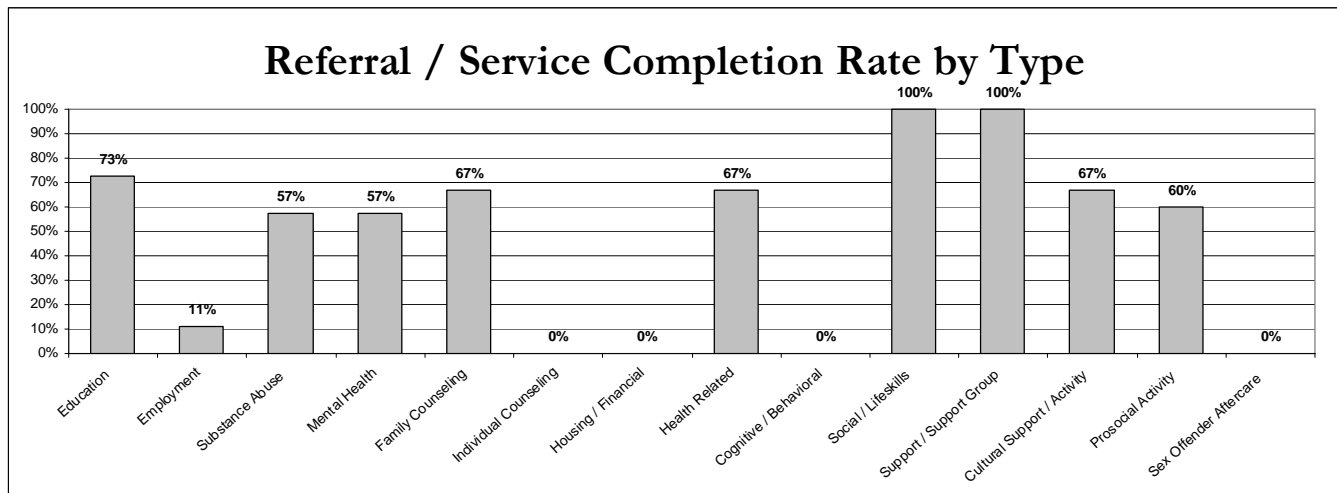
Figure 5. Referrals by Type of Service

Referrals by Type



Eighty-four percent of referrals (47 of 56) resulted in at least some service to the client (i.e., at least one counseling session or assessment). Fifty-seven percent of referrals (32) were considered “complete” or “ongoing” at the end of the clients’ participation in the program (average 6.4 per client). A breakdown of completion rate (proportion of referrals complete or ongoing at the end of RSP participation) by referral type is provided in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Referral / Service Completion Rate by Type of Service



Other Program Activities

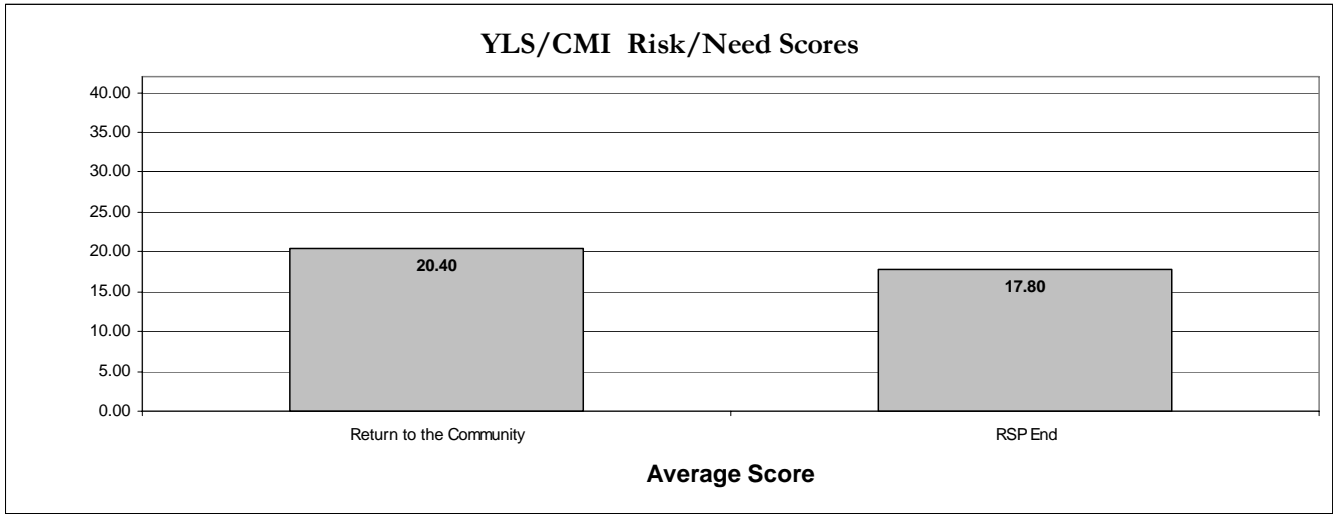
The five clients spent an average of 12.3 months in the Reentry Services Program (range 6 to 19 months). During this time Transitional Coordinators averaged 46 contacts with clients, 25 parent contacts, and 15 agency partner contacts. Probation Officers averaged 16 contacts with clients, 10 parent contacts, and 27 agency partner contacts. On average, Transitional Coordinators spent 83 hours with each client during program participation.

III. Intermediate Outcomes

Eighty percent (4 of 5) of these clients were subjected to at least one drug test during program participation; 60 percent (3) were tested four or more times. All tested clients experienced at least one positive drug test; three clients experienced two or more tests indicating drug use.

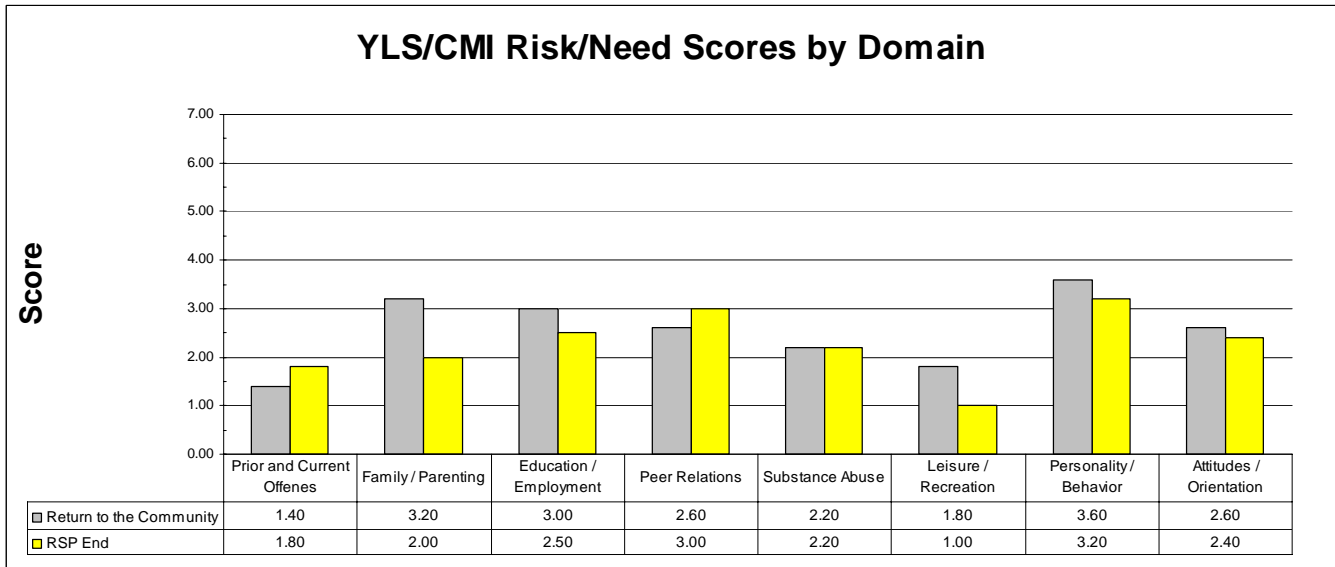
In order to examine changes in YLS/CMI risk/need and strengths scores during the period of program participation, the researchers isolated assessments occurring at two points: a) upon return to the community, and; b) upon program completion. Changes in risk/need score over time are depicted in Figure 7 (see below).

Figure 7 YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores



Overall risk/needs scores declined 13 percent from return to the community (20.40) to the end of RSP participation (17.80). Changes in risk/need score by domain are presented in Figure 8 and Table 3 (see below).

Figure 8. YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores by Domain



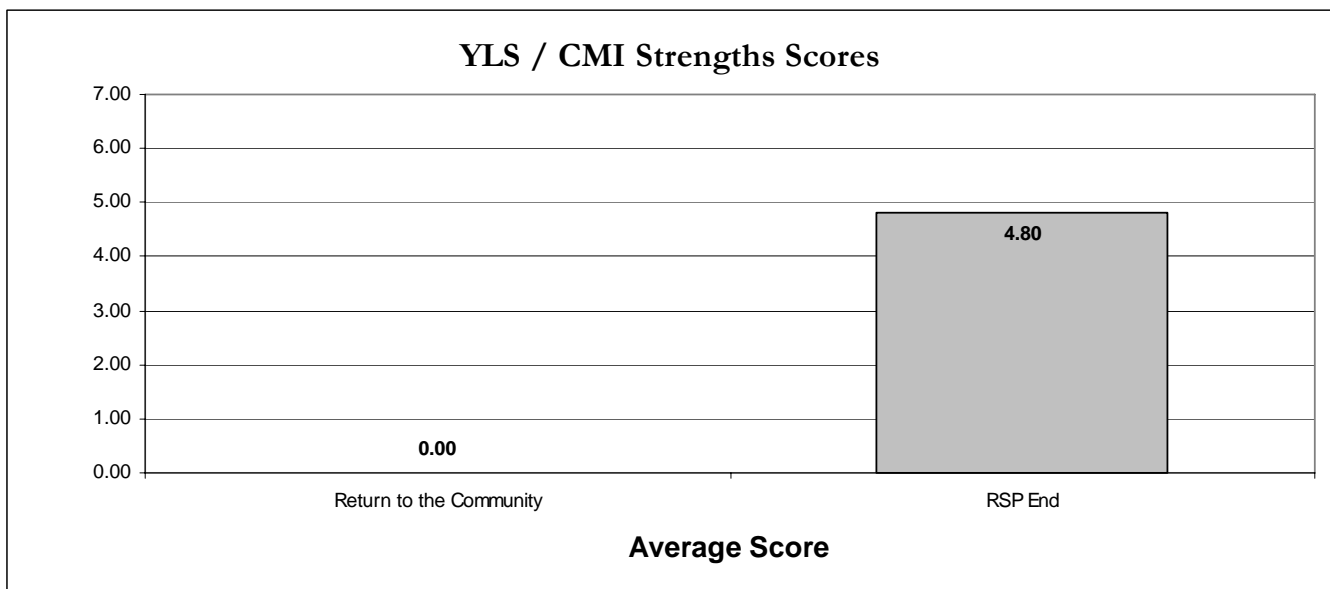
Domain	% change from Return to Program End
Prior / Current Offenses	29%
Family / Parenting	-38%
Education / Employment*	-17%
Peer Relations	15%
Substance Abuse*	0%
Leisure / Recreation*	-44%
Personality / Behavior*	-11%
Attitudes / Orientation	-8%
Overall	-13%

* Leisure/recreation, education/employment, substance abuse, and personality / behavior were the domains closest to ranking “high” on the initial / intake YLS/CMI.

Clients experienced reductions in risk/need in five of eight domains. Risk/need reductions were greatest in the domains of leisure/recreation (44% reduction), family / parenting (39% reduction), and education / employment (17% reduction). Clients evidenced increases in risk/need in two domains, including prior/current offenses (29% increase) and peer relations (15% increase).

Changes in strengths score over time are depicted in Figure 9.

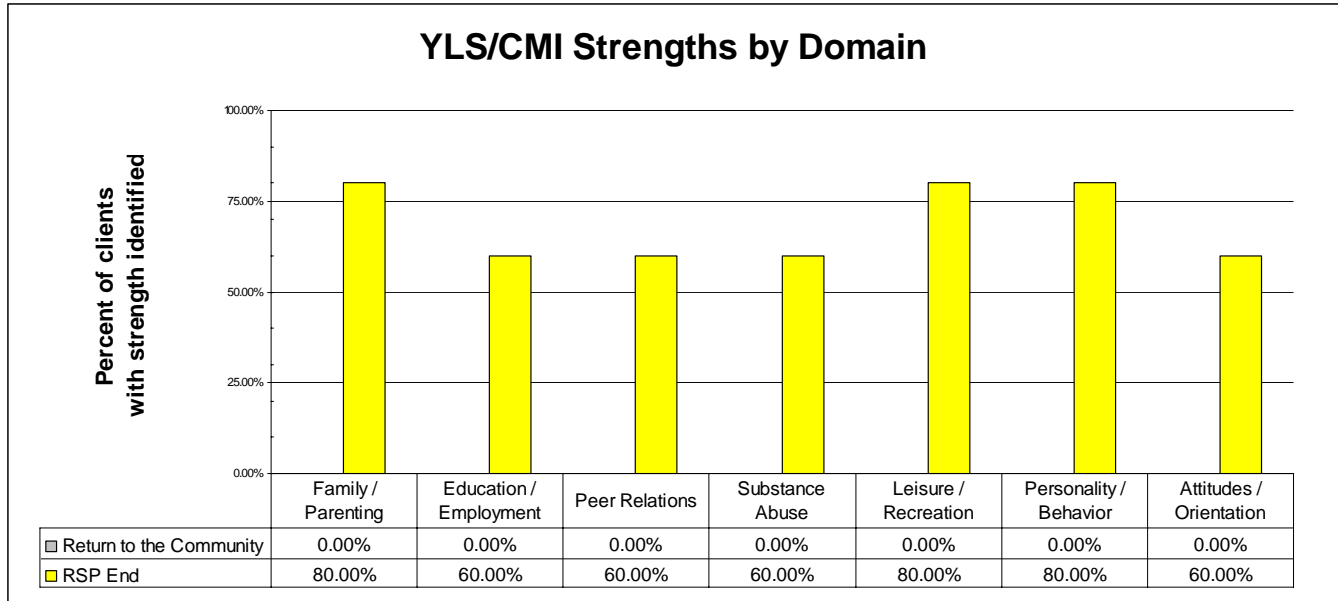
Figure 9. YLS/CMI Strengths Scores



No strengths were identified in the YLS/CMI assessment that occurred upon return to the community. An average of 4.8 strengths were identified per client on the assessment that occurred at the end of program

participation. Figure 10 depicts changes in the proportion of clients with a strength identified in each domain over time.

Figure 10. YLS/CMI Strengths by Domain



IV. In-Program Recidivism

Twenty percent (1 of 5) of these clients experienced no probation violations while participating in the Reentry Services Project. Of clients with probation violations (4), only one experienced multiple violations while participating in the program.

One client (20%) experienced no new charges during program participation. Of the four clients with new charges, two had more than one new charge. The highest level of new charges was most commonly misdemeanor (2 of 4 clients with new charges); one client experienced a felony charge and one experienced a status level charge. No clients experienced a new persons-related charge during program participation; the most serious behavior type among the clients with new charges was property (1), illegal drugs (1), public order (1), and alcohol/tobacco (1).

All of these clients experienced a new out-of-home placement while participating in the program; two clients (40%) experienced more than one placement during program participation. A total of 7 placements were incurred by these five clients; nearly all of these placements were long term (6 of 7 placements were longer than 30 days). Clients spent a total of 2 days in short term out-of-home placements which began while the client was participating in the program and a total of 589 days in long-term placements (30 days or more) which began while the client was participating in the program. All of this time was spent in restrictive out-of-home placement.

Seventy-one percent of out-of-home placements which occurred while clients were participating in the program (5 of 7) were the result of technical probation violations; the remainder was for new charges (1) and unknown reasons (1).

V. Other Client Achievements and Participation

While participating in the program...

- None of these clients had a high school diploma or GED certificate upon entry to the program. Clients attended education services regularly (40%) or sporadically (60%) while participating in the program; one client took GED tests (groups not mutually exclusive).
- Two of these five clients were homeless during program participation; no clients were homeless upon program completion. All of the clients had a stable residence while participating in the program.
- Transitional Coordinators reported that employment was appropriate for all of these five clients. All of these clients (5 of 5) searched for a job and were employed at some time while participating in the program. Four clients (80%) had stable employment while participating in the program. One client was employed upon program completion.
- All of the clients from whom data was recorded (3 of 3) were “clean” upon program completion. Transitional Coordinators reported that all of the clients with a history of substance abuse (4) were in need of treatment services during program participation. All four youth regularly attended treatment. Transitional Coordinators reported that all of the clients with a history of substance abuse were in need of AA/NA (4); one youth attended AA/NA regularly, three attended sporadically, and one youth did not attend. Substance use status upon program completion was only recorded for two of the four youth with a history of substance abuse; both of these clients were “clean” at the end of program participation.
- Transitional Coordinators indicated that three of the five clients with a history of mental health problems were in need of mental health services while participating in the program. Sixty percent (3 of 5) of clients with a history of mental health problems received mental health services while participating in the Reentry Services Project and all of these clients (3) complied with mental health recommendations.
- Four clients’ families (80%) participated in at least one outing or activity; three families (60%) regularly participated in outings while the client was in the program.
- Sixty percent of clients’ families were involved in services (3 of 5).
- All of the minority clients (3 of 3) participated in at least one culturally specific service; one was regularly involved in culturally specific services.
- Forty percent of these clients (2 of 5) received at least one gender specific service; one client regularly participated in gender specific services.

VI. Summary

The results of this quarterly report mirror earlier reports which have indicated that the program provides increased contact with clients, their parents, and agency partners. In fact, contacts provided by Transitional Coordinators represent a 287% increase contacts with clients, a 250 percent increase in parent contacts, and a 55 percent increase in contact with agency partners when compared to Probation Officer contacts. In addition, program staff continues to develop and implement case specific plans in collaboration with local service agencies. The majority of clients received at least one transitional case plan task in the domains of employment, personality / behavior, substance abuse, education, leisure / recreation, social / life skills, family / parenting, and mental health (Figure 1). The most common domains for task assignment were personality / behavior (38% of all tasks assigned), employment (16% of all assigned tasks), substance abuse (14% of assigned tasks), and leisure / recreation (10% of assigned tasks) (Figure 2). Compliance with transitional case plan tasks in the most common areas of task assignment ranged from 35 percent (leisure/recreation) to 95 percent (employment) (Figure 3).

Most clients were referred to services in the areas of education, employment, family, substance abuse, mental health, health, and prosocial activities (Figure 4). The most common domains for service referral were education (20% of all referrals), family (16%), employment (16%), mental health (13%) and substance abuse (13) (Figure 5). Completion rates for referrals in these domains ranged from 11 percent (employment) to 73 percent (education) (Figure 6).

Data regarding intermediate outcomes is also consistent with prior reports. The data indicate that clients served by the program experienced a number of positive changes in social factors related to reducing the probability of reoffending, including education, employment, substance abuse, mental health, and family functioning. Average YLS/CMI risk/need scores declined 13 percent from return to the community to program end, with the greatest reductions occurring in the domains of leisure / recreation, family / parenting, and education / employment (Table 3).

When compared to earlier reports, however, some interesting differences are observed.

- First, data indicate that youth whose cases were closed during this period had more extensive offending and placement histories than those reviewed in the most recent quarterly (January 2009); however their offense and placement histories are similar to those observed in other quarterly (October 2008) and cumulative (April 2008) reports. They evidenced risk profiles (e.g., average risk/need scores) similar to youth examined in previous reports and a similar proportion evidenced histories of violence, school problems, mental health, and substance abuse.
- Second, youth whose cases were closed during this period spent more time in the RSP program (average 12.3 months) than youth examined in the October 2008 report (8.9 months) and in previous cumulative reports (e.g., 7.6 months in April 2008). The length of program participation was similar, however, to that observed in the January 2009 quarterly report (average 13.6 months). Thus, two recent quarterly reports indicate that the length of program participation may have recently increased.
- Third, youth whose cases were closed during this quarter were assigned a larger number of goals and tasks (average 13 goals and 83 tasks) than youth examined in the October 2008 report (8.4 goals and 54 tasks) or those included in the April 2008 cumulative report (6.5 goals and 33 tasks). Again, this

increase is similar to that observed in the January 2009 quarterly report (average 9.38 goals and 58.75 tasks). Service referral rates were also higher than in previous reports.

- Finally, clients who completed the program during this period seem to have experienced more positive drug testing, probation violations, charges, and out-of-home placement than youth examined in earlier reports. They were also more likely, however, to attend educational services, look for work and be employed and comply with mental health recommendations. Their families were also more likely to participate in outings and services than youth in previous reports.

These differences may be anomalies related to the small number of cases included in the current report or they may signal important shifts in service delivery and youth behavior that require ongoing monitoring. It is also possible that the greater number of tasks/goals and referrals observed are a reflection of the longer program length experienced by these clients. Similarly, the greater misbehavior observed may be a function of the longer program length (i.e., youth were followed-up for a longer period of time making in-program recidivism more likely).

In summary, this report presents data which reveal that the Clay County RSP program continues to deliver a range of program services which are beneficial to youth, their families, and the larger community. Certain outputs observed are consistent with earlier summative reports which indicated positive benefits of program participation relative to traditional release processes. These consistencies suggest that the benefits observed in earlier analyses, including reductions in recidivism, court placement, and related system costs, will be sustained. At the same time, current analyses alert us to the possibility of developing shifts in service delivery and/or youth behavior when compared to previous reports. These differences may reflect subtle changes over time which might be masked by cumulative analyses. On the other hand, they may simply reflect the unique characteristics and processing of the small sample included in this report (i.e., 5 youth). Ongoing attention to these and other service differences warrant close attention in forthcoming quarterly and cumulative reports.

PROBLEM-SOLVING PARTNERSHIP
PROGRESS REPORT, QUARTER 3
JANUARY 1, 2009-MARCH 31, 2009
GRANT NUMBER 2009-PSP-00029

1. Project Implementation: Our specific program objectives include:

A) Reducing recidivism by improving strengths and reducing risk/needs of juvenile offenders transitioning to their home communities by incorporating a three phase design to ensure continuity in services from placement to the community.

B) Strengthening families of youthful offenders to facilitate youth adjustment and transition to the community.

C) Improving collaboration, coordination, and access to community resources for high risk youth and their families.

*Please see attached report from the Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science, North Dakota State University describing this quarter's activities. Please note that objectives 2 and 3 are recent additions to the program and remain difficult to quantify as few youth have exited the program since these components were added.

2. Staffing: No new staff was hired during this quarter and there are no current vacancies.

3. Project Outcomes: The attached evaluation report addresses the specific identified program outcomes including intermediate outcomes and in-program recidivism.

During this quarter we continue to increase collaboration between systems in Clay County by implementing a family strengthening component to the Reentry Services Project. We are collaborating with Clay County Social Services and local mental health agencies to complete a strength-based family assessment on the youth of families referred to the program, if appropriate. By implementing a family strengthening component to the program we hope to increase the likelihood of positive change in both clients and their families both as individuals and a family unit.

The two family therapists that are assigned to the Reentry Services Project were invited and are participating in the Reentry Services work group that meets bi-monthly to review program objectives and share information on youth opportunities and programs in the area. The workgroup consists of numerous community partners who are involved in youth issues, thereby increasing collaboration across systems. The family therapists also meet monthly with the juvenile probation agents, the Reentry staff and the program administrator to review cases and provide updates.

The joint Restorative Justice/Reentry Services Project Advisory Board will meet again on May 7, 2009. The Advisory Board consists of 30-35 community partners, including a county commissioner, law enforcement, schools, Mental Health agencies, Social Services, MN CEP, corrections, County Attorney's office, parents, youth agencies and the Clay County Collaborative. The Board meets quarterly in an effort to increase the community's awareness of youth issues and increase the community's role in affecting positive change for youth and their families. In March of 2009, a PATH foster parent and a staff member of the local Youth for Christ organization joined both groups and have provided valuable parental and faith based input.

The two staff employed by the program work on a daily basis with community agencies to increase community awareness of the issues facing youth who are returning to the community from out of home placement. Examples include being a part of wraparound teams, working with a homeless youth steering committee to address the needs of homeless youth in the community, working with cultural groups to increase opportunities for youth in the community, working with community members to increase job opportunities for youth, presenting and having group discussions on youth issues at the local alternative school, etc.

Through the program youth are provided the opportunity to restore the harm they have caused to the community and victims of their crimes by completing community work service, writing letters of apology, etc. under the direction of the Reentry staff and/or a local law enforcement officer. Youth are also given the opportunity to participate in a Restorative Justice process, coordinated by the Clay County Restorative Justice coordinator.

4. Feedback: The following feedback was received from youth and parents surveys this quarter. The feedback will be used to make improvements to the program, or build on strengths, as indicated.

Youth

In what ways was the Reentry Services Project helpful to you?

- I get to talk to somebody besides my parents
- I got into tennis, started a job, got better grades, and stayed sober.

In what ways was the program disappointing?

- Mostly nothing was disappointed me besides every time I'd go I'd meet somebody new and I'd like somebody I already knew.
- I really didn't get time to hang out with friends.

Is there anything the Reentry Services Project could have done to make your transition from out of home placement easier?

- Helped to get out of the house once in a while.
- I got away from the house and I got a lot of help finding jobs and getting into activities.

Parent/Guardian

In what ways was the Reentry Services Project helpful to you?

- Someone to talk to and discuss problems with; incentive for child.
- My child had someone she could talk to.
- The program has opened up doors to help us see that there are resources and opportunities for us. I feel that she (client) has done a lot.

In what ways was the Reentry Services Project disappointing?

- It wasn't
- It was disappointing to hear that the program was no longer working with us.

How could the Reentry Services Project have made your transition easier?

- It was good.
- This is as easiest as it gets. So smooth.

The Reentry Services Project partners with the MN Department of Corrections. One of the agents writes, "I have been working with at-risks kids since 1997 in various roles and it is my opinion that the Re-entry Services Program is one of the better programs that can be provided to at-risk children and families. If anything, I wish the program could be expanded to work with more kids, even those who have not been in an out of home placement. If this service was provided to any child who is at-risk, there would no doubt be a significant decrease in juvenile crime in Clay County and likely a significant drop in out of home placements."

5. Illustration:

The following is a case study written by one of the Transitional Coordinators this quarter: (names have been changed to protect the family's privacy)

"For the past three months, I have been working with Dave. He is a 17 year-old Native American male. Dave lives at home with his adoptive mother and father. He spent 3 months at a chemical dependency treatment center located in Detroit Lakes, MN for issues. During his stay at the facility Dave came to understand the negative consequences of his usage and decided to stay clean.

Upon returning home, Dave was referred to the reentry program. During our first meeting Dave his mother, father and I decided that I would try to help Dave look for employment, find some positive activities and possibly attend A.A. meetings. The family also agreed to utilize the in-home assessment component.

We started with his grandfather who agreed to let Dave work at his shop as long as he was staying out of trouble. After finding employment, Dave stated he likes to play baseball. He agreed to try out for the baseball team once tryouts were held.

During our meetings over the past few weeks, I brought Dave to the YMCA to work out and get in shape to help him make a team. After tryouts, Dave reported he made the junior varsity team.

Dave and his mother have been meeting with the assessment counselor, however; has chosen not to participate in this part of the program. Trying to talk with Dave's father, he does not feel he needs to change his frame of thinking, but Dave should follow the rules and stay away from the negative element he brought into the house in the past. Dave and his father continue to struggle with their communication. However, the family continues to make positive steps.

Dave's mom has called several times asking for guidance or wanting to "pick my brain." She has talked about Dave and his father spending some time together, and starting to repair their relationship.

6. Barriers:

A barrier we encounter is negative or uncooperative families, as noted above. A Transitional Coordinator explains how the program addresses this issue: "Re-entry Services Transitional Coordinators encourage family participation while youth are involved in the program. We believe many youth and their families have fragmented relationships derived from past issues. When these relationships are rebuilt the youth has

a better chance being successful at home thus reducing recidivism. Many youth return to their community are motivated to make changes so it helps if the family is on board to support the youth in reaching their goals.

Transitional coordinators refer and transport families, when needed, to the Family Anonymous (FA) support group. FA supplies information and gives needed support from others who experienced or are experiencing similar issues. More recently Reentry Services added a family strengthening component consisting of a 30-day in-home assessment including counseling for the entire family. We partner and meet with professionally trained family counselors from local agencies. In-home counselors are an important piece for those families who participate and they are grateful for the extra support.

Re-entry Services Transitional Coordinators review (with youth, family, previous placement, probation agent) each case individually to establish goals for the youth to achieve while in the program. Family involvement goals include rebuilding trust, opening communication, defining values, goals, and expectations. Acceptance is an important part, i.e., being more open minded, letting go of past hurts and moving forward, meeting each other half way instead of having to be right or wrong, and listening to each other.

Families also participate in a variety of activities with youth and transitional workers such as bowling, culturally specific events, movies, plays, education, AA, sports etc. Some parents are also active in Re-entry Services work group. While transitional workers, youth and families are on outings we have “sober” fun. Many of these activities help youth and families “break through the barriers” that prevent them from being successful. There are quite a few youth and families who have “forgotten” how to have “fun,” which is why these outings help open communication between them. Change for both youth and family can be difficult. However, when people want to change and have the extra support, it makes it easier for them to achieve their goals while empowering them toward a more positive lifestyle.”

7. Evaluation: See attached evaluation report from the Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science, North Dakota State University.

8. Revisions Necessary: On March 17, 2009 a meeting was held with the Department of Public Safety grant manager to review program objectives, goals and current trends. A request was made to allow the Transitional Coordinators to work with youth in the community in an effort to prevent an out of home placement. The Transitional Coordinators each will work with a maximum of three youth at any given time. All other components of the program will remain the same. This was approved and will begin this quarter.