

PROBLEM-SOLVING PARTNERSHIP
PROGRESS REPORT, QUARTER 2
OCTOBER 1, 2008-DECEMBER 31, 2008
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.

Clay County adopted a new pay grid in January of 2009. The two Transitional Coordinators were placed on a new grade level which resulted in significant pay raises. As this was not built into the grant budget, Clay County agreed to absorb the cost of these raises for 2009.

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.

During this quarter the Reentry Services staff, as a part of the family strengthening component have continued to provide families with packets of information regarding services and partners in the community based on case specific needs. This serves to increase a family's awareness of community partners and facilitates access to existing services. The Reentry staff help facilitate a youth or families access to these services by helping to make referrals, accessing funding and providing transportation, as needed.

The joint Restorative Justice/Reentry Services Project Advisory Board met on January 29, 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. Parents have been invited to join both the Reentry Work Group and the joint Restorative Justice/Reentry Services Project Advisory group that meets on a quarterly basis. At this time we have not had any parents express a desire to participate.

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?

- Helped me get used to being back home.
- Helped me stay out of trouble
- Going out and doing things.
- How willing they are to help out
- I loved hanging out with *TC name removed*. He/she is so hyper it makes you happy.

In what ways was the program disappointing?

- NA
- Nothing
- How available they are
- Nothing.

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

- No
- No
- No

Parent/Guardian

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

- Helped keep him motivated
- Resources

In what ways was the Reentry Services Project helpful to your child?

- Gave him time away and someone to talk to; rewards.
- Person to ask questions and help with employment and school.
- Getting her peer interaction, out to do positive activities helped.

Could the Reentry Services Project do anything that would be more helpful to you?

- No
- No

Could the Reentry Services Project do anything that would be more helpful to your child?

- No
- No

5. Illustration:

On December 11th Reentry Services, the Red River Area Learning Center (alternative school), and the Minor Parent Program arranged a holiday party for current and past clients. The school allowed us to use their kitchen to cook and decorate cookies. Games were also part of the evening with many youth playing the interactive computer games from Wii. Pizza and juice was shared by all and clean up included the youth. We had family members (siblings and parents) participate and share in the fun. The minor parents brought their babies to help decorate cookies and play games too. Local community businesses and collaborative partners donated gifts that were distributed to all the youth and babies. Everyone had a great time and we are already planning next year's big bash! Reentry Services encourages family outings to help rebuild relationships while offering needed support. Other family outings include attending youth's tennis or dance classes, restaurant outings, culturally specific activities, movies, plays, and school functions, i.e., teacher's conferences, Back to School Night and college tours.

6. Barriers:

A barrier we encounter is negative or uncooperative families. A family strengthening component was added to the program to help facilitate a youth's adjustment and transition to the community. We try to get family members involved with making positive choices and including family members on outings so that they are also exposed to different activities to meet new people and get involved with positive events in the community. The goal is to mentor both youth and their families to encourage positive community activities and strengthen a youth/families commitment and sense of belonging to their community.

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

8. Revisions Necessary: None at this time, however the budget may need to be revised in the future to address the new pay grid for staff.

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**



January 2009

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**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, January 2009**

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 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 January 15, 2009 the Reentry Services Project had 128 closed and coded case files. An additional 28 cases were currently active and 19 youth had been served more than once by the program.

During the most recent quarter (October 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008) a total of 32 youth were served by the program. Four of these youth had been served before (i.e., reopened files). Eight cases were closed during this period, while 20 cases remain open. This report includes detailed information on the eight cases closed during between October 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008.

I. Socio-demographic Profile

The average age upon release back to the community for the eight clients was 15.7 years. Nearly two-thirds (62.5%) of the clients were male (5 of 8). Seventy-five percent of the clients were White (6), 12.5 percent Native American or Alaskan native (1), and 12.5 percent were African American (1).

On average, these clients had 3.1 prior official contacts including an average of 3.5 charges prior to their most recent out of home placement. Only one client (12.5%) had a prior felony charge, and three (37.5%) had a prior persons charge (e.g. misdemeanor or felony assault). On average the clients spent 9.5 months on probation prior to

returning to the community after their most recent placement (range 1-15 months). All of the clients were on indefinite probation. The majority of these clients (62.5%) were on moderate supervision upon release back to the community; three clients (37.5%) were on maximum supervision.

The clients experienced an average of 1.88 out-of-home placements (0.75 prior long-term – 30 days or more) and had spent on average 132 days in out-of-home placement (all in restrictive out-of-home placement) upon entering the Reentry Services Project.

Nearly all of these clients' most recent charge was a felony offense (87.5 or 7 of 8); one client's most recent offense was a status offense (12.5%). Three clients' (37.5%) most recent charge was a person offense, one (12.5%) property, two (25%) public order (e.g. disorderly conduct), one (12.5%) alcohol or tobacco related (e.g. minor consuming, possession of tobacco), and one (12.5%) traffic related. The clients' most recent placement averaged 121 days (all restrictive) and was most commonly a detention facility (62.5%); the remainder (37.5%) spent time in a residential treatment facility (e.g. Thistledeew, Valley Lake Boys Home).

Three of these clients (37.5%) had a history of violence (e.g., persons charge, fights), all (8) had a history of school problems, 62.5 percent (5) had a history of mental health problems, and 37.5 percent (3) 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).

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=8).

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	1.13	Moderate	N/A

Family / Parenting	4.00	Moderate*	50%
Education / Employment	3.13	Moderate*	63%
Peer Relations	3.13	Moderate*	50%
Substance Abuse	1.25	Moderate	50%
Leisure / Recreation	1.63	Moderate*	63%
Personality / Behavior	3.50	Moderate	63%
Attitudes / Orientation	2.13	Moderate	63%
Overall	19.88	Moderate	Average 4 per client
*While none of the averaged scores rank "high" according to the intake YLS/CMI, the domains that are closest to scoring in the "high" range were leisure/recreation, family/parenting, education/employment, and peer relations.			

II. Program Activities

Case Planning

Transitional case plans were created for all of these clients. Transitional case 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	7.38 (3-12)	51.38 (20-85)
Restorative Accountability	1.00 (0-3)	4.38 (0-13)
Community Safety	1.00 (0-3)	3.00 (0-9)
All	9.38 per client	58.75 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).

Percent of Clients Assigned to Tasks by Domain

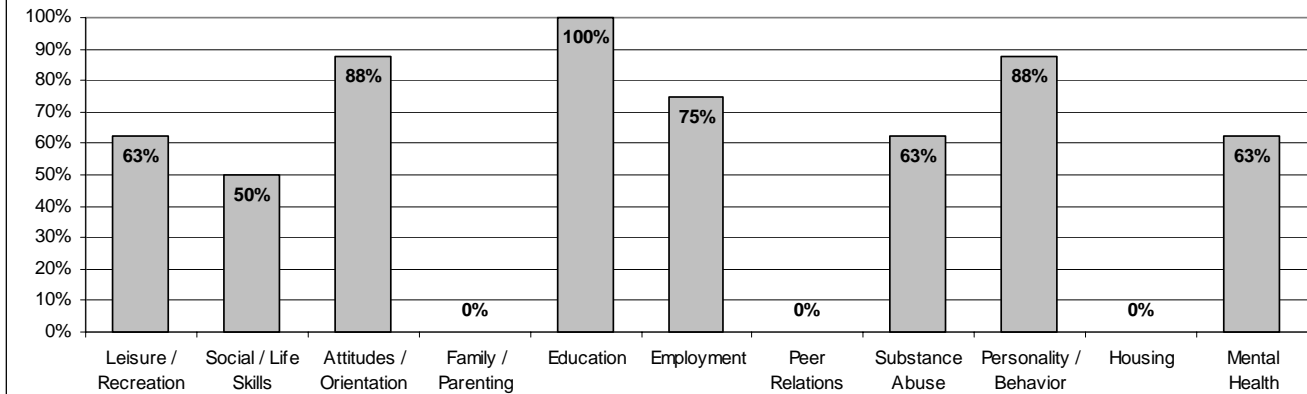
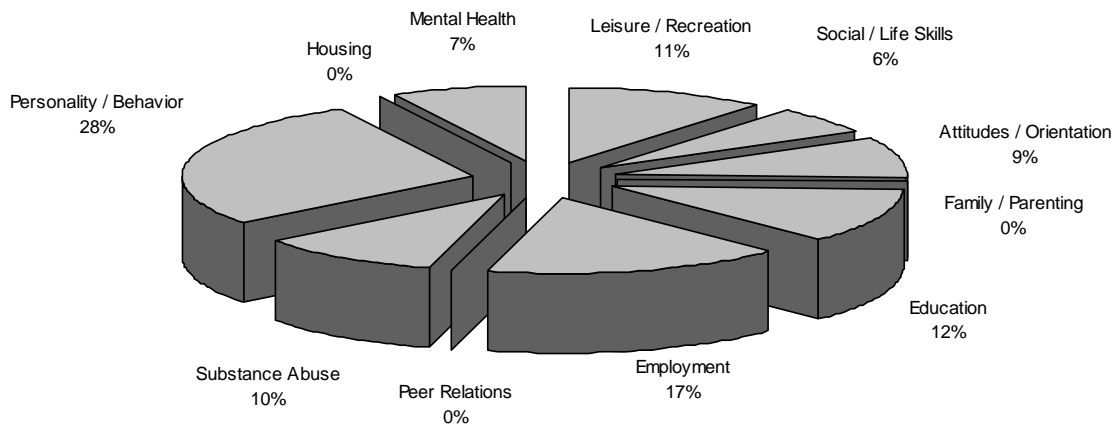


Figure 1. Percent of Clients Assigned to Tasks by Domain

Figure 2. Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain

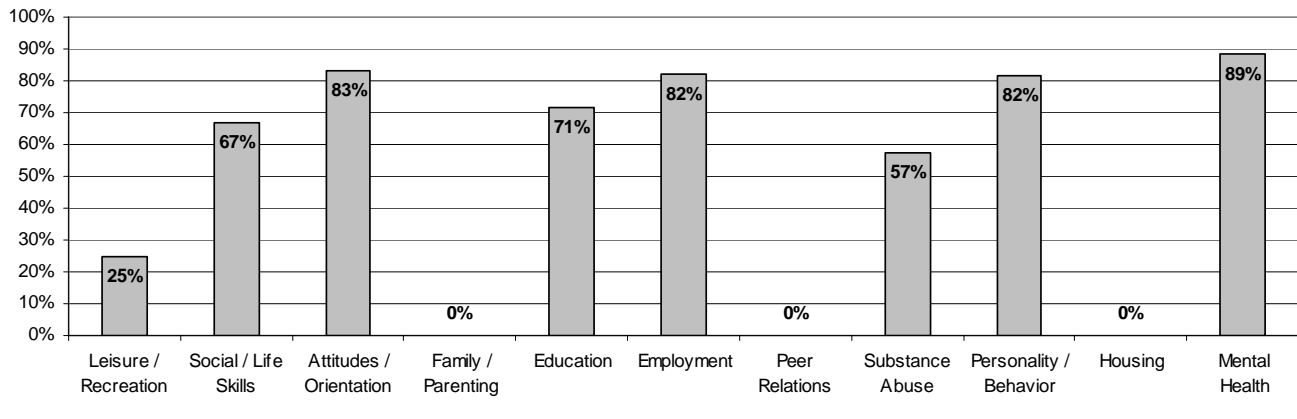
Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain



Seventy-two percent of clients' case plan tasks were considered complete upon exit from the Reentry Services Project (336 of 470 tasks assigned). The remaining tasks (28.5%) 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

Percent of Tasks Completed by Domain



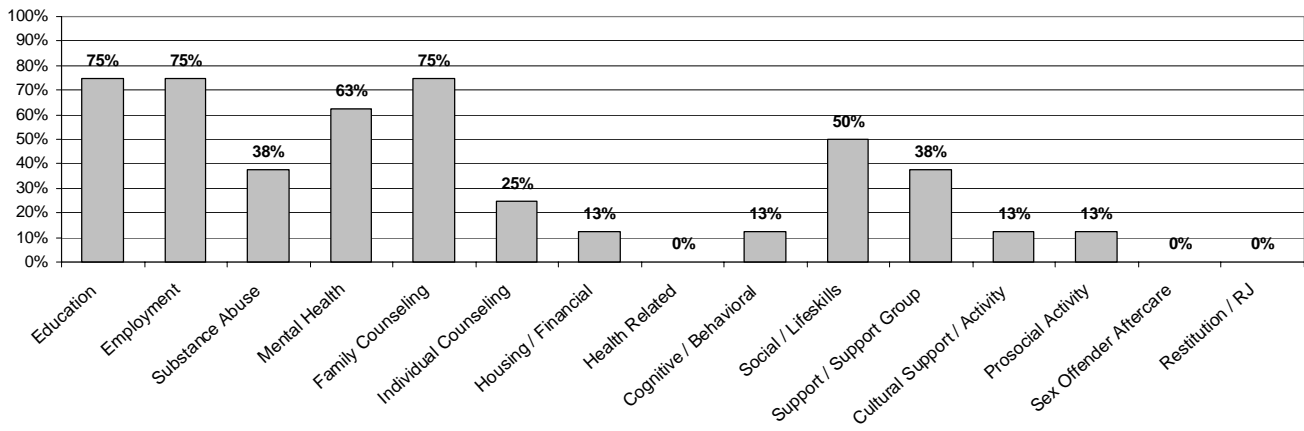
The majority of tasks assigned were in the areas of personality/behavior; employment, education, and leisure/recreation (see Figure 2.). Task completion rates in these domains were 82 percent, 82 percent, 71 percent, and 25 percent respectively.

Referrals / Services

All of these clients (8 of 8) received at least one service-related referral. A total of 54 referrals were made for these clients (an average of 6.75 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

Percent of All Clients Referred to Services



Referrals by Type

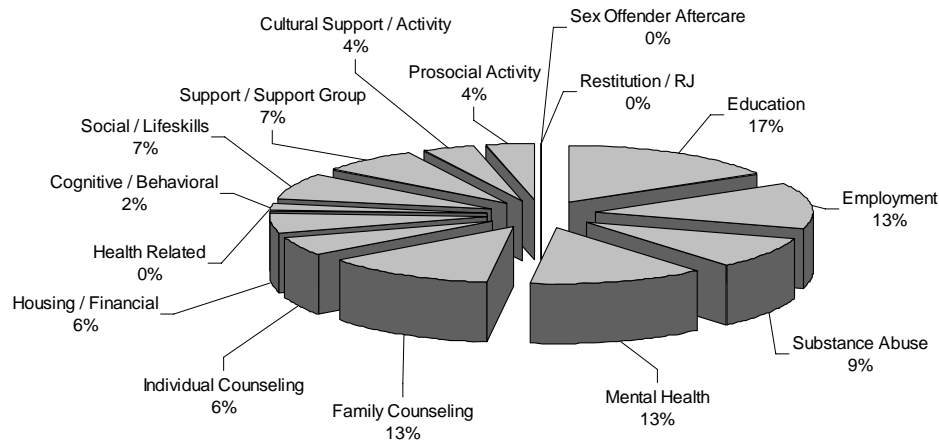
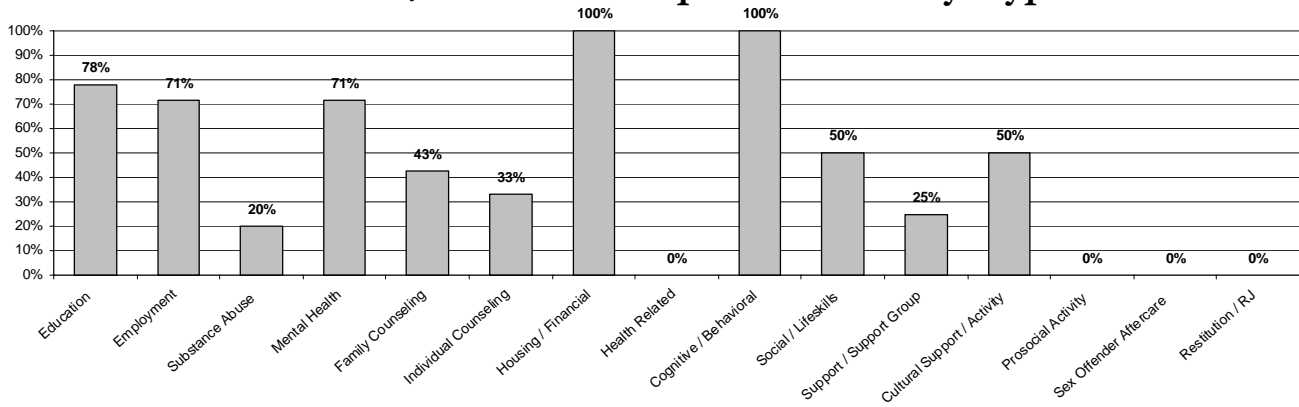


Figure 5. Referrals by Type of Service

Seventy-two- percent of referrals (39 of 54) resulted in at least some service to the client (i.e., at least one counseling session or assessment). Fifty-six percent of referrals (30) were considered "complete" or "ongoing" at the end of the clients' participation in the program (average 3.75 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

Referral / Service Completion Rate by Type



Other Program Activities

The eight clients spent an average of 13.6 months in the Reentry Services Program (range 5 to 27 months). During this time Transitional Coordinators averaged 46 contacts with clients, 16 parent contacts, and 15 agency partner contacts. Probation Officers averaged 18 contacts with clients, 11 parent contacts, and 37 agency partner contacts. On average, Transitional Coordinators spent 43 hours with each client during program participation.

III. Intermediate Outcomes

More than one-third (3 of 8) of these clients were subjected to at least one drug test during program participation; 25 percent (2) were tested three or more times. Thirty-three percent of tested clients had no positive drug tests (1); two clients (25%) 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).

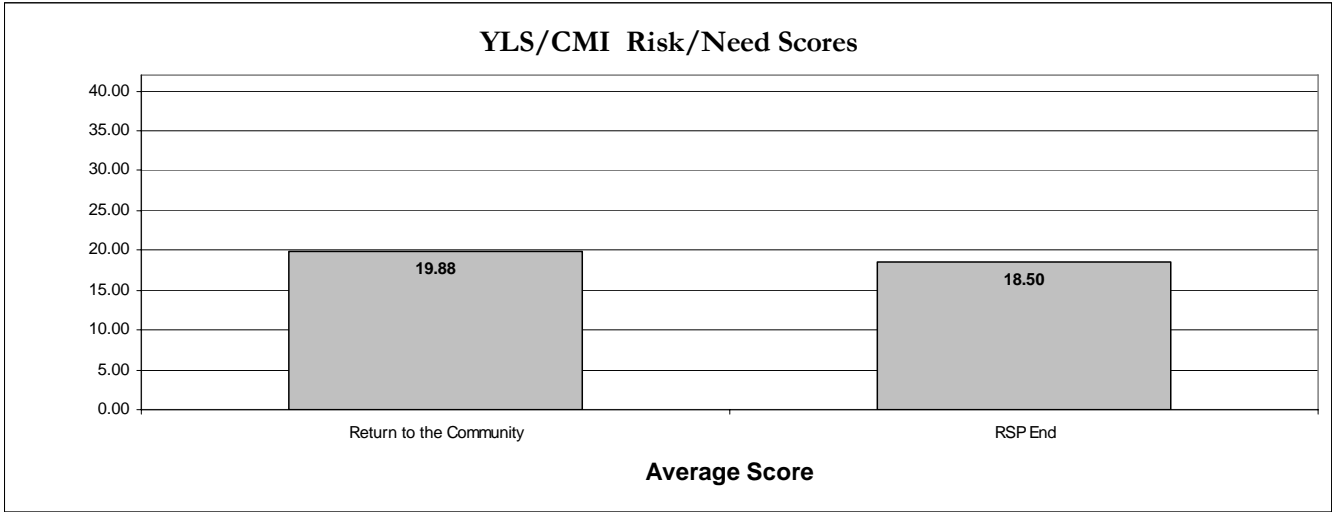
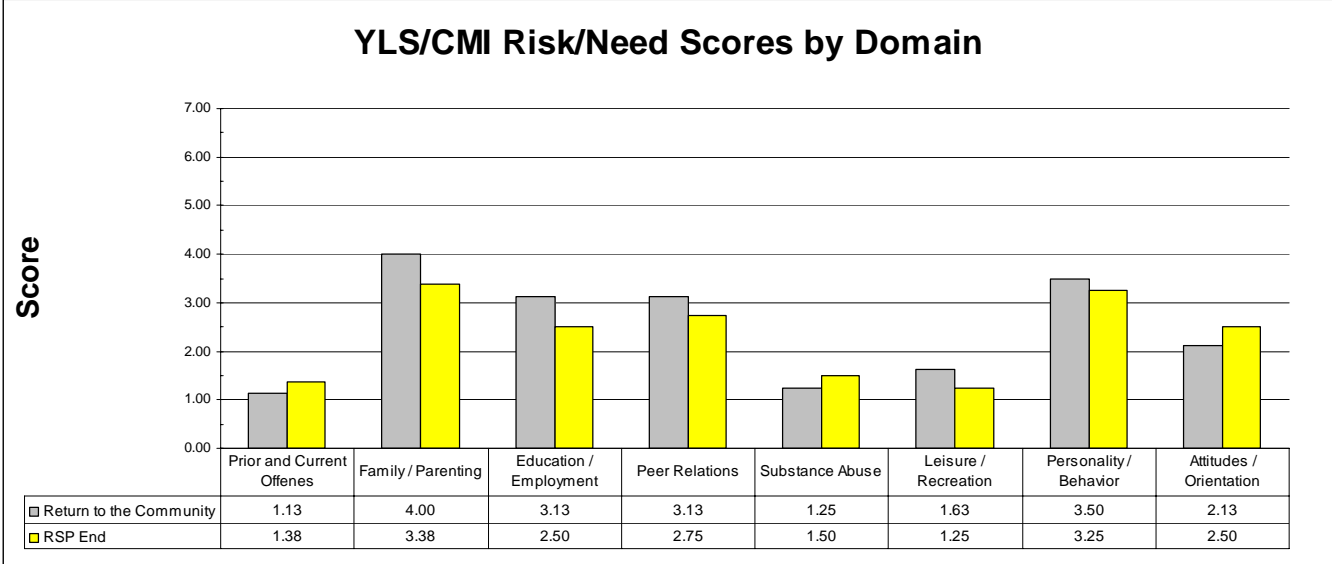


Figure 7 YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores

Overall risk/needs scores declined 6.9 percent from return to the community (19.88) to the end of RSP participation (18.50). 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



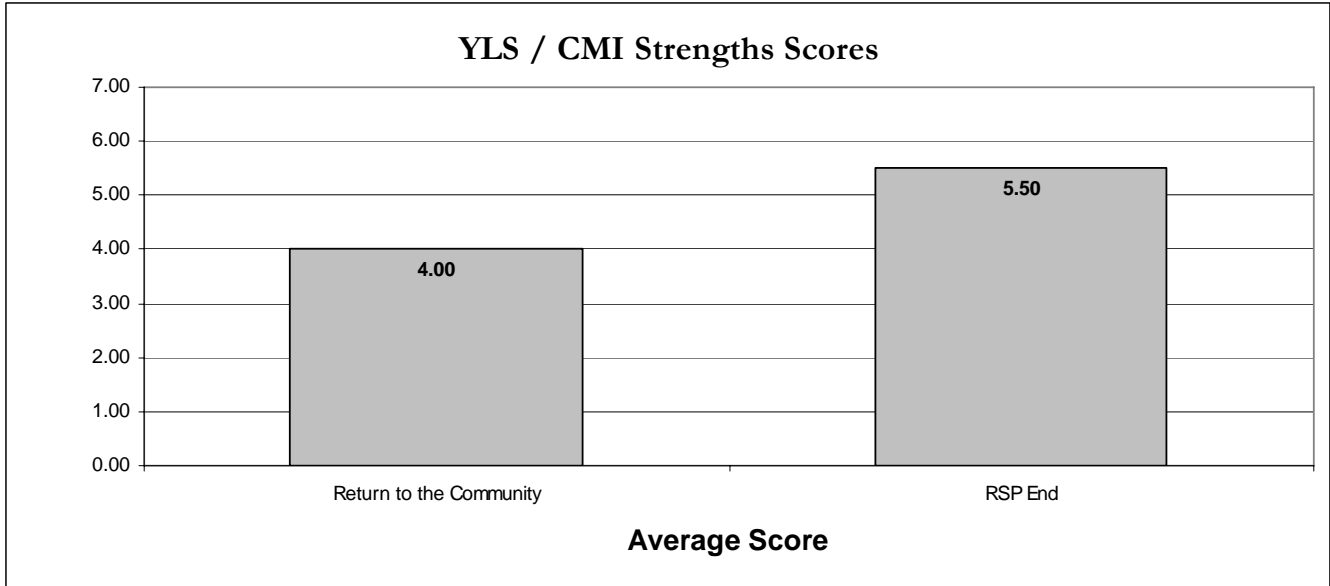
Domain	% change from Return to Program End
Prior / Current Offenses	22%
Family / Parenting*	-16%
Education / Employment*	-20%
Peer Relations*	-12%
Substance Abuse	20%
Leisure / Recreation*	-23%
Personality / Behavior	-7%
Attitudes / Orientation	17%
Overall	-7%

* Leisure/recreation, family/parenting, education/employment, and peer relations 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 (23% reduction), education/employment (20% reduction), and family/parenting (16percent reduction). Clients evidenced risk/need increases in three domains, including prior/current offenses (22% increase), substance abuse (20% increase), and attitudes/orientation (17%).

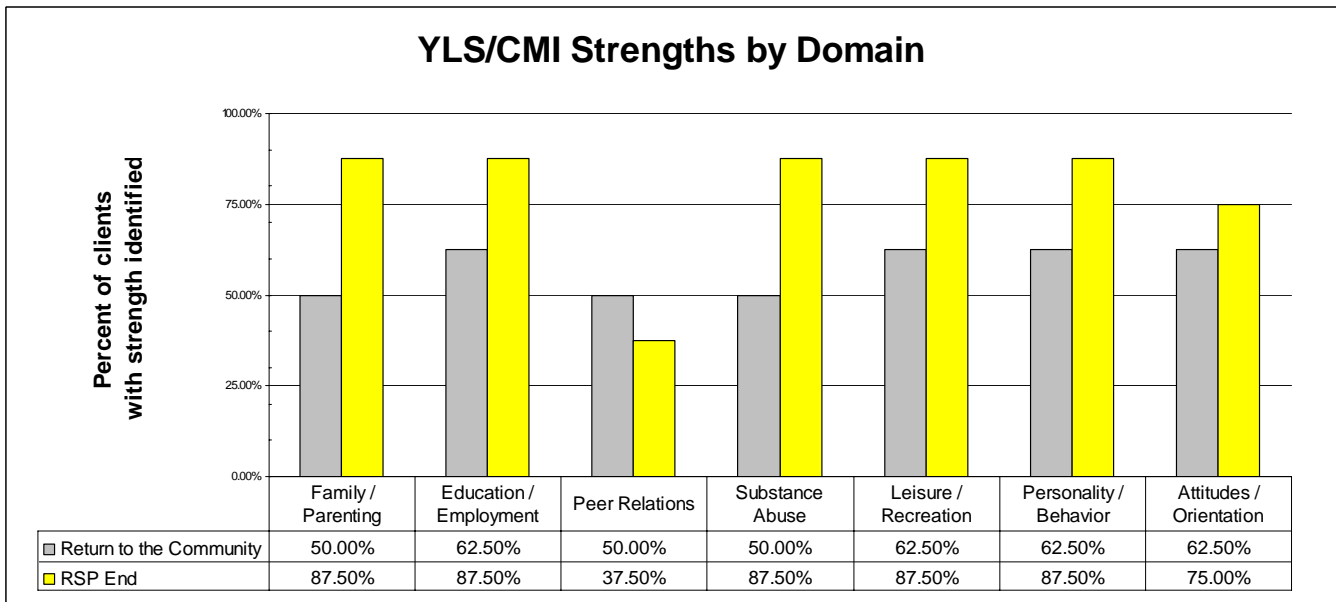
Changes in strengths score over time are depicted in Figure 9.

Figure 9. YLS/CMI Strengths Scores



Average strengths scores increased 37.5 percent from the return to the community (4.00 strengths identified) to the end of program participation (5.50 strengths identified). 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

Nearly two-thirds (5 of 8) of these clients experienced no probation violations while participating in the Reentry Services Project. All three clients with probation violations experienced multiple violations while participating in the program.

Half of these clients (4 of 8) 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 (3 of 4 clients with new charges); the remaining client experienced a status level charge. Two clients experienced a new persons-related charge during program participation; the most serious behavior type among the remaining clients with new charges was public order (1) and alcohol/tobacco (1).

Four of the clients (50%) experienced no new out-of-home placements while participating in the program. The four clients experiencing one or more out-of-home placements incurred a total of 11 placements during program participation. Nearly half of these placements were short-term (5 of 11 placements were less than 30 days). Clients spent a total of 86 days in short term out-of-home placements that began while the client was participating in the program (average 17 days per placement), and a total of 1056 days in long-term placements (30 days or more) that began while the client was participating in the program. All of this time was spent in non-restrictive out-of-home placement.

Sixty-four percent of out-of-home placements that occurred while clients were participating in the program (7 of 11) were the result of technical probation violations; the remainder was for new charges (2) and protection of the client (2).

V. Other Client Achievements and Participation

While participating in the program...

- Eighty-eight percent (7 of 9) of these clients did not have a high school diploma or GED certificate upon entry to the program. Clients attended education services regularly (50%) or sporadically (50%) while participating in the program; one client took GED tests (groups not mutually exclusive).
- Three of these eight clients were homeless during program participation; one client was homeless upon program completion. Three-fourths of clients (6 of 8) had a stable residence while participating in the program.
- Transitional Coordinators reported that employment was appropriate for seven of these clients. All of these clients searched for a job while participating in the program, six were employed at some time during program participation, and four

were employed upon program completion. TCs indicated that 57 percent of these clients (4 of 7) had stable employment while participating in the program.

- Overall, 75 percent of all clients (6 of 8) were “clean” upon program completion. Among clients with a history of substance abuse, Transitional Coordinators believed that all (3 of 3 clients) needed treatment services. Two youth regularly attended treatment, and one youth refused substance abuse treatment. Transitional Coordinators reported that all of the clients with a history of substance abuse were in need of AA/NA (3); one youth attended AA/NA regularly. Sixty-seven percent of clients with a history of substance abuse (2 of 3) were “clean” at the end of program participation.
- Transitional Coordinators indicated that all of the clients with a history of mental health problems (5) 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.
- Two clients’ families (37.5%) participated in at least one outing or activity; two families regularly participated in outings while the client was in the program.
- Twenty-five percent of clients’ families were involved in services (2 of 8).
- Half of minority clients (1 of 2) participated in at least one culturally specific service; none were regularly involved in culturally specific services.
- One quarter of these clients (2 of 8) regularly received 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 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 education, attitudes/orientation, personality/behavior, employment, substance abuse, mental health, leisure/recreation, and social/life skills (Figure 1), and the most common domains for task assignment were personality/behavior (28% of all tasks assigned), employment (17% of assigned tasks), leisure/recreation (11% of assigned tasks) and substance abuse (10% of assigned tasks) (Figure 2). Compliance with transitional case plan tasks in the most common areas of task assignment ranged from 25 percent (leisure/recreation) to 82 percent (employment and personality/behavior) (Figure 3).

Most clients were referred to services in the areas of education, employment, family counseling, and mental health; half of clients were referred to social/life skills services (Figure 4). The most common domains for service referral were employment, mental health, family counseling (each 13% of all referrals), and substance abuse (9 percent of referrals) (Figure 5). Completion rates for referrals in these domains ranged from 20 percent (substance abuse) to 78 percent (education) (Figure 6).

Data regarding intermediate outcomes and ongoing misbehavior are also consistent with prior reports.

While half of these clients experienced no new placements while participating in the program, some mostly non-serious misbehavior continued (e.g., public order and alcohol/tobacco charges). At the same time, 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. Average YLS/CMI risk/need scores declined 7 percent from return to the community to program end, with the greatest reductions occurring in the domains of leisure/recreation, education/employment, and family/parenting (Table 3). Strengths scores increased 37.5 percent during this same period.

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

- First, data indicate that youth whose cases were closed during this period had less extensive offending and placement histories than those reviewed in prior quarterly (October 2008) and cumulative (April 2008) reports and fewer had histories of violence, mental health, and substance abuse problems. At the same time, they evidenced risk profiles (e.g., average risk/need scores) similar to youth examined in previous periods.
- Second, youth whose cases were closed during this period spent more time in the RSP program (average 13.6 months) than youth examined in the October report (8.9 months) and in previous cumulative reports (e.g., 7.6 months in April 2008).
- Third, youth whose cases were closed during this quarter were also assigned a larger number of goals and tasks (average 9.38 goals and 58.75 tasks) than youth examined in the October report (8.4 goals and 54 tasks) or those included in the April 2008 cumulative report (6.5 goals and 33 tasks). Service referral and completion rates were similar to previous reports.
- Finally, clients who completed the program during this period experienced similar rates of misbehavior (e.g., probation violations and new charges) than youth examined in earlier reports; however they were more likely to attend education services, search for work, be employed, and have stable employment while participating in the program.

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.

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 suggest possible 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., 8 youth). Ongoing attention to these and other service differences warrant close attention in forthcoming quarterly reports.