

Reentry Services Project:

Report to the

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



April 2008

Kathleen J. Bergseth

Thomas D. McDonald

Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science
North Dakota State University



Reentry Services Project: Report to the Joint Advisory Committee for the Restorative Justice Program & Re-entry Services Project, April 2008

The Reentry Services Project (RSP) in Clay County, MN began in July 2003 and continues today with funding from 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 case specific needs and employ comprehensive case management services. The program seeks to reduce the likelihood of further delinquency and crime 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. The RSP is designed to begin at least 30 days prior to release from out-of-home placement, and to continue for six months following release to the community.

As of April 14, 2008 the Reentry Services Project has 107 closed and coded case files. There are an additional 28 cases currently active or recently closed but not yet coded and 16 reopened cases. The details of this report include information on the 107 closed and coded cases.

The average age upon release back to the community for the 107 clients was 16.4 years. Seventy-two percent of the clients were male. Fifty one percent of the clients were White, 24 percent Native American or Alaskan native, 23 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent were African American.

On average, these clients had 4.2 prior official contacts including an average of 4.8 charges prior to their most recent out of home placement. Thirty-five percent of clients had a prior felony charge, and 52 percent had a prior persons charge (e.g. misdemeanor or felony assault). On average the clients spent 17.4 months on probation prior to returning to the community after their most recent placement. Ninety-six percent of the clients were on indefinite probation. Fifty-seven percent of the clients were on maximum or intensive supervision upon release back to the community.

On average the clients experienced 3.3 out-of-home placements (1.4 prior long-term – 30 days or more) and had spent on average 197 days in out-of-home placement (167 days in restrictive out-of-home placement) upon entering the Reentry Services Project.

Twenty percent of the clients' most recent charge was a felony offense, 70 percent a misdemeanor, and 10 percent a status offense. Thirty percent of the clients' most recent charge was a persons offense, 36 percent property, 1 percent illegal drugs, 21 percent public order (e.g. disorderly conduct), and 12 percent traffic or alcohol or tobacco related (e.g. minor consuming, possession of tobacco). The clients' most recent placement averaged 135 days (112 days restrictive) and was most commonly a residential treatment (e.g. Thistledew, Valley Lake Boys Home; 39%), detention or sheltercare (33%) or treatment center (e.g. substance abuse treatment; 28%).

Sixty-four percent of these clients had a history of violence (e.g., persons charge, fights), 88 percent had a history of school problems, 74 percent had a history of mental health problems, and 77 percent had a

history of substance abuse. In addition, 98 percent of these clients had a history of multiple risk factors (two or more of violence, substance abuse, school, or mental health problems), and 33 percent had all four.

Initial YLS / CMI Scores

RSP clients are assessed regularly using the YLS/CMI. Table 1 provides the average YLS/CMI score for youth upon return to the community (N=105).

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	2.20	Moderate	N/A
Family / Parenting	3.24	Moderate	50%
Education / Employment	3.15	Moderate*	56%
Peer Relations	2.97	Moderate	48%
Substance Abuse	2.48	Moderate*	51%
Leisure / Recreation	1.73	Moderate*	50%
Personality / Behavior	3.03	Moderate	45%
Attitudes / Orientation	2.09	Moderate	36%
Overall	20.92	Moderate	Average 3.3 / 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, Substance Abuse, and Education / Employment			

Transitional Case Plans

Transitional case plans were created for 104 (97%) of these 107 clients. Transitional case plans included goals and tasks in three general categories (competency development, restorative accountability, and community safety). These 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.

Table 2. Transitional Case Plan Goals and Tasks by Category		
Case Plan Area	Average Number of Goals Assigned (range)	Average Number of Tasks Assigned (range)
Competency Development	4.2 (0-11)	26.3 (0-83)
Restorative Accountability	0.7 (0-3)	2.1 (0-10)
Community Safety	1.6 (0-7)	5.0 (0-40)
All	6.5 / client	33 / 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

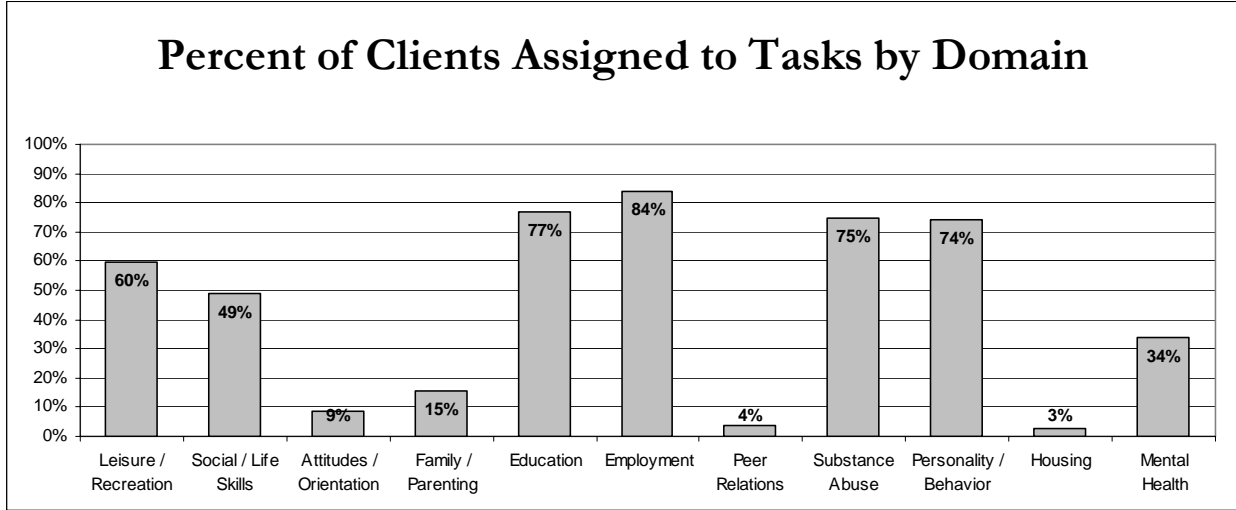
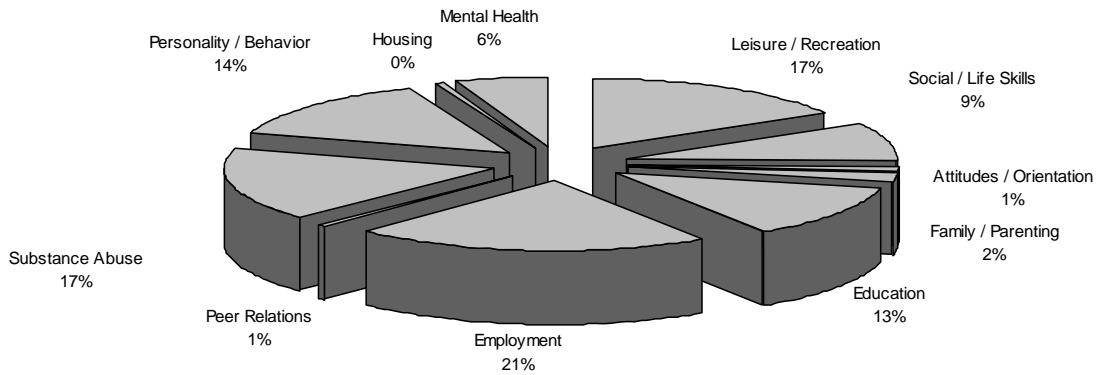


Figure 2. Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain

Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain



Referrals / Services

Ninety-seven percent (104 of 107) of clients received at least one service-related referral. A total of 626 referrals were made for these clients (average 6 per client). Figure 3 depicts the proportion of clients referred to various types of services and Figure 4 examines referrals to services by type.

Figure 3. Percent of All Clients Referred to Services

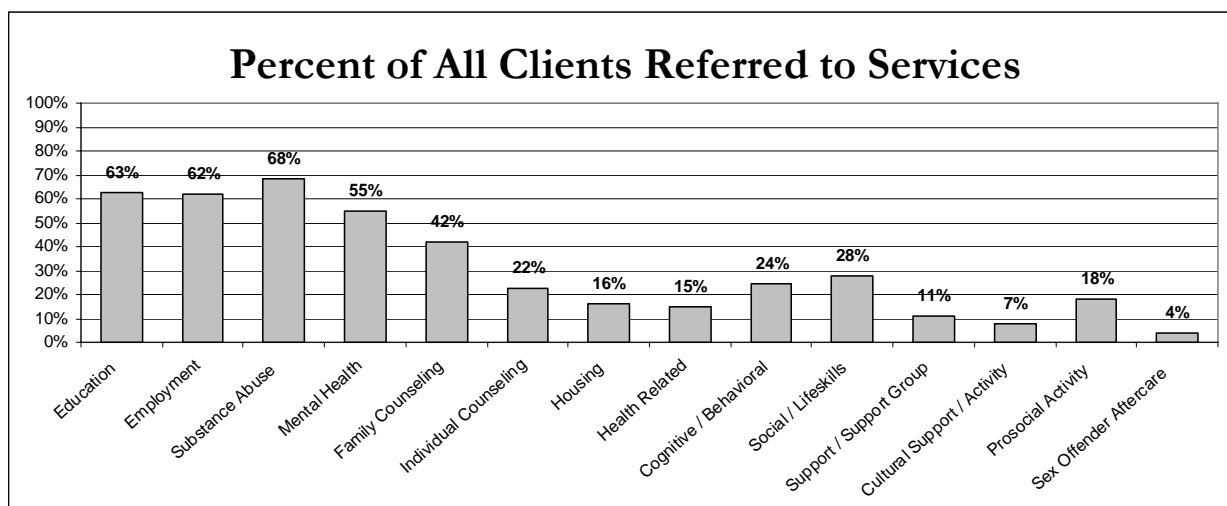
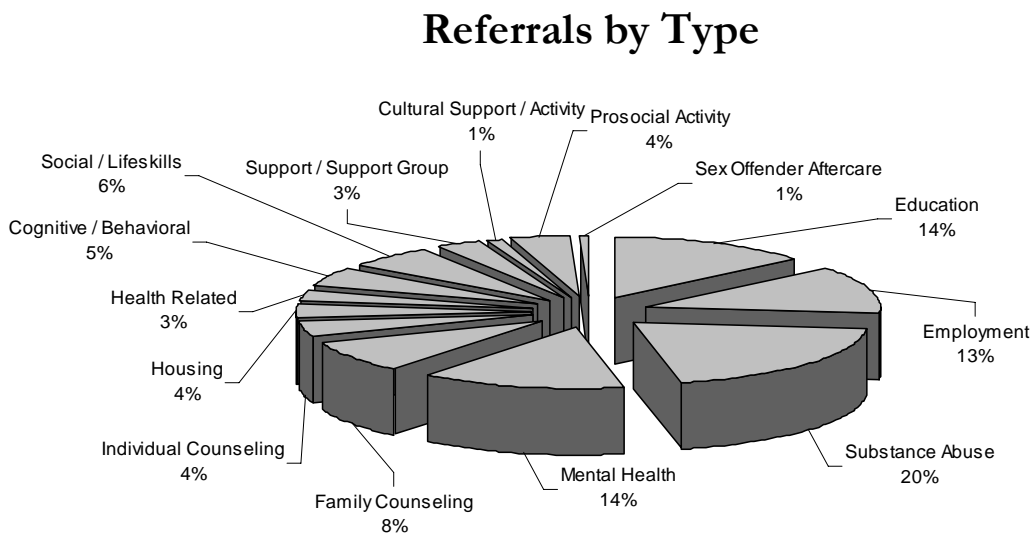


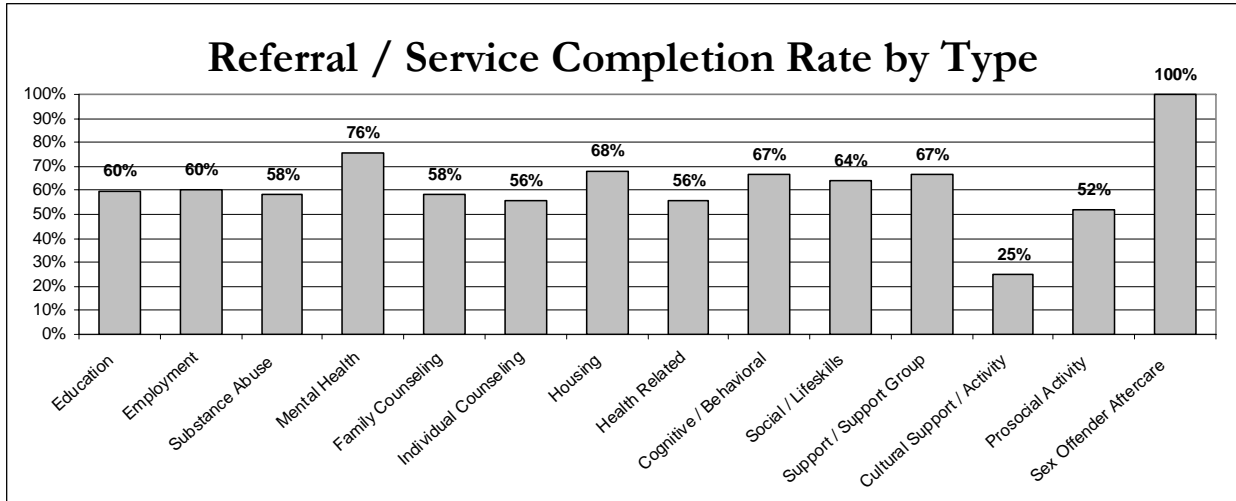
Figure 4. Referrals by Type of Service



Sixty-two percent of the 624 referrals were considered “complete” or “ongoing” at the end of the clients’ participation in the program (average 3.6 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 5 (see below).

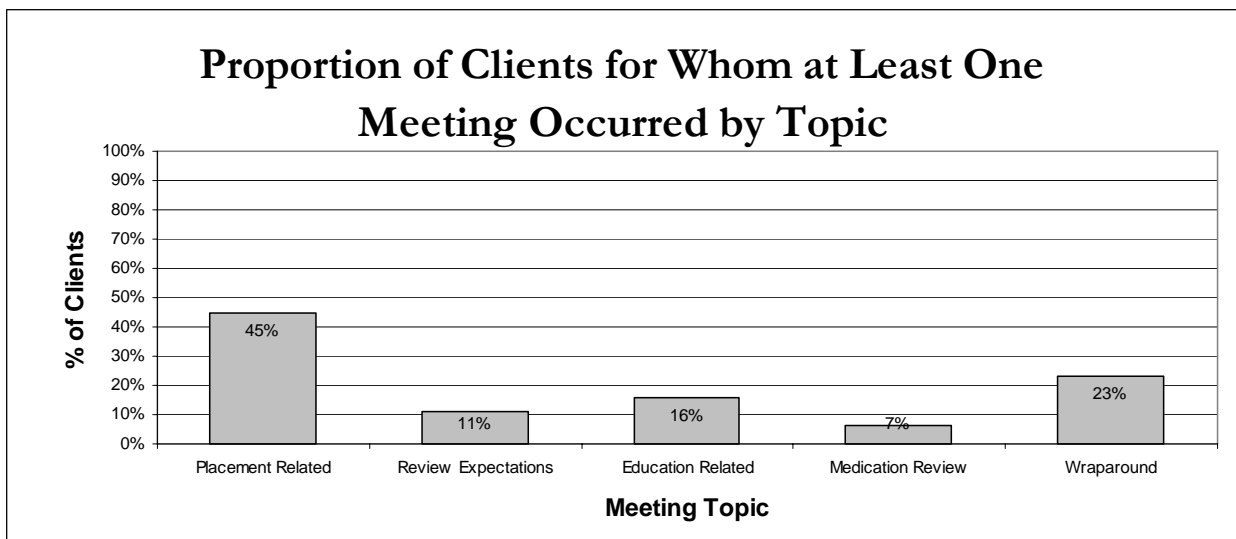
Figure 5. Referral / Service Completion Rate by Type of Service



Staffing Meetings

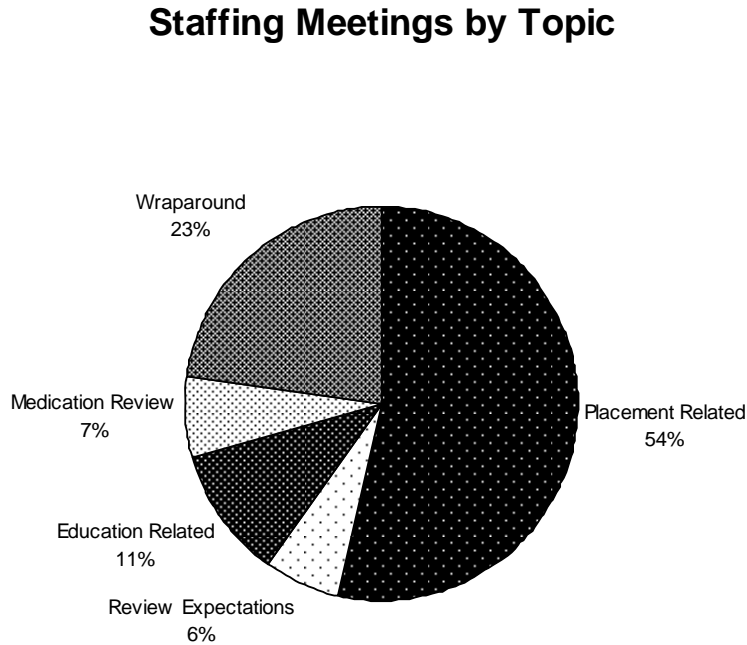
Probation Officers and Transitional Coordinators participated in at least one “staffing” meeting for 65 (60%) of the 107 clients. Figure 6 (see below) indicates the proportion of clients for whom these meetings occurred by meeting topic.

Figure 6. Proportion of Clients for Whom at Least One Meeting Occurred by Topic



Probation Officers and Transitional Coordinators participated in a total of 228 “staffing” meetings for the 65 clients. Meeting participants included clients, parents, treatment providers, mental health agents, and social services. Figure 7 depicts the distribution of these meetings by major topic (see below).

Figure 7. Staffing Meetings by Topic



Other Program Activities

The 107 clients spent an average of 7.6 months in the Reentry Services Program (range 1 to 18 months). During this time Transitional Coordinators averaged 38 contacts with clients, 15 parent contacts, and 13 agency partner contacts. Probation Officers averaged 10 contacts with clients, 7 parent contacts, and 15 agency partner contacts.

Eighty percent (86 of 107) of these clients were subjected to at least one drug test during program participation; 41 percent were tested 3 or more times. Fifty percent of tested clients (43) had no positive drug tests, 24 percent (21) had one positive test, and 26 percent (22) experienced two or more tests indicating drug use.

On average, Transitional Coordinators spent 51 hours with each of these clients during program participation, and an additional two hours after the clients had completed the program.

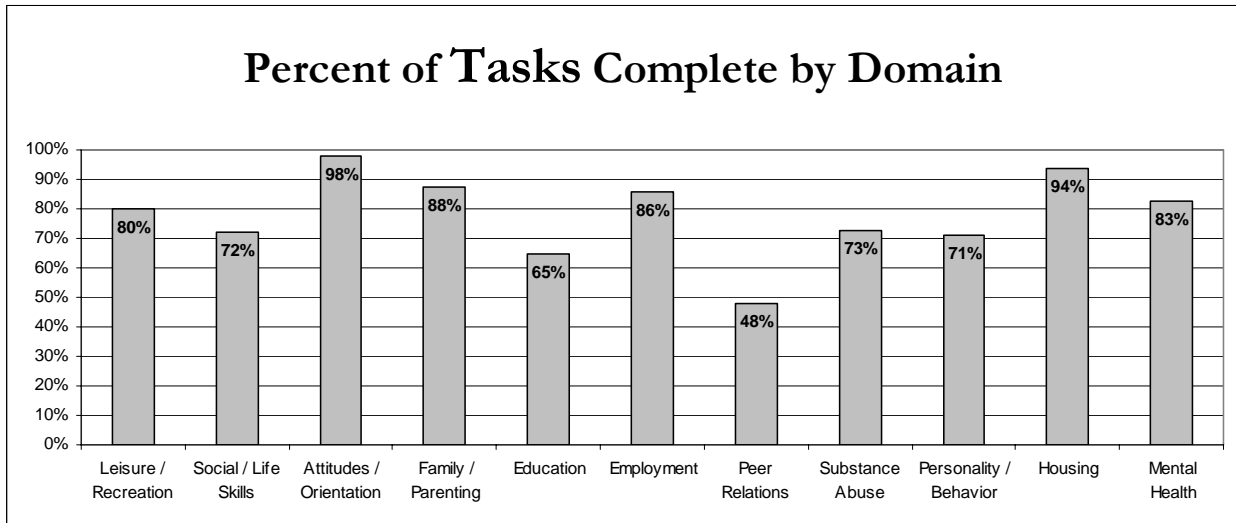
Outcomes

Three key outcome objectives were identified by the designers of the Reentry Services Project: a) 75% compliance rate with transitional case plan tasks, b) 20% reduction of the YLS/CMI risk/need levels, and c) 20% increase in identified strengths on the YLS/CMI. Additional outcome measures examined include recidivism, technical violations, and additional out of home placements.

Transitional Case Plan Compliance

Seventy-seven percent of clients’ case plan tasks were considered complete upon exit from the Reentry Services Project (2,694 of 3,519 tasks assigned). The remaining tasks (23%) were not completed during program participation. Figure 8 includes a breakdown of task completion rates by domain.

Figure 8. Percent of Tasks Complete by Domain

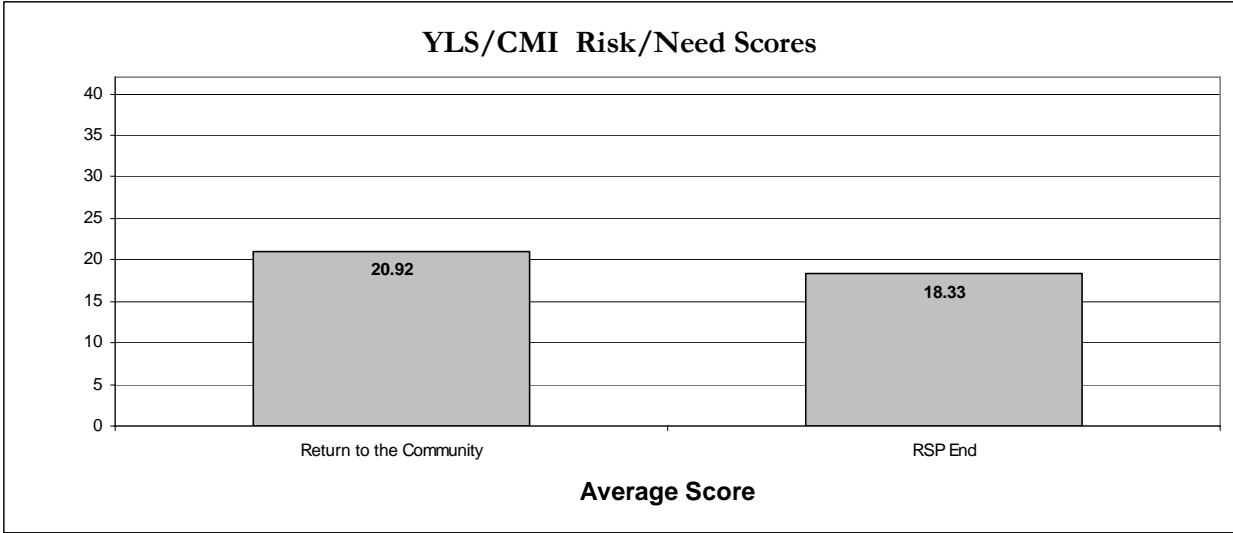


The majority of tasks assigned were in the areas of employment, leisure / recreation, substance abuse, personality/behavior, and education (see Figure 2.). Task completion rates in these domains were 86 percent, 80 percent, 73 percent, 71 percent, and 65 percent respectively.

Change in YLS/CMI Risk/Needs Scores

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 9.

Figure 9. YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores



Overall risk/needs scores declined 12 percent from return to the community (20.92) to the end of RSP participation (18.33). Changes in risk/need score by domain are presented in Figure 10 and Table 3 (see below).

Figure 10. YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores by Domain

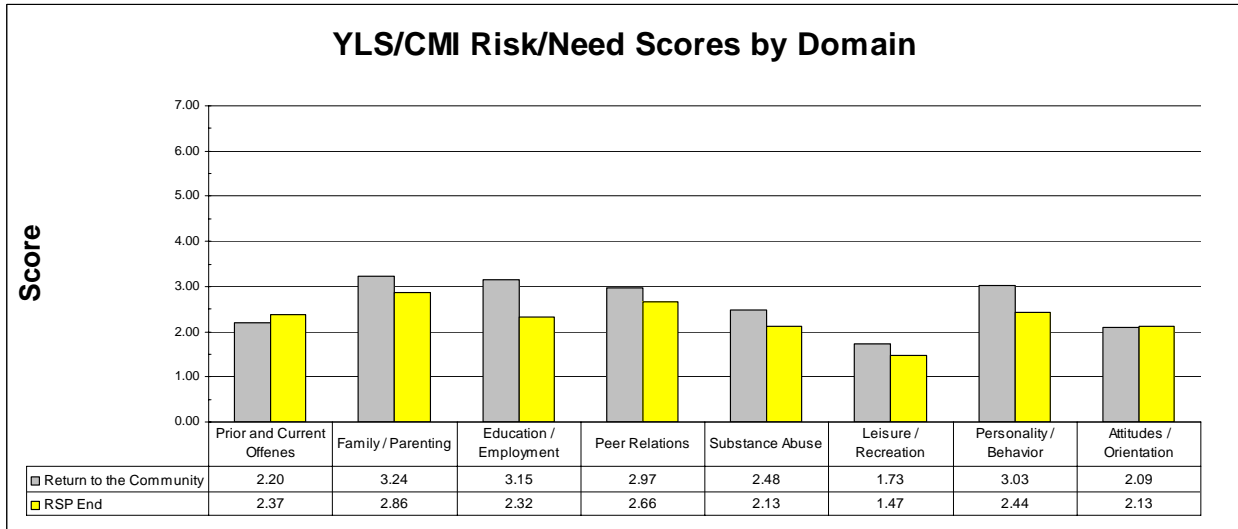


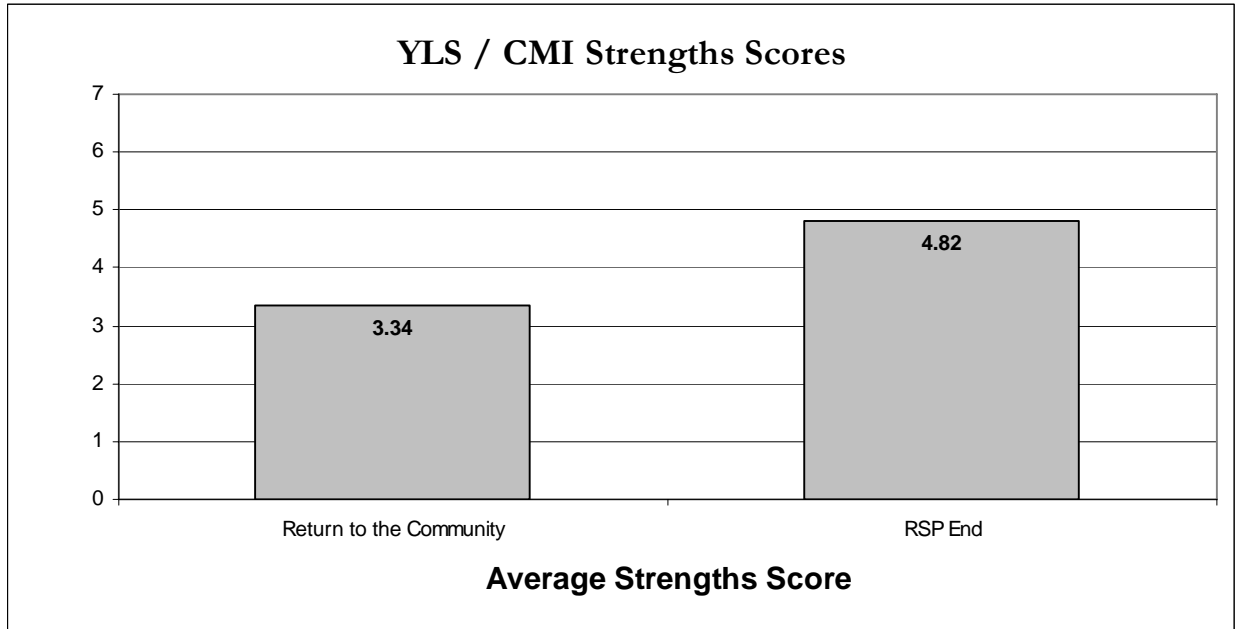
Table 3. Change in YLS/CMI Risk/Needs by Domain	
Domain	% change from Return to Program End
Prior / Current Offenses	8%
Family / Parenting	-12%
Education / Employment*	-26%
Peer Relations	-10%
Substance Abuse*	-14%
Leisure / Recreation*	-15%
Personality / Behavior	-19%
Attitudes / Orientation	2%
Overall	-12%
* Leisure/Recreation, Substance Abuse, and Education/Employment were the domains closest to ranking “high” on the initial / intake YLS/CMI.	

With the exception of prior/current offenses and attitudes/orientation, clients experienced reductions in risk/need in each of the domains. Risk/need reductions were greatest in the domains of Education/Employment (26% reduction), Personality / Behavior (19% reduction), and Leisure/Recreation (15% reduction).

Change in YLS/CMI Strengths Scores

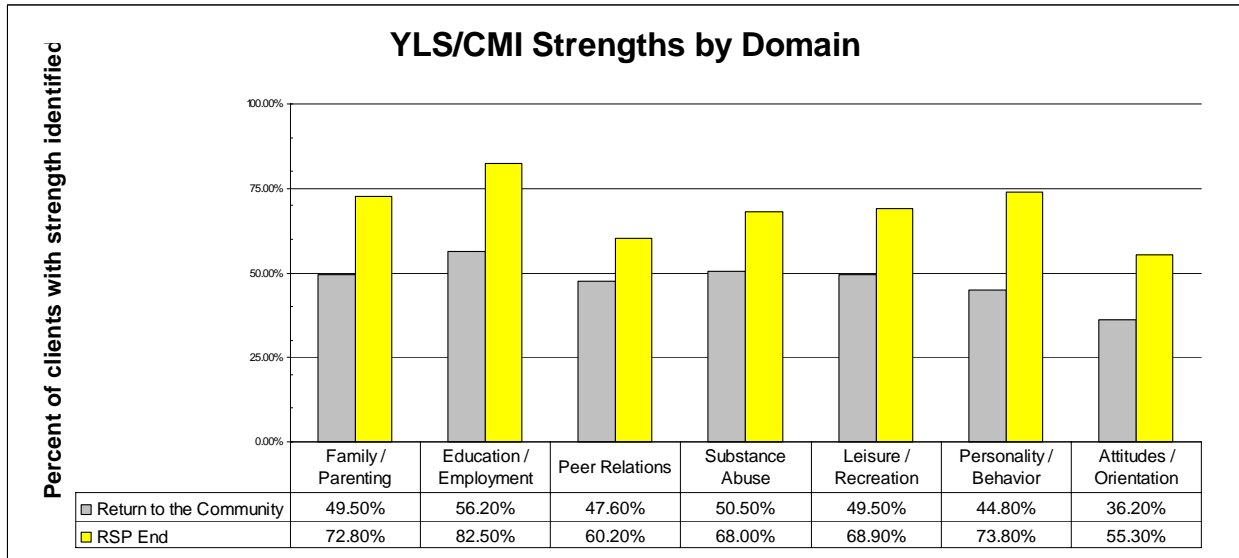
Changes in strengths score over time are depicted in Figure 11 (see below).

Figure 11. YLS/CMI Strengths Scores



Average strengths scores increased 44 percent from the return to the community (3.34 strengths identified) to the end of program participation (4.82 strengths identified). Figure 12 depicts changes in the proportion of clients with a strength identified in each domain over time.

Figure 12. YLS/CMI Strengths by Domain



In-Program Recidivism, Technical Violations, and Out-of-Home Placement

Fifty-four percent (58) of the clients experienced no probation violations while participating in the Reentry Services Project. Of the 49 clients with probation violations, 23 had more than one violation.

Fifty-eight percent (62) of these clients experienced no new charges during program participation. Of the 45 clients with new charges, 17 had more than one new charge. The highest level of new charges was most commonly misdemeanor (32 of 45 clients with new charges), followed by status level (7) and felony (6). Six clients experienced a new persons-related charge during program participation; the most serious behavior type for the remaining clients with new charges was property (18); illegal drugs (1); public order (6); alcohol and tobacco (7), traffic (5), and status (2).

Forty-seven percent (50) of clients experienced no new out-of-home placements while participating in the program. The 57 clients experiencing one or more out-of-home placements incurred a total of 96 placements during program participation. More than half of these placements were short-term (53 of 96 were less than 30 day placements). Clients spent a total of 390 days in short term out-of-home placements that began while the client was participating in the program (average 7.4 days per placement), and a total of 5,258 days in long-term placements (30 days or more) that began while the client was participating in the program (average 122 days per placement). The majority of this time was spent in restrictive out-of-home placement (94% of short-term placement time and 76% of long-term out-of-home placement time).

Fifty-eight percent of out-of-home placements that occurred while clients were participating in the program were the result of technical probation violations, 24 percent were the result of new charges, and the remainder was for protection of the client or unknown reasons.

Client Achievements and Participation

Early in 2004 the Transitional Coordinators began tracking individual social factors and service information for each client. This information reveals that while participating in the program...

- The vast majority (96%) of RSP clients did not have a high school diploma or GED certificate upon entry to the program. Of those without a high school education or equivalent, the majority attended education services (i.e., school or basic education) regularly (53%) or sporadically (24%) during program participation and 8 percent took GED tests (groups not mutually exclusive).
- Twenty-two clients (22%) were homeless at some time during program participation while only 6 (6%) were homeless upon program completion. Eighty-two percent of clients (41 of 50 for whom data was available) had a stable residence while participating in the program.
- Transitional Coordinators reported that employment was appropriate for 94 (88%) of the 107 clients; of those clients, 89 percent searched for a job, 65 percent were employed at some time during program participation, and 41 percent were employed upon program completion. Forty-eight percent had stable employment while participating in the program.

- Overall, 61 percent of all clients were “clean” upon program completion. Among clients with a history of substance abuse, Transitional Coordinators believed that 87 percent needed treatment services. Forty-four percent regularly attended treatment, and 10 percent attended sporadically. Transitional Coordinators reported that 84 percent of clients with a history of substance abuse were in need of AA/NA. Thirty-seven percent attended AA/NA regularly, and an additional 20 percent attended sporadically while participating in the Reentry Services Project. Fifty-four percent of clients with a history of substance abuse were “clean” at the end of program participation.
- Transitional Coordinators indicated that 70 percent of clients with a history of mental health problems were in need of mental health services while participating in the program. Fifty-eight percent of clients with a history of mental health problems received mental health services while participating in the Reentry Services Project and 39 percent of clients complied with mental health recommendations.
- Fifty percent of clients’ families participated in at least one outing or activity and 20 percent regularly participated in outings and activities.
- Thirty-nine percent of clients’ families were involved in services.
- Forty percent of minority clients (21 of 53) received at least one culturally specific service and 15 percent regularly participated in culturally specific services.
- Sixty percent of female clients (18 of 30) received at least one gender specific service, and 43 percent regularly participated in gender specific services during program participation.

Summary

The results of this quarterly report mirror earlier reports which have indicated that the program appears to provide increased contact with clients, their parents, and agency partners. In addition, the examination of transitional case plan tasks and service referrals indicate that program staff and probation officers are targeting the areas of highest risk/need indicated on YLS/CMI assessments. Specifically, the intake assessment (Table 1) indicated that the areas of highest risk/need were leisure/recreation, substance abuse, and education/employment.

These were also common domains for transitional case plan tasks (Figures 1 and 2), and service referral (Figures 3 and 4). The majority of clients received at least one transitional case plan task in the domains of education, employment, personality/behavior, substance abuse, and leisure/recreation (Figure 1), and the most common domains for task assignment were employment (21% of all tasks assigned), leisure/recreation (17%), substance abuse (17%), personality/behavior (14%) and education (13%; Figure 2). Compliance with transitional case plans in the most common areas of task assignment ranged from sixty-five (education) to 86 percent (employment; Figure 8).

More than half of clients were referred to services in the areas of substance abuse, education, employment, and mental health (Figure 3), and the most common domains for service referral were substance abuse (20% of all referrals), education (14%), mental health (14%) and employment (13%; Figure 4). More than half of services in each of the most common referral domains were either complete or ongoing at the time of program completion (Figure 5).

The observation that program staff appear to be targeting areas of greatest risk/need in case plans and referrals for services is congruent with observed changes in risk/need scores over time. The domains of highest risk/need and those most often targeted in transitional case plan tasks and services referrals were also the domains with the largest reductions in risk/need over time. The decline in risk/need scores from return to the community to six months post return was greatest in the areas of education/employment (26% reduction), personality/behavior (19%), leisure/recreation (15%), and substance abuse (14%).

Data regarding ongoing misbehavior are also consistent with prior reports. While a healthy majority of clients experienced no technical probation violations or new charges while participating in the program, some mostly non-serious misbehavior continued. At the same time, the data indicate clients served by the program experienced a number of positive changes in social factors related to reducing the probability of reoffending. 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. Outputs observed are consistent with earlier summative reports which indicated positive benefits of program participation relative to traditional release processes. Given the consistency in program services over time, it is likely that those benefits including reduced recidivism, placement, and related costs, will be sustained.