

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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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, October 2008

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 case 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 when a client enters a placement facility and to continue for approximately six months following his/her return to the community. As of October 15, 2008 the Reentry Services Project had 120 closed and coded case files. An additional 23 cases were currently active and a 17 youth had been served more than once by the program.

RSP staff contracted with North Dakota State University for an ongoing evaluation of the RSP program. The evaluation includes ongoing program monitoring in the form of six (6) regularly scheduled reports provided to the Department of Public Safety and the Advisory Committee. Included below is the first of these reports. In addition, a cumulative report examining the impact of program activities over the first six years of operation (July 2003 to June 2009) will be produced in July of 2009. Evaluators have worked with program staff to identify a group of youth released from placement in Clay County prior to program inception (1999-2003) who will serve as a comparison group for this cumulative report.

During the most recent quarter (July 1, 2008 to September 30, 2008) a total of 32 youth were served by the program. Four of these youth had been served before (i.e., reopened files). Six cases were closed during this period, while 22 cases remain open. This report includes detailed information on the 6 cases closed during between July 1, 2008 and September 30, 2008.

I. Sociodemographic Profile

The average age upon release back to the community for the 6 clients was 16.72 years. All of the clients (n=6) were male. Seventeen percent of the clients were White (n=1), 17 percent Native American or Alaskan native (n=1), 50 percent Hispanic (n=3), and 17 percent were African American (n=1).

On average, these clients had 4.5 prior official contacts including an average of 4.8 charges prior to their most recent out of home placement. Fifty percent of clients had a prior felony charge, and 50 percent had a prior persons charge (e.g. misdemeanor or felony assault). On average the clients spent 25 months on probation prior to returning to the community after their most recent placement. All of the clients were on indefinite probation. The majority of these clients (67%) were on moderate supervision upon release back to the community; two clients (33%) were on maximum supervision.

The clients experienced an average of 3.5 out-of-home placements (1.67 prior long-term – 30 days or more) and had spent on average 320 days in out-of-home placement (362 days in restrictive out-of-home placement) upon entering the Reentry Services Project.

Half of these clients’ most recent charge was a felony offense, 33 percent a misdemeanor, and 17 percent (n=1) a status offense. One client’s (17%) most recent charge was a persons offense, two (33%) property, 2 (33%) public order (e.g. disorderly conduct), and one (17%) alcohol or tobacco related (e.g. minor consuming, possession of tobacco). The clients’ most recent placement averaged 171 days (all restrictive) and was most commonly a residential treatment (e.g. Thistledeew, Valley Lake Boys Home; 83%).

Eighty-three percent (n=5) of these clients had a history of violence (e.g., persons charge, fights), all (6) had a history of school problems, all (6) had a history of mental health problems, and 67 percent (n=4) 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), and half (50%) had all four of these risk factors.

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=6).

Domain	Average Score	Risk Level (associated with Average Score)	Percent of clients with strength identified
Prior / Current Offenses	3.17	Moderate	N/A
Family / Parenting	2.50	Low	50%
Education / Employment	2.50	Moderate*	50%
Peer Relations	2.83	Moderate	50%
Substance Abuse	2.00	Moderate*	50%
Leisure / Recreation	1.67	Moderate*	50%
Personality / Behavior	2.50	Moderate	50%
Attitudes / Orientation	1.17	Moderate	67%
Overall	18.33	Moderate	Average 3.37 / 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, Peer Relations, and Substance Abuse			

II. Program Activities

Case Planning

Transitional case plans were created for five of these six 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	6.6 (4-9)	47.4 (20-71)
Restorative Accountability	.40 (0-1)	2.4 (0-6)
Community Safety	1.4 (0-3)	4.2 (0-9)
All	8.4 / client	54.0 / 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

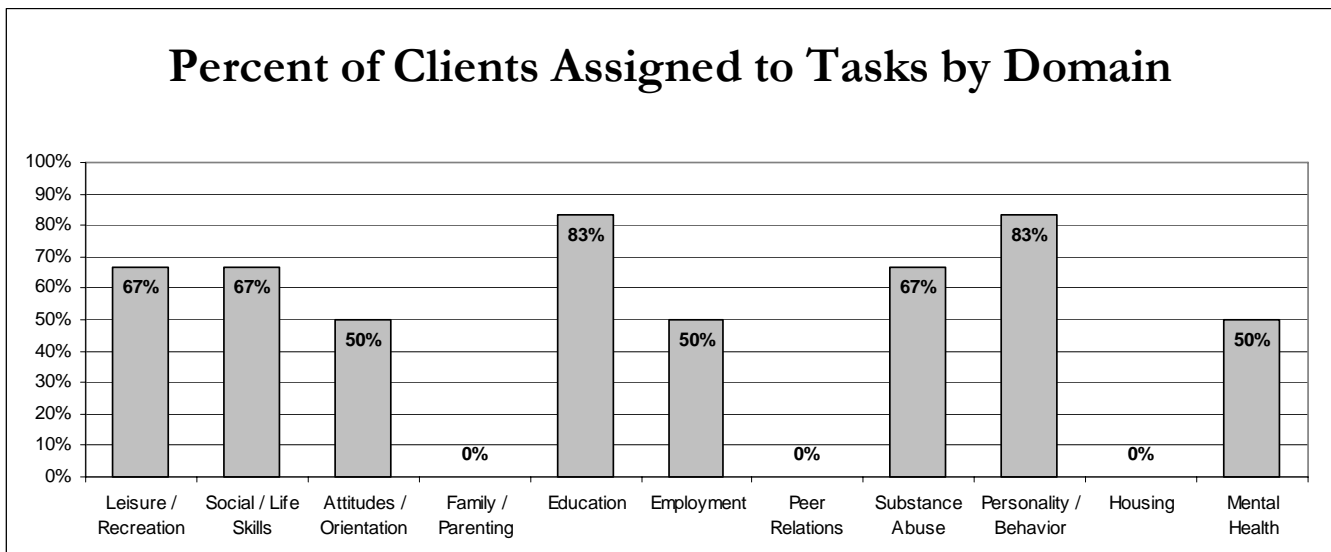
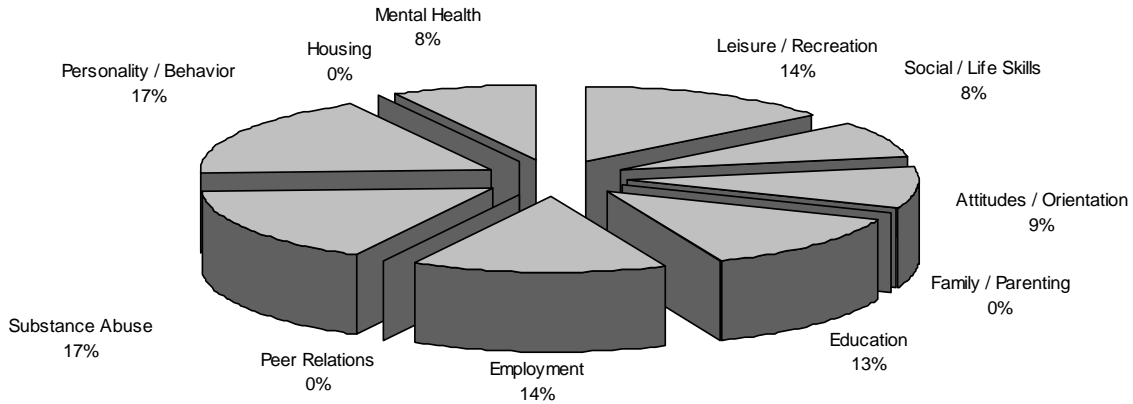


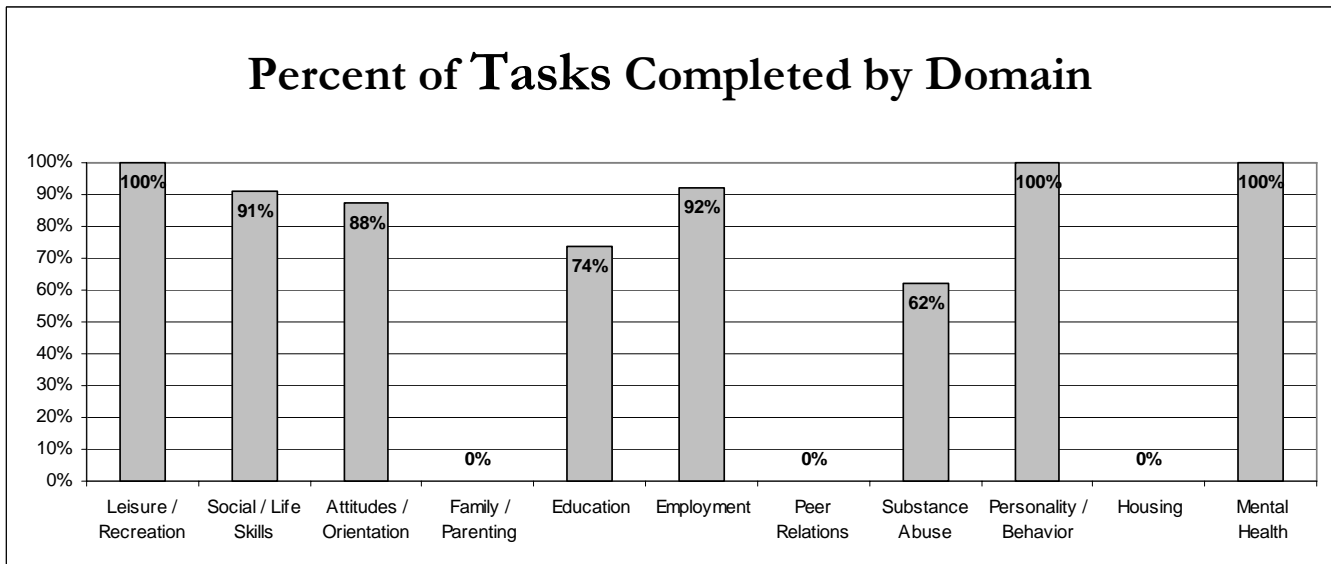
Figure 2. Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain

Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain



Eighty-seven percent of clients’ case plan tasks were considered complete upon exit from the Reentry Services Project (236 of 270 tasks assigned). The remaining tasks (13%) were not completed during program participation. Figure 3 includes 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 education, personality/behavior, leisure/recreation, and social/life skills (see Figure 2.). Task completion rates in these domains were 74 percent, 100 percent, 100 percent, and 91 percent respectively.

Referrals / Services

All of these clients (6 of 6) received at least one service-related referral. A total of 36 referrals were made for these clients (an average of 6 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

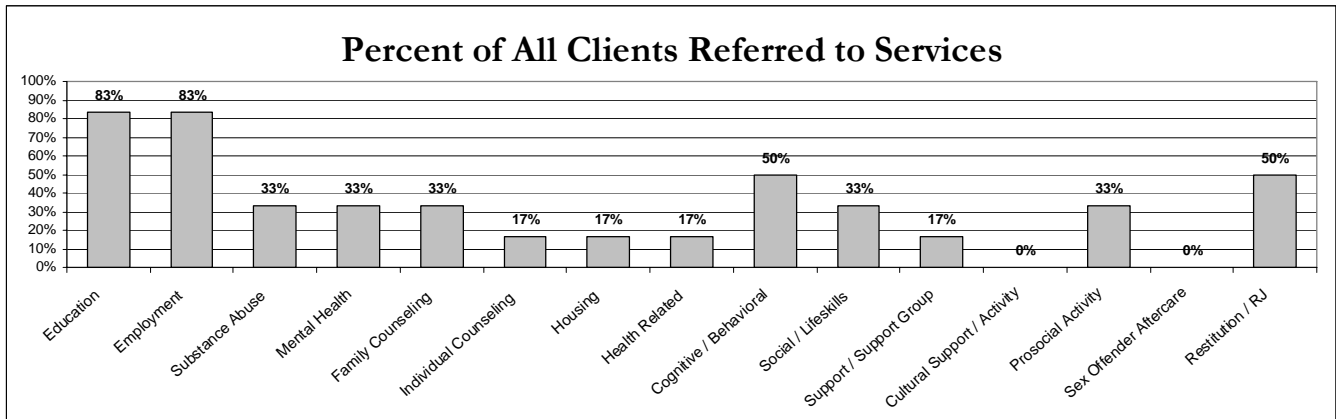
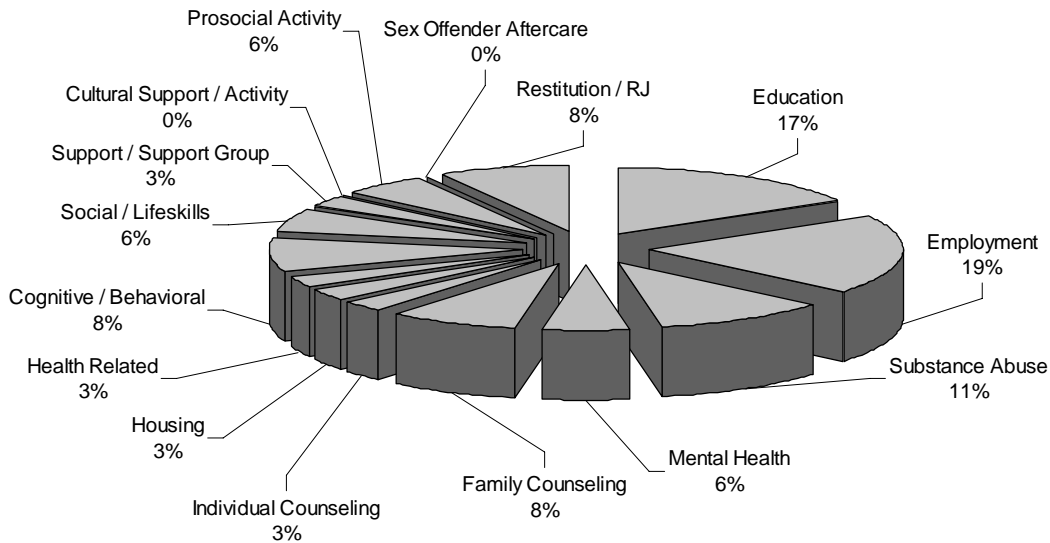


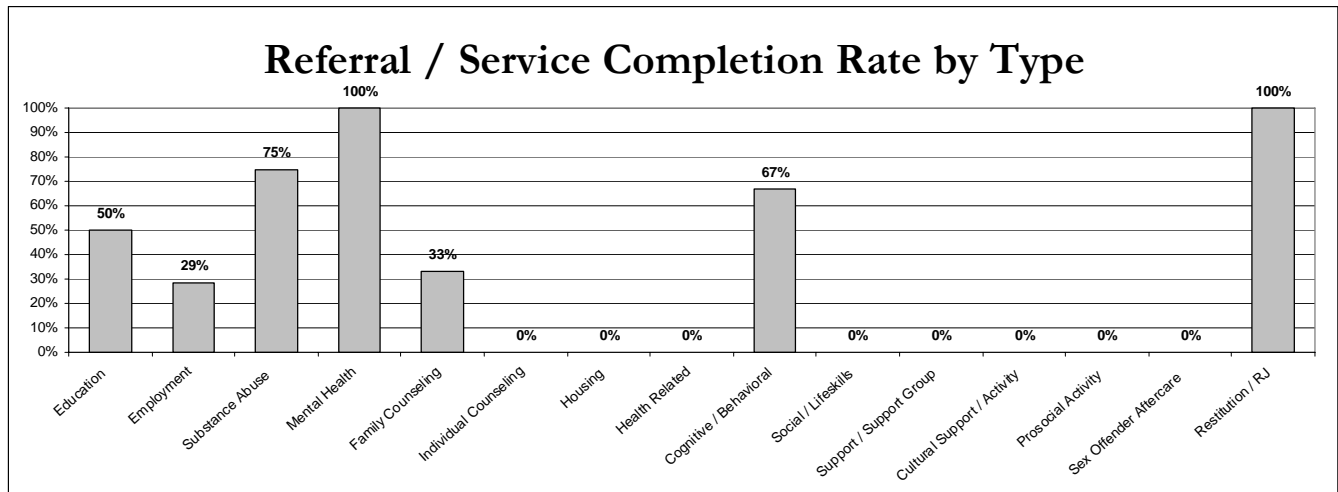
Figure 5. Referrals by Type of Service

Referrals by Type



Fifty-three percent of referrals resulted in at least some service to the client (i.e., at least one counseling session or assessment). Thirty-one percent of the 36 referrals (n=11) were considered “complete” or “ongoing” at the end of the clients’ participation in the program (average 1.8 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

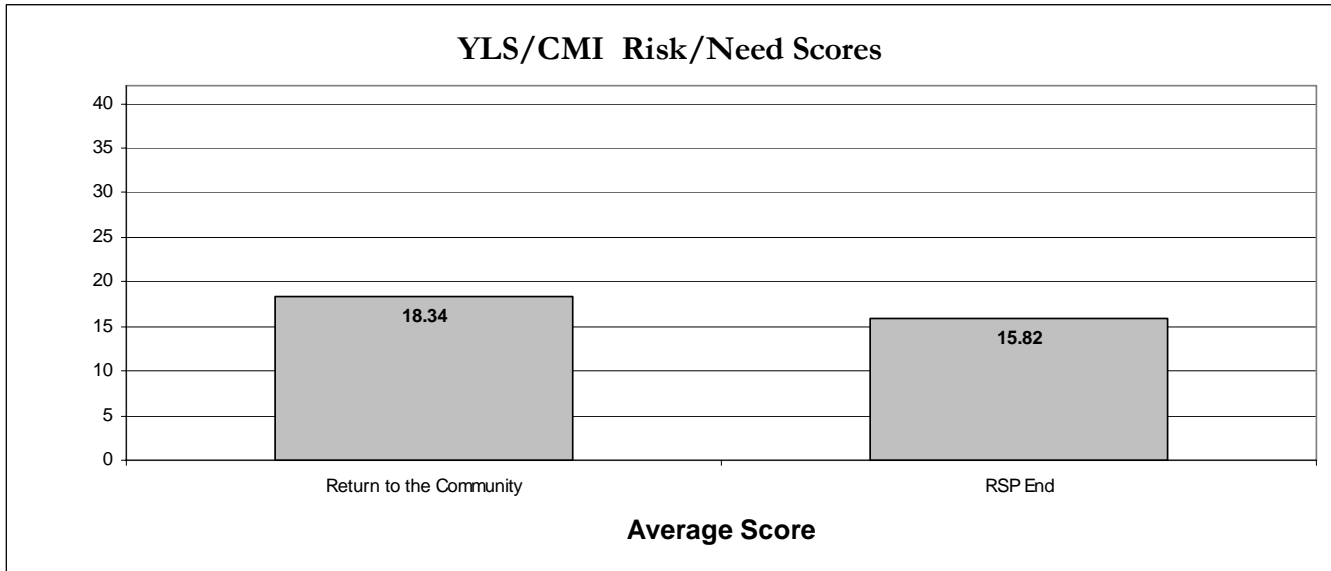
The six clients spent an average of 8.9 months in the Reentry Services Program (range 4 to 14 months). During this time Transitional Coordinators averaged 55 contacts with clients, 20 parent contacts, and 10 agency partner contacts. Probation Officers averaged 14 contacts with clients, 11 parent contacts, and 17 agency partner contacts. On average, Transitional Coordinators spent 38 hours with each of these clients during program participation.

III. Intermediate Outcomes

Eighty-three percent (5 of 6) of these clients were subjected to at least one drug test during program participation; 50 percent were tested 3 or more times. Sixty percent of tested clients (3) had no positive drug tests, one client had one positive test, and two clients (20%) experienced two or more tests indicating drug use.

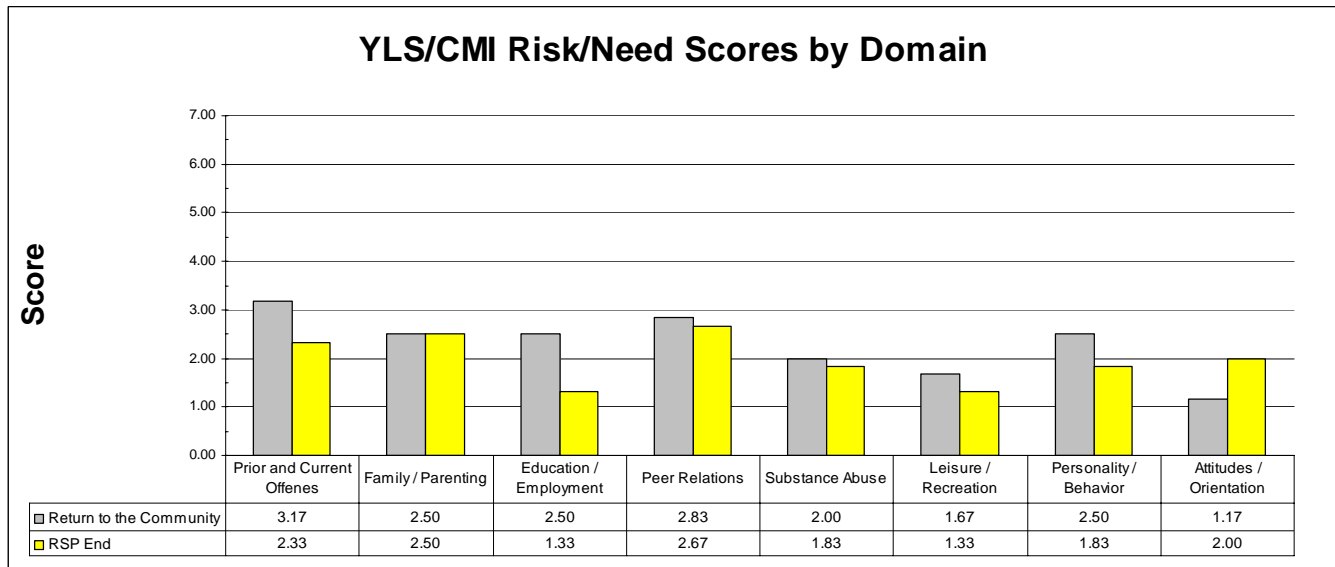
In order to examine changes in YLS/CMI risk/need and strengths scores during the period of program participation, the researchers isolated assessments occurring at two points: a) upon return to the community, and; b) upon program completion. Changes in risk/need score over time are depicted in Figure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

Figure 7 YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores



Overall, risk/needs scores declined by 14 percent from the clients’ initial return to the community (18.34) to the conclusion of their participation in the RSP program (15.82). 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



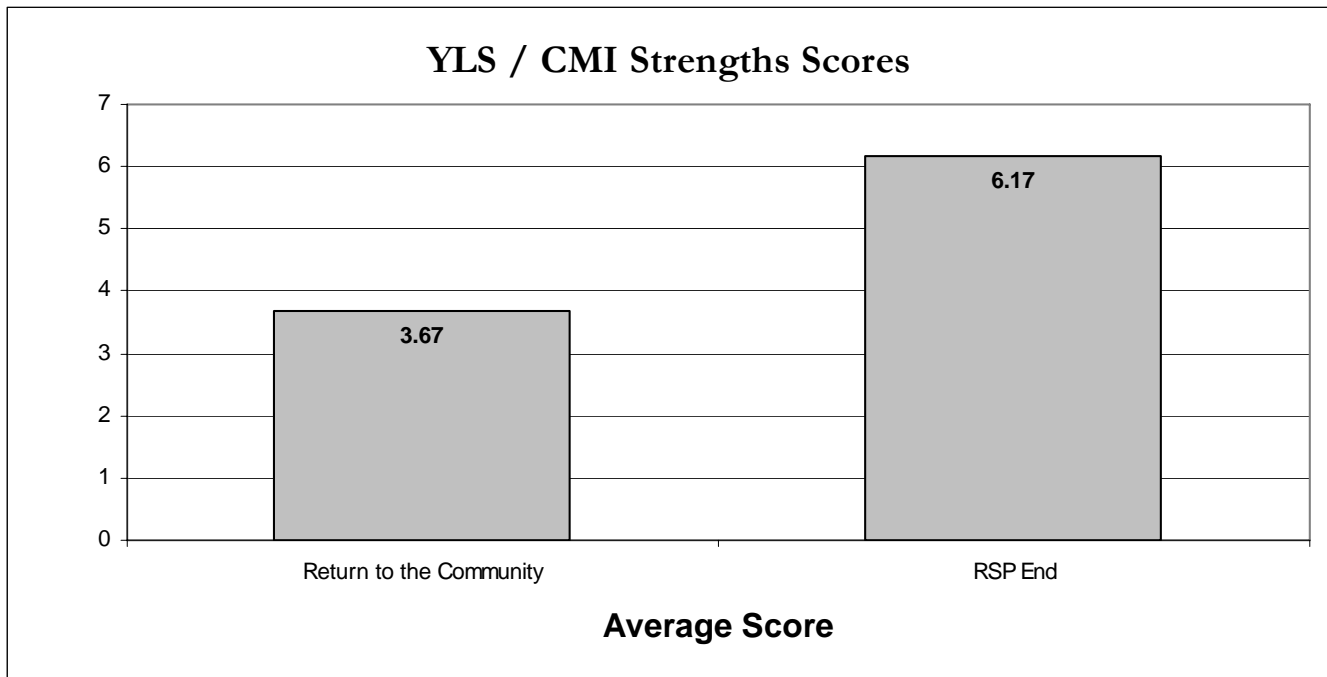
Domain	% change from Return to Program End
Prior / Current Offenses	-26%
Family / Parenting	0%
Education / Employment	-47%
Peer Relations*	-6%
Substance Abuse*	-9%
Leisure / Recreation*	-20%
Personality / Behavior	-27%
Attitudes / Orientation	71%
Overall	-14%

* Leisure/Recreation, Peer Relations, and Substance Abuse were the domains closest to ranking “high” on the initial / intake YLS/CMI.

With the exception of attitudes/orientation, clients experienced reductions in risk/need in each of the domains. Risk/need reductions were greatest in the domains of Education/Employment (47% reduction), Personality / Behavior (27% reduction), and Leisure / Recreation (36% reduction).

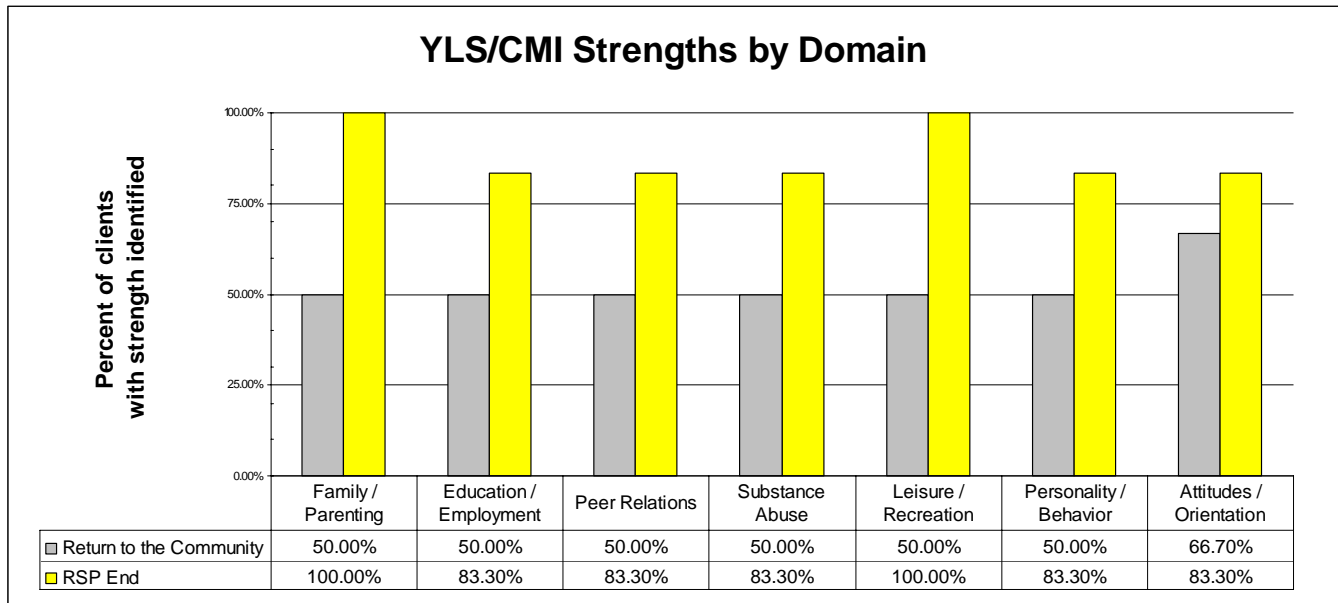
Changes in strengths score over time are depicted in Figure 9.

Figure 9. YLS/CMI Strengths Scores



Average strengths scores increased 68 percent from the return to the community (3.67 strengths identified) to the end of program participation (6.17 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

One-third (2 of 6) of the clients experienced no probation violations while participating in the Reentry Services Project. Of the 4 clients with probation violations, one had more than one violation.

Two of these six clients experienced no new charges during program participation. Of the 4 clients with new charges, 2 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. None of these clients experienced a new persons-related charge during program participation; the most serious behavior type among clients with new charges was property (1), illegal drugs (1), public order (1), and alcohol and tobacco (1).

Two-thirds (4 of 6) of the clients experienced no new out-of-home placements while participating in the program. The 2 clients experiencing one or more out-of-home placements incurred a total of 4 placements during program participation. Most of these placements were short-term (3 of 4 placements were less than 30 days). Clients spent a total of 34 days in short term out-of-home placements that began while the client was participating in the program (average 11 days per placement), and a total of 93 days in long-term placements (30 days or more) that began while the client was participating in the program. The majority of this time was spent in non-restrictive out-of-home placement (i.e., only 3% of long term placement was restrictive).

Seventy-five percent of out-of-home placements that occurred while clients were participating in the program (3 of 4) were the result of technical probation violations; the remainder was for protection of the client or unknown reasons.

V. Other Client Achievements and Participation

While participating in the program...

- Eighty percent (5 of 6) of these clients did not have a high school diploma or GED certificate upon entry to the program. Clients without a high school education or equivalent attended education services regularly (40%) or sporadically (60%) while participating in the program and one client took GED tests (groups not mutually exclusive).
- One of these six clients was homeless during program participation; no clients were homeless upon program completion. Eighty percent of clients (4 of 5 for whom data was available) had a stable residence while participating in the program.
- Transitional Coordinators reported that employment was appropriate for all of these clients. Eighty percent of clients for whom data was available (5) searched for a job while participating in the program, all were employed at some time during program participation, and eighty percent (4 of 5) were employed upon program completion. TCs indicated that all percent of these clients (5 of 5) had stable employment while participating in the program.
- Overall, 67 percent of all clients (4 of 6) were “clean” upon program completion. Among clients with a history of substance abuse, Transitional Coordinators believed that 75 percent (3 of 4 clients) needed treatment services. One youth regularly attended treatment, and one youth attended sporadically. Transitional Coordinators reported that 25 percent (1 of 4) of clients with a history of substance abuse were in need of AA/NA; none of the youth attended AA/NA regularly. Fifty percent of clients with a history of substance abuse were “clean” at the end of program participation.
- Transitional Coordinators indicated that 67 percent of clients with a history of mental health problems were in need of mental health services while participating in the program. Sixty-seven percent of clients with a history of mental health problems received mental health services while participating in the Reentry Services Project and 40 percent of clients complied with mental health recommendations.
- Forty percent of clients’ families participated in at least one outing or activity (4 of 5 clients for whom data was available); 20% of families regularly participated in outings while the client was in the program.
- Forty percent of clients’ families were involved in services (2 of 5).
- None of these clients received culturally specific services.
- Two of these clients 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 continue 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, personality/behavior, substance abuse, leisure/recreation, and social/life skills (Figure 1), and the most common domains for task assignment were substance abuse (17% of all tasks assigned),

personality/behavior (17% of tasks), leisure/recreation (14% of tasks) and employment (14% of tasks) (Figure 2). Compliance with transitional case plan tasks in the most common areas of task assignment ranged from 62 percent (substance abuse) to 100 percent (leisure/recreation and personality/behavior) (Figure 3).

Most clients were referred to services in the areas of education and employment, and half of clients were referred to cognitive/behavioral and restitution/restorative justice services (Figure 4). The most common domains for service referral were employment (19% of all referrals), education (17%) and substance abuse (11% of all referrals) (Figure 5). Completion rates for referrals in these domains ranged from 29 percent (employment) to 75 percent (substance abuse) (Figure 6).

Data regarding intermediate outcomes and ongoing misbehavior are also consistent with prior reports. While a healthy majority of clients experienced no new placements 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. Average YLS/CMI risk/need scores declined 14 percent from return to the community to program end, with the greatest reductions occurring in the domains of education/employment, personality/behavior, and leisure/recreation. Strengths scores increased 68 percent during this same period.

When compared to earlier (cumulative) reports, however, some interesting differences are observed. First, the data indicate that youth whose cases were closed during this period spent more time in the RSP program (average 8.9 months) than youth examined in previous quarters (e.g., average 7.6 months in April 2008). At the same time, however, TCs spent less time with clients whose cases were closed this quarter (average 38 hours) than with those closed during previous quarters (e.g., average 51 hours for the 107 youth examined in the April 2008 report). Second, youth whose cases were closed during this quarter were assigned a larger number of goals (average 8.4) and tasks (average 54) than youth closed during previous quarters (for example, youth examined in the April 2008 report were assigned an average of 6.5 goals and 33 tasks). In addition, a greater rate of task completion (87%) was observed compared to previous reports (e.g., 77% completion rate in April 2008). Third, clients whose cases were closed during this period experienced a similar level of service referral as youth examined in previous quarters (i.e., average 6 referrals per youth), however referral completion rates were much lower (31%) than in previous quarters (e.g., 62% in April 2008). Finally, clients who completed the program during this period experienced a greater rate of misbehavior (e.g., probation violations and new charges) than youth examined in earlier reports, however they were more likely to be search for work, be employed, and have stable employment while participating in the program. These differences may signal shifts in service delivery and/or youth behavior which warrant attention or they may be anomalies related to the small number of cases included in the current report.

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 summary 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, are being 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., six youth). Additional attention to these and other service differences in future reports is warranted.