

Reentry Services Project

Annual Report July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005

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The Reentry Services Project began in July of 2003, and evaluation of the program by the North Dakota State University evaluation team began in September of 2003. This report details the program progress for the second year of the project – specifically it details client service, outcome, and evaluation activities for the period of July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005.

Program Description

The Reentry Services Project in Clay County is funded by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, with matching funds provided by the Clay County Collaborative. The grant employs two full-time Transitional Coordinators who work with Clay County juvenile offenders returning to their home communities from an out-of-home placement.

The overall goal of the project is to improve public safety by preparing offenders for successful reentry to communities. The program aims to achieve this goal by assisting youthful offenders in becoming productive, responsible, and law abiding citizens through strategic and comprehensive reentry plans. These plans address the following Reentry components:

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

Evaluation Activities

Data Collection

Evaluation-related activities during the second year of the program (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005) focused primarily on data collection for both the Reentry Services Project clients and our comparison group of juvenile offenders from Becker County, MN who do not receive enhanced reentry services. Since the evaluation began in September of 2003, 52 Reentry Services Project client cases and 51 comparison client cases for which relevant evaluation information has coded for the evaluation. This coding includes a comprehensive review of each client's prior offense, out-of-home placement, and probation history; RSP program-related activities; and outcomes including new technical violations, new charges, and new out-of-home placements. The evaluators enter this information into a comprehensive database to produce quarterly and annual reports.

Development of Program Tracking Instruments

Several additional data collection instruments were developed during this review period. These documents are used primarily by RSP staff to track progress on various social factors and other outcomes during program participation, and six and 12 months after program completion. These data are then collected by the evaluators and entered into the database.

Agency Partner and Probation Officer Surveys

The evaluators distributed two rounds of program implementation/satisfaction surveys to Probation officers and individuals from other agency partners during the review period (summer of 2004 and summer of 2005). Response rates were 22 percent (2004) and 40 percent (2005) for agency partners and 75 percent and 100 percent for Probation Officers. Since the proportion of respondents to each survey is relatively small, results from the two rounds of agency partner surveys have been combined and are presented in the following analysis.

Agency partner surveys include questions designed to elicit the level of satisfaction with the timing and quality of referrals made by Reentry Services Project staff to other service providers, and information regarding frequency of, and satisfaction with communication between the RSP staff and personnel from these other agencies. Of the 24 surveys distributed to date, seven returned surveys have usable data. These agency partners report an average of 10.7 contacts between their agency and the Reentry Services Project staff each month, including 4.8 in-person contacts, 0.8 email contacts, and 5 telephone contacts. Table 1. provides the results of these surveys. The “satisfaction” questions ask agency partners to rate their satisfaction with several aspects of the program, using a five-point scale (1 = “not at all satisfied”, 5 = “very satisfied”). Mean scores for responses to these questions are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Reentry Services Project Agency Partner Satisfaction Surveys

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

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

Respondent A.

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

Respondent B.

“They seem to be on task and work very well with the juveniles they serve. They also do a good job networking with other agencies. I have heard nothing but positive things from the juveniles I talk to about the staff at the Reentry Services Project.”

Respondent C.

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

Respondent D.

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

Respondent E.

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

Respondent F.

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

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

A. “Expand duration of the program from 6 months to adding potential of 6 months of follow-up upon completion of project -- regardless of successful completion.”

B. “I hope the program is able to achieve long term funding.”

C. “It would be interesting to see the results of those kids involved after 6-12 months out of the program (without names, of course) to see how effective it is.”

Probation Officers have completed two rounds of program implementation/satisfaction surveys. These surveys elicit information about whether program procedures had changed, the amount of contact between Probation Agents and Reentry Services Project staff, and the Probation Agents’ overall satisfaction with the implementation of the program. Three of four completed surveys were received during the first round of administration, and all four surveys received during the second round. The results of these surveys are reported below in Table 2.

Table 2. Reentry Services Project Probation Officer Surveys

	Summer 2004	Summer 2005
Average contacts with RSP staff per month		
In-person	12.00	9.50
Referral contacts	1.67	.88
Telephone	26.33	13.5
Total	40.00	23.88
Original intake procedures have been followed (% yes)	100%	75%
Original division of responsibilities has been followed (% yes)	100%	100%
Satisfied with...	Mean (1 to 5 scale)	Mean (1 to 5 scale)
intake procedures for RSP	4.67	4.00
frequency of client referrals to services made by RSP staff	4.33	4.00
types of referrals to services made by RSP staff	5.00	3.75
division of responsibilities between POs and TCs	4.67	4.50

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

Respondent A.

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

Respondent B.

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

Respondent C.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. "Reduce YLSI re-assessments."

B. "One of the TC's has another job which takes away from effectiveness, quantity, and quality of services provided to the clients."

Agency partner and probation officer satisfaction surveys will continue in the upcoming program year.

Client Profile

During the second year of the program (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005), the Reentry Services Project served a total of 48 clients. Twenty-nine of those client files have since been closed and the files have been coded by the evaluators. An additional 19 files are still open or recently closed but not yet coded, including 7 re-opened files. This report will focus on the 29 clients who were served during this period whose case files are closed and coded.

Demographics

The average age of clients served during this period is 16.2 years upon return to the community following their most recent out-of-home placement. Seventy-two percent of the clients are male. Forty-five percent of the clients are White, 38 percent Native American, 14 percent Hispanic, and three percent Black. The demographic breakdown of other clients served during this period whose cases have not been closed/coded is similar: 75 percent male; 33 percent White, 17 percent Native American, 42 percent Hispanic, and 8 percent unknown race/ethnicity.

Prior Offenses and Out-of-Home Placement History

On average these 29 clients have 4.1 prior official contacts, including 4.9 charges prior to their most recent out-of-home placement. Thirty-eight percent have a prior felony charge and 66 percent have a prior 'persons-crime' (i.e., violent offense) charge. On average these clients have

3.5 misdemeanor charges, and 0.55 felony charges (average 1 persons charge per client) upon entry into the Reentry Services Project.

The average number of placements these clients have experienced prior to service in the program is 3.1 out-of-home placements. They have spent an average of 163 days in out-of-home placement, including 136 days in restrictive out-of-home placement.

On average these clients spent 18.8 months on probation prior to return to the community. All of these clients were on indefinite probation. Sixty-two percent of the clients were on maximum or intensive supervision upon return to the community.

Most Recent Offense and Out-of-Home Placement

Twenty-one percent of these clients' most recent charge was a felony offense (79% misdemeanor). Forty-two percent of the clients' most recent charge was a 'persons-related' charge (e.g. assault), 35 percent property offense, three percent illegal drugs, 17 percent public order offense (e.g. disorderly conduct), and three percent traffic offense.

These clients most recent placement averaged 124 days (97 days restrictive out-of-home placement). The most common types of placement were residential treatment (41%), detention or sheltercare (38%), and treatment center (17%). Sixty-nine percent of these clients' most recent placement was the result of a probation violation.

Additional Background Information

Seventy-six percent of these clients have a history of violence, 69 percent have a history of substance abuse, 97 percent have a history of school problems, and 76 percent have a history of mental health problems.

Program Outcomes

Program Activities

These 29 clients spent an average of 7.2 months in the Reentry Services Project, and spent an average of 52 total hours with Transitional Coordinators. During this time they were assigned an average of 23.5 tasks as part of their transitional case plans, and were referred to an average of 6.3 services in the community (60% of which were complete or ongoing upon exiting the Reentry Services Project). Transitional Coordinators averaged 36 total contacts with clients, 12 contacts with parents, and 13 contacts with agency partners. Probation Officers averaged 10.5 client, 8 parent, and 15 agency partner contacts while clients were participating in the Reentry Services Project.

Program Outcome Measures

Identified outcome measures for the Reentry Services Project include:

- a) 75 percent compliance rate with transitional case plan tasks;
- b) 20 percent reduction in YLS/CMI risk/needs scores, and
- c) 20 percent increase in YLS/CMI strengths scores.

These 29 clients completed an average of 75 percent of their case plan tasks (17.6 of 23.5 tasks). Average YLS/CMI risk/needs scores declined for these clients from 21.67 at intake into out-of-home placement to 18.92 at 6-months post return to the community (the average decrease in scores is 13%), and from 22.96 at return to the community to 18.92 at 6-months post return to the community (the average decrease in these scores is 18%). Average YLS/CMI strengths scores increased from 0.88 at intake into the most recent out-of-home placement, to 5.33 at 6-months post-return to the community (the average increase in these scores is 506%), and from 3.92 at return to the community to 5.33 at 6-months post return to the community (average increase in these scores is 36%).

Note that since the “intake” and later assessments (in the community) generally have different raters (e.g. out of home placement staff or Probation Officer vs. Transitional Coordinator), the change in scores between the return-to-community and 6-months post return to community are potentially more accurate comparisons because the same rater is likely to have conducted these assessments, avoiding issues related to inter-rater reliability.

Client Recidivism

All of these clients’ case files were re-coded in September and October of 2005, to bring information related to new charges and out-of-home placements up to date. The average follow-up time (after return from the out-of-home placement that brought them to RSP) for these 29 clients is 15 months (range is 8.3 months to 24 months). The average follow-up time post participation in the Reentry Services Project is 8.5 months (range is 2.1 to 14.6 months).

In-Program Recidivism

While participating in the Reentry Services Project, 55 percent of these clients had no new technical violations. The total number of new technical violations for the 13 clients who received technical violations during the program is 24.

Fifty-nine percent of these clients (17) had no new official contacts while participating in the Reentry Services Project. Of the 12 new clients with new in-program contacts, 66 percent experienced only one new official contact.

Of those with new in-program charges, the highest level of the charges was a misdemeanor for the majority of these clients (58%), while 25 percent experienced a new in-program felony charge. The total number of new in-program charges for these 12 clients is 26.

While participating in the Reentry Services Project, 48 percent of these clients (14) experienced no new out-of-home placements. A total of 26 in-program out-of-home placements were experienced by 15 clients. Eight clients experienced at least one new short-term out-of-home placement (less than 30 days) while participating in the program; the average time spent in short-

term placement was 8.62 days (all restrictive). Twelve clients experienced at least one new long-term out-of-home placements while participating in the program; the average time spent in long-term placement was 178 days (157 days restrictive). The vast majority of in-program out-of-home placements (69%) were for technical violations, while 19 percent were the result of new charges.

Follow-up Recidivism

Thirty-four percent (10 of 29) of these clients' probation files are now closed. The average time on probation for those clients whose files are now closed was 277 days after release from out-of-home placement, and 78 days after RSP case closure. The remaining clients (19) were still on probation as of September/October 2005.

During the full follow-up period (release from most recent out-of-home placement through September/October 2005), 41 percent of these clients experienced no new technical violations. Of those with new technical violations (17), 53 percent have experienced only one new technical violation. The total number of new technical violations for these 17 clients is 34.

Fifty-two percent of the 29 clients (15) experienced no new official contacts during the entire follow-up period. Of the 14 clients with new official contacts, 64 percent experienced only one new official contact. Of those with new official charges, the highest level of new charges was a misdemeanor for the majority of the clients (57%), while 36 percent of the 14 clients experienced a new felony charge. The total number of new charges for the clients during the full follow-up period is 29.

During the full follow-up period, 31 percent of the clients (9 of 29) experienced no new out-of-home placements. A total of 44 new out-of-home placements were experienced by 20 clients. Thirteen clients experienced at least one new short-term out-of-home placement during the follow-up period; the average time spent by these clients in short-term placements was 13.6 days (13.1 days in a 'restrictive' placement, like detention).

Fifteen clients experienced at least one new long-term out-of-home placement during the follow-up period; the average time spent by these clients in long-term placement was 198 days (180 days in a 'restrictive' placement). The majority of new out-of-home placements were the result of technical violations (55%), while 29 percent were the result of new charges (2% for protection of the client, and 14% unknown reasons)

Other Outcomes

Transitional Coordinators track client progress at the start of the program and at program end for a number of indicators of social adjustment including housing, employment, education, general support, substance use, mental health, cultural/ethnic support, gender related services, and participation in prosocial activities. Transitional Coordinators and Probation Officers follow-up with clients six and 12 months post program on many of these same indicators. The Transitional Coordinators and Probation Officers complete a survey at each of the intervals which elicits information regarding client progress either 'during-program' participation (program end) or in

the prior six months (6 and 12 month post program updates). In addition to progress-related questions, Transitional Coordinators and Probation Agents respond to a series of “satisfaction” questions regarding the clients’ progress in each area. The following analysis includes in-program social adjustment indicators for all 29 clients, for six months post-program follow-up for 21 of 29 clients, and for 12 months post-program follow-up for 8 of 29 clients. Results are presented in Tables 3-9 below.

Table 3. Housing and Family Indicators

	Program intake N = 28	Program end N=29	6 months post-program N=21	12 months post-program N=8
Has been homeless at some time in past 6 months/during program		27%	33%	38%
Is currently homeless		7%	10%	0%
Has had a stable residence for the most of the last 6 months			52%	75%
Family regularly receives services		41%	14%	13%
Family regularly participates in prosocial activities		21%	19%	38%
Satisfied with family/parenting status*	2.53	2.11	2.67	3.13
Satisfied with housing stability*	3.32	2.95	3.14	4.29
Satisfied with communication in clients home*	2.36	2.11	2.24	3.33
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 4. Education Indicators

	Program intake N=28	Program end N=29	6 months post-program N=21	12 months post-program N=8
Highest education level				
Has earned HS diploma		3%	10%	0%
Has earned GED		7%	14%	25%
Attends school regularly		52%	48%	25%
Has taken GED tests		7%	0%	25%
None		31%	28%	25%
Satisfied with educational status*	2.32	2.55	2.62	3.0
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 5. Employment Indicators

	Program intake N=28	Program end N=29	6 months post-program N=21	12 months post-program N=8
Satisfied with employment status*	2.0	2.63	2.55	3.0
Of clients for whom employment is appropriate		N=24	N=16	N=8
Searched for a job during program		92%		
Employed at some time in program or past 6 months		67%	44%	75%
Currently employed		42%	38%	50%
Stable employment in past 6 months			19%	38%
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 6. Substance Use/Abuse Indicators

	Program intake N=28	Program end N=29	6 months post-program N=21	12 months post-program N=8
Satisfied with substance use status*	3.16	2.80	2.95	3.43
Of clients with substance use history		N=20	N=14	N=7
Regularly attended treatment or AA/NA in program or past 6 months		50%	43%	14%
Is “clean”		40%	36%	29%
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 7. Mental/Physical Health Indicators

	Program intake N=28	Program end N=29	6 months post-program N=21	12 months post-program N=8
Satisfied with mental/physical health status*	2.78	2.47	3.0	3.20
Of clients with a history of mental health problems		N=22	N=17	N=5
Received services or complied with recommendations in program/last 6 months		59%	47%	40%
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 8. Prosocial Support and Activities

	Program intake N=28	Program end N=29	6 months post-program N=21	12 months post-program N=8
Has role model or mentor in home	61%	37%	24%	25%
Has role model or mentor outside the home	48%	68%	43%	38%
Is involved with prosocial peers			29%	50%
Regularly participates in prosocial activities			24%	25%
Satisfied with peer relationships*	1.96	2.0	2.05	2.38
Satisfied with involvement in prosocial activities*	2.07	2.42	2.24	2.38
Satisfied with network to go to with problems*	2.48	2.26	2.50	3.25
*Satisfaction is mean score on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)				

Table 9. Cultural/Gender Specific Services and Support

	Program end	6 months post-program	12 months post-program
Of minority clients	N=16	N=11	N=4
Participated in at least one culturally specific service in program	69%		
Regularly participates in culturally specific services	19%	27%	50%
Of female clients	N=8	N= 4	N=5
Participated in at least one gender specific service in program	86%		
Regularly participates in gender specific services	75%	0%	80%