

PROBLEM-SOLVING PARTNERSHIP  
PROGRESS REPORT, QUARTER 6  
OCTOBER 1, 2009-DECEMBER 31, 2009  
GRANT NUMBER 2009-PSP-00029

**1. Project Implementation:**

Our specific program objectives include:

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

\*Please see attached report from the Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science, North Dakota State University describing this quarter's activities.

**2. Staffing:**

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

**3. Project Outcomes:**

The attached evaluation report addresses the specific identified program outcomes including intermediate outcomes and in-program recidivism. During this quarter we continue to increase collaboration between systems in Clay County by implementing a family strengthening component to the Reentry Services Project. We are collaborating with Clay County Social Services and local mental health agencies to complete a strength-based family assessment on the youth of families referred to the program, if appropriate. Implementing a family strengthening component to the program has generated positive changes in both clients and their families, both as individuals and a family unit. The family assessment component has been utilized by approximately 30% of families. Family participation in RSP activities in the community continues to be emphasized and supported by providing mentoring, transportation and financial support for these activities.

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

The joint Restorative Justice/Reentry Services Project Advisory Board met on November 5, 2009 and is scheduled to meet again on February 4, 2010. The Advisory Board consists of 30-35 community partners. These partners represent the county commission, law enforcement, schools, Mental Health agencies, Social Services, MN CEP, corrections, County Attorney's office, parents, youth agencies and the Clay County Collaborative. The committee meets quarterly in an effort to increase the community's awareness of youth issues and increase the community's role in affecting positive change for youth and their families. In 2009, a PATH foster parent and a staff member of a local faith-based organization joined this group and have provided valuable parental and faith-based input. A result of the formation of these strong partnerships has been solid community support for the RSP, a construction of open, routine communication among agencies and the willingness of the Clay County Collaborative to continue to provide financial support for the RSP in the upcoming fiscal year.

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?*

- Hanging out with (TC name removed) & (Client name removed), going out to eat, getting advice, going to events I normally would have missed out on.

*In what ways was the program disappointing?*

- Nothing really.

## **Parent/Guardian**

None available

### **5. Illustration:** (submitted by Sally Dandurand, Transitional Coordinator)

I am currently working with a 20-year old Caucasian male referred to Reentry Services for extra support in job searching, housing, education, mental health, and maintaining sobriety. The client has several mental health diagnosis i.e., Depression with Suicidal Ideation, ADHD, Antisocial Personality Disorder and a Chemical Dependency Addiction. He does take medication for his diagnosis but not as required.

The client has been in treatment for addiction to Marijuana and huffing Air Duster and had multiple placements in the past. He is presently EJJ, which means he has an adult sentence stayed until he is 21 years old, which can be imposed if he has further criminal charges or does not follow the Court's recommendations. The client relapsed soon after his four month treatment by smoking Marijuana and huffing Air Duster. He has been hospitalized nine different times, both for mental illness and chemical dependency treatment. Upon his referral to Reentry Services I met with him at the psychiatric hospital where he had been recently placed in outpatient treatment, for overdosing on Air Duster.

The client was attentive and respectful during the intake and stated he wanted to be happy and successful. We talked about his goals for the future. He made it clear of his love for his girlfriend and how she was the center of his life. He also admitted they get high together but that he wanted to get a job, apartment (currently lives with his mom), and go to college one day. He graduated from a regular school with a 3.8 GPA. He was on a bowling league for 8 years as a youth with an average of 183. He cried when he talked about how his life changed after his parents got divorced. In order to "fit" in he started hanging around kids that got high to have fun. He stated almost instantly he noticed he wanted more and more because he liked not having to think about his problems. He wouldn't give a release of information to his mom to me because he said sometimes she helps too much. Later, I would learn that she is one of his major enablers who according to him let him get by with many things while helping him cover up his behavior. He stated his dad has given up on him but still talks to him. I suggested there has to be a better way be happy and that he needs to follow the current treatment plan. At this time, he agreed he needed help and stated he was willing to try. We talked about how his using drugs help him deal with pain, disappointment and shame. We talked about him getting back involved with bowling and possibly guitar lessons. He was excited to show me how good a bowler he used to be.

I was on my way to visit him two days later but found out he was moved to another area of the hospital due to staff found three bottles of computer cleaning cans in his room. Upon meeting him again with his probation agent, staff counselors and me, it was clear he was not going to commit to the program. After a number of days he left and went to stay at his mom's house waiting for his next court date. During this time we looked for jobs and talked a lot about his past and his future. He is very smart, has a sense of humor, cares a lot about others (he admits maybe too much), and wants to attend college one day. He believes his mental illness and chemical addiction may hinder that from happening. While on an outing we stopped at a local drop-in center for at-risk youth who are experiencing a crisis. We met with the director who agreed to

meet with the client on a regular basis to give him extra support as well. The client was excited about this because he had met the director previously at a treatment center and really liked him.

I keep in regular contact with the client's probation agent who has great concerns for the client's safety also. The client was told by the courts to schedule another chemical dependency evaluation by his next court date. Both his probation agent and I reminded him how important it was that he follows through with this requirement. The client then told us mistruths in that he had scheduled a meeting but would get there on his own. At the next court date it was discovered he hadn't followed through so he was sentenced to 120 days at a local treatment and detention center.

When I met the client a week after his 120 day placement began, he was lethargic and extremely depressed. He didn't want me or anyone else visiting him and kept saying over and over that he doesn't need to be locked up. I discussed his deep depression with the detention staff counselor and his probation officer. All of us agreed he is one to be watched closely while at placement due his past suicide attempts. I waited a couple of weeks and went to see him again. He was still non-engaging however I told him I would be coming weekly to see him even if he didn't talk to me. Surprisingly he started to talk about his health and his feelings again. I am not sure what I can do for this client because it is obvious he has given up on himself. I will continue to visit him weekly and upon closer to his release bring job applications and housing applications. Maybe by that time he will believe in himself enough to want to check out some colleges too.

#### **6. Barriers: Negative Peers** (submitted by Michael McMullen, Transitional Coordinator)

While using the YLS/CMI one of the categories we try to help facilitate change in is the peer group our clients associate with. By eliminating negative peer influences we have a better chance for success, as it takes the negative ideas/ activities away and the client starts making better decisions. We try to find positive activities for our clients and help them continue to make positive decisions regarding the peers they associate with.

Some peers are a positive influence and help the client achieve a voice of their own. When a client finds a peer who will help and listen to them it increases their ability to establish a more positive peer group network.

However, many times, the client does not leave his/her peer group. Sometimes, the client is forced to see his/her peer group at school, around town or they live by the peers they are trying to stay away from. Many times these peers are the only people that will accept and socialize with the client. Trying to get the client to leave his only source of socializing can be difficult.

Many clients believe they have entered a gang and struggle to sever ties. Some of our clients feel strongly that they can be harmed or killed due to things they have heard while participating in their gang. Getting them to make the decision to reduce the amount of time they are spending with these peers and then trying to show that they are not in real danger helps. Some clients have

been physically assaulted by their own gang members and chosen not to press charges because they felt they did something wrong.

Many of our client's most negative influence can be their own parents. Many times the family fails to establish proper boundaries. If the parents don't parent and try to be peers instead, our clients will continue to get in trouble and make poor choices because that is what they have been taught.

**7. Evaluation:**

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

**8. Revisions Necessary:**

None

# **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 2010

Kathleen J. Bergseth  
Thomas D. McDonald

Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science  
North Dakota State University



**Reentry Services Project:  
Report to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and the Joint  
Advisory Committee for the Restorative Justice Program & Reentry  
Services Project, January 2010**

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:

- 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,
- strengthening families of youthful offenders in order to facilitate youth adjustment and transition to the community, and
- 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 December 31, 2009 the Reentry Services Project had 156 closed and coded case files. An additional 16 cases are currently active and 24 youth have been served more than once by the program.

During the most recent quarter (October 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009) a total of 20 youth were served by the program. Four cases were closed during this period, while 16 remain open. This report includes detailed information on the four cases closed during between October 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009.

## I. Sociodemographic Profile

Upon release back to the community, the average age of the four clients was 16.9 years. Three of these clients (75%) were male; one (25%) was female. Seventy-five percent (3) were Hispanic and one (25%) was White (non-Hispanic).

On average, these clients had 2.3 prior official contacts including an average of 2.8 charges prior to their most recent out of home placement. Three clients (75%) had a prior felony charge; one (25%) had prior persons charges (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 2-23 months). All of the clients were on indefinite probation. Half (2) were on maximum supervision upon release back to the community and half (2) were on moderate supervision.

The clients experienced an average of 1.75 out-of-home placements (0.8 prior long-term – 30 days or more) and had spent on average 109 days in out-of-home placement (all in restrictive placement) upon entering the Reentry Services Project.

Seventy-five percent (3 of 4) of these clients' most recent charge was a felony offense; one client's most recent offense was a misdemeanor (25%). One client's (25%) most recent charge was a persons offense, two (50%) property, and one (25%) public order (e.g. disorderly conduct). The clients' most recent placement averaged 101 days (all in restrictive placement); all of this time was spent in detention facilities.

All of these clients (4) had a history of school problems. Half (2) had a history of mental health problems and half (2) had a history of substance abuse. One client (25%) had a history of violence (e.g., persons charge, fighting). Three quarters of the clients (3) 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=4).

Domain	Average Score	Risk Level (associated with Average Score)	Percent of clients with strength identified
Prior / Current Offenses	.50	Low	N/A
Family / Parenting	2.00	Low	50%
<b>Education / Employment</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>Moderate*</b>	75%
<b>Peer Relations</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>Moderate*</b>	75%
Substance Abuse	1.50	Moderate	50%
<b>Leisure / Recreation</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>High*</b>	50%
Personality / Behavior	2.75	Moderate	25%
Attitudes / Orientation	1.75	Moderate	0%
Overall	16.50	Moderate	Average 3.3 per client

\*Leisure/Recreation scores reflected "high" risk/need. The other domains closest to scoring in

the “high” range were education / employment and peer relations.

**II. Program Activities**

*Case Planning*

Transitional case plans were created for each of these clients. These plans included goals and tasks in three general categories (competency development, restorative accountability, and community safety). 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	6.75 (5 – 10)	47.25 (33 – 70)
Restorative Accountability	1.25 (0 – 2)	6.5 (0 – 10)
Community Safety	1.25 (1 – 2)	3.75 (3 – 6)
All	9.25 per client	57.5 per client

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

Figure 1. Percent of Clients Assigned to Tasks by Domain

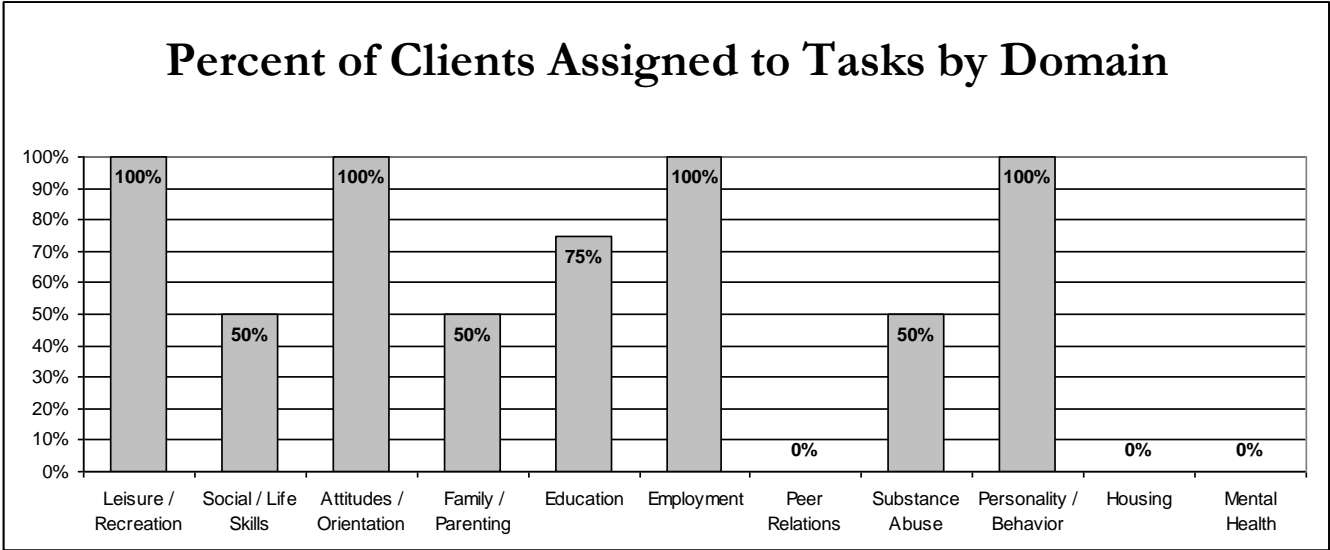
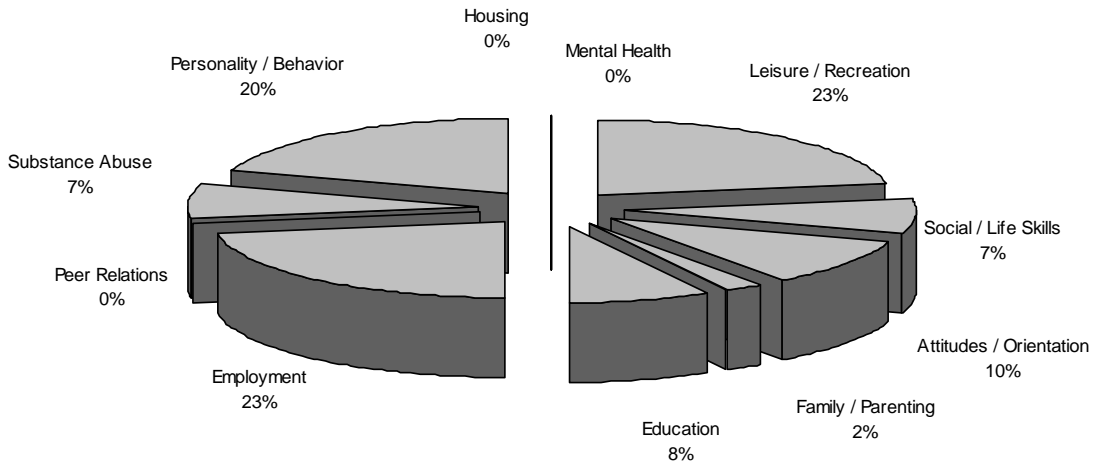


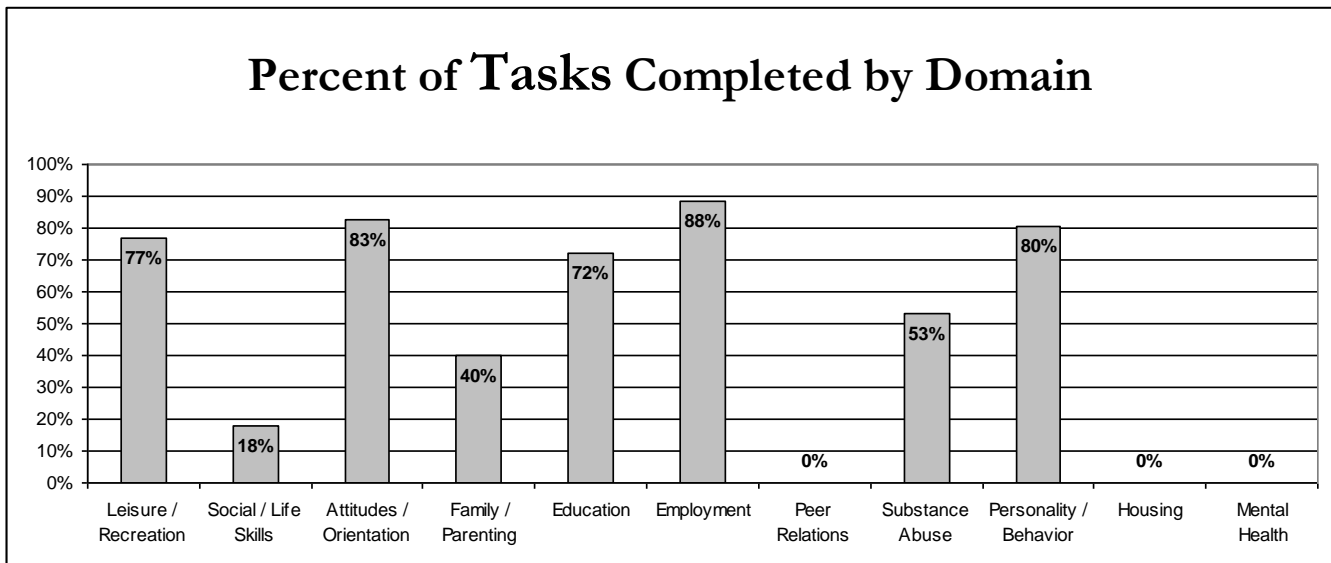
Figure 2. Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain

## Transitional Case Plan Tasks by Domain



Seventy-three percent of clients' case plan tasks were completed upon exit from the Reentry Services Project (167 of 230 tasks assigned). The remaining tasks (27%) were not completed during program participation. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of task completion rates by domain.

Figure 3. Percent of Tasks Complete by Domain



The majority of tasks assigned were in the areas of leisure / recreation, employment, and personality / behavior (see Figure 2.). Task completion rates in these domains were 77 percent, 88 percent, and 80 percent respectively.

*Referrals / Services*

All of these clients (4 of 4) received at least one service-related referral. A total of 25 referrals were made for these clients (an average of 6.25 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

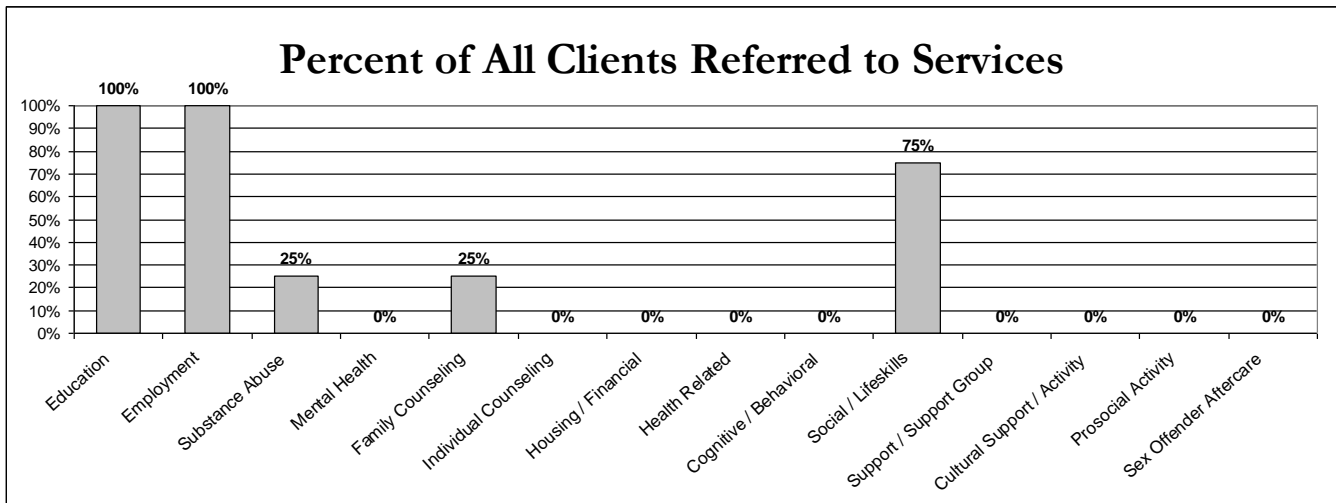
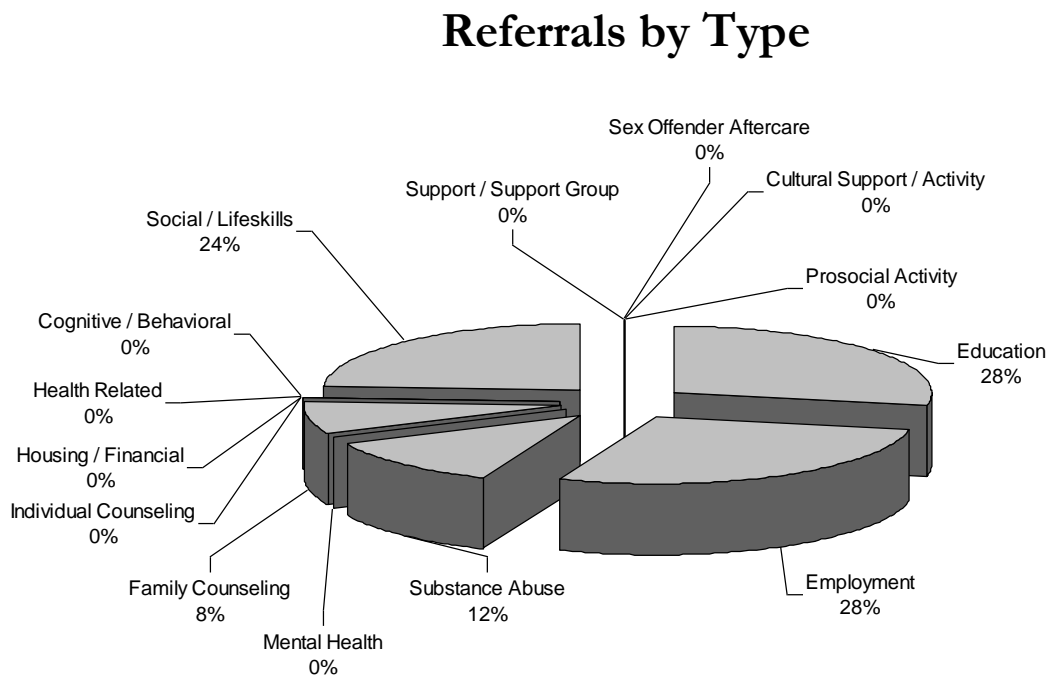
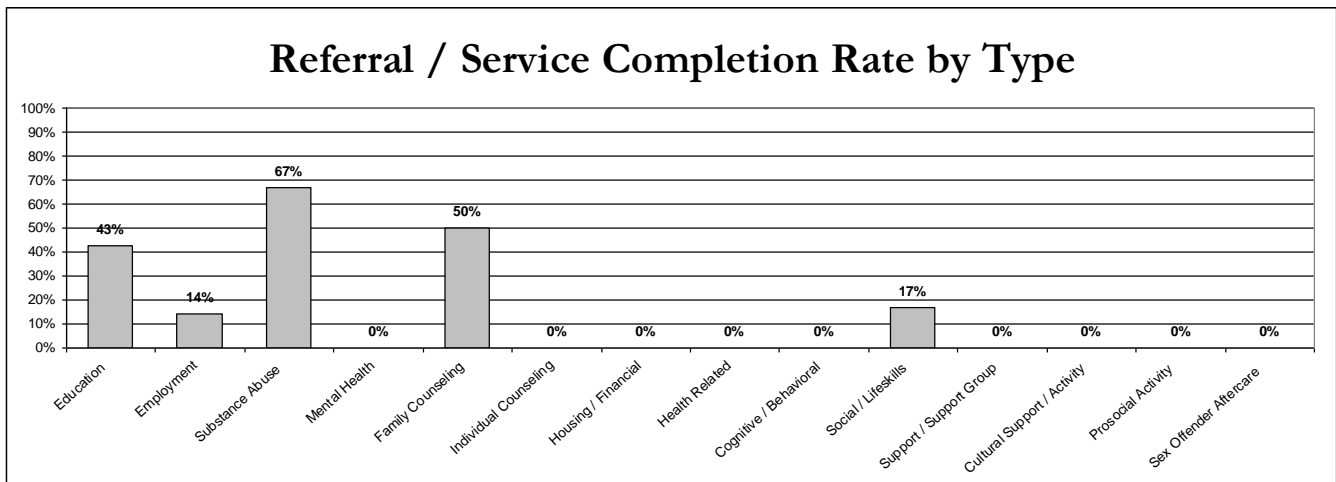


Figure 5. Referrals by Type of Service



Seventy-two percent of referrals (18 of 25) resulted in at least some service to the client (i.e., at least one counseling session or assessment). Thirty-two percent of referrals (8) were considered “complete” or “ongoing” at the end of the clients’ participation in the program (average 2 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*

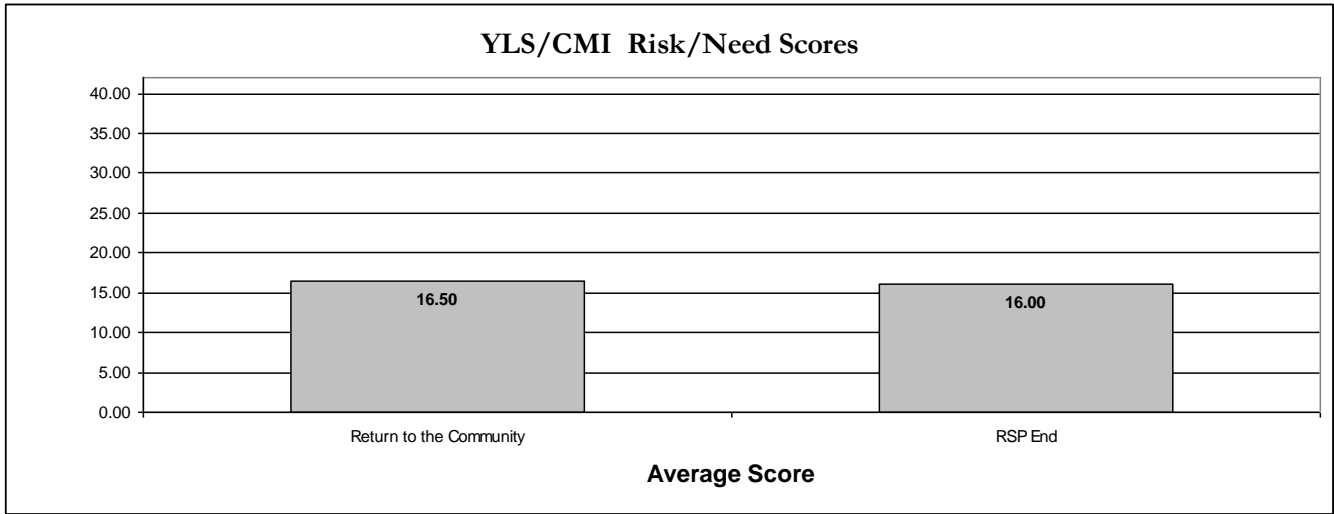
The four clients spent an average of 6.1 months in the Reentry Services Program (range 5 to 7 months). During this time Transitional Coordinators averaged 18 contacts with clients, 6 parent contacts, and 5 agency partner contacts. Probation Officers averaged 12 contacts with clients, 8 parent contacts, and 10 agency partner contacts. On average, Transitional Coordinators spent 19 hours with each client during program participation.

**III. Intermediate Outcomes**

Only one client (25%) was subjected to urinalysis testing during program participation; this client had a single positive drug test.

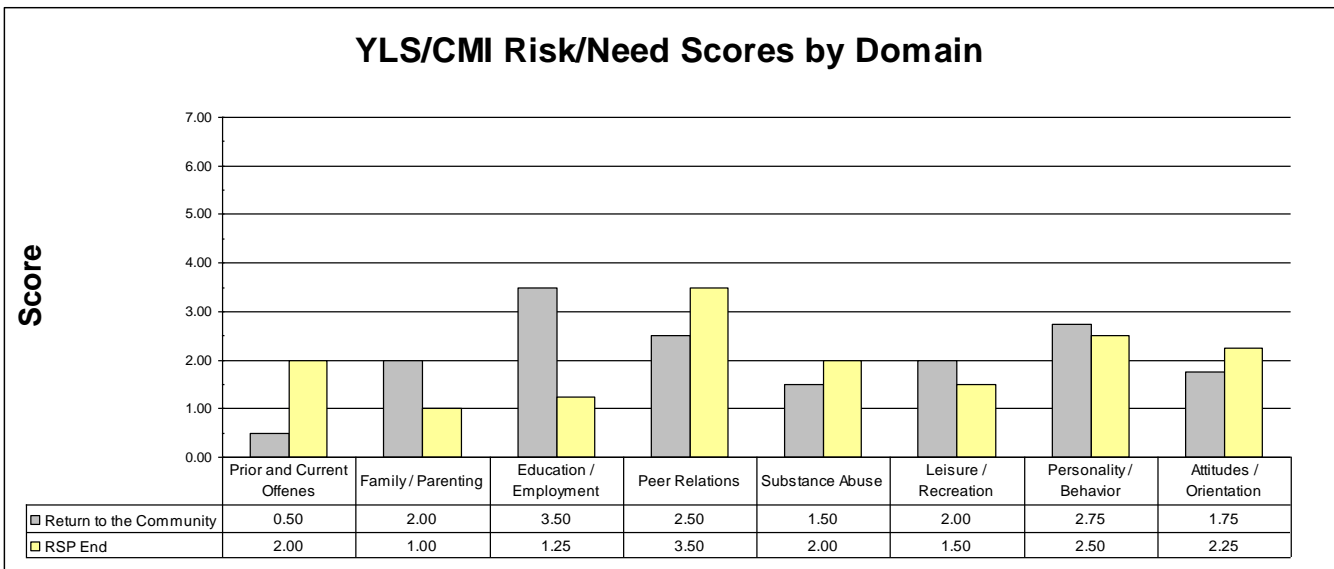
In order to examine changes in YLS/CMI risk/need and strengths scores during the period of program participation, the researchers isolated assessments occurring at two points: a) upon return to the community, and; b) upon program completion. Changes in risk/need score over time are depicted in Figure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

Figure 7 YLS/CMI Risk/Need Scores



Overall risk/needs scores declined 3 percent from return to the community (16.5) to the end of RSP participation (16.0). 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



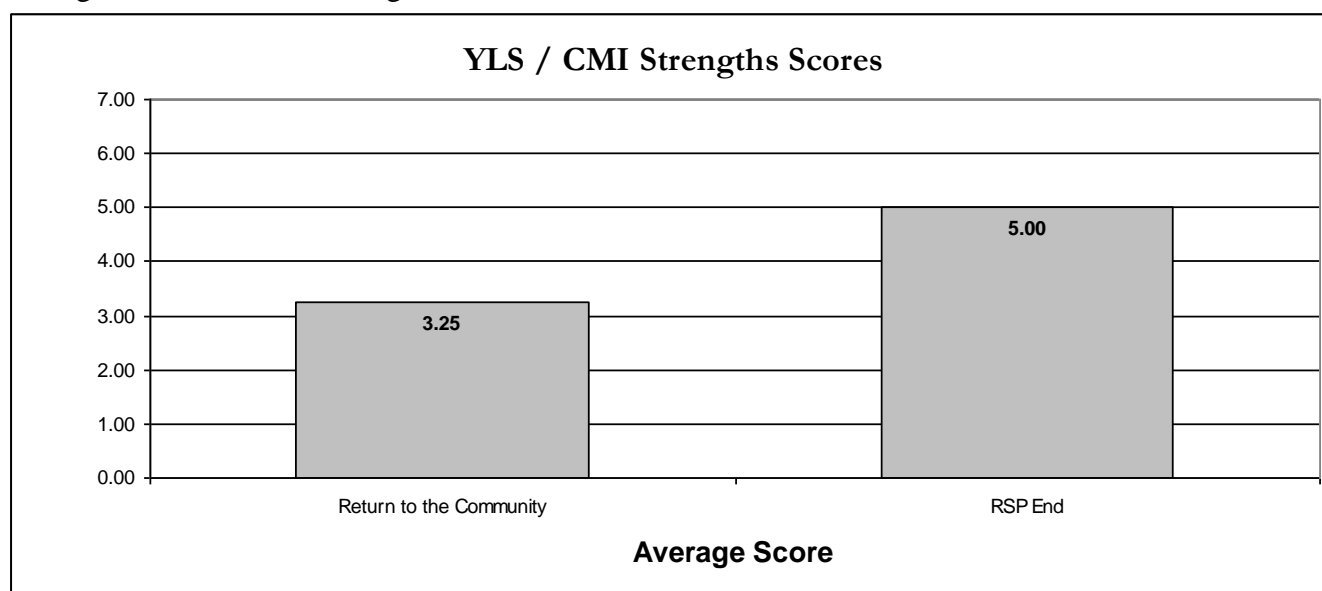
Domain	% change from Return to Program End
Prior / Current Offenses	300%
Family / Parenting	-50%
Education / Employment*	-64%
Peer Relations*	40%
Substance Abuse	33%
Leisure / Recreation*	-25%
Personality / Behavior	-9%
Attitudes / Orientation	29%
Overall	-3%

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

Clients experienced reductions in risk/need in four of eight domains. Risk/need reductions were greatest in the domains of education / employment (a 64% reduction in risk/need), family / parenting (50%), and leisure / recreation (25%). Risk/need scores increased in the domains of prior or current offenses (risk/need score increased 300%), peer relations (40%), substance abuse (33%), and attitudes / orientation (29%).

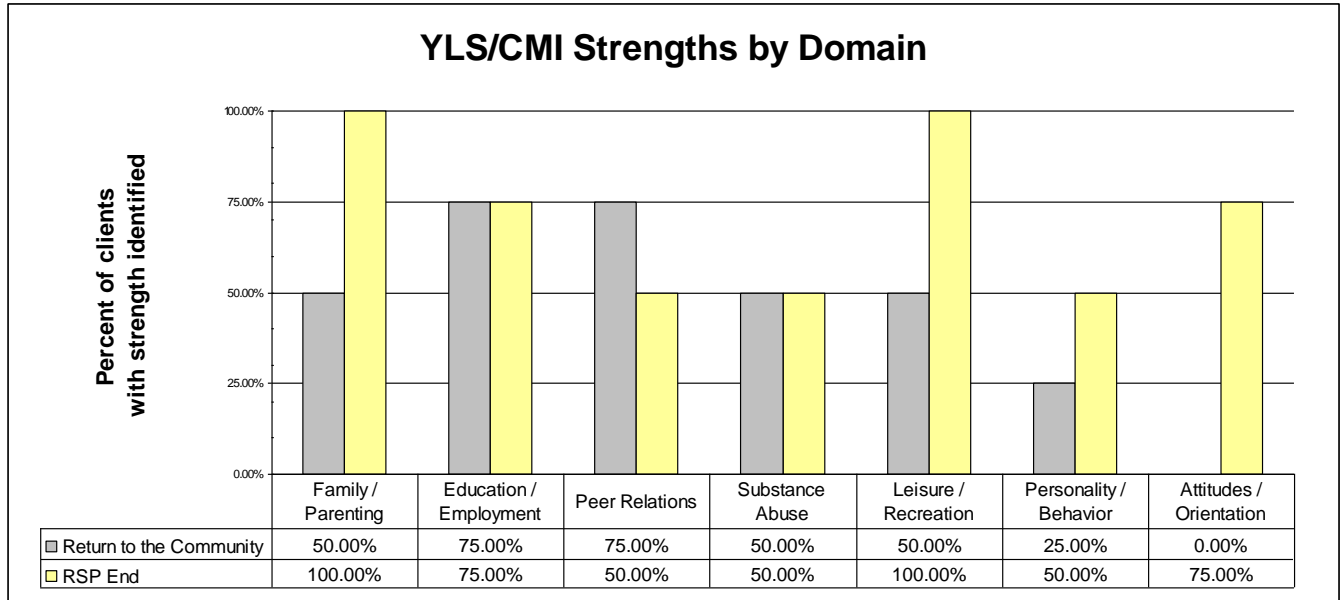
Changes in strengths score over time are depicted in Figure 9.

Figure 9. YLS/CMI Strengths Scores



Average strengths scores increased 54 percent from the return to the community (3.25 strengths identified) to the end of program participation (5.0 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**

Seventy-five percent of these clients (3 of 4) experienced no probation violations while participating in the Reentry Services Project. The remaining client (1) experienced a single probation violation.

Half of these clients (2 of 4) experienced no new charges during program participation. Both of the clients with new charges experienced new misdemeanor level public order charges.

One client (25%) experienced a new out-of-home placement while participating in the program; that client experienced three new placements during program participation, two of which were long term (longer than 30 days). The client spent a total of 23 days in short term out-of-home placements which began while the client was participating in the program and a total of 115 days in long-term placements (30 days or more) which began while the client was participating in the program. All of this time was spent in restrictive placements.

One-third of the out-of-home placements (1 of 3) was the result of technical probation violations; the remainder was for protection of the client (1) and unknown reasons (1).

#### **V. Other Client Achievements and Participation**

While participating in the program...

- One of these clients had a GED certificate upon entry to the program. Two clients (50%) attended education services sporadically while participating in the program; two clients did not attend educational services at all during program participation.
- Two of these four clients were homeless during program participation; only one client was homeless upon program completion. All of the clients had a stable residence while participating in the program.
- Transitional Coordinators reported that employment was appropriate for all of these clients. All of the clients searched for a job while participating in the program; 75 percent (3) were employed at sometime during program participation. Three clients (75%) had stable employment while participating in the program. Two clients (50%) were employed upon program completion.
- Fifty percent of the clients (2 of 4) were “clean” upon program completion. Transitional Coordinators reported that one of the two clients with a history of substance abuse was in need of treatment services during program participation; that client did not attend treatment while participating in the program. Transitional Coordinators reported that one of the clients with a history of substance abuse was in need of AA/NA; that youth attended AA/NA sporadically. TCs reported that half of the youth with history of substance abuse (1 of 2) were “clean” at the end of program participation.
- Transitional Coordinators indicated that one of the two clients with a history of mental health problems was in need of mental health services while participating in the program. That client received mental health services while participating in the Reentry Services Project; he/she took medication and attended treatment services sporadically.
- Two clients’ families (50%) participated in at least one outing or activity.
- Twenty-five percent of clients’ families were involved in services (1 of 4).
- None of the minority clients (3) participated in culturally specific services.
- The female client did not participate in gender specific services.
- None of these clients participated in Restorative Justice while involved with the RSP.
- All clients (4 of 4) received one-on-one cognitive-behavioral sessions with their Transitional Coordinator.
- All clients’ families (4 of 4) received an individualized packet of information about services available in the community. Three families (75%) were referred to a family assessment but refused; the remaining family was not referred because the youth was almost 18. None of the families received in-home services while participating in the program.

## **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. The data reported here indicate that the contacts provided by Transitional Coordinators represent a 250 percent increase contacts with clients, a 175 percent increase in parent contacts, and a 150 percent increase in contact with agency partners when compared to Probation Officer contacts. In addition, program staff continues to develop and implement case specific plans in collaboration with local service agencies. All clients received at least one transitional case plan task in the domains of leisure / recreation, attitudes / orientation, employment, and personality / behavior, most received at least one task in the domain of education, and half received tasks in the domains of social / life skills, family / parenting, and substance abuse (Figure 1). The most common domains for task assignment were leisure / recreation (23 of all assigned tasks), employment (23% of assigned tasks), and personality / behavior (20% of assigned tasks) (Figure 2). Compliance with transitional case plan tasks in the most common areas of task assignment ranged from 77 percent (leisure / recreation) to 88 percent (employment) (Figure 3).

All clients were referred to services in the areas of education and employment; most were referred to services in the social / life skill domain (Figure 4). The most common domains for service referral were employment (28% of all referrals), education (28%), and substance abuse (12%) (Figure 5). Completion rates for referrals in these domains ranged from 14 percent (education) to 67 percent (substance abuse) (Figure 6).

Data regarding intermediate outcomes indicate that clients served by the program experienced a number of positive changes in social factors related to reducing the probability of reoffending, especially employment. Average YLS/CMI risk/need scores declined 3 percent from return to the community to program end, with the greatest reductions occurring in the domains of education / employment, family / parenting, and leisure / recreation (Table 3).

When compared to earlier reports, several points are worth noting.

- First, youth whose cases were closed during this quarter exhibited a less extensive offending history (as evidence by prior number of contacts/charges, fewer prior out of home placements, and less time on probation) than youth closed during earlier periods. They also evidenced a less risky profile when measured by YLS/CMI risk/need scores and the presence of a number of social factors related to offending (e.g., substance abuse, violence, mental health problems, and school problems).
- These youth spent less time in the RSP program (average 6 months) than those closed during recent earlier periods. They were assigned fewer tasks and referrals, experienced fewer TC and PO contacts, and as a result spent less time overall with their TCs.
- For the most part these youth completed the program without incident. They evidenced only a small decline in YLS/CMI risk/need scores (3% reduction) but did exhibit a 54 percent increase in strengths scores. Half experienced new charges during their participation in the

RSP program but their offending behavior was relatively minor. Only one experienced a new out of home placement during program participation.

As in earlier periods, these differences may be anomalies related to the small number of cases included in the current report (4) or they may signal important shifts in service delivery and youth behavior that require ongoing monitoring.

In summary, data 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 and court placement, and related system costs savings, will be sustained. At the same time, current analyses alert us to the possibility of developing shifts in service delivery and/or youth behavior when compared to previous reports. These differences may reflect subtle changes over time which might be masked by cumulative analyses. On the other hand, they may simply reflect the unique characteristics and processing of the small sample included in this report (i.e., 4 youth). As always, these and other service differences warrant close attention in forthcoming quarterly and cumulative reports.