

Reentry Services: An Evaluation of a Pilot Project in Clay County, MN

Kathleen J. Bergseth
Thomas D. McDonald

North Dakota State University
Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science

July, 2007

This project was sponsored by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Drug Policy & Violence Prevention. Opinions or points of view are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Reentry Services Project, Clay County, NDSU, or the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. All questions should be directed to Kathleen Bergseth (kathleen.bergseth@ndsu.edu) or Dr. Thomas McDonald (thomas.mcdonald@ndsu.edu)

Executive Summary

Program and goals

The Reentry Services Project (RSP) in Clay County, MN began in July 2003 with funding from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention and matching funds from the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative (a collaborative group of local human service agencies). The RSP aimed to improve public safety by assisting youthful offenders in successful community reentry following out-of-home placement. The program included the addition of two Transitional Coordinators (TCs) who worked with Probation Officers (POs) and community-based service providers to identify case specific needs and employ comprehensive case management services. Specifically, the RSP sought to reduce the likelihood of further crime and delinquency by providing comprehensive reentry case management to aid youth in:

- Obtaining and maintaining long-term employment, if appropriate,
- Maintaining a stable residence,
- Addressing substance abuse issues,
- Addressing physical and mental health issues, and
- Establishing a meaningful and supportive role in the community.

RSP was 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. The program served 124 youth during its first 4 years of operation.

Evaluation

Evaluators from North Dakota State University's Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science were contracted with to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the RSP

program. Evaluation data were generated through several techniques, including stakeholder interviews and surveys, a thorough review of program materials, and an examination of service related data from the Court Services Tracking System (CSTS) and paper files maintained by POs and TCs. Process, intermediate outcome, and recidivism indicators were recorded for youth served by the RSP and a group of similar youth returning from placement without reentry services (Becker County, MN).

The evaluators provided quarterly, annual, and cumulative grant reports (i.e., a technical report for the first 2 years of program operation, this report covering the full 4 years of program operation) to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention. In addition the evaluators presented quarterly reports examining program processes and outputs to the Joint Committee for the Restorative Justice Program and Re-entry Services Project, a advisory group consisting of 29 representatives from 24 local agencies, including the local court system, county commission, schools, law enforcement, social services, mental health, and other human service agencies.

Youth Profile

This report includes information on 92 RSP youth whose files were closed as of April, 2007. The average (mean) age of youth served during this period was 16.3 years upon return to the community following their most recent out-of-home placement. Of the 92 youth, 72% were male. Half (50%) were White, 26% were Native American or Alaskan Native, 22% Hispanic, and 2% African American. RSP youth averaged 4.2 official contacts with juvenile justice authorities prior to program participation, 38% had a prior felony charge, and 54% had a prior person-related crime (i.e., violent offense charge). On average, RSP clients had been on

probation for 18 months prior to returning to the community following their most recent placement. RSP clients experienced an average of 3.4 prior out-of-home placements and had spent 197 days in placement, including 173 days in restrictive placement.

Nearly all (98%) RSP youth were on indefinite probation, and most (60%) were on maximum or intensive probation supervision. Many RSP youth had extensive histories of problems, such as substance abuse (77%), histories of violence (65%), mental health issues (74%) and school problems (88%). More than three-quarters (76%) had experienced three or more of these problems, and more than half (54%) could be considered dual diagnosis (history of both substance abuse and mental health issues).

Program Process and Outputs

Process and output results clearly indicate that the RSP was implemented as intended. This is an exception to the general profile in the literature, which points to implementation difficulties of many aftercare pilot programs. For example, TC assignment (while not always in complete compliance with original time tables) generally occurred prior to release from placement, assessments were completed as scheduled, individualized case plans were developed, and a number of community-based service referrals were made. Furthermore, the content of transitional case plans and types of service referral matched the primary areas of risk/need identified in the intake YLS/CMI (e.g., emphasis on education, employment, substance abuse). The program (with the addition of TCs) increased the amount of contact with youth, parents, and agency partners, and TC time with youth was approximately evenly shared between surveillance and mentoring related activities. Finally, surveys of POs, agency partners, youth, and parents suggested that the program was implemented as designed and that key stakeholders had a favorable impression of the program. For example, on a 5 point scale (where 1 = not at all

satisfied” and 5 = “very satisfied), average PO satisfaction ranged from 4.30 to 4.70 on factors including intake procedures, frequency and nature of client referral to community-based service agencies, and the division of responsibilities between POs and TCs . Agency Partner satisfaction ranged from 4.20 to 4.60 on a number of items related to timing and quality of referrals from RSP staff and frequency, nature, and quality of communication with RSP staff.

Intermediate Outcomes

The RSP was successful in achieving case plan compliance goals, a reduction in YLS/CMI risk/needs scores, and a improvement in strengths scores. RSP youth completed 74% of the case plan tasks assigned by TCs and POs (virtual completion of the 75% goal). While the changes in risk/need (12% reduction) and strengths scores (17% increase) were slightly lower than program goals (20% reduction and 20% increase, respectively), they were substantial, and represent significant changes in known correlates of recidivism. In addition, more than half (60%) of RSP youth who received both assessments experienced a reduction in risk from return to the community to six months post-return, and the reduction met the goal set by program designers (20% or greater) for 43% of youth. Among youth with both assessments, 44% experienced an increase in strengths, and that increase met the goal set by program designers (20% or greater) for 41% of youth. In addition, youth followed through on the majority (60%) of community-based service referrals.

Furthermore, the YLS/CMI domains with the largest changes, the transitional plan domains with the greatest compliance rates, and the follow through rates on service referral tended to be in the areas indicating the greatest risk/need on the intake YLS/CMI (e.g., employment, education, substance abuse). There were also indicators of positive change for youth both during the program and up to 12 months after they completed the program. Staff

perception of youth status showed signs of improvement over time in each domain examined, including education, employment, substance abuse, mental health, family, housing, and prosocial support.

Recidivism of Program Participants

The majority of youth completed the RSP without incident, experiencing no technical probation violations (57%), no new official contacts (61%), and no criminal contacts (71%); however about half of youth (53%) did experience a new placement during participation in the program. During the entire follow-up period (average 28 months), 40% of RSP youth remained offense free, half (50%) of youth experienced no new criminal contacts, 39% experienced no technical probation violations, 30% experienced no new placements, and half experienced no long term placement. When placements did occur, they were most often the result of technical probation violations (e.g., failure to follow rules of probation, failure to attend school or treatment services). New offending was mainly isolated incidents involving misdemeanor and property related offenses, although a small number of youth experienced several later contacts or contacts for more serious behavior.

RSP Service and Outcomes Relative to Comparison Group

Services received, intermediate outcomes, and long term (recidivism) outcomes were compared between the 92 RSP youth and a group of 92 youth returning from placement without reentry services in a neighboring county (Becker County, MN). An examination of background characteristics indicated that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of age, gender, most recent placement type, YLS/CMI risk/need score, history of person-related offending, or percent of youth experiencing multiple problems. In general the data indicated that, while the groups are similar in many respects, the two groups exhibited significant initial

differences on several variables which can be expected to relate to the individual's propensity for reoffense (e.g., offense and placement history).

Relative to the comparison group (which included POs but did not include TCs), the RSP significantly increased contact between staff (TC and PO) and youth, their parents, and agency partners. The additional contacts provided by TCs represent a 346% increase in contacts with youth, a 194% increase in contacts with parents, and a 76% increase in contacts with agency partners, relative to the comparison group. RSP youth were significantly less likely to test positive for substances (35.5% of tests indicated substance use) than comparison youth (58.8% positive), even though they were more likely to be tested and were tested more frequently than youth in the comparison group.

Bivariate analyses indicated that, with a few exceptions, RSP youth experienced better recidivism outcomes than comparison youth. Specifically, RSP youth were less likely to spend time on adult probation, less likely to experience a later contact or official contact, and experienced less serious later contacts than comparison group youth. RSP youth experienced significantly fewer later official contacts and charges, were significantly less likely to experience a new long-term out-of-home placement, and spent significantly fewer days in placement and restrictive placement. These results point to the value of this type of program, which combines supervision and treatment, relative to programs which utilize only supervision.

Multivariate analyses examined whether these differences remained when we controlled for background characteristics and known predictors of recidivism. These results revealed that significant differences in number of official and criminal contacts per week at risk remained, controlling for age, race, gender, hometown, and number of prior charges. This strengthens the

findings above, which indicated the beneficial impact of RSP participation on a number of recidivism outcomes relative to the comparison group.

Subgroup analyses examined the possibility that RSP participation was differentially effective, by sorting out youth based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, hometown, offending history, and YLS/CMI risk/need category. These analyses found a relatively consistent pattern of beneficial impact related to RSP participation, and indicated that RSP participation may be particularly beneficial among some groups of youth. In addition, these analyses were consistent with the “risk” principle, suggesting that RSP may have more beneficial impacts among youth who are most at risk for reoffense. The impact of RSP on various subgroups of youth should be further investigated with a larger sample. If a larger sample were used and differential effectiveness were found, the RSP could be adapted to target certain select youth who are more likely to benefit.

Predictors of Recidivism Within RSP

The relationship between various service elements (e.g., transitional planning, referrals) and outcomes (likelihood of recidivism during follow-up) was examined within the RSP group to determine whether any specific program features were related to recidivism. Task assignment and completion, service referral and referral follow-through and level of contact between staff (TCs and total) were related to lower recidivism risk, as expected.

A number of program features were related to increased recidivism risk (including positive drug testing rate, level of contact with youth and agency partners, time spent in program, and time spent directly with TCs). The higher levels of some services experienced by the group who recidivated may reflect ongoing problems with the youth (i.e., misbehavior), or simply TC and PO recognition of the problems faced by these youth and their need for additional services.

On the other hand, the possibility exists that the impact of intensity or duration of RSP services may vary depending on youth characteristics (e.g., lower vs. higher risk). It is also possible that task and referral related features of the RSP program, while related to reduced recidivism overall, may be beneficial for some, but not all youth. Unfortunately, the size of the sample precluded further analysis of these hypotheses. If a larger sample were available and relationships were found between program features and youth characteristics, the RSP could be adapted to target youth with specific types (or varying intensities) of services.

The association between youth background characteristics and recidivism within the RSP group was also examined. The relationship observed between demographic characteristics, offending history, and social factors and outcomes among RSP youth are similar to those commonly found in recidivism research. RSP males, non-White youth, youth with more extensive and serious (as measured by whether youth had a prior felony charge) offending histories, those with higher YLS/CMI risk scores, and those with a history of substance abuse were more likely to recidivate than were RSP youth who were female, White, had less extensive or serious offending histories, those with lower risk scores, and those without a substance abuse history. Older RSP youth, those who experienced a prior person-related offense and those with a history of violence, mental health, and school problems were less likely to recidivate than were younger RSP youth, those with no prior person-related charges, and those with no history of violence, mental health, and school problems.

Sample size limitations restricted these analyses to bivariate correlations. It is quite possible, that certain program components (e.g., time in program, contact levels, referral completion rates) operate differently for various types of youth (e.g., those with a history of substance abuse). For example, transitional case plan tasks, referrals, and contact levels may

operate differently for high and low risk youth. Further research, with a larger sample, should examine these and other combinations of factors.

Cost- Benefit Analysis

A cost-benefit analysis was conducted by comparing program impact at four follow-up intervals (6 months post-release, and 1, 2, and 3 years post-release) to cost estimates related to juvenile justice processing in Clay County, MN. Program impacts were derived by comparing RSP and comparison group youth outcomes. Processing cost-estimates were obtained from Clay County Family Court Services personnel.

The analysis revealed that youth in the RSP experienced more technical violations, placements, and non-restrictive placement days than would be expected in the absence of the program (comparison group); however they experienced fewer minor and serious contacts, and fewer days in restrictive placement. As a result, reductions in processing costs attributed to the RSP (though fewer new official contacts and fewer days in restrictive placement) were partially offset by increased processing costs related to technical probation violations and non-restrictive placement costs.

RSP program costs (estimated at \$4,415 per youth) were partially recovered within the first year after release from placement, and were fully recovered within 2 years of release. Within 3 years of release from placement, the net benefit of the program was \$7,600 in reduced juvenile justice processing costs per youth. The primary factor driving reduced juvenile justice processing was the reduction in time in restrictive placement. Considering this “benefit” alone, the costs of the program (\$4,415 per youth) are offset if the program prevents an average of 24 days restrictive placement per youth. The data indicate that an average of 129 days of restrictive placement was avoided within the first 3 years after release. These data speak favorably about

the savings which were realized. When considered along with previously discussed impressive results about behavioral changes, the data definitely suggest that the program achieved impressive cost savings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Results indicated that the RSP was implemented as intended, achieved numerous important intermediate outcomes, and that participation in RSP was related to lower recidivism relative to a comparison group who received only probation. RSP staff were successful in securing local funding to continue program operations for an additional year. This is reflective of earlier data (Section 3) which indicated widespread community agency support. The Clay County, MN Reentry Services Project has generated considerable respect which has led to its continuation being strongly endorsed. During the next year, staff will have the opportunity to more fully implement and/or modify the program. The results of the process and outcome evaluation pointed to areas where program staff could focus in order to more fully implement the RSP program design. Specifically:

- Earlier TC assignment and improvement in timing of assessment and transitional case planning to ensure continuity of services from placement to the community,
- Increased attention to survey completion, especially parent and youth surveys, and
- Further examination of the relationship between mental health needs and service provision, as some data suggested that there may be some youth with unmet mental health needs.

Based on the results of the process and program outcome evaluations, and research in the rehabilitation, aftercare and reintegration program literature, the evaluators have the following recommendations:

- The program should be expanded to accommodate TC assignment as early as possible, preferably upon entry into out-of-home placement,

- Systems should be devised to track placement related assessments and service receipt,
- Additional approaches to increase parental involvement should be explored,
- The focus on identifying and building strengths of participating youth should be intensified,
- Efforts should be made to maximize the value of community based services, particularly in the areas of cognitive-behavioral approaches, gender and culturally specific programming, and mental health services,
- Finally, data collection and analyses should continue. Sample size limited the ability to fully investigate the impact of RSP on various types of youth and the possibility that combinations of services may be predictive of success among certain groups. These issues should be explored in research with a larger sample.

Finally, it is vital that readers of this report keep in mind that the findings are influenced by the rigorous standards of statistical analysis. Many times the statistical formula yielded observations which were "statistically significant" and, therefore, indicated quite favorable conclusions about the achievement of program objectives. On other occasions, the statistical examinations generated results which satisfied the benchmark of "marginal significance." These latter results also indicated a favorable program impact, albeit at a somewhat muted level. The point being, both statistical parameters yield data which reveal a quality program; one which has achieved impressive results on several objectives. Combined with the cost savings this program has provided to the juvenile justice system of Clay County, MN; this particular Reentry Service Program warrants a very favorable cost-effective evaluation.

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1 Introduction

With the rising interest in more cost effectively intervening against juvenile delinquency, aftercare programs have received increasing attention in recent years. This has generated two program models: a) the 'Intensive Aftercare Program' (IAP; Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994; 1999) and b) the 'Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative' (SVORI; Winterfield & Brumbaugh, 2005). While these two models have some distinct characteristics, each prescribes: 1) an institutional or pre-release planning and service phase, 2) a reentry preparation or short term post-release phase, and 3) a community-based services phase following release from placement. Both models attempt to affect short and long term behavior patterns so as to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

These developments reflect the proposition that community restraint alone is largely ineffective in recidivism reduction. Proponents of IAP and SVORI prescribe that intensive supervision along with increased treatment holds greater promise for behavioral intervention programs. Furthermore, costs to the juvenile justice system can be noticeably constrained when the treatment program substantively utilizes existing community resources. While research to date has been sparse, the extant research inventory is yielding promising, albeit uneven, levels of behavioral change. As a result, more pilot projects and evaluation research have been introduced.

In July 2003, the Clay County, MN Joint Powers Collaborative (CCJPC) was awarded funding by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention to develop and implement the Reentry Services Project (RSP), an ambitious effort to improve public safety by assisting youthful offenders in successful reentry to communities following out-of-home placement. The CCJPC also provided matching funds to begin the RSP

program. The RSP aimed to affect change in the lives of youth 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. Addressing these reentry issues was expected to result in changes to youth participating in the program, particularly in terms of their likelihood of engaging in further crime and delinquency, so as to ultimately improve public safety for the Clay County community.

RSP was modeled after the Intensive Aftercare Program model (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994; 1999) and included the addition of two Transitional Coordinators (TCs) who worked with Probation Officers (POs) and community-based service providers to identify case specific needs and employ comprehensive case management services. The program included a three phase design (Placement, Reentry Preparation, and Community-based Services). During these three phases TCs were expected to regularly assess risks/needs (using YLS/CMI), prepare and monitor case specific transitional plans, identify appropriate community-based services and connect youth and their families to them, and supplement supervisory functions provided by POs (e.g., contacts, drug screening). The program was designed to begin at least 30 days prior to release from placement, and to continue for six months following release.

Evaluators from North Dakota State University's Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science were contracted with to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the RSP program. An evaluation of the first two years of program operation (July 2003 – August 2005) was completed in November 2005, and included an examination of program processes and short-term outcomes (see Bouffard & Bergseth, Reentry Service Project: Process and Outcome

Evaluation – Final 2 Year Report). This evaluation included data obtained from agency partner surveys and official agency records. The first 52 youth served by the reentry program were examined, and compared to a group of 52 youth returning from out-of-home placement without reentry services in a neighboring county (Becker County, MN). Results indicated that the reentry program:

- Served its intended target population,
- Achieved several intermediate goals set by program designers (e.g., improvement in YLS/CMI scores and transitional case planning), and
- Was successful in cultivating partnerships with community-based service providers.

Relative to the comparison group, youth served by the reentry program were less likely to experience a new official or criminal contact and experienced fewer new official contacts, criminal contacts, and days in placement during the follow-up period. While these results were encouraging, most outcome differences were not statistically significant.

Initial funding for the RSP allowed for two years of program operation. In 2005, the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative applied for, and received, a two year funding renewal for the RSP program (June 2005- May 2007). While several program changes occurred during the second grant period, the basic model remained largely unchanged. Substantive changes included:

- Elimination of YLS/CMI re-assessment 60 days after return to the community,
- A change related to staff turnover. A new TC began serving male youth in July 2006.
- Effective May of 2005, administration of the grant and staff management shifted from the CCJPC to Clay County Court Services / MN Department of Corrections. The RSP remained a project of the CCJPC, however.

The evaluation continued and, as of May, 31 2007, 124 youth were served by the program. This report examines program outputs and outcomes for the 92 youth whose files were

closed as of April 30, 2007. Data include agency partner surveys, an examination of intermediate changes in social factors related to delinquency, and official recidivism and out-of-home placement records. Where possible, comparisons were made to a group of 92 youth returning from out-of-home placement without reentry services in a neighboring county (Becker County, MN).

This report is organized into several sections. Section 2 provides a profile of youth served during the first 4 years of program operation. Later sections include an examination of program process and output (Section 3), intermediate outcomes (Section 4), and recidivism of RSP youth (Section 5). Section 6 compares process measures, intermediate outcomes, and recidivism outcomes of RSP youth to a group of youth returning from placement without reentry services in a neighboring county. Sections 7 and 8 include analyses of the predictors of recidivism within the RSP group (7) and an assessment of the costs and benefits of the reentry program (8). The final section (9) includes a summary of results and recommendations for program improvement.

2 Youth Profile

The target population for RSP was Clay County youth aged 11-19 returning from out-of-home placement of 3 or more weeks. Socio-demographic data indicate that the program has served the target population. During the first 4 years of the program (July 2003 to May 2007) the Reentry Services Project served a total of 124 youth, including 12 youth who were served more than once. Ninety-two files were closed as of April 30, 2007, and are the subject of this report.

2.1 Demographics

The average (mean) age of youth served during this period was 16.3 years upon return to the community following their most recent out-of-home placement. Of the 92 youth, 72% were male. Half (50%) were White, 26% were Native American or Alaskan Native, 22% Hispanic, and 2% African American.

2.2 Prior Offenses and Out-of-Home Placement History

Youth served by the reentry program had extensive offending histories. For example:

- On average, the 92 youth had 4.2 prior official contacts, including 4.9 charges prior to their most recent out-of-home placement,
- 38% had a prior felony charge and 54% had a prior person-related (i.e., violent offense) charge,
- On average, youth spent 18 months on probation prior to returning to the community after their most recent placement,
- 98% were on indefinite probation,
- 60% were on maximum or intensive supervision upon release back to the community,
- 21% of the youth's most recent charge was a felony offense, 69% a misdemeanor, and 10% a status offense,

- 30% of the youth's most recent charge was a person-related offense, 38% property, 1% illegal drugs, 19% public order (e.g. disorderly conduct), and 12% traffic or alcohol or tobacco related (e.g. minor consuming, possession of tobacco),
- The most recent placement of RSP youth averaged 141 days (range 4 – 805 days) including 119 days in restrictive placement (range 0 – 473 days),
- 96% of youth were assigned to the reentry program after more than three weeks placement,
- 26% of youth's most recent placement (N=24) lasted between 21 and 45 days, 12% (N=11) 46 to 90 days, 32% (N=29) 91 to 180 days, and 26% (N=24) more than 180 days, and
- 40% of placements were residential treatment (e.g. Thistledeew, Valley Lake Boys Home), 30% detention or sheltercare, 27% treatment center (e.g. substance abuse treatment), and 3% foster care.

2.3 Additional Background Information

The average risk / need score among youth assessed using the YLS/CMI (N=90) was 20.8, indicating moderate risk. In addition, 4% of youth were “low” risk (score 0-8), 51% were “moderate” risk (9-22), 43% were “high” risk (23-34), and 2% were “very high” risk (35-42).

Youth served by the RSP evidenced a history of problems in the areas of substance abuse, mental health, school performance or attendance, and violence. Not only did the majority experience problems in these areas, but the vast majority of youth experienced multiple problems:

- Many youth experienced problems in more than one area. Data reveal that while only 2.2% and 3.3% of RSP youth experienced none or only one of these problems, respectively; 18.5% experienced two problems, 43.5% experienced three problems, and a full 32.6% experienced all four problems,
- 54% could be considered ‘dual diagnoses’, having exhibited histories of both mental health and substance abuse,
- 88% had a history of school problems. A large portion of the youths' files indicated problems with attendance/truancy. Other common indicators of school problems included behavior problems, fighting, past participation in special education/ individualized education services, suspensions, expulsions, not doing school work, and commission of crimes on school property,

- 77% had a history of substance abuse. The most commonly reported drugs are marijuana and alcohol, with smaller proportions recorded as having used methamphetamines, inhalants, cocaine, and psychedelics,
- 74% had a history of mental health problems. Common diagnoses included: ADHD or ADD, depression, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, bipolar mood disorder, mood disorder, and anxiety disorder. Other less commonly reported diagnoses included psychosis, emotional disturbance, cognitive disorder, conduct disorder or antisocial personality, borderline traits, low mental functioning, and suicide or self injurious behavior,
- 65% had a history of violence. The most common indicator of violence within this group was a prior person-related charge (85%). Other indicators of violence included use of threats or reports of “anger problems.”

2.4 Youth Profile Summary

Available data clearly indicate that the RSP served the target population defined by program designers (youth aged 11-19 returning from out-of-home placement of 3 or more weeks). Furthermore, youth served by the reentry program had extensive, and rather serious (e.g., half had a prior person-related charge) offense histories; more than half were “high” or “very high” risk according to YLS/CMI assessment, and the vast majority had experienced several problems (i.e., violence, substance abuse, mental health, and school problems) suggesting increased risk of recidivism.

3 Program Process and Outputs

Program design called for a number of specific tasks and activities to address risk factors for youth returning from out-of-home placement. Paper and electronic CSTS (Court Services Tracking System) data were used to examine the extent to which these activities (including assessment, case planning, and referral processes) occurred across each of the three phases. Results indicate that, with few exceptions, the reentry program was implemented as intended.

3.1 Placement Phase

RSP program documents called for YLS/CMI assessment of each youth within 30 days of placement (“intake”). This intake assessment was to be followed by reassessment at two points: a) upon return to the community (“return”), and b) at program end (“six months / program end”). In addition, the Placement Phase was designed to include the development of individualized case plans based on identified risks and needs with input from POs, placement staff, youth, parents and other service providers.

Better than three-fourths (82%) of youth received the intake YLS/CMI assessment. Overall, the average score was 20.8 (indicating moderate risk) and the domains of greatest risk need were education / employment, substance abuse, and leisure / recreation. This assessment occurred “on time” (within 30 days of placement) for only 45% of youth who received the assessment (range was 203 days prior to 446 days after placement start).

Initial program design included the development and monitoring of treatment case plans during the Placement Phase and 75% compliance with treatment case plans. While treatment case plans were developed during placement, these case plans were created primarily by placement staff and were inconsistent in format (e.g. each facility uses a unique format) and

content. For these reasons, programmatic changes were made in the fall of 2003 to focus more on transitional case plans and transitional case plan compliance (results presented below).

3.2 Reentry Preparation Phase

Program design materials identified two specific tasks during the Reentry Preparation Phase: a) TCs were to be assigned (at least 30 days prior to return to the community), and b) case specific transitional case plans were to be developed at least 30 days prior to release.

Program designers intended for transitional case plan development to include input from TCs, POs, youth, parents, community-based service providers, and out-of-home placement staff; and to include goals and tasks in the areas of competency development, restorative accountability, and community safety.

All youth were assigned a TC, and this assignment occurred prior to release for 78% (the remaining 22% were assigned a TC after their release). This assignment occurred “on time” (30 or more days prior to release) for only 36% of youth (range 213 days prior to release to 19 days post release). Short-term placements (e.g., less than 30 days) had some impact on whether TCs are assigned 30 days prior to release, however TC assignment occurred “on time” for only 39% of youth who were in placement for 30 or more days.

Transitional case plans were created for virtually all RSP youth (98%). Analyses of transitional case plan participation and content revealed that:

- Of the case plans for which participation information was available (N=88), TC records indicated that the vast majority involved input from POs (96%), TCs (93%), youth (87%), and mothers (74%). In addition, 21% of case plans involved input from fathers and 7% involved input from another guardian. Out-of-home placement staff were involved in the creation of 32% of transitional case plans and plans less frequently involved the participation of other service providers including treatment providers (13%) and social services agencies (8%),
- The majority of goals and tasks were assigned in the area of Competency Development. Of the average 6 goals and 29 tasks assigned to each youth, 74% of tasks (average 22.1 per

youth) were assigned in the area of competency development. Restorative Accountability represented 7% of tasks (average 2.1 per youth), and Community Safety accounted for 18% of tasks (average 5.1 per youth),

- The most common domains of task assignment were employment, education, substance abuse, and personality or behavior (e.g., community service involvement). In all, 79% of youth were assigned at least one task in the area of employment, 73% in education, and 70% were assigned tasks in the areas of substance abuse and personality or behavior. Additional domains for task assignment included leisure or recreation (e.g. pursue a hobby, 55% of youth assigned at least one task), social or life skills (42% assigned at least one task), mental health (33% assigned at least one task), family / parenting (13% assigned at least one task), and attitudes or orientation (e.g., cultural awareness), peer relations, family or parenting, and housing (each with 3% of youth assigned at least one task),
- Of the 2,638 tasks assigned, the primary domains were employment (22% of tasks), substance abuse (17%), leisure or recreation (17%), personality or behavior (14%), and education (13%). Social and life skills, mental health, attitudes or orientation, peer relations, family or parenting, and housing domains each accounted for less than 10% of all transitional case plan tasks.

While transitional case plans were created for virtually all youth, only 9% were created 30 days prior to returning to the community (range: 136 days prior to return to 221 days after return to the community). Since TCs were responsible for creation of these transitional plans, delays in TC assignment (see above) impact “on time” development of transitional case plans.

Finally, the evaluators assessed whether transitional case plans appeared to be matched with the risks/needs identified on intake or return YLS/CMI assessments. This judgment was made by examining the domains of highest risk/need on the YLS/CMI and whether transitional case plans included goals and tasks related to those domains. As some youth had no intake or return YLS/CMI (or no case plan), evaluators were able to make this assessment for 97% (N=89) of youth. Of these, the evaluators determined that 95% of transitional case plans were matched to risk/needs.

3.3 Community Based Services Phase

The Community Based Services Phase was designed to include YLS/CMI reassessment (at return to the community and six months post release / program end); frequent contact with youth, parents, and agency partners; identification and referral to community-based services, and the use of sanctions and rewards to encourage prosocial behavior.

The “return” YLS/CMI assessment was added in April 2004. More than three-fourths (78%) of youth were assessed at return to the community, and 83% of those assessments were completed “on time” (within 30 days of return to the community; range 67 days prior to return to 57 days post return). Better than three-fourths of youth (78%) were assessed at six months / program end, and 15% of those assessments were completed “on time” (within 7 days of 6 months post return; range 66 to 357 days after returning to the community).

RSP youth spent an average of 7 months in the program. During this time TCs averaged 36 contacts with each youth, 13 contacts with parents, and 11 contacts with agency partners (e.g., community-based service providers; per youth). POs averaged 10 contacts with youth, 7 parent contacts, and 14 agency partner contacts. On average, TCs spent 49 hours with each youth during program participation (range 5 to 211 hours), and an additional hour after program completion.

TCs maintained records of in-person contacts with youth including amount of time spent and basic information on the type of contact (e.g., school visit, outing for dinner). Activity records were coded in an attempt to determine the distribution of supervision, treatment, and mentoring activities.¹ Overall the distribution of TC-youth activity was virtually balanced between the two categories of supervision (46% of activities) and mentoring (44% of activities). On average, 39 activities were recorded for each youth, most of which were supervision or mentoring-related. TCs recorded an average of 17.9 supervisory activities (i.e., home, school,

field, and office visits), 3.6 therapeutic activities (e.g., accompanying youth to treatment, support groups, or doctor's visits) and 17 mentoring (e.g., prosocial leisure outings, obtaining ID, drivers license testing, and educational or occupational pursuits) activities per youth.

POs and TCs participated in at least one "staffing" meeting (i.e., meeting of professionals involved with youth) for 60% of youth. The majority of the 2001 meetings were related to placement (52%), Wraparound processes (22%), and education (11%). Meetings to address probation expectations and medication reviews occurred less frequently.

Nearly all youth (98%) were referred to at least one community-based service, and the vast majority of youth were referred to multiple services. Specifically, 65% (N=60) of youth were referred to 5 or more services, and 28% (N=26) were referred to 2 to 4 services, while only 4% (N=4) were referred to only 1 service, and only 2% (N=2) were not referred to any community-based services. In addition, data reveal that:

- A total of 591 referrals were made (average 5.9 per youth; range 0 to 15),
- The majority of youth received at least one referral in the areas of education, employment, substance abuse and mental health,
- Overall, the most common area of service referral was substance abuse (20% of all referrals), followed by education (15%), mental health (14%), employment (13%), and family counseling (9%). Individual counseling, housing, health, cognitive behavioral, social or life skills, support groups, prosocial activities, and sex offender aftercare each accounted for less than 6% of referrals.

Information related to the utilization of various rewards for RSP youth was derived from the program personnel and is limited to a total for "flex funds" spent on various activities.

Specifically, a total of \$73,935 was spent in flex funds during the 4 years of program operation.

Funds were generally used for items, services, and activities to enhance or improve the life circumstances of youth and their family. Specifically, flex funds were used for such things as school clothing, job interview clothing, recreational activities, bus tokens, GED testing, birth

certificates, school supplies, drivers training classes, housing assistance to prevent homelessness, programming and educational materials (e.g., DVDs), Serenity Stones, and AA materials.

A majority of youth (55%) received no informal sanctions while participating in the program; while 45% of youth received at least one informal sanction for non-compliance with program/probation rules and expectations. The most common reasons for the imposition of these sanctions included positive drug tests, failure to follow probation/house rules, drinking, curfew violations, fighting, and being suspected of a new crime. Most informal sanctions involved placement on house arrest – generally 1-2 weeks (or until the provision of a subsequent negative drug test in the case of failure of a drug test). The evaluators considered whether the imposition of an informal sanction lead to a lower likelihood of the filing of formal technical probation violation against the youth. This analysis revealed that the formal sanctioning process was generally preceded by informal sanctions, indicating that the sanctioning processes operated as intended (e.g., initial attempts to change misbehavior through informal sanctioning, followed by formal sanctioning for continued misbehavior). Specifically:

- The majority of youth (57%) did not experience a technical probation violation while participating in the program. The remaining 43% experienced at least one violation. The most common reasons for formally filing technical probation violations included chemical use (positive drug tests or drinking); absconding home, truancy or failing school; failure to attend substance abuse or mental health treatment/aftercare; and failure to follow probation or parent rules,
- Of those with a formal technical probation violation while participating in the program, 58% had a prior “informal” sanction (23% had more than 1 informal sanction). Thus only after continued misbehavior and the failure of the youth to respond to informal sanctions (at least in 58% of the cases) did the program resort to formal sanctions.

The program was designed to end when youth had successfully complied with the condition of their transitional case plan. Approximately 80% of RSP youth completed at least half of their required tasks prior to program completion. Specifically, at the time of case closure,

78% of youth (N=72) had completed at least 50% of the tasks on their transitional case plan, 53% of youth (N=49) completed at least 75%, 42% (N=39) completed at least 80%, 27% (N=25) completed at least 90%, and 11% (N=10) completed 100% of their assigned transitional plan tasks (categories not mutually exclusive).

3.4 Other Process Elements

3.4.1 Local Collaboration and Oversight

An advisory board was created in the fall of 2003. The Joint Committee for the Restorative Justice Program and Re-entry Services Project included representatives from a variety of local agencies including law enforcement, the Clay County court system, the Clay County Commission, local schools, corrections, social services, victim advocacy, mental health, placement agencies, Restorative Justice, truancy intervention, migrant health services, and the evaluators. The committee met quarterly and reviewed written reports provided by the evaluators, case studies shared by TCs, and program funding and management related updates. Participating agencies and individuals changed over time. The committee initially consisted of 31 representatives. As of May 31, 2007, the Joint Committee consisted of 29 representatives from 24 local agencies.

3.4.2 Internal Organizational Structure

The RSP employed 2 full time TCs who worked closely with POs in supervision and service provision. TCs were initially employees of the Clay County Joint Powers Collaborative (CCJPC) and were supervised by CCJPC staff while coordinating with Clay County Court Services (CCCS) personnel (e.g., POs). Due to a restructure of the CCJPC, the TCs became employees of CCCS in May of 2005, and the Lead Agent of CCCS overtook program and staff supervision.

The RSP operated outside of the probation office, in a building that also houses the community's alternative learning centers. POs identified youth who meet RSP eligibility requirements and completed paper referral forms. After referral, TCs and POs worked closely in the supervision and support of youth returning to the community. PO caseloads were high (80:1); however TC caseloads were limited to 12-15:1 to ensure adequate support and services. The division of responsibilities included PO accountability for formal surveillance through probation contacts and monitoring of probation conditions (e.g., drug testing); while TCs were responsible for creation and monitoring of transitional case plans and coordination of service receipt. TCs also provided formal supervision (e.g., office visits) and informal surveillance and support through participation in prosocial activities with youth. Furthermore, TCs worked to cultivate relationships with other potential service providers, developed a number of services for youth and their families (e.g., Families Anonymous), and served as mentors to youth.

3.4.3 Relationship to other Agencies and Stakeholder Satisfaction

Program implementation surveys were distributed to community-based service providers (agency partners) and Department of Corrections personnel (POs) 1 year (summer 2004), 2 years (summer 2005), and 3 years after program implementation. These surveys were designed to elicit information regarding the agencies' actual relationship with RSP staff, and satisfaction with the operation of the program. They were also used in an analysis of intended and actual implementation (see Bouffard & Bergseth). Response rates for agency partner surveys were low (22-40%) however PO response rates have been high (75-100%). Youth and their parents were also asked to complete surveys soliciting feedback about the program at the time of case closure. Nearly half (45%) of clients returned the survey, as did 33% of parents. The following sections examine the results of these surveys.

3.4.3.1 Probation Officer Experiences with RSP

Results of the PO surveys allowed for an examination of their experiences with the RSP over time (see Table 1). While the number of responses was low (3-4), this is mainly due to the small number of POs surveyed. Response rates were 75% for round 1 surveys (3 of 4), and 100% for rounds 2 and 3 (4 of 4 and 3 of 3). As that data in Table 1 indicate, contact levels between POs and RSP staff (TCs) varied over time, but were clearly highest (average 62 per month) during the final round of surveys (fall of 2006). Perceptions of intake processes and procedures were relatively consistent over time, with all reporting that POs, TCs, and parents were involved in intake processes, although involvement of other individuals varied. For the most part POs reported that program intake and the division of responsibilities were implemented according to program design. POs responded to a series of questions asking them to rate their satisfaction with various program elements using a 5 point scale (1= “not at all satisfied”, 5 = “very satisfied). Average scores were fairly high across all three rounds of surveys. During the final survey administration (fall of 2006), POs reported an average satisfaction of 4.33 for intake procedures, frequency of referral to community-based services, and types of referrals made by RSP staff, and average satisfaction of 4.67 for the division of responsibilities between POs and TCs.

	2004 (N=3)	2005 (N=4)	2006 (N=3)
Average contacts with RSP staff per month			
In-person	12.00	9.50	19.33
Referral contacts	1.67	.88	2.00
Telephone	26.33	13.5	40.33
Total	40.00	23.88	61.66
Is regularly involved in RSP intake process (% yes)			
Probation officer	100%	100%	100%
Transitional Coordinator	100%	100%	100%
Parent/guardian	100%	100%	100%
Out-of-home placement staff	33%	50%	33%
Social worker	0%	25%	0%
Other agency partners	33%	25%	0%
Original intake procedures have been followed (% yes)	100%	75%	100%
Original division of responsibilities has been followed (% yes)	100%	100%	100%
Satisfied with...(mean score on 1-5 scale)			
Intake procedures for RSP	4.67	4.00	4.33
Frequency of client referrals to services made by RSP staff	4.33	4.00	4.33
Types of referrals to services made by RSP staff	5.00	3.75	4.33
Division of responsibilities between POs and TCs	4.67	4.50	4.67

POs were asked open ended questions regarding the strengths of the program and areas for improvement. They reported the following strengths during the final round of surveys (round 1 and 2 responses can be found in the initial 2 year report):

- Respondent A. “Offering supportive services to these high risk clients, creating individualized case plans for each client, able to provide positive mentoring and helping these kids complete positive goals that will make them a more positive member in society (i.e., driver's permit, driver's license, GED, employment, etc),”
- Respondent B. “Involving clients in positive activities, jobs, etc. Transporting clients to meetings, treatment, etc. Keeping probation agent informed of progress,”
- Respondent C. “Client assistance with employment, counseling, treatment, positive activities, and mentoring. Most of the time, the reentry worker is the first positive force working intensively with the client and family and establishes a good working relationship.”

When asked to provide areas for improvement in the final round of surveys, POs responded with the following:

- Respondent A. “So far so good,”
- Respondent B. “Less paperwork? More client-focused,”
- Respondent C. “Additional client funds to help families and clients more -- security deposits, etc. Some families need more financial assistance than what we can currently offer.”

3.4.3.2 Agency Partner Experiences with RSP

Results of agency partner surveys are provided in Table 2. Once again, these data indicate high levels of satisfaction with a number of RSP components (e.g., referral processes and communication). Levels of contact between agency partners and RSP staff varied over time. The results in Table 2 should be interpreted with caution, as response rates for agency partner surveys were relatively low during all three rounds of surveys (only 22% of round 1, 40% of round 2, and 26% of round 3 surveys were completed). In addition, two respondents to the final round of surveys indicated that they knew little or nothing about the program. This may be a reflection of recent additions to the Joint Committee or other factors.

	2004 (N=2)	2005 (N=6)	2006 (N=6)
Average contacts with RSP staff per month			
In-person	1.00	5.60	1.25
Email	0.00	2.50	1.67
Referral contacts	0.00	.17	.17
Telephone	4.00	5.20	1.17
Letter	0.00	0.00	.30
Total	5.00	13.47	4.56
Satisfied ... (mean score on 1-5 scale)			
With timing of referrals from RSP	3.00	4.40	4.20
That referrals from RSP meet program criteria	5.00	4.40	4.60
With client information received from RSP referrals	5.00	4.40	4.60
With frequency of contact with RSP staff	4.00	4.00	4.00
With type of communication with RSP staff	5.00	4.20	4.33
With quality of communication between agency and RSP staff	4.00	4.40	4.50

Agency partners were also asked to comment on the strengths of the program and areas for improvement. They reported the following strengths during the final round of surveys (round 1 and 2 responses can be found in the initial 2 year report):

- Respondent A. “Mentorship role that youth get with their workers. How they address every area in a client’s life,”
- Respondent B. “Professional and committed staff. Serve clients with equal amounts of support and accountability,”
- Respondent C. “TCs who are passionate about helping their clients. Good relationship between (*NAME DELETED*) & TCs and between TCs and others they work with,”
- Respondent D. “When we have mutual clients, I feel we are better able to serve the client. The Reentry Services Project offers a wide array of services. This provides for each client to be able to have an individualized case plan. I feel this gives the client a better chance at success.”

Agency partners provided the following suggestions for improvement during the final round of surveys:

- Respondent A. “Ability to work with more youth,”
- Respondent B. “Survey parent/client satisfaction upon program completion. Ask for their feedback on program improvements,”
- Respondent C. “I would like to see the Reentry Services Project expand their services and serve a larger population of at risk youth,”

3.4.3.3 Youth Experiences with RSP

Youth and their parents were presented paper-and-pencil surveys soliciting feedback regarding their experiences with the RSP. Youth were asked to rate the amount of contact they had with TCs while participating in the program. More than three quarters of youth (83%) who responded indicated that they felt the amount of time spent with their TC was “about right”, 17% reported “too little” contact with their TC, and no youth reported “too much” contact. Results must be interpreted with caution, as only 45% of youth (N=41) completed surveys.

Youth were asked an open-ended question about the way(s) in which the program was helpful to them. Responses from youth served in the first program years were provided in the initial report (Bouffard & Bergseth). The following are responses provided by youth in the last two program years:

- A. "Emotionally – TC talked to me when I was in a bad mood and made everything better,"
- B. "Going out,"
- C. "Going to AA was good. They push you to find a job,"
- D. "Got me into ALC so I could try to graduate,"
- E. "Had fun,"
- F. "Had someone else there for me,"
- G. "Help me out, rides, paying for driver's ed,"
- H. "Helped me stay clean and get my license,"
- I. "Helps me get around and be motivated,"
- J. "I like that I could talk about my problems,"
- K. "It was fun. It took up my free time. Transporting. Motivated me to get a job,"
- L. "It wasn't,"
- M. "Kept me out of trouble. Kept me in school,"
- N. "Take me out to learn new things to do,"
- O. "Talked about feelings. Completed goals,"
- P. "They kept me busy and out of trouble,"
- Q. "To learn how to respect my older peers,"
- R. "Tried to get me to find alternative activities."

When asked in which way(s) the program was disappointing, youths responded in the following ways:

- A. "None,"
- B. "It was okay,"
- C. "None,"
- D. "Getting in trouble,"
- E. "It ended,"
- F. "None,"
- G. "I wish they could have seen me more,"
- H. "It wasn't,"
- I. "Still did some things like smoking and drinking,"
- J. "Not,"
- K. "Never,"
- L. "Don't know."

When asked which service was most helpful, youth responded:

- A. "TC,"
- B. "School,"
- C. "TC,"
- D. "Driver's ed helped me get my license,"
- E. "Solutions – talked about problems,"
- F. "Communicating"
- G. "None,"
- H. "All the contact,"
- I. "My behavior – day treatment,"
- J. "AA."

When asked which service was least helpful, youth responded:

- A. "AA – I don't drink,"
- B. "None,"
- C. "None,"
- D. "Emergency housing assistance – only helped once,"
- E. "Nothing,"
- F. "All because I didn't care,"
- G. "All,"
- H. "Community service – its boring,"
- I. "Don't know".

And finally, when asked how the RSP program could have made the transition from out-of-home placement to the community easier, youth responded:

- A. "It wouldn't because I would rather be at home with my family,"
- B. "Nothing – it was good,"
- C. "I don't know,"
- D. "Not brought me home,"
- E. "Nothing,"
- F. "It couldn't have,"
- G. "It went as smooth as it could have,"
- H. "No AA,"
- I. "It was perfect,"
- J. "Couldn't,"
- K. "Nothing,"
- L. "Don't know."

3.4.3.4 Parent Experiences with RSP

One-third (33%) of parents/guardians completed the program completion survey.

Overall, 85% of respondents felt that the amount of contact they had with TCs was "about right", and 15% reported it was "too little" (no parent reported "too much" contact with TCs).

Nearly three-quarters (69%) of parents felt that the amount of contact between their youth and the TC was “about right”, and 31% felt it was “too little” (no parent felt the TC had “too much” contact with their youth).

Parents were asked an open-ended question about the way(s) the RSP program was most helpful. Responses from the first 2 program years were included in the initial report (Bouffard & Bergseth). Parents responses to this question during the second grant cycle were:

- A. “He has changed so much in the last 9 months. (*TC NAME OMITTED*) was very helpful to us!”
- B. “Knowing there was a male role model for my son to always be there and contact if needed,”
- C. “Helpful ideas. Know about opportunities and programs,”
- D. “Financial, transportation, role model,”
- E. “Support for my son. Constructive ways to handle things,”
- F. “I like. Was a big help,”
- G. “Not much at this time. He is going to be 18 and wants to do things his way,”
- H. “Help my son tremendously in regards to self esteem, school, family relationships, and personal goals.”

When asked the ways in which the program was disappointing, parents/guardians responded:

- A. “It wasn’t,”
- B. “Didn’t seem like there was much they did together, but I don’t know if that is just how the program works,”
- C. “Not enough help to keep him home,”
- D. “None,”
- E. “None,”
- F. “None,”
- G. “He didn’t utilize this program as he could have,”
- H. “Absolutely nothing.”

And finally, when asked the ways in which the RSP could have made the transition from out-of-home placement to the community easier, parents/guardians responded:

- A. “Be around more so he would feel more comfortable,”
- B. “Services offered were very helpful to my child and outstanding service. Thank you,”
- C. “None,”
- D. “I like this program because it was very strict with him and I like that,”
- E. “He didn’t take advantage of this program.”

3.5 Program Process and Outputs Summary

While transitional case plans and service referral outcomes matched the areas of greatest risk/need as identified by the YLS/CMI, a note on mental health needs is in order. Three-quarters (74%) of youth in the RSP program evidenced a history of mental health problems; however only 33% of youth were assigned a task in this area, and mental health tasks accounted for less than 10% of all transitional case plan tasks. In addition, only 14% of referrals to services were related to mental health. These results may reflect aggregation and coding choices. For example, the decision to separate family and individual counseling from mental health referrals impacts the proportion of referrals attributed to mental health. They may also reflect difficulty in obtaining mental health services, resistance of youth and families to address mental health issues, or many youth may not have been in need of service during program participation (e.g., a resolved mental health issue or one that is already being addressed). Nevertheless, the possibility that there may be a number of youth with unmet mental health needs should be explored.

Process and output results clearly indicate that the RSP was implemented as intended. This is an exception to the general profile in the literature, which points to implementation difficulties of many aftercare pilot programs (e.g., Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, & Wang, 2005). For example, TC assignment (while not always in complete compliance with original time tables) generally occurred prior to release from placement, assessments were completed as scheduled, individualized case plans were developed, and a number of community-based service referrals were made. Furthermore, the content of transitional case plans and types of service referral matched the primary areas of risk/need identified in the intake YLS/CMI (e.g., emphasis on education, employment, substance abuse). The addition of TCs increased the amount of contact with youth, parents, and agency partners, and TC time with youth was approximately

evenly shared between surveillance and mentoring related activities. Finally, surveys of POs, agency partners, youth, and parents suggested that the program was implemented as designed and that key stakeholders had a favorable impression of the program.

4 Intermediate Outcomes

Program designers identified three intermediate outcomes aimed ultimately at reducing recidivism risk among program participants. These included: a) a 20% reduction in YLS/CMI risk/needs score; b) a 20% improvement in YLS/CMI strengths score, and c) a 75% compliance rate on case plan tasks. Additional intermediate outcome measures available in the data include completion rates for various referrals to services, the results of urinalysis testing during program participation, and changes in several social factors over time.

A comparison of YLS/CMI assessments completed over time (e.g., intake, return, 6 months post return) yields information about changes in risk and strength factors related to program completion. “Intake” assessments were generally completed by placement staff or POs, while the “return” and “6 month/program end” assessments were conducted by TCs. Comparisons of the “intake” and “6 month” assessments may reflect changes in the youth occurring during the period of placement (e.g., not just reentry services), and differences in screener ratings (since intake assessments were generally completed by placement staff or POs while later assessments were completed by TCs). For these reasons, data are presented for all three YLS/CMI assessments; however the comparison of “return” and “6 month/program end” scores is more appropriate to indicate changes in YLS/CMI scores due to program participation.

4.1 YLS/CMI Risk/Need Score Changes

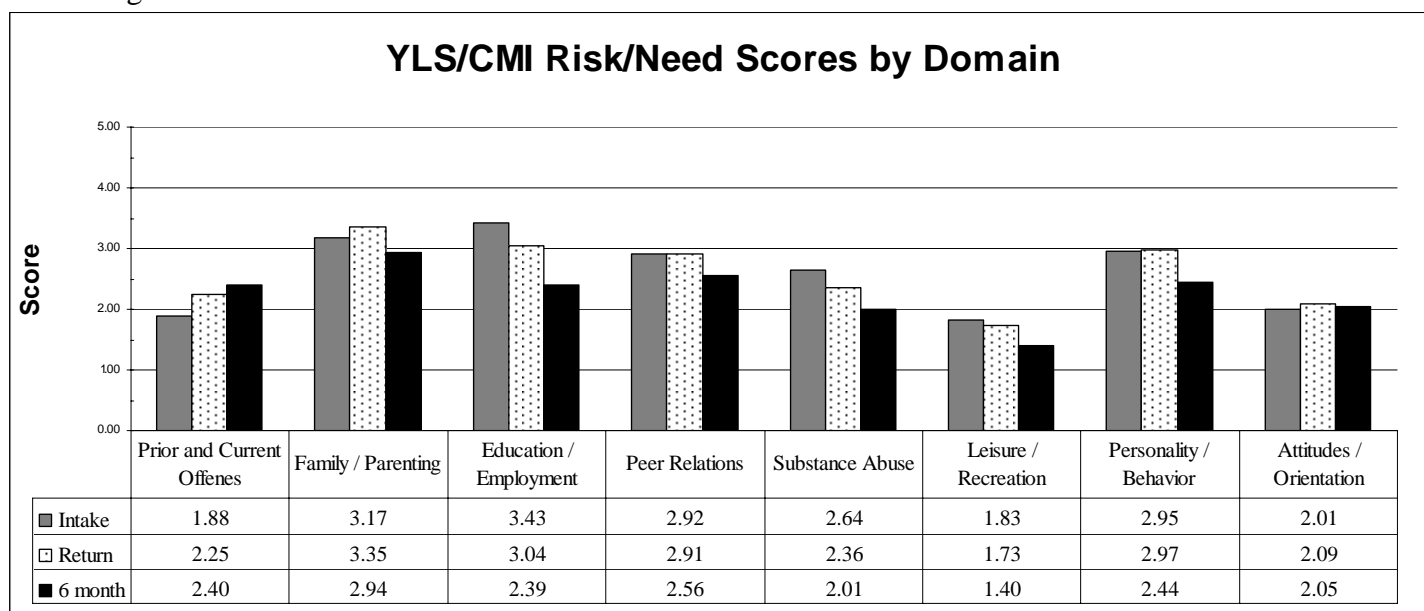
Figure 1 provides a comparison of YLS/CMI risk/need scores by domain over three points in time (upon placement, at return to the community, 6 months post return/program end). Reductions in risk / need are observed over time in all domains, with one exception. Scores on the “prior and current offenses” domain were higher at 6 months post-program (average 2.40) than at return to the community (2.25). This domain includes rater assessment of a number of

items, including prior offenses, failure to comply (e.g., technical probation violations, refusal to cooperate with services, parental reports of problems), and prior probation and custody. Scores in this domain were, on average, 7% higher at 6 months post-release than at release to the community, partially due to the cumulative nature of behavioral items represented.

Overall risk / need scores were compared, and statistical analyses explored the significance of changes in these scores and domain specific scores over time. These analyses revealed that:

- Overall risk/needs scores declined 12% between the return (average 20.7) and six month assessments (average 18.2), falling short of the program goal of 20%.
- At the same time, reductions in average risk/need score are observed in all domains, with the notable exception of prior and current offenses. Excluding the prior and current offenses domain, the overall reduction in risk/needs was 14%,
- The most substantial reductions in risk (i.e., improvements) were observed for the domains of education / employment (declined 21%), and leisure / recreation (19%), followed by personality / behavior (18%), substance abuse (15%), and peer relations and family / parenting (each declined 15%),
- Paired-samples t-tests were examined to determine whether observed changes in risk/need scores from “return” to “six months post return / program end” were statistically significant (i.e., less than 5% likelihood that the change was due to chance). This analysis was restricted to only youth with both assessments (N=63). Results indicated that the overall reduction in risk/need ($M = -3.05$) was statistically significant, as were the changes in the domains of education / employment, peer relations, substance abuse, leisure / recreation, personality / behavior, and prior and current offenses²,
- Finally, among youth with both (return and 6 months post-return) assessments, 60% evidenced risk reductions. More than half (54%) experienced risk reductions of 10% or more, and 43% experienced reductions greater than 20% (there was no change in risk for 3% of youth, and a risk increase for 37%).

Figure 1. YLS/CMI Risk / Need Scores



4.2 YLS/CMI Strengths Score Changes

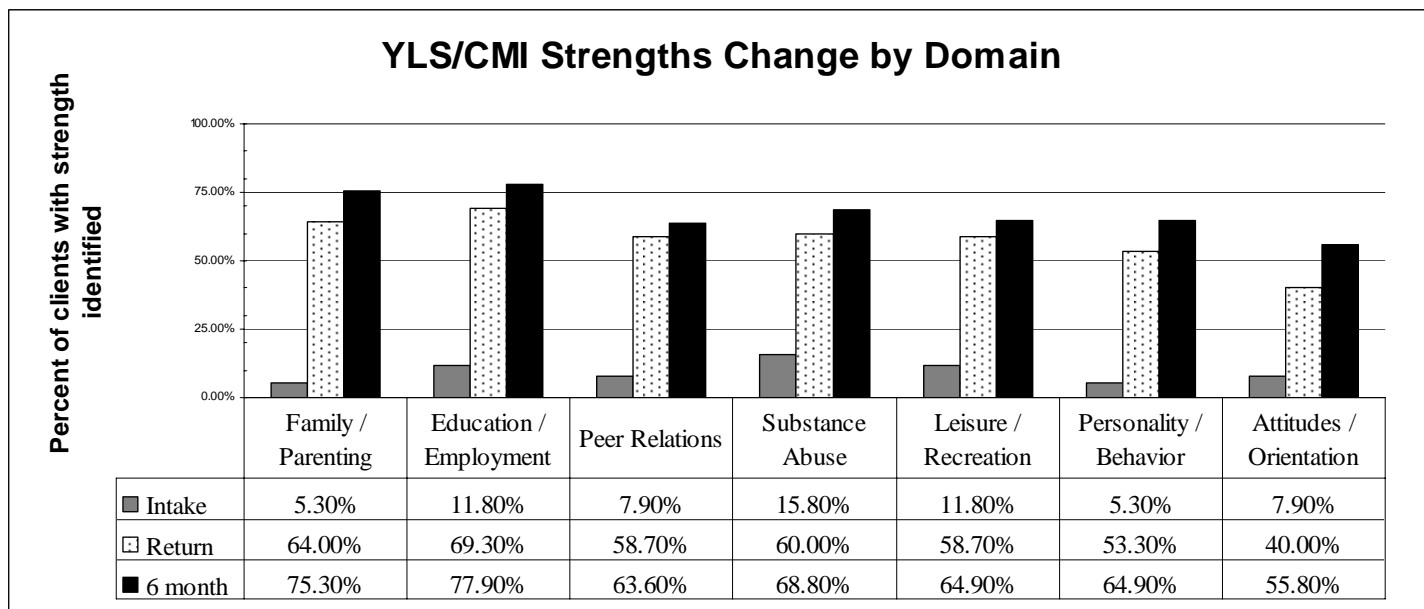
Figure 2 provides a comparison of youth with YLS/CMI strengths identified by domain over three points in time (intake to placement, return to the community, and six months post return/program end). The percentage of youth with a strength identified in each area increased over time. Overall strengths scores were compared and statistical analyses explored the significance of changes in these scores and domain specific scores over time. These analyses revealed that:

- Overall strengths scores increased 17% between the return and six month assessments, which was slightly below the program goal of 20%,
- Strengths scores improved in all domains. The most substantial improvements in the domains of attitudes / orientation (40% increase in percent of youth with strength identified), personality / behavior (22%), family / parenting (18%), substance abuse (15%), and education / employment (12%),
- Paired-samples t-tests were examined to determine whether observed changes in strengths scores from “return” to “six months post return / program end” were statistically significant (i.e., not likely due to chance). The analysis was restricted to youth with both assessments (N=63). Results revealed that the overall improvement in strengths scores (M = .71) was

moderately significant (i.e., less than 10% likelihood that the change was due to chance). In addition, improvement in the attitudes / orientation domain was significant, and improvement in education / employment was moderately significant³,

- Finally, among youth with both (return and 6 months post-return) assessments, 44% evidenced strengths increases, and 41% experienced increases of 20% or more (there was no change in strengths for 24% of youth, and strengths decrease for 32%).

Figure 2. YLS/CMI Strengths Scores



4.3 Transitional Case Plan Task Completion

Table 3 provides details of transitional case plan task plan assignment and completion.

The first column lists the type of task (following domains identified in YLS/CMI), and columns 2-5 provide the percent of youth assigned at least one task in each area, the average number of tasks assigned (among those assigned at least one task), average number of tasks complete, and overall completion rate. As the data in Table 3 indicate:

- 74% of transitional case plan tasks were complete upon case closure, indicating virtual completion of the goal set by program designers (75% completion),
- Task completion was highest in the domains of attitudes / orientation (100%), housing (94%), employment (88%), leisure / recreation (84%), and family / parenting (84%),

although some of were not common areas of task assignment (e.g., attitudes / orientation and housing),

- Completion rates ranged from 65% to 88% in the most common domains of task assignment (employment, education, substance abuse, and personality / behavior).

Table 33 Transitional Case Plan Tasks				
	Assigned Task	Mean Tasks Assigned ^a	Mean Tasks Complete ^a	Percent Complete
Employment	79%	8.16	7.16	88%
Education	73%	5.40	3.49	65%
Substance Abuse	70%	7.03	5.03	72%
Personality / Behavior	70%	6.03	4.30	71%
Leisure / Recreation	55%	9.04	7.61	84%
Social / Life skills	42%	5.46	4.03	74%
Mental Health	33%	5.63	1.30	23%
Family / Parenting	13%	3.75	3.17	84%
Peer Relations	3%	3.33	1.00	30%
Attitudes / Orientation	3%	3.00	3.00	100%
Housing	3%	5.33	5.00	94%
Overall	98%	30.19	22.26	74%
^a Among youth assigned at least one task				

Further analysis revealed that 84% of RSP youth completed at least half of the tasks identified in their transitional case plans. In fact, 54% of youth completed at least 75% of their case plan tasks, 30% completed 50-74% of their tasks, 14% completed 25-49% of their tasks, and only 2% of youth completed less than 25% of their transitional case plan tasks.

4.4 Referral / Service Completion

Table 4 provides details of referrals to services. The format is similar to Table 3, with the first column representing type of referral, and columns 2-5 providing percentage of youth receiving at least one referral in each area, average number of referrals (among those with at least one referral), average number of referrals considered complete or ongoing when upon case closure, and overall completion rates. As the data in Table 4 indicate:

- 60% of referrals were considered complete or ongoing at the time of case closure,
- Completion rates were highest when referrals were made in the areas of sex offender aftercare, mental health, housing, social or life skills, and cognitive behavioral, although some of these represent few referrals (e.g., sex offender aftercare and cognitive behavioral),
- Rates of completion ranged from 56% to 76% in the most common domains of referral (substance abuse, education, mental health, employment, and family counseling).

	Percent Referred	Mean Number of Referrals ^a	Mean Referrals Complete or Ongoing ^a	Percent Complete or Ongoing
Education	64%	1.32	0.78	59%
Substance Abuse	64%	1.78	1.00	56%
Employment	62%	1.19	0.67	56%
Mental Health	54%	1.50	1.14	76%
Family Counseling	44%	1.15	0.68	59%
Cognitive-Behavioral	26%	1.17	0.75	64%
Social / Life skills	26%	1.29	0.83	65%
Individual Counseling	20%	1.06	0.50	47%
Housing	19%	1.47	1.00	68%
Prosocial Activity	16%	1.27	0.67	53%
Health	13%	1.17	0.58	50%
Cultural Support or Activity	9%	1.00	0.25	25%
Support Group	7%	1.17	0.67	57%
Sex Offender Aftercare	4%	1.00	1.00	100%
Overall	98%	5.88	3.54	60%
^a Among youth referred at least once				

Further analysis revealed that 62% of RSP youth followed through on at least half of their referrals. Specifically, 37% of youth followed through on at least 75% of referrals, 26%

followed through on 50-74% of referrals, 23% followed through on 25-49% of referrals, and only 14% followed through on less than 14% of services to which they were referred.

4.5 Urinalysis Testing

More than three-fourths (77%) of RSP youth were subjected to at least one drug test while participating in the program. Among tested youth:

- Slightly more than one-third (35%) of tests indicated substance use, however approximately half of tested youth (48%) had no positive urinalysis tests and another 25% tested positive once,
- Slightly more than one-third (35%) were tested 4 or more times, 16% were tested 2 or 3 times, and 26% were tested just once,
- The average number of urinalysis tests among tested youth was 3.6 (range 1 to 14), and the average number of positive tests was 1.27 (range 0 to 7),
- Among youth who were tested more than once, 40% experienced no positive tests, 20% experienced only one positive test, and 40% tested positive on multiple occasions.

The vast majority (89%) of youth with a history of substance abuse were subjected to urinalysis at least once while participating in the program. Of these youth:

- 36 % of tests indicated substance use, however 44% of tested youth had no positive tests, and another 26% tested positive once,
-
- 35% of youth were tested 4 or more times, 19% were tested 2 or 3 times, and 19% were tested once,
- The average number of tests among tested youth with a history of substance abuse was 3.5, and the average number of positive tests among this group was 1.26,
- Among youth with a history of substance abuse who were tested more than once, 36% experienced no positive tests, 20% tested positive only once, and 44 % tested positive on multiple occasions.

4.6 Changes in Social Factors

TCs and POs provided information related to social factors and service receipt during program participation and six and 12 months after program completion. This information was

intended to track changes in social factors thought to be related to recidivism over time, including housing and family stability, education, employment, substance abuse, mental/physical health and participation in prosocial support networks and activities. These data are subjective assessments and information is not available for all youth, so results should be interpreted carefully⁴. However, taken together with more objective measures of program success they can help underscore program achievements and failures. Indicators of social adjustment are presented in the following series of tables and text.

4.6.1 Education

Table 5 presents several indicators of educational adjustment at intake to the program and up to 12 months after completion of the RSP. Results indicate:

- That program youth are increasingly likely to have completed a GED, graduate from high school, and participate in higher education over time. The percentage of youth who had completed their GED, graduated high school, or were attended higher education programs increased from 8% at program intake to 18% at program end, 25% at 6 months post-program, and 35% at 12 months post-program,
- At the same time, the proportion of program youth not attending any education program who did not have their GED or high school diploma also increased over time, from 4% at program intake, to 15% at program end, 21 % at 6 months post-program, and approximately 18% at 12 months post-program,
- Program youth were less likely to be attending any sort of education program over time. Approximately 88% of youth were attending some sort of educational program when they began RSP; only 67% were doing so at program end, 54% at 6 months post-program, and 48% at 12 months post-program. Lower proportions of youth attending educational programs are partially due to youth abandoning education (i.e., dropping out), but are also influenced by the fact that more youth complete basic education over time, and not all of them continue on to post-secondary education,
- TCs/POs were generally more satisfied with education status of youth as they progressed through and after they had completed the RSP.

	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Education Status	N = 73	N=87	N=43	N=40
Not attending	4.1%	14.9%	20.9%	17.5%
Participating in GED / ABE program	5.5%	2.3%	11.6%	7.5%
Attending school in placement	23.3%	3.4%	11.6%	12.5%
Attending alternative / charter school	15.1%	14.9%	14.0%	7.5%
Attending (unknown type)	31.5%	26.4%	7.0%	12.5%
Attending traditional school	12.6%	19.5%	9.3%	7.5%
GED complete	6.8%	14.9%	11.6%	22.5%
High School Graduate	1.4%	3.4%	11.6%	7.5%
Attending college or technical school	0%	0%	2.3%	5.0%
Education Progress ^a		N=91	N=43	N=40
Did not attend at all		4.4%	20.9%	17.5%
Attended sporadically	NA	37.4%	11.6%	12.5%
Attended regularly		53.8%	51.2%	42.5%
N/A (GED or graduate already)		4.4%	16.3%	27.5%
Took GED tests while in program	NA	7.6% N=92	NA	NA
Satisfied with educational status ^b	2.69 (1.20) N=71	2.91 (1.43) N=56	3.00 (1.36) N=42	3.33 (1.44) N=39
^a In program or past 6 months				
^b Satisfaction is staff rating on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Reported in Mean (SD)				

4.6.2 Employment

In relation to the indicators of social adjustment in the area of employment (Table 6), it should be noted that not all youth are assessed as appropriate to engage in either work or job search activities as part of their participation in the RSP. The data in Table 6 indicate:

- Among those for whom it was determined that employment was appropriate, nearly 89% searched for employment during the program,
- By 12 months post program 74% of youth for whom employment was appropriate had been employed in the previous six months. At the same time, less than one-third (29%) were employed on a stable basis during that time period and only 36 % were currently employed 12 months after RSP,

- TCs/POs were generally more satisfied with the employment status of youth as they progressed through and after they had completed the RSP.

	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Employment status	N=73	N=92	N=43	N=38
Not employed	91.8%	63.0%	62.8%	71.1%
Employed part time	8.2%	33.6%	27.9%	23.7%
Employed full time	0%	3.3%	9.3%	5.3%
Of youth for whom employment is appropriate		N=79	N=37	N=31
Searched for a job	NA	88.6%	NA	NA
Employed at some time ^a	NA	65.8%	59.5%	74.2%
Stable employment ^a	NA	51.4% N=35	21.6%	29.0%
Employment type ^a				
Not employed	85.5%	57.0%	56.8%	64.5%
Part time	9.1%	32.9%	27.0%	29.1%
¾ time	1.8%	6.3%	5.4%	0.0%
Full time	3.6%	3.8%	10.8%	6.5%
Satisfied with employment status ^b	2.30 (1.02) N=69	2.82 (1.61) N=55	2.95 (1.54) N=40	3.09 (1.54) N=35
^a In program or past 6 months				
^b Satisfaction is staff rating on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Reported in Mean (SD)				

4.6.3 Chemical Use

Table 7 presents information related to several indicators of adjustment in the area of substance abuse, as reported by the TCs/POs. Staff were generally more satisfied with the current substance use status of youth at 12 months post-RSP than at any earlier time (including during the program), although the proportion of youth that staff indicated were “clean” at any time remained relatively stable. Among youth with a history of substance abuse, staff reported that fewer youth attended substance abuse treatment or AA/NA meetings at 6 and 12 months post-RSP than they did during their period of active participation in RSP, however the proportion of youth the staff believed to be abstaining over time remained similar.

Table 77 Substance Use / Abuse Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Is “clean”	NA	60.9% N=92	65.7% N=35	61.8% N=34
Satisfied with substance use status ^b	3.28 (1.14) N=67	3.14 (1.60) N=57	3.28 (1.57) N=40	3.49 (1.62) N=35
Of youth with substance use history				
Treatment status ^a				
Regularly attended treatment	NA	39.7% N=68	17.2% N=29	26.1% N=23
AA/NA status ^a				
Regularly attended	NA	42.0% N=69	17.2% N=29	13.6% N=23
Is “clean”	NA	52.9% N=70	59.3% N=27	53.8% N=26
^a In program or past 6 months				
^b Satisfaction is staff rating on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Reported in Mean (SD)				

4.6.4 Mental and Physical Health

Table 8 presents information related to changes in the RSP staff members’ perceptions of the mental health status of youth during and up to 12 months after completing the RSP.

Perceived compliance with mental health service recommendations was highest at 6 months post-RSP, while in general, staffers were more satisfied with the youths’ mental health status during the follow-up period than during the program itself. Among youth with a history of mental health problems, staff perceived that a greater proportion of these youth were taking medications and participating in treatment after the program, at least sporadically. Overall, staff satisfaction with youths’ mental and physical health status increased after program completion.

Table 88 Mental Health Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Received mental health assessment / services ^a	NA	46.2% N=91	35.7% N=42	27.3% N=30
Complied with mental health recommendations ^a	NA	70.6% N=92	81.4% N=43	67.6% N=34
Satisfied with mental/physical health status ^b	3.12 (.80) N=69	2.91 (1.23) N=56	3.60 (1.21) N=40	3.31 (1.38) N=32
Of youth with a history of mental health problems in need of services				
Received services ^a	NA	58.2% N=67	43.8% N=32	37.5% N=24
Medication status		N=24	N=13	N=7
Refused medication	NA	20.8%	7.6%	14.3%
Took medication sporadically		25.0%	7.6%	0.0%
Took medication regularly		54.2%	84.6%	85.7%
Treatment status		N=24	N=9	N=6
Refusing treatment	NA	16.7%	12.0%	16.7%
Participating in treatment sporadically		16.7%	0.0%	50.0%
Participating in treatment regularly		66.6%	88.0%	33.3%
^a In program or past 6 months				
^b Satisfaction is staff rating on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Reported in Mean (SD)				

4.6.5 Housing and Family

In terms of indicators of social adjustment in the areas of “Housing and Family” issues, results presented in Table 9 show that only a small percentage of youth were currently homeless at any point. Participation of families in prosocial activities appeared to improve over time; however staff perception of the residential stability of youth or the proportion of families receiving services did not. Staff members’ perception of the overall family situation of youth improved from program end to the 12 month follow-up post-program (i.e., family/parenting status, housing stability, communication in the home).

Table 99 Housing and Family Indicators				
	Program Intake	Program End ^b	6 Mo. Post Program ^c	12 Mo. Post Program ^d
Homeless at some point ^a	NA	19.6%	25.6%	27.5%
Currently homeless	NA	3.3%	4.7%	0%
Stable residence ^a	NA	85.7%	62.8%	75%
Family involved in at least one outing/activity ^a	NA	51.1%	NA	NA
Family regularly involved in outings/activities ^a	NA	12.0%	22.7%	28.2% N=39
Family received services ^a	NA	35.9%	13.6%	10.3% N=39
Satisfied with family / parenting status ^e	2.77 (1.20) N=61	2.54 (1.37) N=54	2.93 (1.15) N=44	3.08 (1.24) N=39
Satisfied with housing stability ^e	3.66 (1.23) N=71	3.45 (1.37) N=56	3.60 (1.33) N=43	3.87 (1.28) N=39
Satisfied with communication in home ^e	2.44 (1.11) N=70	2.38 (1.24) N=56	2.77 (1.27) N=44	2.85 (1.35) N=34
^a In program or past 6 months ^b N=92 unless otherwise noted ^c N=43 unless otherwise noted ^d N=40 unless otherwise noted ^e Satisfaction is staff rating on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Reported in Mean (SD)				

4.6.6 Prosocial Support and Activities

In Table 10, information related to prosocial supports and other community activities is presented as reported by TCs/POs. Staff reported youth were most likely to have a role model in the home at the time they were admitted to the program, rather than at any other time during or after the program, while the youth were most likely to have role model or mentor outside the home at 6 months post-RSP participation. Involvement with prosocial peers and participation in prosocial activities fluctuated over the follow-up period, as did staff satisfaction with peer relationships and involvement in prosocial activities. Staff appear more satisfied with the network of individuals youth can go to with problems over time.

	Program Intake	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Has role model or mentor in home	64.8% N=71	49.1% N=55	55.8% N=43	50% N=40
Has role model or mentor outside the home	61.2% N=67	56.4% N=55	64.3% N=42	47.5% N=40
Is involved with prosocial peers	NA	34.8% N = 23	50.0% N=42	37.5% N=40
Regularly participates in prosocial activities	NA	39.1% N=23	45.2% N=42	35% N=40
Satisfied with peer relationships ^b	2.17 (.94) N=69	2.38 (1.32) N=56	2.73 (1.34) N=41	2.45 (1.38) N=40
Satisfied with involvement in prosocial activities ^b	2.29 (.92) N=70	2.54 (1.48) N=56	2.78 (1.37) N=41	2.60 (1.30) N=40
Satisfied with network ^b	2.58 (1.02) N=69	2.68 (1.35) N=56	3.15 (1.27) N=40	3.30 (1.40) N=40
^a In program or past 6 months				
^b Satisfaction is staff rating on scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Reported in Mean (SD)				

4.6.7 Participation in Cultural or Gender Specific Services and Support

The extent to which RSP youth participated in cultural and gender-specific activities is presented in Table 11. These results are presented based on the numbers of youth who were either of non-White or female, since these programs applied primarily to minorities and females. The majority of females (62%) participated in gender specific programming during the program, while a lower level of culturally specific programming (41%) was found among minority youth. Participation in gender and/or culturally specific services varied over time.

Table 1111 Cultural and Gender Specific Services and Support			
	Program End	6 Mo. Post Program	12 Mo. Post Program
Of minority youth (N=46)			
Participated in at least one culturally specific service in-program	41.3% N=92	NA	NA
Regularly participates in culturally specific services	13.0% N=92	24.0% N=25	22.7% N=22
Of female youth (N=26)			
Participated in at least one gender specific service in-program ^a	61.5% N=92	NA	NA
Regularly participates in gender specific services ^a	42.3% N=92	30% N=10	53.3% N=15
^a In program or past 6 months			

4.7 Intermediate Outcomes Summary

The RSP was successful in achieving case plan compliance goals, a reduction in YLS/CMI risk/needs scores, and a improvement in strengths scores. While the changes in risk/need (12% reduction) and strengths scores (17% increase) were lower than program goals (20% reduction and 20% increase, respectively), they were substantial, and represent significant differences in known correlates of recidivism. More than half (60%) of RSP youth who experienced both assessments experienced a reduction in risk from return to the community to six months post-return, and the reduction met the goal set by program designers (20% or greater) for 43% of youth. Among youth with both assessments, 44% experienced an increase in strengths, and that increase met the goal set by program designers (20% or greater) for 41% of youth.

Youth followed through on the majority of service referrals. Furthermore, the YLS/CMI domains with the largest changes, the transitional plan domains with the greatest compliance rates, and the follow through rates on service referral tended to be in the areas indicating the greatest risk/need on the intake YLS/CMI (e.g., employment, education, substance abuse). There

were also indicators of positive change for youth both during the program and up to 12 months post-program. Staff perception of youth status showed signs of improvement over time in each domain examined, including education, employment, substance abuse, mental health, family, housing, and prosocial support.

Results of the intermediate outcomes analysis indicate that the program was successful in achieving success goals defined by program designers. These results are encouraging; however it is difficult to know whether the intermediate outcomes observed would be different in the absence of the program. This determination requires an examination of outcomes for youth who did not participate in the reentry program. This comparison is made, where possible, in Section 6. While process and intermediate outcome data were limited for the comparison group, some measures were available. Where available, data were examined to determine the extent to which services and outcomes can be attributed to the RSP (Section 6). First, recidivism outcomes of RSP youth are examined in Section 5.

5 RSP Recidivism

Several recidivism indicators were available in electronic program files (CSTS). The following section summarizes recidivism outcomes, including technical probation violations, time on probation, new official contacts, and later out-of-home placements. The evaluators coded electronic program documents and recorded later official contacts and charges, including number and type of later charges.

For each youth the most serious later official contact was recorded, both in terms of level (e.g., none, status, misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, felony), and behavior (e.g., none, status, traffic, public order, property, person-related). Two separate types of offending were examined based on data from the police/court contacts: a) “official contacts”, which includes all contacts/charges recorded in the computerized court system, and b) “criminal contacts”, a subset of official contacts excluding status, traffic, and alcohol or tobacco related offenses.

Recidivism results are presented separately for two periods. Recidivism during program participation includes technical probation violations, new offenses, and out-of-home placements that occurred while youth were participating in the program. These results indicate that the majority of RSP youth complete the program without incident and that most reoffending is not extensive or particularly serious (e.g., not felony level or person-related). The second set of recidivism results covers the entire follow-up period (from release from placement up to final coding date). While a greater proportion of youth have experienced technical probation violations, new charges, or placements over the longer follow-up period, the data reveal that recidivism among RSP youth is largely restricted to relatively isolated incidents (e.g., few youth experience multiple charges) and less serious behaviors (e.g. public order or property offending).

5.1 Recidivism During Program Participation

Though youth averaged 7 months in the RSP program, actual program time varied from 1 month to 17 months. During this time:

- 57% of RSP youth experienced no technical probation violations, 20% experienced just one violation, 18% experienced two violations, and 5% experienced 3 or more technical probation violations,
- The majority of youth (61%) experienced no official contacts or criminal contacts (71%). Of the 36 youth experiencing an official contact, 75% had just one contact. Of the 27 youth experiencing a criminal contact, 89% had just once criminal contact,
- A total of 49 official contacts and 58 charges were incurred while youth participated in the program (average of 1.36 contacts and 1.61 charges among youth experiencing at least one). A total of 31 criminal contacts and 35 criminal charges were incurred (average 1.15 contacts and 1.3 charges among youth experiencing at least one),
- The most serious official contact was status level for 4% of youth, 26% petty misdemeanor or misdemeanor, 2% a gross misdemeanor, and 7% felony (61% experienced no official contact). Petty misdemeanor or misdemeanor was the most serious criminal charge for 21% of youth, 2% gross misdemeanor, and 6% felony (71% experienced no criminal contact),
- The most serious later behavior was property-related for 16% of youth and 7% person-related (alcohol and tobacco, traffic, and status less than 5% each; 61% experienced no official contact). The most serious later criminal behavior for 16% of youth was property related, 7% person-related, and 6% public order (71% experienced no criminal contact),
- 47% (N=43) of RSP youth experienced no out-of-home placement while participating in the program, 30% experienced one placement, and 23% experienced two or more placements,
- 48% of RSP youth experienced no long-term (30 days or more) placements while participating in the program.

5.2 Overall Recidivism

Follow-up time varied for this group of youth due to timing of program service (e.g., youth served in 2003 have longer follow-up than those served in 2006) from 3.5 months to 45.8 months post-release (average 28 months). Virtually all (99%) youth were followed for a full 6 months after release from out-of-home placement, 87% (N=80) for a full year post-release, 59% (N=54) for 2 full years post-release, and 29% (N=27) for three or more years. During this time:

- RSP youth spent an average of 18 months on probation after return to the community (range 3 to 47 months),
- No youth spent less than 3 months on probation after release, 11% spent three to six months on probation, 29% spent six months to one year, 11% spent 1 year to 18 months, and 49% spent more than 18 months on probation after release from out-of-home placement,
- 15% of youth (N=14) spent at least some time on adult probation following their release from out-of-home placement. These fourteen youth spent an average of 39 weeks on adult probation (range 1 to 114 weeks),
- 39% of RSP youth had no technical probation violations. 21% experienced one violation, 21% experienced two violations, and 19% of youth experienced 3 or more technical probation violations,
- 40% of youth experienced no official contacts and 50% experienced no criminal contacts. Of the 37 youth experiencing an official contact, 47% experienced just one contact, 24% had two contacts, and 29% experienced three or more contacts. Of the 46 youth who experienced at least one criminal contact, 60% experienced only one criminal contact, and 22% experienced two contacts, and 18% experienced three or more criminal contacts,
- A total of 113 official contacts and 136 charges were incurred during the entire follow-up period (average 2.05 contacts and 2.47 charges among youth experiencing at least one). A total of 78 criminal contacts and 92 criminal charges were incurred (average 1.69 contacts and 2.0 charges among youth experiencing at least one),
- The most serious official contact level was status for 4% of youth, 33% petty misdemeanor or misdemeanor, 3% gross misdemeanor, and 20% felony (40% experienced no official contact). Petty misdemeanor or misdemeanor was the most serious criminal charge for 28% of youth, 3% gross misdemeanor, and 19% felony (50% experienced no criminal contact),
- The most serious later behavior was property-related for 29% of youth, 13% person-related, 2% illegal drugs, 6% public order, 6% alcohol and tobacco, and 4% traffic (40% experienced no later official contact). The most serious criminal behavior was property-related for 30% of youth, 13% person-related, 5% public order, and 2% illegal drugs (50% experienced no criminal contact),
- Overall, 30% of youth (N=28) experienced no out-of-home placement during the full follow-up period, and 25% experienced only one placement (45% experienced 2 or more placements). 49% of youth (N=45) experienced no long-term placements (30 days or more), and 29% experienced only one long-term placement (22% experienced two or more long-term placements),
- Evaluators coded the reason for placement where available. Among placements with known reason (157), 54% were due to technical probation violations, 36% due to new charges, and 4% were for protection of the youth.

5.2 RSP Recidivism Summary

The majority of youth in the RSP completed the program without incident, experiencing no technical probation violations (57%), no new official contacts (61%), and no criminal contacts (71%); however about half of youth (53%) did experience a new placement during participation in the program. During the entire follow-up period, 40% of youth remained offense free, half experienced no new, 39% experienced no technical probation violations, 30% experienced no new placements, and half experienced no long term placement. When placements did occur, they were most often the result of technical probation violations. New offending was mainly isolated incidents involving misdemeanor and property related offenses, although a small number of youth experienced several later contacts or contacts for more serious behavior.

As with process and intermediate outcomes, recidivism results are very encouraging. Without a comparison group (e.g., via randomly assigning youth to the RSP and, thus, excluding some youth in Clay County, MN from referral into the RSP), it is difficult to know how they would differ in the absence of the reentry program. Section 6 provides an analysis sample characteristics, process and intermediate outcome indicators, and recidivism outcomes of RSP youth and comparison youth (released from placement in a neighboring county without reentry services). Bivariate and multivariate analyses are examined in an effort to isolate the impact of RSP, controlling for other factors.

6 Comparison

Data presented thus far indicate that the RSP was largely successful in meeting objectives defined by program designers. For example, transitional case plan completion was in-line with stated goals and YLS/CMI risk / needs and strengths scores indicate improvement over time. In addition, the program has connected youth with numerous existing community-based service agencies, maintained high levels of contact with youth, and provided a combination of integrated supervisory, mentoring, and treatment related services. These indicators suggest successful program implementation; however cautious interpretation of the findings is warranted as they are restricted by the absence of data on youth who did not receive reentry services.

This section includes a comparison of RSP youth to similar youth in a neighboring county (Becker County, MN) under the same state probation jurisdiction, in an attempt to determine the extent to which favorable findings (Sections 3-5) can be attributed to the RSP. Youth in Becker County return from out-of-home placement and remain on probation. No specific reentry programming is provided to these youth, however. An examination of census data on the two counties indicated that the counties are similar in terms of percent of population under the age of 18, percent non-White and median household income (see Bouffard & Bergseth). Overall, the county from which the sample of reentry program youth was drawn is larger than the comparison group county, and while the comparison county is more rural it also contains a small urban area which accounts for approximately one-third of that county's population. The counties are in the same state and under the same regional probation district and thus procedures for case planning, youth supervision and other probation activities were similar across the two samples. In addition, with a few exceptions (e.g., specific local foster care placements); the two counties used the same out-of-home placement facilities for youthful

offenders. Both counties assessed youth at regular intervals using the YLS/CMI to determine the types of services and level of supervision necessary for each youth. Thus, the primary difference between the two groups was the receipt of reentry services for Clay County youth.

Comparison group youth were identified for inclusion based on the two main criteria for participation in the RSP (i.e., age and return to community and three or more weeks of out-of-home placement). Computerized and paper (where available) probation and court files were coded for all comparison youth, in a manner similar to RSP case files. Several program elements and all recidivism measures were available for both groups. Unfortunately, some information available in Clay County (RSP) was not available for Becker County (comparison) youth (e.g., transitional plans, service referral).

The sub-sections that follow examine: a) background characteristics of the two groups, b) process and intermediate outcome measures (contacts with youth and other key persons; urinalysis results), and c) outcomes (e.g., technical probation violations, reoffending, and out-of-home placement). Bivariate analyses are presented first. These are followed by multivariate analyses of measures, in an attempt to isolate the impact of program participation, controlling for other factors. In general the analyses indicate that the RSP program increased contacts with parents, youth, and agency partners; that RSP youth were less likely to test positive for substances even though they were tested more frequently; and that the RSP youth experienced better recidivism outcomes than the comparison group on a number of measures.

6.1 Sample Characteristics

Table 12 provides demographic information and offense, placement, and risk factor measures for the total sample of 184 youth, as well as reentry services (N=92) and comparison (N=92) youth separately. The average age of youth in the sample was 16.5 years upon return to

the community. Three-fourths (75%) of the sample was male, and most (56%) came from the small urban areas in the counties. The most common racial/ethnic groups represented were White (44.6%) and Native American (40.8%). The youth in the sample tend to have a significant offending history, as evidenced by numerous contacts (average 5.08), charges (average 5.08) and criminal charges (average 4.41; criminal charges is a subset of charges that excludes status and traffic offenses). In addition, the criminal histories of about half of the youth included at least one felony charge and at least one person-related charge (e.g., assault, robbery). These youth also had a significant out-of-home placement history (average of 3 out-of-home placements, 234 days in placement, and 204 days in restrictive placement), and, on average, had been on probation for more than 20 months upon return to the community after their most recent placement. Finally, a number of youth evidenced multiple problems (i.e., history of violence, school problems, substance abuse, and mental health problems), with 69% of youth experiencing three or four of these problems. More than three-fourths (80%) of youth in the sample had a history of substance abuse, 79% had school problems, 69% had mental health problems, and 63% had a history of violence.

While the RSP and comparison groups were similar in most respects, some statistically significant differences existed between the samples. In particular, the RSP group included more Black or Hispanic youth (23.9% vs. 5.4% in comparison group), while the comparison group included more Native American youth (55.4% vs. 14.7% of RSP group; this difference is consistent with the racial/ethnic composition of the counties)⁵. RSP youth were more likely to come from the small urban area in their county (68.5% vs. 43.5% of comparison youth)⁶. Comparison group youth experienced a greater number of prior contacts (average 5.99 vs. 4.14 among RSP youth), charges (average 7.84 vs. 4.84), and criminal charges (average 5.40 vs.

3.42)⁷ than RSP youth, and they were also more likely to have experienced a prior felony level charge (64.1% vs. 39.1% of RSP youth)⁸. Finally, while RSP youth had experienced a greater number of prior placements (average 3.35 vs. 2.63), comparison youth had spent more time in placements (average 271 days vs. 197 days) and had been on probation longer at the time of their release (average 22 months vs. 18 months)⁹.

The two groups were not significantly different in terms of age, gender, most recent placement type, YLS/CMI risk/need score, history of person-related offending, or percent of youth experiencing multiple problems. In general the data in Table 12 indicate that, while the groups are similar in many respects, the two groups exhibited significant initial differences on several variables which can be expected to relate to the individual's propensity for reoffense (e.g., offense history). Therefore, these factors were controlled for in multivariate analyses of outcomes.

Table 1212 Sample Characteristics			
	Total Sample (N=184)	RSP (N = 92)	Comparison (N=92)
Age at Return to Community	16.52 (1.34)	16.34 (1.38)	16.69 (1.36)
Age			
14 and under	14.1%	15.2%	13.0%
15 to 16	42.9%	47.8%	38.0%
17 to 19	42.9%	37.0%	48.9%
Gender			
Male	75.0%	71.7%	78.3%
Female	25.0%	28.3%	21.7%
Race / Ethnicity**			
White (non-Hispanic)	44.6%	50.0%	39.1%
Black or Hispanic	14.7%	23.9%	5.4%
Native American	40.8%	14.7%	55.4%
Hometown**			
Urban	56.0%	68.5%	43.5%
Rural	46.0%	31.5%	56.5%
Total Number of Prior Contacts***	5.08 (3.24)	4.14 (2.77)	5.99 (3.45)
Total Number of Prior Charges***	5.08 (3.24)	4.85 (3.27)	7.84 (5.17)
Number of Prior Criminal Charges***	4.41 (3.70)	3.42 (2.48)	5.40 (4.40)
Any Prior Felony Charge**			
Yes	51.6%	39.1%	64.1%
No	48.4%	60.9%	35.9%
Any Prior Person-Related Charge			
Yes	53.8%	53.3%	54.3%
No	46.2%	46.7%	45.7%
Most Recent Placement Type			
Foster	3.8%	3.3%	4.3%
Residential	34.8%	40.2%	29.3%
CD / MH Treatment	29.9%	27.2%	32.6%
Detention / Sheltercare	31.5%	29.3%	33.7%
Total Number of Placements*	2.99 (1.91)	3.35 (2.10)	2.63 (1.62)
Total Days in Placement*	234.06 (219)	197.27 (175)	270.85 (251)
Total Days in Restrictive Placement†	204.44 (200)	173.09 (160)	229.79 (230)
Months on Probation at Return to Community†	20.04 (14.17)	18.00 (13.47)	22.08 (14.63)
YLS/CMI Risk / Need	20.68 (6.74)	20.82 (7.33)	20.46 (5.74)
History of Multiple Problems (violence, substance abuse, school, and mental health)			
Zero or One Problem	7.6%	5.4%	9.8%
Two Problems	23.4%	18.5%	28.3%
Three Problems	37.5%	43.5%	31.5%
All Four Problems	31.5%	32.6%	30.4%

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .000

6.2 Process and Intermediate Outcome Indicators

This sub-section examines differences in these service and intermediate outcomes between RSP and comparison group youth. While comparison group measures of some process/output (e.g., case planning, referrals) and intermediate outcome measures (e.g., changes in social factors, task and referral completion) were not available, group comparisons can be made on contact levels and urinalysis testing and results.

POs in both counties have regular contact with the youth they are supervising, as well as with parents and other agency partners (e.g., social services, school personnel). The RSP is an attempt, in part, to increase the amount of contact with these groups. As such, the appropriate comparison of increased level of contact includes an examination of contact levels of POs only (for the comparison group) and total contacts (PO and TC) for the RSP group. In addition, a comparison of “base” contact levels (e.g., PO only) between the two groups is important to ensure that differences in overall contact levels are not due to differences in PO activity. Table 13 provides the average contact levels between POs and youth, parents and agency partners, and “total” contact levels (PO only in comparison group, PO and TC in RSP group). Contact levels are reported per week on probation during the full follow-up period to control for uneven follow-up times and differences in time on probation. The data in Table 13 indicate that:

- POs serving the RSP group averaged slightly more contact with youth (RSP contact level 21% greater than comparison group), parents (25% greater), and agency partners (11% greater), however only PO-youth contacts were marginally significant¹⁰,
- Total contacts were significantly greater for the RSP group on all three measures¹¹. Total contacts with youth, their parents, and agency partners include both PO and TC contacts for the RSP group, but only PO contacts for the comparison group (i.e., the difference between PO contacts and total contacts for the RSP group represents additional contact provided by TCs),

- The additional contacts provided by TCs represent a 346% increase in contacts with youth, a 194% increase in contacts with parents, and a 76% increase in contacts with agency partners, relative to probation only.

Table 13 provides details on testing and urinalysis results. Urinalysis testing rates are reported per week on probation during the full follow-up period to control for uneven follow-up and differences in time on probation. Urinalysis testing is generally considered an output of supervision programs, however available data do not allow for an examination of testing outputs related to the RSP (e.g., data is available on the number of tests administered, but not the number of tests administered by various personnel). While it seems reasonable to assume that the addition of TCs would increase the frequency of urinalysis testing (as TCs are charged with this duty), differences in testing frequency cannot be attributed to reentry services alone, as POs supervising the 2 groups (in 2 different counties) may differ in testing practices. Thus, the outcome of interest for this analysis was the percentage of tests administered that were ‘positive’ or indicative of drug use activity by youth. Urinalysis output information (e.g. number of tests administered) is provided in this section to aid in interpretation of the urinalysis outcome analysis (percent of tests that were positive).

A significantly lower percentage of urinalysis tests administered to youth in the RSP group indicated drug use (35.5%) than those administered to youth in the comparison group (58.8%)¹². This represents a 40% lower rate of positive testing among RSP youth. The lower rate of positive tests observed does not appear to be due to more selective testing of youth in the program (i.e., testing less risky youth), as a significantly greater proportion of RSP youth were subjected to tests (81.5%) than comparison youth (58.7%; difference represents a 39% increase in proportion of youth tested). In addition, among those tested, RSP youth were tested

significantly more frequently than comparison youth (the difference in testing rates represents a 119% increase in number of tests per week on probation)¹³.

Table 1313 Comparison of Process and Intermediate Outcome Indicators			
	RSP (N = 92)	Comparison (N=92)	% Difference
Contact Levels per Week on Probation			
PO - Youth Contacts†	.29 (.18)	.24 (.16)	21%
PO - Parent Contacts	.20 (.17)	.16 (.16)	25%
PO - Agency Partner Contacts	.42 (.47)	.38 (.34)	11%
Total Youth Contacts***	1.07 (1.03)	.24 (.16)	346%
Total Parent Contacts***	.47 (.35)	.16 (.16)	194%
Total Agency Partner Contacts**	.67 (.73)	.38 (.34)	76%
Urinalysis Testing			
^a % of Tests that were Positive***	35.5%	58.8%	-40%
% Tested**	81.5%	58.7%	39%
^a Number of Tests per Week on Probation***	.08 (.07)	.04 (.03)	119%
^a Number of Positive Tests per Week on Probation	.03 (.03)	.02 (.02)	32%
† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .000			
^a Among 54 comparison and 75 reentry services youth receiving at least one drug test			

6.3 Outcomes

Table 14 provides data on a number of recidivism measures (including time on probation, technical probation violations, later official contacts, and out-of-home placements) for the entire sample, and for the RSP and comparison groups separately. All measures are reported for the entire follow-up period (i.e., through April 2007), the length of which varied by youth depending on date of release from placement (range 15 to 202 weeks; no group differences were observed on average follow-up time). Technical probation violations are presented per week on probation to control for differences in probation length. Official contacts include all recorded police or court contacts in the CSTS system, and “criminal” contacts are a subset of official contacts

excluding status, alcohol and tobacco, and traffic offenses. Time at risk (weeks) includes all time free in the community at risk of reoffense (i.e., not in restrictive placement).

During the full follow-up period (after release from placement), youths averaged 68 weeks on juvenile probation. Nearly one-fifth (18%) of the total sample experienced a period of adult probation (average weeks on adult probation was 8). Most youth (56.5%) experienced at least one technical probation violation, and most (60.9%) experienced at least one official contact. Later contacts were misdemeanor or felony level, and the most common type of later offense was property related. Better than two-thirds of youth (70.7%) also experienced some form of out of home placement, and 57% experienced a long term (30 or more days) placement during the follow-up period. On average, youth in the sample were “at risk” (not in restrictive placement) for 104 weeks (26 months) over the follow-up period.

With two exceptions, RSP youth experienced better outcomes on all recidivism measures. RSP youth were less likely to be placed on adult probation (15.2% vs. 21.7% of comparison youth), slightly less likely to experience a new official contact (59.8% vs. 62.0%), or new criminal contact (48.9% vs. 55.4%), and were slightly less likely to experience a new out-of-home placement (69.9% vs. 71.7%) or long term placement (51.1% vs. 63.0%). RSP youth also experienced less serious later officially recorded outcomes, as measured by most serious level (none, status, misdemeanor, felony) and behavior (none, other, property, person-related) of later official contacts. RSP youth experienced fewer weeks on adult probation, fewer new official contacts, fewer charges, fewer out-of-home placements, fewer days in placement, and fewer days in restrictive placement. A number of these differences were statistically significant. Specifically, RSP youth experienced significantly fewer later official contacts, criminal contacts, and charges; significantly less serious later contacts (level); were significantly less likely to

experience a new long term placement; and spent significantly fewer days in placement and restrictive placement¹⁴. The exceptions to the pattern of beneficial RSP effects included time on probation and technical probation violations. RSP youth did experience marginally longer time on probation after release¹⁵, and were more likely to experience a technical probation violation (though this difference was not statistically significant).

Table 1414 Sample Outcomes			
	Total Sample (N=184)	RSP (N = 92)	Comparison (N=92)
Weeks on Juvenile Probation†	67.99 (45.29)	72.58 (42.61)	63.41 (47.61)
Any Adult Probation			
Yes	18.5%	15.2%	21.7%
No	81.5%	84.8%	78.3%
Weeks on Adult Probation	8.18 (24.33)	5.93 (19.32)	10.43 (28.40)
Any Technical Probation Violation			
Yes	56.5%	57.6%	55.4%
No	43.5%	42.4%	44.6%
Number of Violations per Week on Probation	.017 (.02)	.016 (.02)	.019 (.02)
Any Later Official Contact			
Yes	60.9%	59.8%	62.0%
No	39.1%	40.2%	38.0%
Any Later Criminal Contact			
Yes	52.2%	48.9%	55.4%
No	47.8%	51.1%	44.6%
Number of Later Official Contacts*	1.54 (2.03)	1.23 (1.50)	1.86 (2.41)
Number of Later Criminal Contacts†	1.21 (1.81)	.85 (1.20)	1.21 (1.81)
Number of Later Charges**	2.06 (2.87)	1.48 (1.90)	2.64 (3.49)
Highest Level of Later Contacts*			
None	39.1%	40.2%	38.0%
Status	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Misdemeanor	27.7%	35.9%	19.6%
Felony	27.7%	18.5%	37.0%
Most Serious Behavior of Later Contacts			
None	39.1%	40.2%	38.0%
Other	17.9%	17.4%	18.5%
Property	26.6%	29.3%	23.9%
Person-Related	16.3%	13.0%	19.6%
Any Later Out-of-Home Placement (OHP)			
Yes	70.7%	69.6%	71.7%
No	29.3%	30.4%	28.3%
Any Long Term OHP*			
Yes	57.1%	51.1%	63.0%
No	42.9%	48.9%	37.0%
Number of OHP	1.91 (2.07)	1.87 (1.92)	1.95 (2.22)
Days in OHP*	148.25 (198.66)	167.46 (17.46)	223.43 (23.29)
Days in Restrictive OHP*	131.66 (190.41)	157.52 (16.42)	215.06 (22.42)
Weeks at Risk	104.34 (53.32)	106.76 (51.22)	101.92 (55.52)
† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .000			
Differences tested with one-tailed significance			

6.4 Multivariate Analyses

Bivariate results suggested better outcomes for youth participating in the reentry program. However, the two groups also exhibited some significant initial differences on several variables which can be expected to relate to the individual's propensity for reoffending (e.g., offense history). And, follow-up times varied. As such, this section examines several outcomes in multivariate analyses, in an attempt to determine whether recidivism differences appear when controlling for other observed group differences and other known predictors of recidivism over a standardized follow-up period. Specifically, the impact of RSP was examined controlling for age at release, race/ethnicity, gender, hometown, and number of prior of charges. Outcomes were examined over three time periods – within 6 months of release, within 1 year of release, and within 2 years of release. Sample size varied by time period, as only youth with full follow-up data were included in each analysis. A total of 178 youth were included in the six months post-release follow-up (91 RSP and 87 Comparison), 157 in the one year post-release follow-up (80 RSP and 77 Comparison), and 116 in the two years post-release follow-up (54 RSP and 62 Comparison).

The results from a series of regression analyses predicting the number of later contacts during the three follow-up periods are presented in Table 20 (Appendix B). This model also included a control for time at risk during the follow-up periods. The pattern of results with regard to the control variables was consistent with other literature on the predictors of recidivism. Controlling for other factors, older youth experienced fewer new official contacts per week at risk during each follow-up period. Males and non-White youth experienced more new official contacts per week at risk (than did females and White youth), as did youth with more extensive offending histories (as measured by number of prior official charges). Youth

from urban areas experienced more new contacts at the 6 month post-release follow-up, however they experienced fewer new contacts at the 1 and 2 year post-release follow-ups.

Central to the purpose of this analysis, receipt of reentry services (versus traditional release to probation) was associated with fewer new official contacts per week at risk during all three follow-up periods. Youth who participated in the RSP experienced fewer new official contacts. This result was marginally significant for the 6 month post-release follow-up and statistically significant at 1 and 2 years post release¹⁶, controlling for other factors.

To examine whether the groups differed in the number of criminal contacts they experienced, the series of regressions was repeated predicting number of criminal contacts (see Table 21, Appendix B). The pattern of results was similar to those observed in Table 20. Importantly, group type was once again consistently related to recidivism. Controlling for other factors, RSP youth experienced marginally fewer new official contacts per week at risk during the 6 month follow-up period, and significantly fewer new contacts at 1 and 2 years post release¹⁵.

Additional regression analyses examined other dependent variables including prevalence of reoffense, and seriousness of later behavior (measured as most serious later level and most serious later behavior) over each of the three follow-up periods. RSP was related to reduced reoffending (controlling for other factors) in all analyses, however these differences were not statistically significant. The lack of significant findings using alternative recidivism measures could result from limited power to detect smaller differences due to the size of the samples (especially in longer follow-up periods). In addition, it may be that reentry services were differentially effective – in other words, RSP may be more or less effective for different types of youth. This possibility was examined through a series of subgroup analyses.

6.5 Subgroup Analyses

Aggregate multivariate analyses (above) indicated that outcomes for RSP youth were generally better over three follow-up periods (though mostly not statistically significant). These findings remained controlling for other factors over a number of recidivism measures, including prevalence of reoffense, number of later contacts per week at risk (number of contacts / time not in restrictive placement), and seriousness of later offending measured by most serious level and behavior. The evaluators explored whether differential effectiveness could account for non-significant results. This could occur, for example, if RSP participation was more effective for some youth than others – failing to examine the impact of RSP within subgroups could mask important program effects. To investigate this possibility, the evaluators explored whether the impact of program participation varied with offender characteristics. This was done by repeating each regression series (including appropriate control variables) among various subgroups. To maximize sample size, subgroup analyses were limited to recidivism outcomes within the first six months after release. Separate regression series were explored based on gender, race/ethnicity, age, hometown, prior offending history, and YLS/CMI risk/need category. The following sections summarize the findings from these analyses. Unless otherwise reported, group differences were not statistically significant.

6.5.1 Gender

Separate regression analyses examined the impact of RSP participation on males and females during the first 6 months after release (controlling for age at release, race/ethnicity, hometown, and number of prior charges). The impact of RSP participation was mixed for females. Females served by the RSP were less likely than their comparison group counterparts

to reoffend and later outcomes were less serious (measured by most serious level and behavior). On the other hand, females served by the RSP experienced more official contacts per week at risk than did females in the comparison group. Due to the small number of females, these results should be interpreted with caution. Outcomes experienced by males served by the RSP program were consistently better than the outcomes of comparison group males. Males served by the RSP were less likely to reoffend, and their later outcomes were less serious (level and behavior). Males served by the RSP experienced statistically significantly fewer contracts per week at risk than did comparison group males.

6.5.2 Age

The impact of RSP participation on youth of different age groups (less than 15, 15-16, 17-19) at time of release was examined by comparing outcomes of RSP youth in each age group to their counterparts in the comparison group during the first 6 months after release (controlling for gender, race/ethnicity, hometown, and number of prior charges). A relatively consistent pattern of results was found across age groups. With one exception, RSP youth in each age group were less likely to reoffend, their outcomes were less serious (level and behavior), and they experienced fewer new contacts per week at risk than did their comparison group counterparts. The youngest RSP youth (less than 15) experienced more serious later outcomes (measured as most serious later offending level) than were similar comparison youth, however this result should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size in this analysis.

6.5.3 Race / Ethnicity

To determine whether the impact of RSP participation varied for youth of various racial or ethnic backgrounds, separate regression analyzes examined outcomes for White and non-White youth during the first 6 months after release (controlling for age at release, gender,

hometown, and number of prior charges). Among White youth, receipt of reentry services was related to increased likelihood of reoffense and more serious outcomes (level and behavior); however White RSP youth experienced fewer new official contacts per week at risk than did White youth in the comparison group. RSP was related to consistently better outcomes among minority youth. Non-White youth who participated in the RSP were significantly less likely to experience a new offense, experienced significantly less serious later outcomes (level and behavior), and experienced significantly fewer new official contacts, controlling for other factors. Additional analyses examined outcomes among three race/ethnicity groups (White, Black or Hispanic, and Native American), and found that the pattern of results was similar across the two minority groups (i.e., consistently beneficial effects). An interaction appears to exist between race/ethnicity and group. Reentry programming had inconsistent effects for Whites, but consistently positive effects among minorities. The relationship between race and program impact is undoubtedly connected to socio-economic status and its relationship to recidivism risk, however socio-economic indicators were not available.

6.5.4 Hometown

Separate regression analyses examined the impact of RSP participation on youth from urban and rural hometowns during the first 6 months after release (controlling for age at release, gender, race/ethnicity, and number of prior charges). Youth from the more urban areas who participated in the RSP experienced consistently better outcomes than their comparison group counterparts (including lower prevalence of reoffense, less serious outcomes, and fewer new contacts). Mixed effects were observed among more rural youth – rural youth who participated in the reentry program were more likely to experience a new official contact and their behavior was more serious than similar comparison group youth, however their outcomes were less

serious when measured as “most serious level”, and they experienced fewer new official contacts.

6.5.5 Criminal History

To determine whether the impact of RSP participation varied based on youths’ offending history, separate regression analyses examined outcomes for youth with less (3 or fewer prior contacts) and more (4 or more prior contacts) lengthy offending histories during the first 6 months after release (controlling for age at release, gender, race/ethnicity, and hometown). Mixed effects were found among youth with less extensive offending histories. Youth with three or fewer prior contacts who participated in the reentry program were more likely to experience a new contact, and evidenced more serious later behavior than their comparison group counterparts, but their outcomes were less serious when measured by “most serious level”, and they experienced fewer new official contacts than did comparison group youth with similar offense histories. Among youth with more extensive offending histories (4 or more prior contacts), RSP was consistently related to reduced recidivism. Youth with more extensive offending histories who participated in the reentry program were less likely to experience a new official contact, experienced less serious outcomes (level and behavior), and experienced significantly fewer new official contacts than youth with similar offending histories in the comparison group (controlling for other factors). This finding is consistent with the “risk” principle of effective treatment (Andrews et al., 1990), which suggests that highest risk youth are most likely to benefit from more intensive programming.

6.5.6 YLS/CMI Risk / Need Score

Analyses of outcomes based on subgroups defined by YLS/CMI risk / need score were also consistent with the “risk” principle. To determine whether the impact of RSP varied with

risk level, separate regression analyses examined RSP effects for youth identified as “low” or “moderate” risk and those identified as “high” or “very high” risk on the assessment closest to the time of release. These analyses examined outcomes within the first 6 months of release, controlling for age at release, gender, race/ethnicity, hometown, and number of prior charges. Since not all youth received this assessment, the sample is restricted to 141 youth. Results were mixed for youth identified as low or moderate risk. Low or moderate risk youth who received reentry programming were less likely to experience a new official contact, their outcomes were less serious when measured as “most serious level”, and they experienced significantly fewer contacts than similar comparison group youth, however they experienced more serious later behavior. Among youth identified as high or very high risk, RSP participation produced consistently beneficial effects. RSP youth who were identified as high or very high risk were less likely to experience a new official contact, experienced fewer new official contacts, and evidenced significantly less serious later behavior than their counterparts in the comparison group. In other words, outcomes youth were consistently better among higher risk youth served by the RSP, and mixed among lower risk youth.

6.5.7 Summary of Subgroup Analyses

The subgroup analyses indicated positive effects of reentry participation. Of the 52 group coefficients examined, 81% (42 of 52) favored the RSP group, while only 19% (10 of 52) seemed to favor the comparison group. In addition, group (RSP) was a significant predictor of reduced recidivism in 9 tests (17%), while no tests significantly favored the comparison group. While these results suggest positive program effects, they should be interpreted with caution for several reasons. First, a short follow-up period was examined (i.e., within six months of release). Second, sample sizes for some subgroup analyses were small. Larger sample sizes may improve

the reliability of findings and improve the ability to detect differences. Finally, a statistical challenge emerges from the large number of tests examined (i.e., alpha inflation) which increase the likelihood of interpreting a few “random” significant effects as meaningful findings. These limitations mean that unqualified conclusions may be premature. Nevertheless, it appears that the RSP program had similar positive effects across various subgroups. Results also suggest that RSP participation may be particularly beneficial for minority youth, youth with more extensive offending histories, and those indicated as higher risk on YLS/CMI assessments.

6.6 Summary of Comparison

The examination of RSP and comparison group characteristics indicated that, while the groups were similar on a number of measures, several statistically significant differences existed in known predictors of recidivism. The examination of process and outcome measures indicated that the RSP program increased contacts with youth, parents, and agency partners significantly. In addition, RSP youth were significantly less likely to test positive for substances, even though they were more likely to be tested and were tested more frequently than comparison group youth.

Bivariate analyses indicated that, with a few exceptions, RSP youth experienced better outcomes than comparison group youth. Specifically, RSP youth were less likely to spend time on adult probation, less likely to experience a later contact or official contact, and experienced less serious later contacts than comparison group youth. RSP youth experienced significantly fewer later official contacts and charges, were significantly less likely to experience a new long-term out-of-home placement, and spent significantly fewer days in placement and restrictive placement. These results point to the value of this type of program, which combines supervision and treatment, relatively to supervision alone.

Multivariate analyses examined whether these differences remained controlling for background characteristics and known predictors of recidivism. These results revealed that significant differences in number of official and criminal contacts per week at risk remained, controlling for age, race, gender, hometown, and number of prior charges.

Subgroup analyses examined the possibility that RSP participation was differentially effective, by sorting out youth based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, hometown, offending history, and YLS/CMI risk/need category. These analyses found a relatively consistent pattern of beneficial impact related to RSP participation, and indicated that RSP participation may be particularly beneficial among some groups of youth. In addition, these analyses were consistent with the “risk” principle, suggesting that RSP may have more beneficial impacts among youth who are most at risk for reoffense. The impact of RSP on various subgroups of youth should be further investigated with a larger sample. If a larger sample were used (perhaps permitting random assignment) and differential effectiveness were found, the RSP could be adapted to target certain select youth who are probable beneficiaries.

7 Predictors of Recidivism Within RSP

Thus far, analyses have indicated that RSP participation was related to a number of positive outcomes and, more specifically, some data suggested that participation may be particularly beneficial for certain groups of youth. In addition, analyses indicated that RSP participation increased contact levels and frequency of urinalysis testing. RSP participants were assigned to and did complete a number of transitional case plan tasks, and were referred to and did complete a number of community-based services. In other words, the program appears to have both increased services delivered to youth and produced beneficial outcomes. In an attempt to investigate which program features are related to favorable outcomes, this section explores the relationship between various program features and likelihood of recidivism among RSP participants. The relationship between RSP youth background characteristics and outcomes are also examined.

7.1. RSP Components

Table 15 provides the results of analyses examining the relationship between RSP processing components (e.g., transitional case planning, referrals, drug testing, contact levels) and recidivism. Specifically, average level of services are provided for the entire RSP sample (N=92) and separately for RSP youth who experienced no new official contacts over the entire follow-up period (N=37) and those who experienced one or more official contacts (N=55). The data indicate that a number of process and program features were related to recidivism likelihood. Specifically:

- The average number of transitional case plan tasks assigned (36.1) and tasks completed (28.2) were significantly greater among youth who experienced no new official contacts, than among those who experienced one or more later contacts (25.6 tasks assigned and 19.6 tasks completed)²⁰. Transitional case plan task completion rates were also higher among youth who did not recidivate. In other words, youth who were assigned a greater number of transitional case plan tasks, those who completed more tasks, and those who completed a

greater proportion of the tasks they were assigned were less likely to experience a new official contact than those who were assigned or completed fewer tasks,

- The average number of referrals (6.0) and referrals completed (3.8) were greater among youth who experienced no new official contacts, compared to youth with one or more later contacts (5.6 referrals and 3.3 referrals complete). Referral completion rates were also higher among youth who did not recidivate. Youth who were referred to more services, those who followed through on more referrals, and those who followed through on a greater proportion of their referrals were less likely to recidivate than those who were referred to fewer services or followed through on fewer referrals,
- The rate of positive drug testing (percent of tests that indicated substance use) during program participation was greater among youth who recidivated than among those who did not. Youth who provided more positive tests (relative to the number of tests they received) were more likely to recidivate. In other words, the rate of positive drug testing appears to be an indicator of risk of recidivism within the RSP sample,
- Youth who experienced one or more later official contacts also experienced more TC and overall (TC and PO) contacts and agency partner contacts than youth who experienced no new contacts. The difference in contact level with agency partners was significant²¹. In other words, greater contact levels (between TCs /POs and youth and agency partners) were related to increased likelihood of recidivism,
- The average number of TC and overall (TC and PO) parent contacts were greater among youth who did not recidivate. In other words, greater contact between TCs / POs and parents was related to lower likelihood of youth recidivism. While these results were unexpected, there are a number of possible explanations (discussed below),
- Time in program and direct contact with TCs were related to increased likelihood of recidivism. Youth who experienced one or more later official contacts spent more time in the program and had slightly more direct contact with their TCs than did youth who experienced no later official contacts. These results were also unexpected. A discussion of their interpretation follows Table 15.

Table 1515 Relationship Between Program Factors and Recidivism			
	All RSP (N=92)	No New Contact (N=37)	New Official Contact (N=55)
Number of tasks assigned*	29.8 (22.8)	36.1 (23.3)	25.6 (21.6)
Number of tasks complete*	23.1 (20.4)	28.2 (21.2)	19.6 (19.2)
Task completion rate	72.2%	74.9%	70.3%
Number of referrals	5.7 (2.9)	6.0 (2.9)	5.6 (3.0)
Number of referrals complete	3.5 (2.6)	3.8 (2.5)	3.3 (2.6)
Referral completion rate	58.6%	64.2%	54.9%
Positive drug testing rate	34.6%	31.8%	36.2%
TC-youth contacts	49.4 (33.9)	32.7 (22.3)	37.6 (30.8)
TC-parent contacts	13.3 (10.5)	13.8 (10.3)	13.0 (10.8)
TC-agency partner contacts*	10.9 (9.3)	8.7 (5.8)	12.5 (10.8)
Total youth contacts (TC & PO)	45.3 (29.3)	40.8 (23.6)	48.4 (32.5)
Total parent contacts (TC & PO)	20.8 (16.3)	19.7 (16.3)	21.5 (16.5)
Total agency partner contacts (TC & PO)*	24.7 (18.6)	19.4 (13.7)	28.3 (20.7)
Time in program (days)	214.6 (96.0)	196.8 (94.6)	226.6 (95.9)
TC time with youth (hours)	49.4 (33.9)	48.7 (26.0)	49.8 (38.5)
† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .000			

Overall, the results of the analysis presented in Table 15 were mixed. Task assignment and completion, service referral and referral follow-through and level of contact between staff (TCs and total) and parents were related to lower recidivism risk, as expected. On the other hand, a number of program features were related to increased recidivism risk. At least one of these relationships (positive drug testing rate) was not unexpected. Other results were unexpected. Contact levels with youth and agency partners, time spent in the program, and time spent directly with TCs were related to increased recidivism. These measures are indicative of intensity or duration of service, which are generally related to reduced recidivism, at least among high risk youth (Andrews et al., 1990). While it is possible that more intensive services may result in increased recidivism risk, especially when focused on low risk youth, it seems more

likely that these results may reflect the realities of working with high risk youth, who experience a number of difficulties and thus likely require much attention from TCs and POs. The higher levels of some services experienced by the group who recidivated may reflect ongoing problems with the youth (i.e., misbehavior), or simply TC and PO recognition of the problems faced by these youth and their need for additional services. On the other hand, the possibility exists that impact of RSP may vary with the intensity or duration of services and certain groups of youth (e.g., high vs. low risk). It is also possible that task and referral related features of the RSP program, while related to reduced recidivism overall, may more beneficial for some youth than others. Unfortunately, the size of the sample precluded further analysis of these hypotheses.

The relationship between various RSP services and outcomes should be further examined with a larger sample of youth. If the hypothesis of differential effectiveness were confirmed, program staff could target various program features to youth who would benefit from them most. The results of this preliminary analysis suggest that, in the main, task assignment, task completion, referral, referral follow-through, and staff contact with parents are related to decreased likelihood of recidivism.

7.2 Youth Characteristics

Some analyses in Section 6 suggested that RSP may be particularly beneficial for certain subsets of youth, particularly minority youth and “riskier” youth (i.e., those with more extensive offending histories and those defined as higher risk based on YLS/CMI risk score). The relationship between various youth characteristics and recidivism were examined. Table 16 provides data on a number of youth characteristics for the entire RSP sample (N=92) and separately for the subset of RSP youth who had no new official contacts during the follow-up

period (N=37) and those who experienced one or more official contacts (N=53). Specifically, the data show that within RSP program participants:

- YLS/CMI risk score was a predictor of recidivism. In fact, risk score was the only significant predictor of recidivism within the RSP group¹⁹. Youth who experienced one or more later contacts scored, on average, 3 points higher on the YLS/CMI than did youth who experienced no later contacts (22.2 vs. 18.9). This finding is consistent with research supporting this tool as a predictor of recidivism risk (Andrews & Bonta, 2003), and speaks to the value of the instrument in predicting recidivism among high risk youth,
- Youth with a history of violence, mental health problems, and school problems were less likely to experience new official contacts during the follow-up period than were youth who did not evidence these problems. This finding was unexpected, but may be the result of RSP service itself. In other words, it may be that issues related to violence, mental health, and school failure / truancy were addressed by the program. It may also be that these youth are the type of youth who are most likely to benefit from RSP services. Sample size limitations preclude investigation of these hypotheses,
- Youth with a history of substance abuse were more likely to experience new official contacts than were youth without such a history. This finding is consistent with research on the relationship between substance use and crime (Lipton, 1995) and the difficulty in addressing substance abuse issues. In addition, youth who may be considered dual-diagnosis (history of both substance abuse and mental health problems) were more likely to experience a new official contact,
- RSP youth who did not experience a new official contact were, on average, older at release from placement (16.7 years) than were RSP youth who experienced one or more later official contacts (16.1 years). In other words, older RSP youth were less likely to recidivate than younger RSP youth. This difference was marginally significant¹⁸, and is consistent with research on desistance from crime with age, which finds that crime peaks at an early age and declines thereafter (Farrington, 2003). This result should not be interpreted as an indication that RSP participation is not beneficial for older youth, however, as subgroup analyses (Section 6) indicated that RSP participation had a beneficial impact on youth of all age groups, relative to similar comparison youth,
- Males and non-White youth were more likely recidivate during the follow-up period than were females and White youth. These results are consistent with research on the correlates of crime and recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Hawkins, Laub, & Lauritsen, 1998),
- Youth with more extensive offending histories and those with a prior felony charge were more likely to experience a new official contact. These results are consistent with research linking the seriousness and extensiveness of prior offending to recidivism likelihood (Andrews & Bonta, 2003),

- Youth with a prior person-related charge were slightly less likely to experience a new official contact than youth with no prior person-related charge. This finding was unexpected, as violent offending is generally an indicator of offense seriousness. On the other hand, violent offending is a rare occurrence (even among serious offenders), particularly among juveniles. This jurisdiction has a low rate of juvenile delinquency, in general, and a low rate of violence more specifically. Thus, the data may reflect, in part, socioeconomic and cultural conditions which provide relatively low endorsement of and tolerance for juvenile delinquency, especially violence by juveniles.

	All RSP (N=92)	No New Contact (N=37)	New Official Contact (N=55)
Age at return†	16.3 (1.4)	16.7 (1.5)	16.1 (1.3)
Race / Ethnicity			
White	50.0%	56.8%	45.5%
Non-White	50.0%	43.2%	54.5%
Gender			
Female	28.3%	35.1%	23.6%
Male	71.7%	64.9%	76.4%
Hometown			
Rural	31.5%	37.8%	27.3%
Urban	68.5%	62.2%	72.7%
Number of prior official contacts	4.2 (2.7)	4.0 (2.4)	4.3 (3.0)
Prior felony			
No	60.9%	67.6%	56.4%
Yes	39.1%	32.4%	43.6%
Prior person-related			
No	46.7%	43.2%	49.1%
Yes	53.3%	56.8%	50.9%
YLS / CMI risk score*	20.8 (7.3)	18.9 (7.1)	22.2 (7.2)
History of violence			
No	34.8%	32.4%	36.4%
Yes	65.2%	67.6%	63.6%
History of substance abuse			
No	23.9%	32.4%	18.2%
Yes	76.1%	67.6%	81.8%
History of mental health problems			
No	26.1%	21.6%	29.1%
Yes	73.9%	78.4%	70.9%
History of school problems			
No	14.1%	13.5%	14.5%
Yes	85.9%	86.5%	85.5%
Dual-diagnosis			
No	45.7%	51.4%	41.8%
Yes	54.3%	48.6%	58.2%

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .000

The data in Table 16 are consistent with other literature on the predictors of recidivism. In other words, the relationships observed between demographic characteristics, offending history, and social factors and outcomes among RSP youth are similar to those commonly found in recidivism research. The data also support the usefulness of the YLS/CMI as a predictor of recidivism, within a sample of youthful offenders with extensive offending and placement histories.

Some analyses in Section 6 suggested that RSP may be particularly beneficial for “riskier” (i.e., those with more extensive offending histories and those defined as higher risk based on YLS/CMI risk score) and minority youth. Data in Table 16 indicated that minority youth were more likely to recidivate, and that the average risk score and number of prior contacts were greater among RSP youth with one or more later contacts. Taken together these sets of results indicate that while minority youth and youth with higher risk scores or more extensive offending histories were less likely to reoffend when they participated in the reentry program (than when they did not), they were more likely to reoffend than Whites, lower risk youth, and youth with less extensive offending histories who participated in the RSP.

7.3 Case Histories

Each youth entered the RSP with unique strengths and challenges, not adequately revealed in statistical analyses. In addition, services provided varied, and the combination of youth and service factors are not easily captured in aggregate analyses. Finally, the process of reintegration varied for each youth. This section provides 3 case studies in an attempt to illustrate the variation in reentry experiences for youth and the unique challenges and services they experienced. Case histories were provided by TCs.

The reentry experience was fairly straightforward and positive for some youth. The case of “Frank” is an illustration:

“One of the participants in the project is a 13 year-old male (we’ll call him Frank). Frank’s transitional case plan includes improving school behavior, improving school grades, maintaining regular school attendance, attending a cognitive based thinking group, improving relations at home, finding positive recreational activities, completing community work service hours, and choosing positive friends/peers that do not pose a negative influence. He has been very successful with all goals related to school. His advising teacher has very positive reports and his grades have improved. Attendance has been good, with only a few absences due to illness and a family trip. Frank has also done a very impressive job improving family relations. He cares for his younger brothers on a regular basis and his mother reports that he helps out quite a bit. He recently went with his grandparents to California to stay with an uncle that was in a car accident. His mother was very proud of the fact that he wanted to go and help his family. Frank also started a job this fall that allowed him to work an hour or two after school each day. The job was seasonal and as soon as it ended he started his community service and has already completed it. He will start a cognitive-based group on decision making when school resumes after Christmas break. He has been very successful in all goals and tasks identified in his transitional case plan, and will hopefully continue on his new “path.”

For other youth, the transition back to the community was not as positive. “Nathan’s” case illustrates the challenges some youth faced, and the difficulties TCs encountered with youth and families who did not take advantage of services.

“During this quarter I decided to talk about a case which has given me some challenging moments. The youth involved is a 16/17 year old Native American male who was placed on probation as the result of a 5th degree assault. “Nathan” was placed at Valley Lake Boys Home in Breckenridge, MN. He was transferred to a foster home in Moorhead on the 4th day of August, 2014. After a couple of days his mother arranged for him to be able to reside with her at the Share House in Fargo.

While in the program, some of the goals for Nathan were for him to receive and maintain employment, get registered and attend school on a regular basis, be respectful to staff and peers and do assigned work, receive chemical dependency evaluation and follow recommendations, receive a mental health evaluation and follow recommendations, and follow directives of probation and home rules. During the first four months of the program, Nathan was very defiant. On several occasions, I had to redirect his attitude at school for sleeping in class, walking out of class, and being disrespectful to staff at the school. Appointments were scheduled for a Chemical Dependency evaluation; however they were never kept. Part of the plan was for he and his mom to schedule a mental health evaluation, however after several reminders they

still failed to comply. I took Nathan, with much resistance, to fill out applications for employment. Weekly AA meetings were also offered, which he refused to attend.

In December, Nathan was placed in detention for continued absconding from home, non-compliance with probation rules, being disrespectful in school, truancy, and continued usage of chemicals. He was resistant the whole time about complying with the Reentry program. After about 2 days, he once again was released to the custody of his mother, placed on house arrest. Nathan started complying with rules again for about 3 weeks – he went to AA, complied with school, looked for employment, and received a job.

After about 3 weeks, Nathan absconded from his mother's home and was gone for several days. He started missing school again, and when he did attend he was very non-compliant. Arrangements were made for him to attend school 1 time each week for independent study per his request. He was then going to work full time at his job. Nathan again absconded from his parent's home. This time it was decided that he needed to be removed from the community, as he continued to use drugs/alcohol, was involved in fights in the community, and wasn't complying with the rules of probation or the Reentry program.

During the program, I attempted to build a relationship with Nathan. It started out shaky and slow. I took him out and assisted him in filling out job applications, rehearsed interviewing skills, referred him to a chemical dependency program for evaluation on 2 or 3 occasions. He failed to attend the evaluations and had several altercations with his mother and the school for non-compliance. Since Nathan last went AWOL, he has been calling me on a weekly or sometimes biweekly basis to check in and say that he continues to be OK. He has no desire to turn himself in at this time, as his mom is in jail and may be going to prison, thereby leaving him with the only option of going into placement or foster care.

Although this case failed by the standards of the Reentry program, I feel great strides were made as Nathan continues to check in with me and my co-worker (other TC) on a regular basis. He has talked about different options available and occasionally contemplates if he should continue running. Hopefully Nathan will turn things around and get his messes cleared up.”

Even though this case was not a success story (if measured by compliance or recidivism), the TC felt that progress had been made as Nathan stayed in contact with his TC, even though he had absconded supervision. In addition, Nathan's case illustrates the numerous challenges faced by many youth returning from out-of-home placement, including school difficulties, substance abuse issues, and difficulties related to parental criminality. “Melva's” story (below) depicts other challenges, including mental health, substance abuse, and social difficulties. In addition,

her case serves as a reminder that reentry is a process which includes both achievements and setbacks, with the ultimate goal of long-term change.

“I reported on this particular case in Quarter 3 at the Advisory Board meeting. I would like to do an update on this case study because I recently closed her file. The client is a 16-year-old Caucasian female whom I will call “Melva.”

Melva participated in the Reentry Services Project from September 2003 to March 2004. During this time she completed many of her case plan goals and tasks, Melva has had numerous placements such as West Central Juvenile Detention Center, Shelter Care, and St. Croix Girls Camp. These placements were due to Melva using drugs/alcohol, fighting, and curfew violations. Melva was hospitalized at Prairie St. Johns after her stay at St. Croix to assess her marked cognitive decline. The diagnosis from Prairie showed an abnormal EEG, Polysubstance Abuse-CD, and a Cognitive Disorder. Melva was placed on medicine, referred for therapy at the Village Family Service Center, and referred to a psychiatrist at Prairie.

Melva, her Correction Agency, parents, and I developed a transitional case plan of goals and tasks for her to achieve while in the Reentry Services Project. These goals consisted of: attending school regularly and studying to get good grades; being more positive with people, particularly her family; behaving more responsibly; participating in recreational/leisure activities of her choice; completing a Learn and Serve Project; continuing with her doctor appointments and medication compliance; and actively seeking employment. All of these goals were derived from the high risk level rating disclosed on the Youth Level of Service and Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). There are 8 possible domains and Melva scored high on 5 of them. Her initial YLS score was 31, her 60 day score was 23, and her six month's score was 13. She improved a great deal while in the Reentry Services Project.

At first Melva did not want to participate in the Project, possibly because she tested “dirty” for THC in September. However, the next 5 random drug tests given to Melva were all “clean”. In the beginning, when Melva and I went on outings, she did not engage in conversations properly. She was like a small child just learning about life in which processing information was very difficult for her. Her therapists and I worked with her to develop better skills and eventually she started communicating better.

Melva continues to take her medication regularly. In early October, at one of her doctor's visits, her medication was increased. From October-December however, I received many complaints from teachers, the school social worker, and principal about Melva being highly sexual. It was also reported she was having a difficult time sitting still in class. Her classmates also noticed her negative behavior and started to shun Melva. During December, when the school went on an outing, none of the other students would sit by or talk with her. She was also easily agitated. Melva's dad permitted me to bring Melva to her psychiatric appointments, and while there Melva also wanted me to be with her when she met with the doctor. While with the doctor, Melva talked about having no friends, how she felt like a “witch”, and how her mom always drank alcohol. With the doctor, I shared mine and the school's concerns about Melva's negative behavior. I suggested a medication change and the doctor agreed to try. Melva was very compliant about switching her medication. She said she wanted to stop feeling so

anxious about everything plus she hated how she reacted to various situations. Within a couple of weeks on the new medication Melva was doing much better and when school started in January, after winter break, a “new calmer Melva” started too.

Melva admits she is spoiled by her dad. Her dad and I had many conversations about him being more consistent with disciplining Melva. He admits to overcompensating for Melva’s mom’s lack of involvement with her. I gave him some ideas on how to stop Melva’s demanding ways. I also talked with Melva’s therapist to ask if parenting skills could be offered to dad as part of Melva’s treatment. During the time I spent with her, Melva’s mom never wanted to meet with me. I invited mom to join Melva and me for an outing, but she didn’t want to participate. In fact, one day I called mom to see if she wanted to bring Melva to her doctor appointment so mom could talk to the doctor. She stated that her daughter’s mental illness was her daughter’s problem and she wanted nothing to do with it.

To achieve Melva’s goals, we incorporated all of the domains she scored high or at-risk levels. This case plan was developed because her mental health and her chemical addiction affected everything going on in her life. My job as the transitional coordinator was to give Melva and her family the support, tools, and needed access to achieve these goals. Melva signed up for a bowling league, 2 dance classes, AA, Alanon, helping at a fundraiser for the homeless, and began theatre classes. I transported Melva to all of these activities and as she became more interested, her dad took over the driving. She excelled in most of the activities she participated in. Melva took first place in the bowling league and is one of the best dancers in her class. Other students watch Melva dance if they forget the steps. She will be performing in 2 spring dance recitals and acting in a theater skit at the school picnic in May. She communicates her stories to the AA and Alanon groups, and listens to others with more empathy than before. Melva has found new non-using friends. Teachers report she is participating in school, her grades have improved, and there is a lot fewer behavior problems. Melva also found a job. She worked for a couple of months. However, the job caused her to miss too much school; partly due to the hours of the job and partly due to Melva’s taking advantage of the situation by saying she was always tired. Her corrections agent, parents, Melva, and I decided she should not work during the school year, only in the summer. She has since quit her job and there have been fewer truancy issues.

My concerns for Melva are that she may start using drugs again and stop taking her medicine. Melva has been very successful in the last six months. She has developed many strengths through the activities she is involved with, and from taking the right medication. She has learned how to communicate again and to develop goals for her future. She now has a sense of humor and can even laugh at herself. Her self-esteem and self-awareness have flourished. Melva’s brain disorder was caused from very heavy drug usage and I am concerned that if she starts using drugs again she will “hit bottom” even faster than she did before. She is very fortunate her brain is functioning at a higher level again. Melva also needs to continue with AA and Alanon.

Overall, Melva is a success. In fact, she has done amazing. She still needs to work on her demanding ways but she has stayed drug free, has not been locked up (she did shoplift and is doing community service), has continued with her dance, is doing well in school, modeled in a style show, has new positive friends, is working on her relationship with her parents, and is willing to make the changes needed in her life to

become more successful. Melva is also very good in math and wants to become an accountant. I asked Melva if she thought the Reentry Services Project helped her. She stated, “very much, without someone there to give me help and give me the boost I needed I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Although I have closed her file, I still visit Melva at school. My office is located upstairs of her school so when she is having a bad day or just wants to say hello, she will visit. I recently referred Melva to a new musical keyboarding group at school. She used to play the piano and keyboard before she started using drugs. Today, Melva told me she has a new boyfriend who doesn’t use drugs/alcohol, and he has a job. She wants me to meet him. I told her I would be honored. I wish Melva and her family the best in the future.”

While things started off rocky and setbacks occurred, Melva’s TC felt that she had made meaningful progress. And while she was doing well, Melva’s TC expressed concerns that she would return to drugs or stop taking her medication. And again, while not a “success” by recidivism standards (i.e., Melva experienced a new shoplifting charge), the case illustrates that reentry is a process of achievements and setbacks, and that the ultimate goal is long-term positive changes.

7.4 Summary of Predictors of Recidivism Within RSP

Data presented in Sections 6 and 7 suggested that the reentry program may have a more beneficial impact for some youth than others. The relationship between various RSP services and outcomes should be further examined with a larger sample of youth. If the hypothesis of differential effectiveness were confirmed, program staff could target youth who would benefit most.

In addition, data suggested that the impact various RSP components, combinations of services, and/or the intensity of service may vary, depending on youth characteristics. Sample size limitations restricted these analyses to bivariate correlations. It is quite possible that certain program components (e.g., time in program, contact levels, referral completion rates) operate differently for different types of youth (e.g., those with a history of substance abuse). For

example, transitional case plan tasks, referrals, and contact levels may operate differently for high and low risk youth. Further research, with a larger sample, should examine these and other combinations of factors. If a larger sample were used and relationships were found between program features and youth characteristics, the RSP could be adapted to target certain youth with certain types (or varying intensities) of services.

8 Cost Benefit

This section includes a cost benefit analysis comparing program (RSP) costs to avoided juvenile justice processing costs, including police, courts, and probation staff. No attempt was made to calculate overall differences in processing costs between the two groups. Instead, comparison group data were used only to estimate the impact of RSP on the processing-related outcomes. In other words, the comparison group was used mainly to determine outcomes in absence of the reentry program. Differences in juvenile justice processing costs were then calculated using processing cost estimates in Clay County, MN.

The analysis is “partial” for a number of reasons. First, the only benefits included are juvenile justice processing costs related to recidivism and other outcomes. Thus, benefits to crime victims resulting from reduced recidivism are excluded, as are benefits to youth (e.g., education, employability), their families (e.g., reduced costs associated with attending to youth on probation and in placement), and society as a whole (e.g., increased tax revenues). In other words, this comparison of program to processing costs is conservative (in that it excludes many benefits). On the other hand, it illustrates the impact of reentry services on overall processing costs for juvenile offenders in Clay County. One of the principal reasons for implementing the RSP was to reduce the costs of justice processing, specifically costs related to later out-of-home placements. In addition, the high cost of crime means that efforts that divert youthful offenders from a persistent pattern of adult crime can have a substantial impact (Mandel & Magnusson, 1993).

The calculation of cost-benefit in this analysis was completed as follows. First estimates were developed of processing costs for juvenile offenders in Clay County. Estimates of various types of processing, including processing of minor contacts, criminal contacts, technical

probation violations, and out-of-home placements were provided by the Lead Agent of Family Court Services. In most cases these estimates included average time for appropriate staff (e.g., police, judge, court reporter, PO), and salary and benefit information. Average costs of restrictive and non-restrictive placements were computed. These estimates were compiled to calculate at the total cost of processing minor contacts, criminal contacts, technical probation violations, and placement in Clay County. Table 22 (in Appendix B) provides a breakdown of these estimates, and related assumptions. The average costs of processing a minor offense (e.g., status, alcohol or tobacco, traffic) in Clay County were estimated at just over \$221, including \$35 in costs related to police time and car, \$148 in court costs, and \$38 in probation costs. The average cost of processing a criminal contact in Clay County was estimated at \$949 while the average cost of processing a technical probation violation was \$135. Finally, the average cost of processing an out-of-home placement was \$383, and each non-restrictive placement day was estimated to cost \$150, while each restrictive placement day was estimated at \$189.

Next, the impact of the program on 6 processing-related measures was determined by comparing RSP and Comparison youth outcomes. The 6 measures were number of minor contacts (i.e., status, alcohol and tobacco, and traffic offenses), number of criminal contacts (i.e., property, person-related, illegal drugs, and public order offenses), number of technical probation violations, and number of out-of-home placement, days in out-of-home placement, and days in restrictive out-of-home placement. Following earlier analyses, each of these outcomes was measured at several intervals – 6 months post-return, 1 year post-return, 2 years post-return, and 3 years post-return. The impact of the program on each measure at each interval was determined by comparing average outcomes for RSP and comparison youth. Only youth for whom full-follow-up data were available for each time period were examined, thus sample sizes vary (i.e.,

178 youth were included at six months post-release, 157 at one year post-release, 116 at two years post-release, and 61 at three years post-release).

Results of the analysis examining impact of program participation at each time point are provided in Table 17 (below). Average outcome levels for the two groups are provided, as well as differences. Positive numbers in the “difference” column indicate that RSP experienced more of a given outcome than did comparison youth, whereas negative numbers indicate that RSP youth experienced less of the outcome. As the data in Table 17 indicate, RSP youth experienced more technical probation violations, out-of-home placements, and non-restrictive placement days than comparison youth, at each follow-up period. Comparison youth experienced more minor and criminal contacts, and more restrictive placement days than RSP youth. The differences between the groups grew over time. For example, at six months post-release, RSP youth (on average) experienced 0.1 fewer minor contacts, 0.2 fewer criminal contacts and 3 fewer days in restrictive placement. However, they experienced 0.1 more technical probation violations and 0.1 more placements, and 5 more days non-restrictive placement than comparison youth. Over time, the direction of differences remained the same (e.g., increase vs. decrease in processing outcome), however the strength of the relationship changed. By three years post-release RSP youth experienced 0.6 fewer minor contacts, 0.8 fewer criminal contacts, and 69.8 fewer days in restrictive placement, however they experienced 0.3 more technical probation violations, 0.1 more placements, and 13.7 more days in non-restrictive placement than the comparison group.

	6 Months (N=178) ^a			1 Year (N=157) ^a			2 Years (N=116) ^a			3 Years (N=61) ^a		
	RSP	Comp ^b	Diff ^c	RSP	Comp ^b	Diff ^c	RSP	Comp ^b	Diff ^c	RSP	Comp ^b	Diff ^c
Minor Contacts	0.2	0.2	-0.1	0.3	0.4	-0.2	0.4	0.7	-0.3	0.7	1.3	-0.6
Criminal Contacts	0.3	0.5	-0.2	0.5	0.8	-0.3	0.9	1.2	-0.4	1.2	2.0	-0.8
Technical Probation Violations	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.8	0.6	0.2	1.5	1.1	0.4	1.8	1.5	0.3
Placements	0.8	0.7	0.1	1.2	1.2	0.0	2.1	1.9	0.2	2.6	2.6	0.1
Days in Non-restrictive Placement	6.7	1.7	5.0	20.4	7.8	12.6	20.8	16.3	4.5	30.3	16.6	13.7
Days in Restrictive Placement	22.9	25.9	-3.0	58.9	77.0	-18.2	121.1	149.8	-28.7	129.0	198.8	-69.8

^aSamples for each period include only youth with full follow-up data (i.e., 3 year sample includes only youth followed for a full 3 years after release. The 6 month analysis includes 91 RSP and 87 comparison youth. The one, two, and three year samples include 80, 54, and 27 RSP youth (respectively), and 77, 62, and 34 comparison youth (respectively).

^bComparison Group

^cMean difference between RSP and Comparison groups.

The cost savings (or increase) associated with each outcome was computed by multiplying the average difference (program impact; observed in Table 17) by the total estimated cost of processing in Clay County (from Table 22). These results are presented in Table 18, where cost differences reflect the average change in juvenile justice processing costs related for a youth in the reentry program over each of the time periods. As these data indicate, at the 6 month follow-up juncture, juvenile justice processing costs in Clay County are estimated at approximately \$59 more than would be expected in absence of the reentry program. This trend reverses, though, and there is an estimated reduction in costs of \$1,822 at 1 year post-release, \$5,033 at 2 years post-release, and \$12,004 at 3 years post-release. The difference grows considerably over time, and the majority of the difference is due to the changes in the estimated impact of the program on placement costs (days in non-restrictive and restrictive placement).

Table 1818 Juvenile Justice Processing Cost Difference									
		6 Months		1 Year		2 Years		3 Years	
	Cost Estimate	Program Impact	Cost Difference	Program Impact	Cost Difference	Program Impact	Cost Difference	Program Impact	Cost Difference
Minor Contacts	\$221.18	-0.1	(\$17.7)	-0.2	(\$33.2)	-0.3	(\$61.9)	0.7	(\$139.3)
Criminal Contacts	\$948.92	-0.2	(\$170.8)	-0.3	(\$294.2)	-0.4	(\$341.6)	1.2	(\$768.6)
Technical Probation Violations	\$134.97	0.1	\$15.0	0.2	\$27.1	0.4	\$49.6	1.8	\$36.3
Placements	\$383.39	0.1	\$47.9	0.0	\$16.4	0.2	\$71.7	2.6	\$27.1
Days in Non-restrictive Placement	\$150.00	5.0	\$755.3	12.6	\$1,896.9	4.5	\$673.5	30.3	\$2,052.9
Days in Restrictive Placement	\$189.23	-3.0	(\$571.1)	-18.2	(\$3,434.8)	-28.7	(\$5,424.4)	129.0	(\$13,212.7)
Total Processing Difference			\$58.7		(\$1,821.7)		(\$5,033.1)		(\$12,004.4)

The final step in the cost-benefit analysis included a comparison of these processing cost differences per youth (shown in Table 18.) to total program (RSP) costs per youth (results in Table 19). During the first 4 years of operation, a total of \$547,438 was spent to serve 124 youth in the reentry program, for an average cost per youth of \$4,415. Table 19 includes a comparison of program costs per youth to juvenile justice processing costs.

While some youth remained in the program longer than six months, the cost-benefit analysis assumed that all program costs were incurred during the first six months after release. Benefits (differences in juvenile justice processing costs) increased over time. The result is that total costs (RSP and juvenile justice related; reflected in Table 19) of processing youth through the reentry program are greatest at six months post-release (\$4,474), and decline over time as juvenile justice processing differences offset program costs. For example, total cost per youth

(RSP and juvenile justice processing) are reduced to \$2,593 at 1 year post-release. By 2 years post-release the cost of reduced juvenile justice processing fully offsets the cost of the program, and a total cost savings of \$618 is observed. This savings grows to \$7,590 by 3 years post release. In other words, the reentry program “pays for itself” between one and two years of release through a reduction in juvenile justice processing costs, and the benefits of the program (reduced juvenile justice costs) continue to increase over time.

	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Cost (RSP)	\$4,414.8	\$4,414.8	\$4,414.8	\$4,414.8
Benefit (difference in processing)	\$58.7	(\$1,821.7)	(\$5,033.1)	(\$12,004.4)
Total Cost of Processing per Youth	\$4,473.50	\$2,593.10	(\$618.30)	(\$7,589.60)

8.1 Summary of Cost-Benefit Analysis

A cost-benefit analysis was conducted by comparing program impact at four follow-up intervals to cost estimates related to juvenile justice processing in Clay County, MN. Program impacts were derived by comparing RSP and Comparison group youth outcomes. Processing cost-estimates were obtained from Clay County Family Court Services personnel. The analysis revealed that youth in the program experienced more technical violations, placements, and non-restrictive placement days than would be expected in the absence of the program; however they experienced fewer minor and serious contacts, and fewer days in restrictive placement. Reduced processing costs related to new offenses and restrictive placement were partially offset by increased processing costs related to technical violations and non-restrictive placement days.

Whether the greater number of technical probation violations among the RSP group is due to behavioral differences or differences in supervision level is unknown. The pattern observed is consistent with research that finds increases in technical probation violations

associated with increased levels of supervision or contact (Petersilia & Turner, 1993). The greater number of out-of-home placements and non-restrictive placement days observed in the RSP group (relative to the comparison group) may be related to the greater number of technical probation violations (i.e., use of placement as a consequence of violation), and may also be due to proximity to the juvenile detention center and sheltercare facility. While both counties use these facilities (and others) as sanctions for youth, the location of the facilities in Clay County makes them more readily available as an intermediate sanction for Clay County youth. The greater number of technical probation violations observed among RSP youth.

RSP program costs (estimated at \$4,415 per youth) were partially recovered within the first year after release from placement, and were fully recovered within 2 years of release. Within 3 years of release from placement, the net benefit of the program was \$7,600 in reduced juvenile justice processing costs per youth. The primary factor driving reduced juvenile justice processing was the reduction in time in restrictive placement. Considering this “benefit” alone, the costs of the program (\$4,415 per youth) are offset if the program prevents an average of 24 days restrictive placement per youth. The data indicate that an average of 129 days of restrictive placement was avoided within the first 3 years after release. These data speak favorably about the savings which were realized. When considered along with previously discussed impressive results about behavioral changes, the data definitely suggest that the program achieved impressive cost savings.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

Results indicated that the RSP was implemented as intended, achieved numerous important intermediate outcomes, and that participation in RSP was related to lower recidivism relative to a comparison group who received only probation. RSP staff were successful in securing local funding to continue program operations for an additional year. This is reflective of earlier data (Section 3) which indicated widespread community agency support. The Clay County, MN Reentry Services Project has generated considerable respect which has led to its continuation being strongly endorsed. During the next year, staff will have the opportunity to more fully implement and/or modify the program. This section summarizes results for the first 4 years of RSP operation. Several recommendations for program improvement are provided.

9.1 Conclusions

Results of the process and outcome evaluation indicated that the RSP staff were successful in implementing the program as designed. Specifically, the program:

- Serviced a target population for which it was designed – youth aged 11-19 returning home after 3 or more weeks of out-of-home placement,
- Increased contacts with youth, parents, and agency partners through collaboration between TCs and POs. Contacts between TCs and youth were evenly shared between supervision and mentoring related activities. The additional contact provided by the program represented a significant increase relative to the comparison group, for youth, parents, and agency partners,
- Provided youth with individualized transitional case plans matched to case needs,
- Referred youth to appropriate services,
- Created and maintained an advisory committee which met quarterly to review the progress of the program,
- Cultivated a strong working relationship with POs and community-based service providers. Agency partner, PO, youth, and parent surveys all indicated high satisfaction with program operations,

- Virtually met transitional case plan completion goals, achieving a 74% completion rate (goal of 75%),
- Produced meaningful changes in YLS/CMI risk/need and strengths scores. The overall risk / need reduction of 12% was somewhat shy of the 20% goal set by program designers, but represented a significant reduction in risk. The overall strengths improvement (17%) was also somewhat shy of the goal set by program designers (20%), but represented a marginally significant improvement. Furthermore, more than half (60%) of RSP youth who experienced both assessments experienced a reduction in risk from return to the community to six months post-return, and the reduction met the goal set by program designers (20% or greater) for 43% of youth. Among youth with both assessments, 44% experienced an increase in strengths, and that increase met the goal set by program designers (20% or greater) for 41% of youth.
- In addition to working directly with youth, TCs networked with other service providers in the community to establish programs and relationships that RSP youth and their families could access in their transition from out-of-home placement. A list of those activities is provided in Appendix A,
- Produced better long-term recidivism outcomes, relative to comparison youth. Results were statistically significant on two recidivism measures (number of new official contacts and criminal contacts per week at risk), controlling for demographic and offense history factors. In addition, significant bivariate differences were observed on a number of other recidivism outcomes, and subgroup analyses revealed a relatively consistent pattern of beneficial (though not consistently significant) results.

A greater number of technical probation violations were observed in the RSP group (relative to the comparison group). This finding was not unexpected, since research finds that programs that increase supervision or contact also tend to increase the rate of technical probation violations (Petersilia & Turner, 1993). This same research leads to the expectation that the significantly increased likelihood and frequency of urinalysis testing among RSP youth would have resulted in increased frequency of positive tests (i.e., more frequent testing increases likelihood of detecting drug use). This was not the case. While RSP youth experienced more positive tests than comparison youth, the rate of positive testing was significantly lower among RSP youth (35.5%) than comparison youth (58.8%). In other words, the increased likelihood and frequency of testing among RSP youth did not increase the likelihood of detecting substance

use. These results suggest that the program may be successful in encouraging abstinence among participants, and this short term impact likely has long term benefits for both the juvenile and criminal justice systems as well as for youth.

The cost-benefit analysis (Section 7) indicated that RSP costs (\$4,415 per youth) are offset within the first 2 years after release due to reduced juvenile justice system processing costs. Moreover, the estimated net impact of the RSP program is nearly \$7,600 in reduced juvenile justice costs within the first 3 years after release. These benefits will likely continue to grow over time (e.g., reduced costs associated with adult criminality).

A preliminary analysis of youth characteristics and program features related to recidivism among RSP participants was provided (Section 8). Due to limited sample size, this analysis was restricted to bivariate relationships between youth demographic and social history factors, offense history, and program features and the likelihood of reoffense during the entire follow-up period. As expected, results indicated that YLS/CMI risk level was significant predictor of recidivism among RSP youth. In addition, youth who were assigned and completed more transitional case plan tasks were less likely to recidivate. A pattern of unexpected results related to frequency and intensity of services suggested further subgroup analyses. It may be that certain program components are more beneficial for certain types of youth (e.g., high or low risk youth). Unfortunately, sample size limitations did not allow for more in depth analyses.

The results of the process and outcome evaluation also pointed to areas where program staff could focus to more fully implement the RSP program design, including:

- Improvements in timing of TC assignment, YLS/CMI assessment, and transitional case planning to ensure continuity of services. While program design called for improved services beginning upon placement, TCs were not assigned until much later. It may be that more intensive services occurred during the placement phase that did not come to the attention of the evaluators (because placement facility records were not available), however for the most part the RSP appeared to begin just prior to release from placement,

- More attention should be paid to survey completion, primarily youth and parent surveys. These surveys can provide an additional, valuable means of tracking social factors over time; however they have not yet been incorporated into the evaluation because too few surveys have been returned. In addition, youth and parent surveys provide the opportunity to solicit feedback for program improvement,
- The relationship between mental health needs and service provision should be more thoroughly examined. Some data (Section 6) suggested that there may be some youth with unmet mental health issues. This possibility should be investigated and addressed appropriately.

9.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of the process and program outcome evaluations, and research in the rehabilitation, aftercare and reintegration program literature, the evaluators have the following recommendations:

- Refine the program to accommodate Transitional Coordinator assignment as early as possible, preferably upon entry into placement. Aftercare research indicates that time in treatment and continuity of services across settings are important predictors of success (Hiller, Knight, Devereau & Hathcoat, 1996; Travis, 2005). The assignment of TCs at an early point would allow for improved coordination of services and earlier transitional planning,
- Systems should be devised to track placement related assessments and service receipt. The IAP and other aftercare models stress the importance of quality of services, treatment case planning, and continuity in services across settings (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1999). The evaluators have no information about the type or quality of services received during placement, and thus cannot determine whether services provided by the RSP represent a “continuum of care” philosophy,
- Pursue additional avenues to increase parent involvement with the program. Results indicated that greater contact between parents and staff (TCs and POs) was related to lower recidivism among RSP youth. This finding speaks to the value of parental involvement, and suggests that finding additional ways to encourage parental involvement may be beneficial for youth,
- Intensify attention on the strengths of youth and focus on them as a means to reduce the impact of their weaknesses. Barton (2006) advocates a strengths based approach to aftercare programming and recent studies (e.g., Kurtz & Linneman, 2006) support this approach (over traditional supervision) in diversionary programs. Many program activities (e.g., tasks and referrals) targeted traditional risk or need areas (e.g., addressing substance abuse or mental health issues), although strengths-based activities were also evident (e.g., pursue a hobby).

To the extent possible, case plan tasks, referrals, and other program activities should identify and develop youths' strengths,

- Efforts should be made to increase attention on cognitive-behavioral (CB) approaches, both in placement and in the community. While community-based referrals appeared to target identified need areas, the evaluators have no information about the content or quality of services that clients actually received. Research supports "appropriate" treatment, including a focus on high risk youth, dynamic risk factors, and a preference for CB style programming (Andrews et. al., 1990; Lipsey, 1992; MacKenzie, 2006). Slightly more than one-fourth (26%) of RSP youth were referred to a specific CB program (e.g., thinking skills), and CB specific referrals accounted for less than 5% of all referrals. It may be that other programs to which youth were referred offered a CB approach (e.g., substance abuse programs), however without more detailed information on these programs this possibility cannot be investigated. Program staff should provide or attempt to locate/refer clients to CBT style treatment targeting not only broad issues such as "criminal thinking" or other antisocial attitudes, but also to address substance abuse and other specific need areas. Where such treatment is not available, program staff could partner with other agencies to provide it (as they have with other types of programs),
- Maximize the value in community-based resources, particularly CBT, gender specific programming, and mental health services. Identify gaps in existing community-based services and explore additional avenues for collaboration.
- Continue data collection and analyses. Extension of the project through local funding will allow data collection to continue. Sample size limited the ability to fully investigate differential effectiveness and combinations of services predictive of success; however, the available data suggested that these are fruitful lines of future research. Specifically, analyses should focus on differential effectiveness for higher and lower risk clients (risk score), and combinations of services that are more or less effective within those groups.

Finally, it is vital that readers of this report keep in mind that the findings are influenced by the rigorous standards of statistical analysis. Many times the statistical formula yielded observations which were "statistically significant" and, therefore, indicated quite favorable conclusions about the achievement of program objectives. On other occasions, the statistical examinations generated results which satisfied the benchmark of "marginal significance." These latter results also indicated a favorable program impact, albeit at a somewhat muted level. The point being, both statistical parameters yield data which reveal a quality program; one which has achieved impressive results on several objectives. Combined with the cost savings this program

has provided to the juvenile justice system of Clay County, MN; this particular Reentry Service Program warrants a very favorable cost-effective evaluation conclusion.

Appendix A: TC Activities Aimed at 5 Reentry Components

In addition to working directly with youth, TCs networked with other service providers in the community to establish programs and relationships that RSP youth could access in their transition from out-of-home placement. The following describes the efforts of the TCs in the 4 years of the grant cycle. Information in this appendix was provided by the TCs, and is divided into efforts aimed at each of the five reentry components, including: a) obtaining and retaining long term employment; b) maintaining a stable residence; c) successfully addressing substance abuse issues; c) successfully addressing physical and mental health issues; d) establishing a meaningful and supportive role in the community.

Obtaining and Retaining Long Term Employment

To assist youth in obtaining and retaining employment, TCs:

- Met with local employers to develop rapport and assist RSP youth with employment opportunities,
- Created an employment portfolio to assist youth in tracking job applications, personal contacts, and follow-ups,
- Obtained educational software to enhance youths' skills and build confidence,
- Assisted youth in obtaining Social Security identification and Birth Certificates,
- Purchased appropriate clothing for job interviews and work attire,
- Made referrals to the Clay County independent living SELF program. Several youth were accepted into this program,
- Worked closely with the Minnesota Workforce Center and Rural MN CEP programs and referred RSP youth for placement consideration in these programs. Several youth were accepted into the CEP summer work program, and one was accepted into their year-round program,
- Assisted youth in completing job applications, role played interviewing skills, and provided education on proper work ethic,

- Assisted youth in applying for Job Corps,
- Assisted one youth in enlisting in the Minnesota National Guard,
- Provided transportation of youth to look for jobs, and to and from work,
- Assisted youth in obtaining drivers' licenses and bicycles to help them become more self sufficient in work transportation, and
- Served as contact person for employers and assisted youth and employers when problems arose.

Youth in the RSP program often needed support in their school environment. To address this need, TCs:

- Made referrals to alternative education programs,
- Attended school meetings to assist others in developing appropriate schedules or modified educational programming (IEP),
- Collaborated closely with the Truancy Intervention Program,
- Addressed academic or behavioral concerns with youth,
- Transported youth to and from school, when needed,
- Initiated a weekly study group for youth,
- Acted as a contact person for schools to address concerns regarding RSP youth,
- Accompanied youth on meetings with post-secondary school counselors and assisted youth in completing admission forms and financial aid packets,
- Took youth on tours of local colleges,
- Assisted youth in applying to technical college,
- Assisted youth in attending a leadership camp, and
- RSP youth assisted the alternative school staff in establishing a school newspaper and wrote articles for it,

Maintaining a Stable Residence

Some RSP youth and their families were homeless upon entering the program. Other families had difficulty maintaining their housing for various reasons. To address these issues,

TCs:

- Assisted families in securing housing,
- Provided Section 8 housing packets to eligible families and referrals to appropriate agencies,
- Advocated on behalf of families to local homeless shelters,
- Advocated on behalf of families with local apartment complex owners. Some families have “burned many bridges” with poor credit, prior evictions, and criminal records and thus have a difficult time finding housing. TCs established relationships with local apartment complex owners which resulted in increased receptivity to renting to these families. These housing opportunities allowed families to reestablish rental and credit histories and will hopefully prevent future homelessness,
- Paid utilities bills when no other funding was available,
- Purchased car parts to prevent mothers from losing their jobs when no other funding was available,
- Organized Wilder Homeless Foundation surveys, and
- Served on a local homeless youth committee.

Successfully Addressing Substance Abuse Issues

Transitional Coordinators established substance abuse support for RSP youth. When the treatment/transitional plan indicated that substance abuse services are required, TCs:

- Ordered AA treatment workbooks through the Hazelton Treatment Center in Minnesota and distributed them to appropriate youth (based on CD evaluations and current/prior CD services),
- Obtained National Drug Intelligence Center brochures detailing information on assorted drugs and distributed them to youth and their families,
- Purchased and utilized a variety of educational DVDs, brochures, and worksheets for RSP youth regarding substance abuse,
- Provided information regarding community services for aftercare to youth and their families,

- Assisted in scheduling treatment appointments,
- Provided transportation to and from treatment programs,
- Worked closely with chemical dependency counselors,
- Completed urinalysis testing,
- Attended weekly AA meetings with appropriate youth,
- Provided support for school AA/NA groups, and
- Helped to establish an Alateen support group in Clay County.

Successfully Address Physical Health and Mental Health Issues

Several youth involved with the RSP program were in need of physical or mental health services. In an attempt to meet these needs, TCs:

- Purchased material to provide a cognitive group (EQUIP). This program focuses on teaching youth to think and act responsibly through a peer-helping approach. Transitional Coordinators facilitated the group,
- Provided individual cognitive thinking sessions for youth,
- Assisted youth in scheduling physicals and mental health assessments,
- Assisted youth and their families in completing medical paperwork,
- Transported youth and/or parents or guardians to and from health related appointments,
- Attended a diabetic and weight loss support group with a youth,
- Acted as a resource for doctors and therapists involved with RSP youth,
- Assisted schools in receiving the paperwork necessary to administer youth medication,
- Collaborated with Rule 79 caseworkers to make sure that they are aware of problems with RSP youth involved with their services,

Establishing a Meaningful and Supportive Role in the Community

There were many families *not involved with their children, too involved with their children* and/or who *experienced many of the same issues and problems as the youth*. The TCs believed that for youth to be successful, the needs of the family often also needed to be addressed. To address these needs, TCs:

- Attempted to keep an open line of communication with parents/guardians by encouraging them to contact TCs at any time,
- Attended wraparound meetings and assisted families in reaching their goals,
- Made referrals to local agencies qualified to assist families with their needs,
- Transported families to appointments, when necessary,
- Encouraged family involvement in RSP by inviting family members to attend outings with their children including social activities, cultural events, and AA/NA meetings,
- Participated in crisis interventions with families, and
- Helped establish a Families Anonymous group in Clay County for family members of youth who have drug / alcohol or behavioral problems.

In addition to addressing family issues, TCs attempted to involve youth in their community in an effort to create a more meaningful role for youth. Specifically, TCs have:

- Coordinated with a local youth program to provide an independent living class for youth,
- Prepared youth to participate and compete in the Star Convention in Minneapolis, MN. (The Star Convention is a component of the MN Association of Alternative Programs),
- Provided opportunities for Restorative Justice conferencing and circles for youth in the program,
- Combined resources with the Clay County Minor Parent program to provide services to teen parents,
- Began the process of establishing a volunteer site at a local nursing home, and
- Provided community volunteer opportunities including working at local homeless shelters, thrift stores, and a senior program.

Appendix B: Additional Tables

	Within 6 Months of Release ^a		Within 1 Year of Release ^b		Within 2 Years of Release ^c	
	B (SE)	Wald	B(SE)	Wald	B(SE)	Wald
Constant	-5.03 (1.23)	16.81***	-4.04 (.94)	18.55***	-4.29 (.89)	23.45***
Age	-.09 (.07)	1.37	-.12 (.06)	4.68*	-.12 (.05)	5.14*
Race/Ethnicity (Non-White = 1)	.36 (.21)	2.94†	.32 (.17)	3.58†	.43 (.16)	6.95**
Gender (Male = 1)	.51 (.25)	4.22*	.26 (.19)	1.83	.34 (.17)	3.90*
Hometown (Urban = 1)	.15 (.20)	.50	-.12 (.16)	.56	-.32 (.15)	4.64*
Number of Prior Charges	.05 (.02)	5.94*	.04 (.02)	4.68*	.02 (.01)	1.91
Group (RSP = 1) ^d	-.32 (.22)	2.11†	-.37 (.18)	4.20*	-.32 (.17)	3.55*
	Likelihood Ratio χ^2 (6, N = 178) = 18.41, p = .005		Likelihood Ratio χ^2 (6, N = 157) = 24.50, p = .000		Likelihood Ratio χ^2 (6, N = 116) = 32.83, p = .000	

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .000
^aN = 178 (91 RSP and 87 Comparison youth with at least 6 months follow-up)
^bN = 157 (80 RSP and 77 Comparison youth with at least 1 year follow-up)
^cN = 116 (54 RSP and 62 Comparison youth with at least 2 years follow-up)
^d Group effects tested with one-tailed significance

	Within 6 Months of Release ^a		Within 1 Year of Release ^b		Within 2 Years of Release ^c	
	B (SE)	Wald	B(SE)	Wald	B(SE)	Wald
Constant	-4.77 (1.48)	10.40**	-3.82 (1.13)	11.48**	-4.57 (1.10)	17.33***
Age	-.09 (.09)	1.05	-.12 (.07)	3.27†	-.09 (.06)	1.93
Race/Ethnicity (Non-White = 1)	.20 (.25)	.61	.10 (.20)	.25	.12 (.19)	.36
Gender (Male = 1)	.53 (.31)	2.84†	.29 (.24)	1.47	.38 (.23)	2.78†
Hometown (Urban = 1)	-.27 (.25)	1.12	-.47 (.20)	5.34*	-.51 (.19)	7.32**
Number of Prior Charges	.01 (.27)	.16	-.01 (.02)	.06	-.03 (.02)	1.53
Group (RSP = 1) ^d	-.41 (.27)	2.23†	-.50 (.22)	5.17*	-.44 (.21)	4.53*
	Likelihood Ratio χ^2 (6, N = 178) = 10.23, p = .115		Likelihood Ratio χ^2 (6, N = 157) = 19.94, p = .003		Likelihood Ratio χ^2 (6, N = 116) = 21.82, p = .001	

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .000
^aN = 178 (91 RSP and 87 Comparison youth with at least 6 months follow-up)
^bN = 157 (80 RSP and 77 Comparison youth with at least 1 year follow-up)
^cN = 116 (54 RSP and 62 Comparison youth with at least 2 years follow-up)
^d Reentry Services effects tested with one-tailed significance

Table 2222 Clay County Juvenile Justice Processing Cost Estimates	
Minor Offense Processing (status, alcohol and tobacco, and traffic offenses) ^a	
Police (.75 hours, 1 hour vehicle)	\$35.44
Court ^b	\$148.24
Probation (1 hour PO, .75 administrative) ^c	\$37.50
Total	\$221.18
Criminal Offense Processing ^a	
Police (4.5 hours, vehicle, investigation and court appearance) ^d	\$264.45
Court ^e	\$392.52
Probation (10 hours PO, .75 administrative, predispositional reports) ^f	\$291.96
Total	\$948.92
Additional Costs ^a	
Processing cost for technical probation violation ^g	\$134.97
Processing costs for out-of-home placement ^h	\$383.39
Restrictive out-of-home placement per day ⁱ	\$189.23
Non-restrictive out-of-home placement per day ^j	\$150.00
<p>^aAll estimates include salary and benefits</p> <p>^bAssumes case is resolved in one court hearing. Includes .50 hours Judge, Court Reporter, and Clerk time, 1.25 hours Public Defender time, and 1.5 hours Assistant County Attorney time.</p> <p>^cProcessing and supervision. Assumes 90 days unsupervised probation</p> <p>^dInvestigation and court appearance occur in only a subset of cases. This estimate assumes investigation (average 15 hours) occurs in 50% of cases, and court appearance (3 hours overtime) occurs in 5% of cases</p> <p>^eAssumes case is resolved in one court hearing. Includes 1 hour Judge, Court Reporter, and Clerk time, 3.5 hours Public Defender time, and 5 hours Assistant County Attorney time</p> <p>^fIncludes processing and supervision. This estimate assumes 1 year supervised probation (sentences are typically between 6 months and 18 months supervised). Predispositional reports occur in only a subset of cases. This estimate assumes predispositional reports are completed for 25% of cases (4.5 hours PO time and 1.75 hours Administrative Staff)</p> <p>^g1 hour PO, 1 hour Administrative Staff, and .50 hours court time</p> <p>^hAssumes matter is resolved in 1 hearing. Includes 10 hours PO (paperwork, hearing, visiting youth in placement), and .75 court time</p> <p>ⁱAverage cost of 5 most common restrictive placements used by agency</p> <p>^jAverage of group home / foster and halfway house costs</p>	

Appendix C: Notes and Significance Tests

Section 3: Program Process and Outputs

¹Activity records were coded in an attempt to determine the distribution of supervision, treatment, and mentoring activities, however due to limitations in the recordkeeping this analysis is somewhat subjective as the appropriate coding of some activities is unclear. The evaluators treated all home, school, office, and field visits as supervisory in nature, even though such visits could also be considered “mentoring”, depending on the reason for the visit. Overall this decision likely underestimates the amount of mentoring (and overestimates supervision) actually occurring, as these visits may also be mentoring-related.

Section 4: Intermediate Outcomes

²Paired-samples t-tests revealed that the overall reduction in risk/need was statistically significant [t(62) = 3.14, p = .003]. Reductions in several specific domains were significant, including education / employment [t(62) = 3.15, p = .003], peer relations [t(62) = 2.27, p = .027], substance abuse [t(62) = 2.17, p = .034], leisure / recreation [t(62) = 3.55, p = .001], and personality and behavior [t(62) = 2.60, p = .012]. The increased rating of prior and current offenses was also significant [t(62) = -2.43, p = .018].

³Paired-samples t-tests revealed that the overall improvement in strengths scores was moderately significant [t(62) = 1.71, p = .093]. Improvement in the domain of attitudes / orientation was statistically significant [t(62) = 2.73, p = .008], and the improvement in education / employment was moderately significant [t(62) = 1.82, p = .073].

⁴All of this data is based on the perception of the youths’ adjustment in each of these domains as reported by either the TC or PO. The ability of these staff members to accurately assess these domains after program completion (and when there is generally less frequent contact with youth) is unclear. As such, the results presented in this section must be interpreted carefully – they are staff perceptions of adjustment, which may be susceptible to bias from many sources including lack of knowledge of the youths’ actual behavior and current status, staff members’ knowledge of the youths’ status as an RSP participant and an associated desire to have the youth be a “success”, acquiescence (e.g., youth tendency to report positively to TCs), and so on. Taken together with more objective measures of program success, the evaluators believe that these perceived social indicators can help underscore program achievements and failures; however they are not to be and should not be taken as the only indicators of whether the program has met its stated objectives.

In addition, a limited number of youth have this data available as it is based largely on the perceptions of TCs and POs as recorded on “tracking forms” after the youth completes the program. Youth who remain on probation after completing the program may be more likely to have these tracking forms completed since they are easier for TCs and POs to maintain contact with. If this is indeed the case, the information presented here may actually underestimate the improvement of those RSP youth who do not remain on probation after completing RSP, since those who do not merit continued probation supervision post-RSP may be less “serious” offenders and/or those who have less positive adjustment.

Section 6: Comparison

⁵A chi-square test of independence revealed that the relationship between group (RSP or comparison) and race/ethnicity was significant [χ^2 (2, N=184) = 21.64, $p < .000$], with the RSP group including more Black or Hispanic youth and the comparison group including more Native American Youth. Further analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between group and race/ethnicity when race/ethnicity was operationalized as “white – non-Hispanic” or “non-white”. Due to small sample size the white/non-white grouping was used in all multivariate analyses.

⁶A chi-square test of independence revealed that the relationship between group (RSP or comparison) and hometown (urban or rural) was significant [χ^2 (1, N=184) = 11.67, $p=.001$]. RSP youth were more likely to come from the small urban area than were comparison youth.

⁷A series of independent samples t-tests revealed that comparison group youth had experienced significantly more prior official contacts [$t(173) = 3.95$, $p<.000$], more prior charges [$t(153) = 4.68$, $p<.000$], and more prior criminal charges [$t(144) = 3.76$, $p<.000$].

⁸A chi-square test of independence revealed that the relationship between group (RSP or comparison) and prior felony charge was significant [χ^2 (1, N=184) = 11.51, $p=.001$]. Comparison group youth were more likely to have experienced a felony level charge.

⁹A series of independent samples t-tests revealed that RSP youth experienced significantly more prior placements [$t(171) = -2.59$, $p=.01$], while comparison group youth spent more time in placement [$t(162) = 2.30$, $p=.02$] and in restrictive placement [$t(163) = 1.94$, $p=.06$]. In addition, comparison group youth spent more time on probation prior to their most recent release [$t(182) = 1.97$, $p=.05$].

¹⁰An independent samples t-test revealed that POs serving the RSP group had more contact with youth than POs serving the comparison group, and this difference was marginally significant [$t(182) = -1.95$, $p=.053$].

¹¹A series of independent samples t-tests revealed that total contact levels were significantly greater in the RSP group. This was true of all three contact measures, including contact with youth [$t(96) = -7.72$, $p<.000$], contact with parents [$t(129) = -7.71$, $p<.000$], and contact with agency partners [$t(128) = -3.54$, $p=.001$].

¹²An independent samples t-test revealed that the rate of positive testing (number of positive tests vs. number of tests) was significantly lower among RSP youth [$t(127) = 4.16$, $p<.000$].

¹³A chi-square test of independence revealed that the relationship between group (RSP or comparison) and %age of youth who were subjected to urinalysis testing was significant [χ^2 (1, N=184) = 11.44, $p=.001$], with a proportion of RSP youth subjected to testing. In addition, an independent samples t-test revealed that, among tested youth, RSP youth were tested more frequently (as measured by urinalysis tests per week on probation) than comparison youth, and this difference was statistically significant [$t(115) = -4.68$, $p<.000$].

¹⁴A series of independent samples t-tests revealed RSP youth experienced significantly fewer later official contacts [$t(152) = 2.13$, one-tailed $p=.02$], criminal contacts [$t(158) = 1.58$, one-tailed $p=.06$], charges [$t(141) = 2.80$, one-tailed $p=.003$], and fewer days in placement [$t(169) = 1.81$, one-tailed $p=.04$] and restrictive placement [$t(167) = 2.17$, one-tailed $p=.02$] than comparison youth during the follow-up period. A series of chi-square tests of independence revealed that RSP youth were significantly less likely to experience a long-term out-of-home placement [$\chi^2(1, N=184) = 2.68$, one-tailed $p=.05$], and their later behavior (measured as most serious later level) was less serious [$\chi^2(3, N=184) = 10.13$, one-tailed $p=.009$],

¹⁵An independent samples t-test revealed that RSP youth spent marginally longer time on probation after release than did comparison youth [$t(182) = -1.38$, one-tailed $p=.09$].

¹⁶Negative binomial regression revealed that, controlling for other factors, group (RSP) was a predictor of number of official contacts per week at risk at the 6 month post-release period (one-tailed $p = .07$), one year post-release (one-tailed $p = .02$), and two years post-release (one-tailed $p = .02$).

¹⁷Negative binomial regression revealed that, controlling for other factors, group (RSP) was a predictor of number of official contacts per week at risk at the 6 month post-release period (one-tailed $p = .07$), one year post-release (one-tailed $p = .01$), and two years post-release (one-tailed $p = .02$).

Section 8: Predictors of Recidivism within RSP

¹⁸RSP youth who did not experience a new official contact were, on average, younger at release from placement (16.7 years) than were RSP youth who experienced one or more later official contacts (16.1 years). An independent samples t-test revealed that this difference was marginally significant [$t(90) = 1.70$, $p=.09$].

¹⁹An independent samples t-test revealed the youth with one or more later contacts also has significantly higher YLS/CMI risk scores than youth with no later contacts [$t(88) = -2.10$, $p=.04$].

²⁰A series of independent samples t-tests revealed that RSP youth who experienced no later official contacts were assigned [$t(90) = 2.19$, $p=.03$] and completed [$t(90) = 2.03$, $p=.05$] a significantly greater number of transitional case plan tasks RSP youth who experienced one or more later contacts.

²¹A series of independent samples t-tests revealed RSP youth who experienced one or more later official contacts were also experienced significantly more TC-agency partner [$t(90) = -2.17$, $p=.03$] and overall agency partner [$t(90) = -2.46$, $p=.02$] contacts than youth who experienced no later official contacts.

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