

Redirection Continues to Save Money and Reduce Recidivism

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Statewide Outcomes

Redirection Services for Delinquent Youth

The Redirection Project is a Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) intervention initially funded by the Florida Legislature in 2004 to target juvenile offenders placed in confinement for minor offenses and non-law violations of probation. Today, any youth in Florida, regardless of criminal history, risk, or

The Justice Research Center (JRC) recently completed its annual independent evaluation of the Redirection Project. This summary report presents findings from the study in which statewide recidivism outcomes of youth completing Redirection services in fiscal year (FY) 2009-10 were compared to a matched sample of

Key Findings

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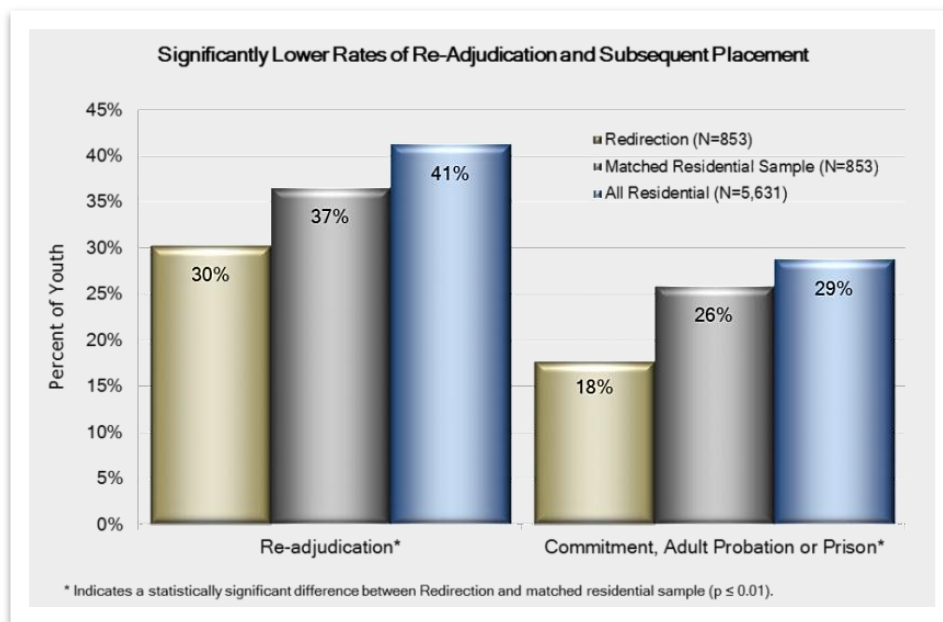
Rates of subsequent adjudication/conviction were 19% lower for youth completing Redirection programs in FY 2009-10 compared to the matched sample of residential youth.

Rates of subsequent placement to juvenile commitment, adult probation or adult incarceration were 31% lower for Redirection youth.

The average cost of serving a youth in a Redirection program was \$22,000 less than the cost of incarcerating a youth in a residential facility.

Redirection avoided \$19 million in residential commitment costs in FY 2009-10.

Over the last five years, serving youth in Redirection saved more than \$93 million dollars in residential commitment costs.



current offense, at the discretion of the courts and FDJJ, is eligible for Redirection. Youth are "redirected" from residential confinement to one of three community-based alternatives: Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT).

youth who completed residential programs. Detailed methods and results are presented in the accompanying report appendices.¹

¹ Hand, G., Winokur Early, K., Chapman, S., & Blankenship, J. (2011). *Redirection Continues to Save Money and Reduce Recidivism: Methodology Appendix*. Tallahassee, FL: Justice Research Center.

Redirection Services Background

Redirection services were developed as a cost-effective option for youthful offenders with services tailored to the individual risks and needs of youth and their families. Florida law set forth that Redirection interventions should target youth who would otherwise be served in residential commitment.²

Evidence Based Associates (EBA) partnered with FDJJ to provide Redirection services to youth diverted from residential commitment initially to one of two treatment alternatives: Multisystemic Therapy (MST) or Functional Family Therapy (FFT). These community-based interventions have been proven through research to effectively treat delinquent youth and reduce recidivism. A national review of juvenile violence prevention programs found that MST and FFT reduced arrests and out-of-home placements through services “focus(ed) on developing social competency skills, a long-term approach, and family involvement.”³

² Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. (2006). *Redirection as effective as residential delinquency programs, achieved substantial cost avoidance*. Retrieved from <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/reports/pdf/0634rpt.pdf>.

³ National Institute of Health. (2004). Panel finds scare tactics for violence prevention are harmful. *NIH News*. Retrieved from <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/oct2004/od-15.htm>.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has identified both interventions in its Model Programs Guide as being among those scientifically proven to address a range of delinquency, mental health and substance abuse related issues. MST and FFT have also been designated by the Blueprints for Violence Prevention Initiative as a Blueprints Model Program, a classification thus far awarded to only 11 prevention interventions.

Beginning in 2007, the University of Miami, FDJJ and EBA partnered to introduce an additional Redirection alternative, Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), on a

Broward and Escambia. The project was expanded in 2005, to include Osceola, Brevard, Hillsborough, Orange, Seminole and Pinellas counties. Services were again expanded in 2006 to include the counties of Marion, Polk, Sarasota, Palm Beach, Vero Beach, and Lee, and in 2007, to include Leon, Gadsden, Wakulla, Duval, Clay, Nassau, Alachua, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, Union and Bay. Due to state budget cuts in 2008, the Legislature reduced Redirection funding by \$1.4 million, resulting in a reduction of programs in Circuits 4 (Clay, Duval and Nassau counties) and 17 (Broward county).

A goal of the initial pilot was to determine the value of

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small scale across the state. The Blueprints for Violence Prevention Initiative designated BSFT as a Promising Program and the intervention was also endorsed as an OJJDP Model Program in 2009, with an Effective rating.

The Redirection project was initially introduced in three counties with high juvenile commitment rates for non-law violations of probation: Dade,

Redirection services in terms of reducing juvenile delinquency and providing a cost-effective alternative to residential commitment. To this end, the Florida Legislature directed its Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct annual outcome evaluations of the project from 2006 to 2009. The OPPAGA reports found that Redirection

was as effective as residential placement at reducing juvenile arrests, and was significantly less expensive than traditional juvenile incarceration.⁴

Beginning in 2007, EBA partnered with the JRC to perform independent data tracking, reporting, and outcome evaluations of all Redirection programs statewide. The data-driven process allows EBA to maintain data integrity, program accountability, and operational fidelity. Similar to the OPPAGA findings, the JRC found that the Redirection Project consistently demonstrated as good or better recidivism results than residential services, which were achieved at a significantly lower cost per completion.⁵

Current Evaluation Methods

The current study is the latest in the series of annual comprehensive evaluations conducted by the JRC. Analysis and findings are separated into a program recidivism evaluation and cost avoidance analysis.

There are many ways to evaluate the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs. Programs are often assessed for their ability to alter attitudes and beliefs, improve quality of life, and change behaviors. It is change in behavior, namely the reduction of delinquent or criminal activities, which is routinely utilized as a measure of juvenile justice program success. The expectation of all juvenile justice services is that they will mitigate risk factors and reduce involvement of youth in further delinquent behaviors. Redirection programs were assessed here in terms of their impact on juvenile recidivism.

Legislative proviso in Florida stipulated the following regarding Redirection services:

*Youth at risk of commitment are eligible for evidenced-based family therapy services. These services are to be provided as an alternative to commitment were intended for referrals that would otherwise have required residential commitment, the logical comparison group is juvenile offenders placed in residential facilities.*⁶

Given that Redirection youth would otherwise be served through residential commitment, the study compared the outcomes of youth who completed a

Redirection program during fiscal year 2009-10, to similar youth who completed low, moderate, and high risk residential commitment services. Outcome measures were calculated for youth who completed services, adhering to the official FDJJ methodology used to report delinquency program outcomes to the Florida Legislature.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined in assessing the impact of Redirection on recidivism and program costs compared to residential commitment:

- 1) Do youth who complete Redirection services have lower rates of re-arrest than youth completing residential commitment services?
- 2) Do youth who complete Redirection services have lower rates of felony arrest than youth completing residential commitment services?
- 3) Do youth who complete Redirection services have lower rates of re-adjudication/conviction than youth completing residential commitment services?
- 4) Do youth who complete Redirection services have lower rates of felony adjudication/conviction than youth completing residential commitment?

⁴ Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. (2006). *Redirection as effective as residential delinquency programs, achieved substantial cost avoidance*. Retrieved from <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/reports/pdf/0634rpt.pdf>.

⁵ Hand, G., Winokur, K., & Blankenship, J. (2011). *Evaluation of Evidence-Based Associates Redirections Project: Outcome Evaluation Report 2011*. Tallahassee, FL: Justice Research Center.

⁶ Florida HB 5001, § 4, 1141, 2010.

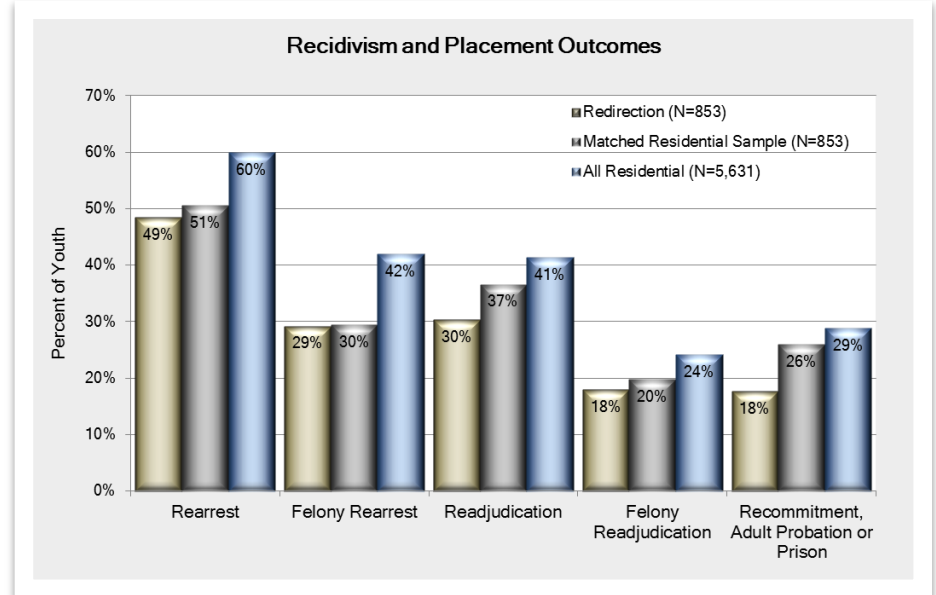
5) Do youth who complete Redirection services have lower rates of placement to juvenile commitment, adult probation, or adult incarceration than youth completing residential commitment services?

6) To what extent does the State of Florida avoid costs as a result of diverting youth from residential commitment to Redirection services?

Recidivism outcomes for Redirection and residential youth were tracked for 12 months following program completion. The study included two outcome evaluation samples and sets of analyses. The first analysis compared all 858 juvenile offenders who completed Redirection services in FY 2009-10, to all 5,631 youth who completed low, moderate, and high risk residential commitment programs in Florida during the same year.

The second analysis examined recidivism outcomes for the youth completing Redirection services compared to a matched sample of residential youth to control for individual differences in the likelihood to be disposed to Redirection versus residential programming.

This report focuses on the findings from the second analysis. Readers can review outcomes for the total samples, as well as detailed discussions of the methodology used in



matching youth, in the accompanying report appendices.

Following the outcome evaluation, state and federal expenditures, based on figures from the FDJJ *CAR Report*,⁷ were compared for Redirection and residential services.

Results

Redirection and Matched Residential Outcomes

Youth who completed Redirection services had lower rates of re-offending than their matched residential counterparts and the population of all youth completing low, moderate and high risk residential programs in fiscal year 2009-10. The proportion of those re-adjudicated or

convicted within twelve months of program completion was significantly different between the two groups. Thirty-percent of the Redirection youth were re-adjudicated within twelve months of program completion compared to 37% of the matched commitment sample, a difference that was statistically significant ($p \leq 0.01$). In examining subsequent placements to juvenile commitment, adult probation, or adult incarceration following release, Redirection services demonstrated significantly more favorable outcomes (18% compared to 26% for the matched residential group).

The Redirection sample also achieved lower rates of re-arrest, felony arrest, and felony adjudication/conviction 12-months post program completion compared to the matched residential sample.

⁷ Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (2011). *2008-09 Comprehensive Accountability Report: Outcome evaluation, quality assurance and program accountability*. Tallahassee, FL: Department of Juvenile Justice. Retrieved from <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/Research/PMIndex.html>

The analyses revealed that residential youth were 1.3 times more likely to recidivate than youth completing Redirection services.

Additional analyses were performed to further control for factors not included in the matching process but which may have contributed to differences in observed outcomes for the Redirection and matched residential samples. These factors included risk assessment data from the FDJJ Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) and individual demographic characteristics. Expected recidivism outcomes were compared to observed recidivism for both the Redirection and matched residential samples.

Completion of Redirection services significantly reduced the odds of recidivism, even after controlling for these additional factors. The analyses revealed that residential youth were 1.3 times more likely to recidivate than youth completing Redirection services.

On average, Redirection programs achieved better than predicted rates of re-offending (three percentage points lower than expected), while youth in the matched residential sample had higher than predicted recidivism rates (three

percentage points higher than expected). A detailed presentation of these post-hoc regression analyses can be found in the report appendices.

Analysis of Cost Savings

A total of 858 youth completed Redirection services in fiscal year 2009-10. The average cost per completion for Redirection

programming during this fiscal year was \$12,697.⁸ In comparison, on average it cost Florida \$35,352 for each youth in the matched commitment study sample who completed

⁸ Redirection Project expenditures for MST, FFT, and BSFT services totaled \$10,894,338.86 in fiscal year 2009-10.

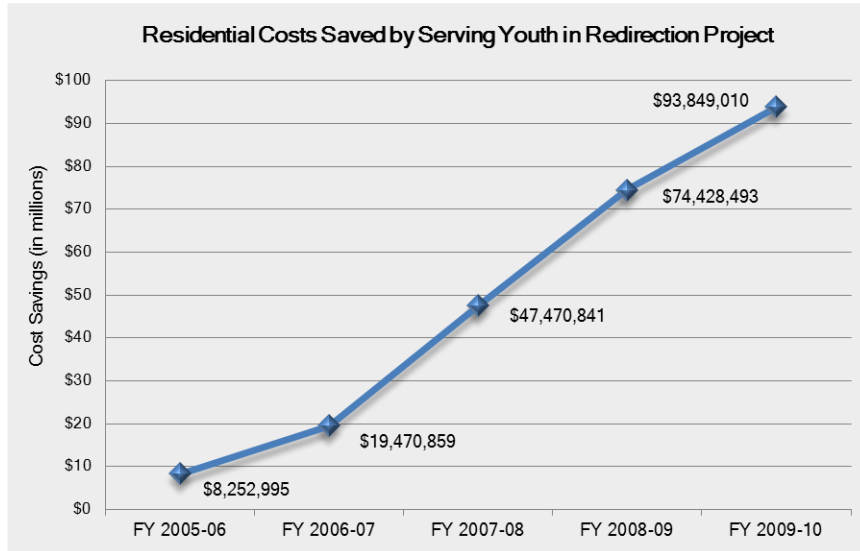
low, moderate, and high risk residential programs.⁹

The cost differential of serving similar risk youth in Redirection programs versus residential commitment was \$22,635 for each youth completing services. Diverting 858 youth from residential confinement to Redirection services avoided more than \$19 million dollars in program expenditures (see table). This figure represents a conservative estimate, as current and long-term savings associated with reductions in recidivism are not also factored into this calculation.

Cumulative cost savings achieved by diverting youth from residential placement to Redirection services were

Redirection Project Cost Savings by Fiscal Year					
Fiscal Year	Completions	Cost Per Completion			Total Costed Avoided
		Residential	Redirection	Difference	
FY 2005-06	305	\$34,774	\$7,715	\$27,059	\$8,252,995
FY 2006-07	392	\$39,471	\$10,854	\$28,617	\$11,217,864
FY 2007-08	905	\$40,235	\$9,296	\$30,939	\$27,999,982
FY 2008-09	858	\$41,969	\$10,550	\$31,419	\$26,957,652
FY 2009-10	858	\$35,332	\$12,697	\$22,635	\$19,420,517
Five-Year Total	3,318				\$93,849,010

⁹ Average costs per completion for FY 2009-10 were based upon the number of low, moderate, and high risk youth in the matched residential sample and the corresponding expenditures for each residential level, as reported in the Program Accountability Measures (PAM) section of the FDJJ 2011 CAR Report. Costs per completion for each commitment level was then combined to produce the overall average residential cost per completion reported.



substantial. Each year the state avoided an average of \$22,600 to \$31,400 per youth completing Redirection services, as compared to residential commitment. By fiscal year 2009-10, more than \$93 million in residential expenditures had been avoided as a result of the Redirection Project. As more youth continue to be served through the evidence-based programs offered through the Redirection Project, and if Redirection programming continues to achieve significantly better recidivism outcomes than residential commitment, then the State of Florida can expect to receive a significant return on its investment in these juvenile justice services.

Conclusion

The current evaluation adds to the growing body of research on the effectiveness of Florida

Redirection Project services – specifically MST, FFT, and BSFT – in reducing recidivism among delinquent offenders completing services. Conversely, the negative effects of residential incarceration are well documented.¹⁰ The findings from this study suggest that similar risk youth can be served as effectively, if not more effectively, in the community than in residential programming when evidence-

¹⁰ Beck, A.J., P.M. Harrison, & P. Guerino, *Sexual victimization in juvenile facilities reported by youth, 2008–09*, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, January 2010, downloaded from <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/svjfry09.pdf>; Gatti, U., R.E. Tremblay, & F. Vitaro, “Iatrogenic effect of juvenile justice,” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 50, No. 8, 2009, downloaded from [http://www.jdaihelpdesk.org/miscellaneous/Gatti et al 2009_1.pdf](http://www.jdaihelpdesk.org/miscellaneous/Gatti%20et%20al%202009_1.pdf); Lipsey, Mark W., “The primary factors that characterize effective interventions with juvenile offenders: A meta-analytic overview,” *Victims & Offenders*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2009; Lowenkamp, Christopher T. & Edward J. Latessa, *Evaluation of Ohio’s RECLAIM funded programs, community corrections facilities, and DYS facilities*, University of Cincinnati, 2005, downloaded from www.uc.edu/ccjr/Reports/ProjectReports/Final_DYS_RECLAIM_Report_2005.pdf; Mendel, R.A. (2011). *The case for reducing juvenile incarceration*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

based interventions are implemented. Recent meta-analytic research conducted by Mark Lipsey further underscores the promise of using less restrictive interventions for juvenile offenders.¹¹ After reviewing nearly 600 studies spanning a 44-year period, Lipsey noted,

When risk level was statistically controlled, however, no difference was found in the overall effectiveness of the intervention programs in the different supervision categories. Thus a type of program that was effective for juveniles under probation or parole supervision in the community was equally effective when applied to juveniles in secure residential facilities once the fact that effects are generally larger for higher risk juveniles is taken into account. p. 22.

Diverting youth confinement to community-based programs appears from the current study to significantly reduce the odds of future offending. In an era in which states are facing serious budget constraints, Redirection services offer a cost-effective intervention for treating delinquent youth.

¹¹ Lipsey, Mark W., “The primary factors that characterize effective interventions with juvenile offenders: A meta-analytic overview,” *Victims & Offenders*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2009.

The Justice Research Center (JRC) is an independent evaluation firm specializing in program accountability, performance measurement, process and outcome evaluation, and assessment instrument validation and reliability studies in the fields of criminal and juvenile justice, social work, child welfare, sociology and public policy. The JRC is committed to producing quality, objective research designed to inform sound public policy and the implementation of evidence-based practices.

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