

Reducing Recidivism for Youth in the Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services

Analyses and Recommendations

Josh Weber, Juvenile Justice Program Director

March 25, 2015

Overview



Background and Overview of Assessment

Findings

Recommendations

The Council of State Governments Justice Center

Corrections



Courts



Justice Reinvestment



Law Enforcement



Mental Health



Reentry



Substance Abuse



Youth



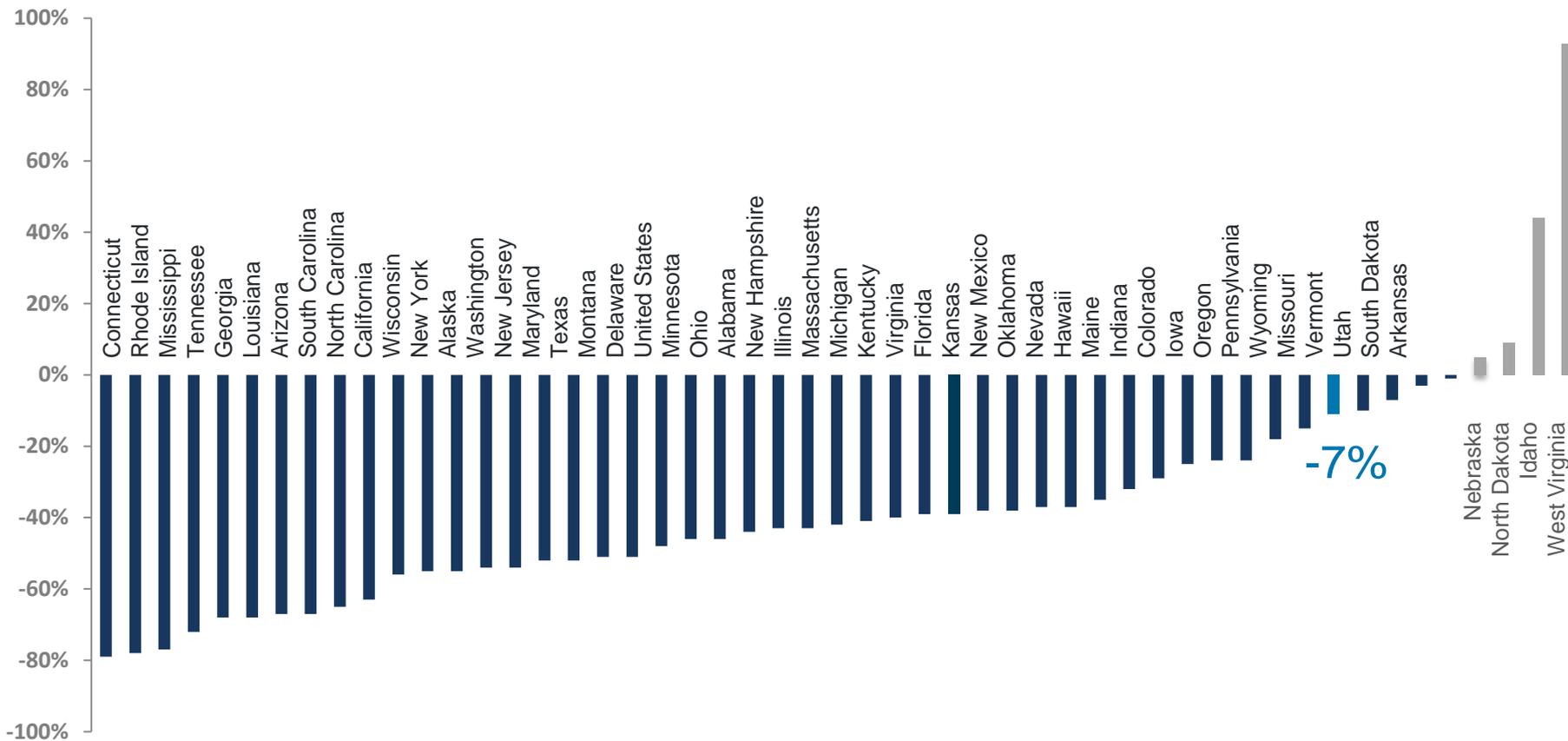
National nonprofit,
nonpartisan membership
association of state
government officials

Represents all
three branches of
state government

Provides practical
advice informed by the
best available evidence

Progress in Reducing State Juvenile Confinement Rates

PERCENT CHANGE IN STATE JUVENILE CONFINEMENT RATES (1997-2011)



*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement. Available at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp

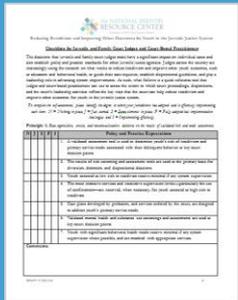
Importance of Youth Outcomes



July 2014

WHITEPAPER PUBLISHED

Identifies core principles demonstrated by research to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes



August 2014

PILOTS LAUNCHED IN FIVE STATES

Piloting checklists to help government officials assess whether policies and practices align with the core principles

Core Principles for Improving Youth Outcomes

Principle 1

Base supervision, service, and resource allocation decisions on the results of **validated risk and needs assessments**

Principle 2

Adopt and effectively implement **programs and services demonstrated to reduce recidivism** and improve other youth outcomes, and use data to **evaluate the results** and direct system improvements

Principle 3

Employ a **coordinated approach** across service systems to address youth's needs

Principle 4

Tailor system policies, programs, and supervision to reflect the **distinct developmental needs of adolescents**

Assessment of Policies and Practices

Youth Served by the Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services (JJS)

No juvenile justice system has fully implemented all or even most of “what works” to reduce recidivism

JJS has engaged in a **robust and transparent evaluation** of its efforts and is committed to improvement

Reviewed JJS policies and procedures

Analyzed recidivism and other outcome data

Conducted over 25 focus groups with JJS staff and external stakeholders

Identified key barriers to reducing recidivism and recommendations for improvement

Data and Information Used for Assessment

Data Analyzed

- Dispositions to JJS detention, Early Intervention services, and custody
- Dispositions by risk level, youth demographics, most recent and serious offenses, offense and custody history, and urban/rural court districts
- Placement snapshot by risk level
- Lengths of stay by placement type, risk level, and YPA recommended vs. actual
- Releases by risk level and needs
- Misdemeanor and felony recidivism by placement type
- Program costs per day
- Required JJS training

Information Reviewed

- Juvenile justice system flow chart
- JJS organizational chart
- JJS annual reports
- Case Management Operations Manual, 2014
- Performance Audits, 1999, 2001
- Determinants of Lengths of Stay
- Three-Year Comprehensive Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Plan
- In-Depth Budget Review of the Department of Human Services, 2014
- Youth Services and Receiving Centers Working Group Report
- Correctional Education Site Visit Summary Memo

Focus Group Participants

Defense Attorneys

Detention Line Staff

Executive Offices and Criminal Justice Legislative Subcommittee

Guardians ad Litem

JJS Assistant Program Directors, Case Managers, and Early Intervention Services Staff

JJS Board Members

JJS Executive Management Team

JJS Research Department

JJS Secure Facility Supervisors and Line Staff

Juvenile Court Judges

Juvenile Court Administration; Research Staff; and Probation Chiefs, Supervisors, and Officers

Prosecutors

University of Utah Researchers

Utah Board of Juvenile Justice

Utah Department of Human Services

Utah Division of Children and Family Services

Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Volunteers and mentors

Youth and families from Decker Lake Youth Center

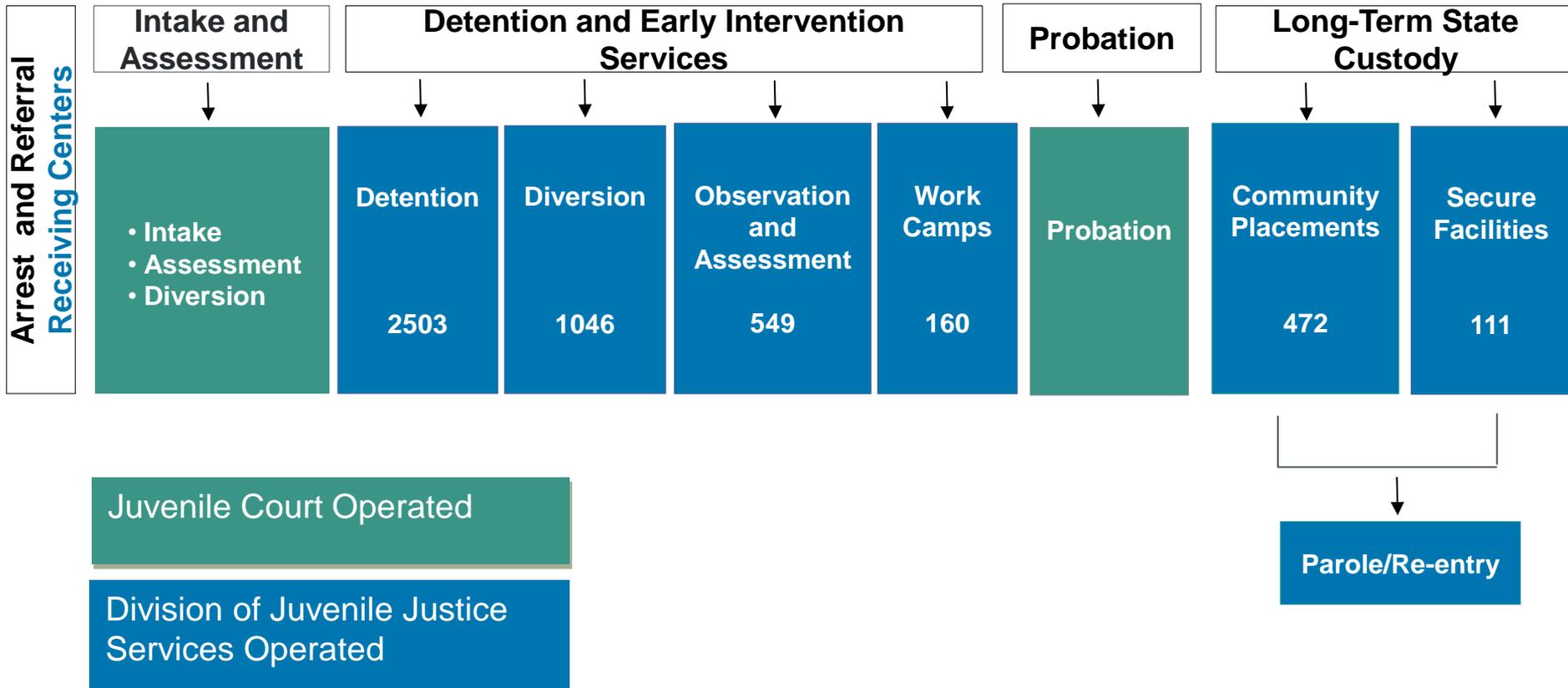
Youth in Custody Educators

Youth Parole Authority

Youth Providers Association and Associated Service Providers

Utah Juvenile Justice System

Focus of Assessment Primarily on JJS Long-Term Custody Services



High Recidivism Rates for Youth in Long-Term JJS Custody

51%

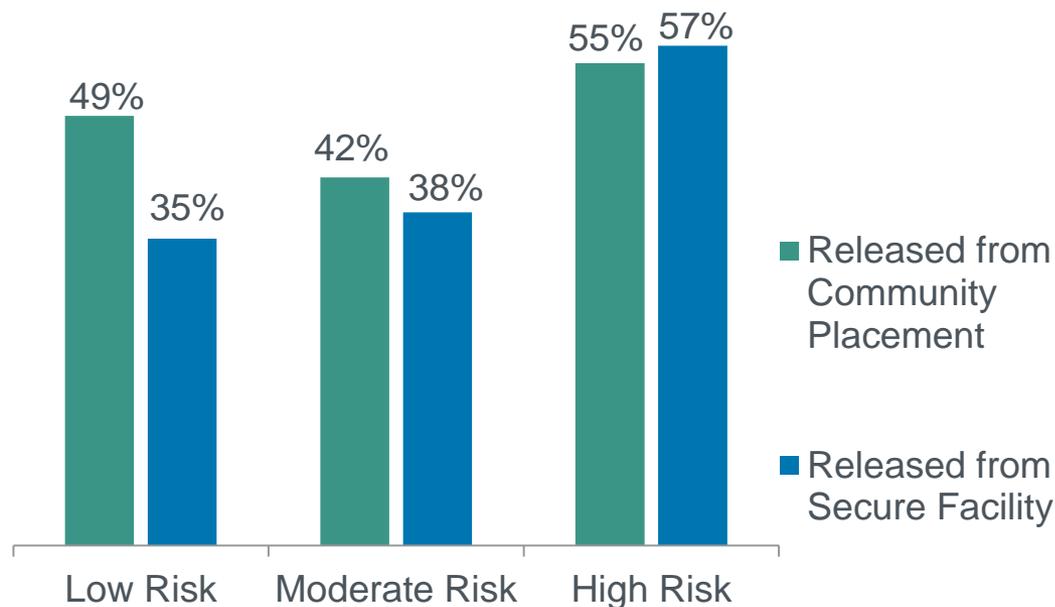
of youth in community placements

52%

of youth in secure facilities

Receive new misdemeanor or felony charges within **one year** of release

FIGURE 1: New Charges for Youth Released from Community Placements and Secure Facilities by Assessed Risk Level, 2014



Youth in Secure Facilities Are More Likely to Reoffend with a Felony Offense

18%

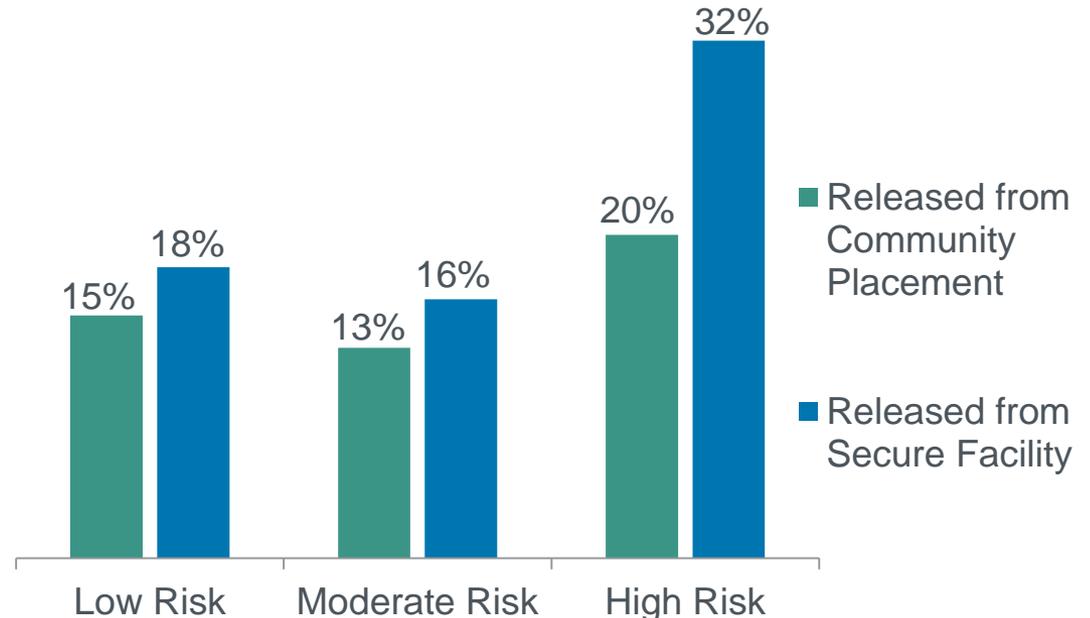
of youth in community placements

28%

of youth in secure facilities

Receive new felony charge within **one year** of release

FIGURE 2: New Felony Charges for Youth Released from Community Placements and Secure Facilities by Assessed Risk Level, 2014



Recidivism Also a Concern for Early Intervention Programs

19%

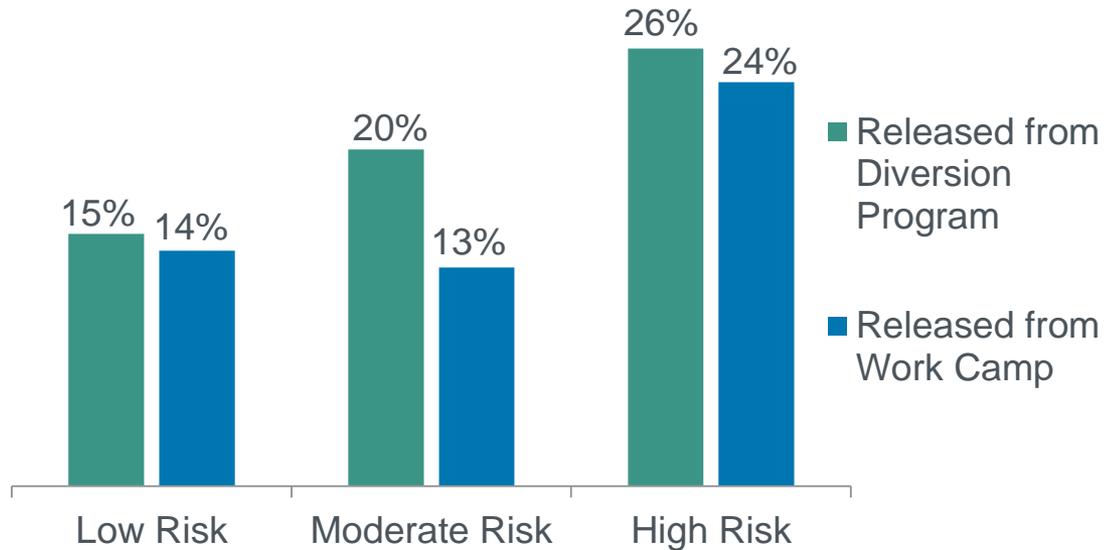
of youth in diversion programs

20%

of youth in work camps

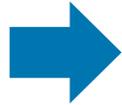
Receive new misdemeanor or felony charges within **90 days** of release

FIGURE 3: New Charges for Youth Released from Diversion and Work Camp Programs by Assessed Risk Level, 2014



Overview

Background and Overview of Assessment

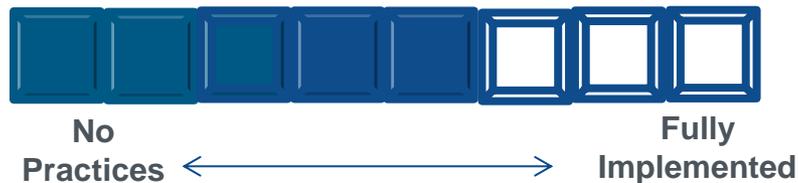


Findings

Recommendations

Steps Taken Towards Adopting and Using Validated Risk Assessments

Principle 1: Use Validated Assessments



- ✓ Validated risk screening and assessment tools used statewide for intake, disposition, and case planning
- ✓ Established standard case planning tool based on youth's risks and needs
- ✓ Uses Court and Agencies' Record Exchange (C.A.R.E) system to track assessments
- ✓ Reassessments occur every six months or when significant changes occur
- ✓ Uses validated mental health screen at receiving centers and in detention
- ✓ Conducts fidelity audits of assessments

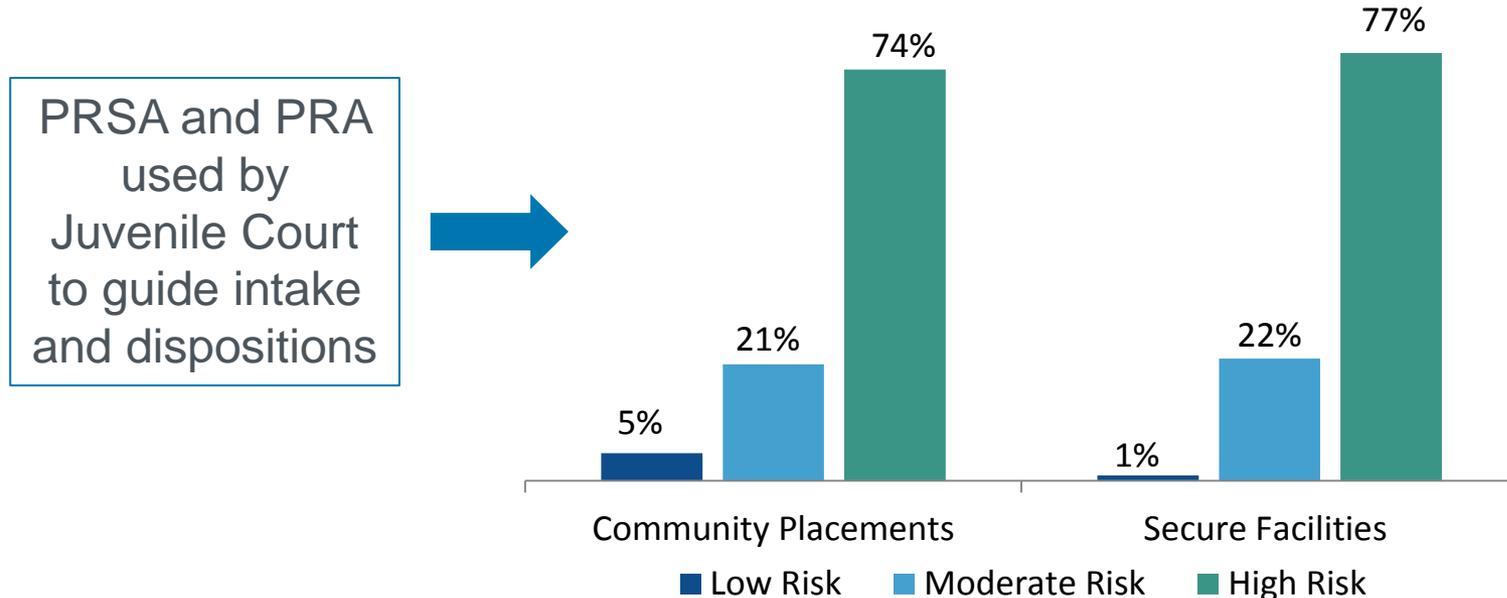
Areas in Need of Improvements

Insufficient use of objective criteria to guide key decisions

- Risk screening and assessment tools are not a primary determining factor for the use of Early Intervention services or detention
- Youth do not have their mental health and substance use treatment needs assessed consistently or in a resource efficient manner
- Many JJS programs don't provide services that directly address the primary needs that drive youth's delinquent behavior, which is a barrier to effective service matching
- Lengths of stay in secure facilities and community placements are not based on youth's risk or needs
- Early Intervention and secure facility staff and service providers don't receive the consistent training needed to ensure assessment results are fully utilized

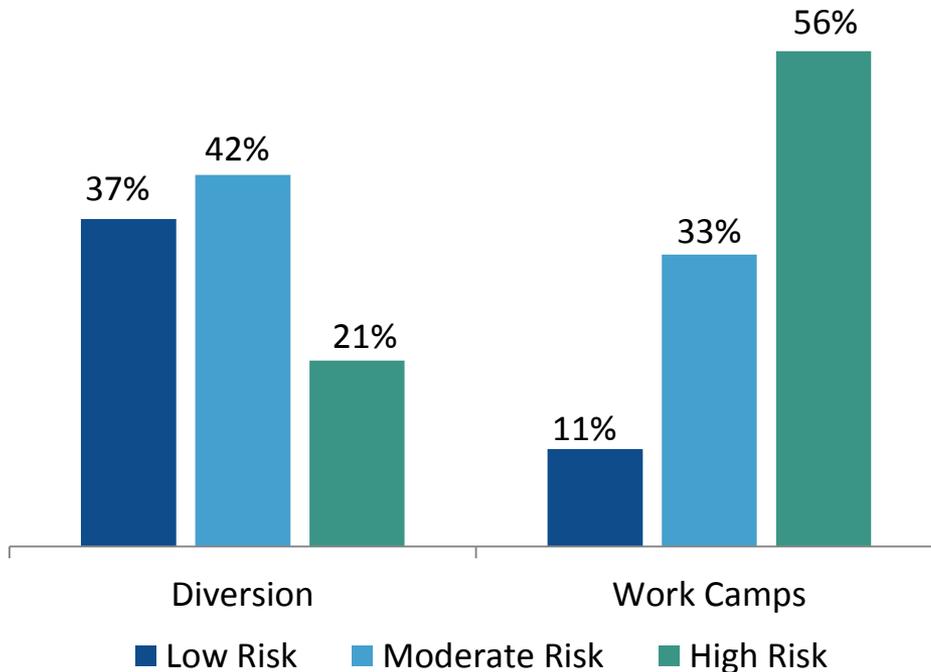
The Majority of Youth in JJS Long-Term Custody Are Assessed as High-Risk of Reoffending

FIGURE 4: Assessed Risk Level of Youth Admitted to Community Placements and Secure Facilities, 2014



A High Proportion of Youth in Early Intervention Programs Are Low/Moderate Risk to Reoffend

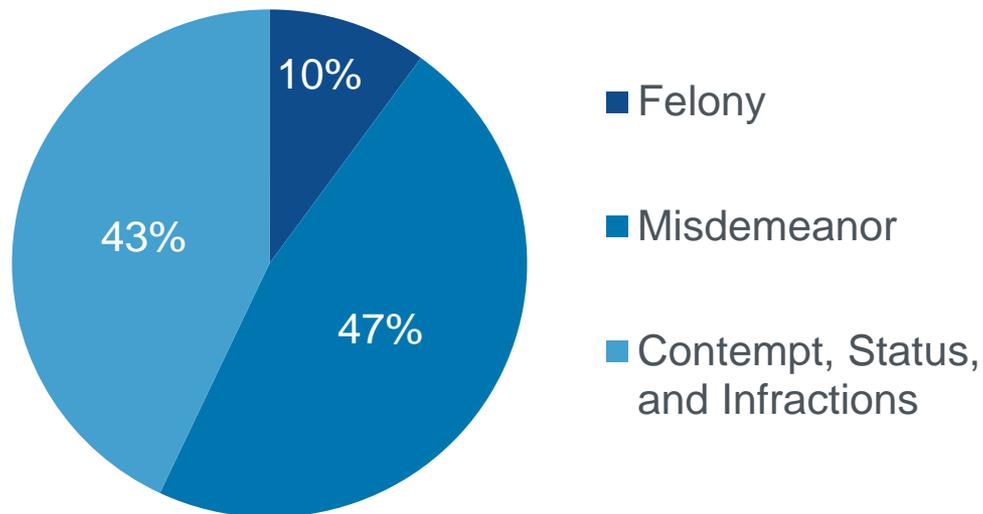
FIGURE 5: Assessed Risk Level of Youth Discharged from Diversion Programs and Admitted to Work Camp Programs, 2014



- Risk assessments are not generally used to determine eligibility for diversion or work camp programs. The use of these programs is primarily based on the discretion of individual probation officers and judges

Majority of Youth Admitted to Detention Not Due to Felony Offenses

FIGURE 7: Most Recent Offense Prior to Detention Admission, 2014



- A risk screening tool is not used to help guide detention decisions; admission is based solely on the number and type of charges and/or judicial discretion

\$21 million per year spent on detention

\$340 average daily cost per youth in detention, **3x** more than the average daily cost (\$108) for JJS diversion programs

Youth's Treatment Needs Are Not Assessed Fully or in a Resource Efficient Manner

Insufficient Communication

Youth may receive a mental health screening by JJS, but JJS staff don't routinely share the results with the Court or enter this information into C.A.R.E

+

Lack of Formal Assessments

Courts don't employ validated behavioral health assessments and/ or know when they are warranted so youth with significant treatment needs may never get assessed

+

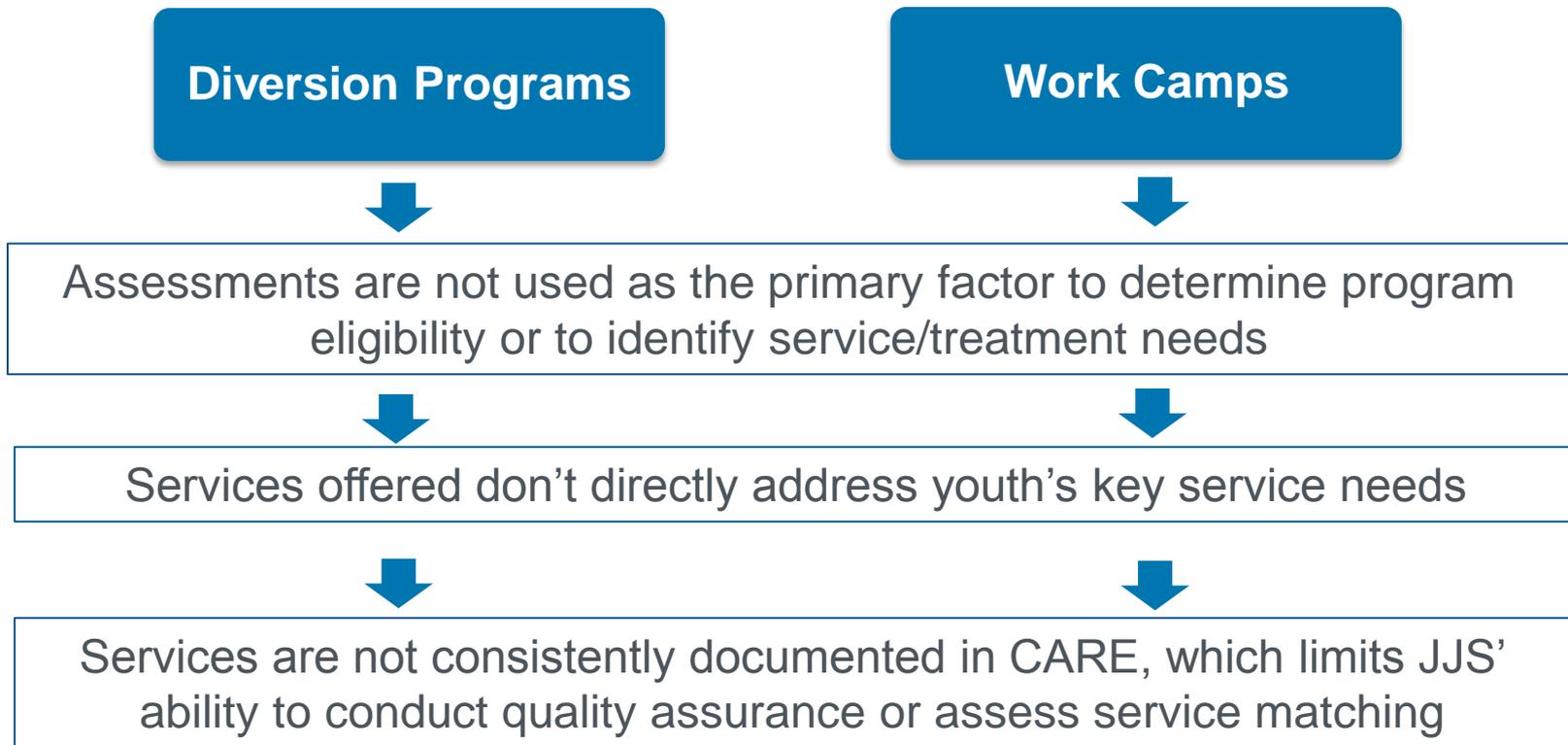
Reliance on Residential Placement

Based on probation officer and judicial discretion, youth are placed in Observation and Assessment centers for 45 days for the sole purpose of assessment

\$6.6 million per year spent on Observation and Assessment

\$11,395 average daily cost per youth placed at O&A, up to 50x times more than the cost of in-depth validated assessment in the community

Early Intervention Programs Lack Focus on Youth's Key Needs Required for Effective Service Matching



Assessment Gaps and Undefined Program Models Hinder Service Matching for Youth in Residential Placements

Community Placements



Secure Facilities



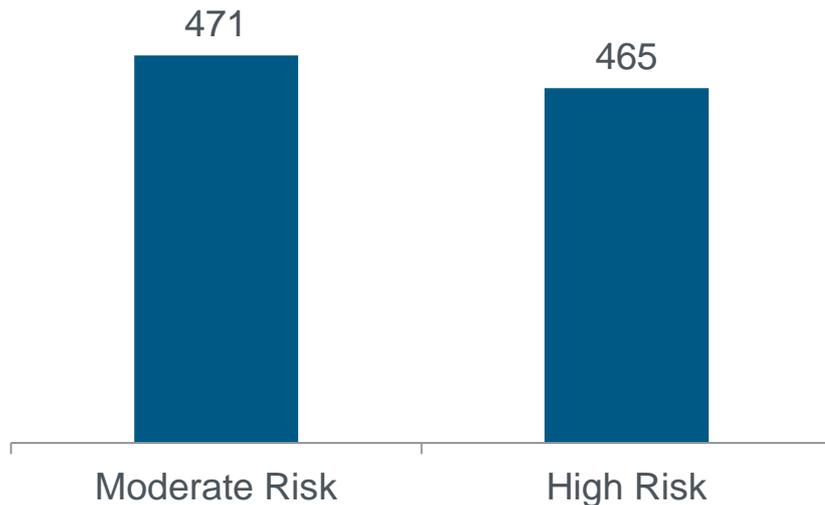
Assessment results and graduated sanction guidelines are used to inform placement decisions, but youth's mental health and substance use treatment needs may not be fully known before placement



Facilities and providers lack clearly defined, evidence-based program models that address youth's key service needs, impacting appropriate matching of youth needs to programs/services

Lengths of Stay in Secure Facilities Are Not Based on the Time Needed for Effective Treatment and Efficient Use of Resources

FIGURE 8: Average Secure Facility Custody Days by Youth's Assessed Risk Level, 2014



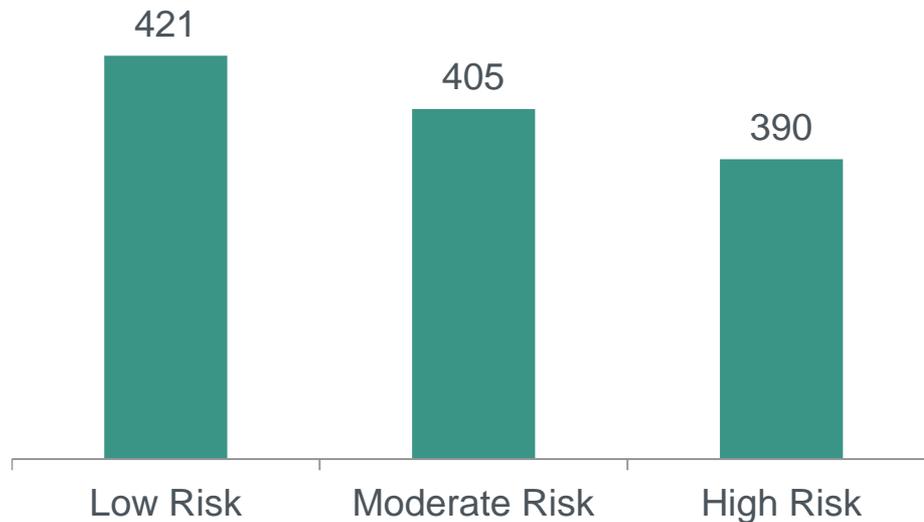
- Initial LOS are determined by the Youth Parole Authority (YPA) based on the seriousness of youth's offenses—YPA members don't receive the PRA results and get limited training on the PRA
- PRA assessments are conducted every six months but not used for LOS or release decisions
- Subjective ratings of progress, influenced by youth behavior and attitude, determine release
- 69% of placements exceed YPA guidelines
- Actual LOS exceed guidelines by average of 95 days

“In staff surveys, only 22% of case managers and 0% of secure care staff identified lower assessed risk as an important factor in determining treatment progress”

Determinants of Lengths of Stay in Utah's Juvenile Secure Facilities, Utah Criminal Justice Center, 2014

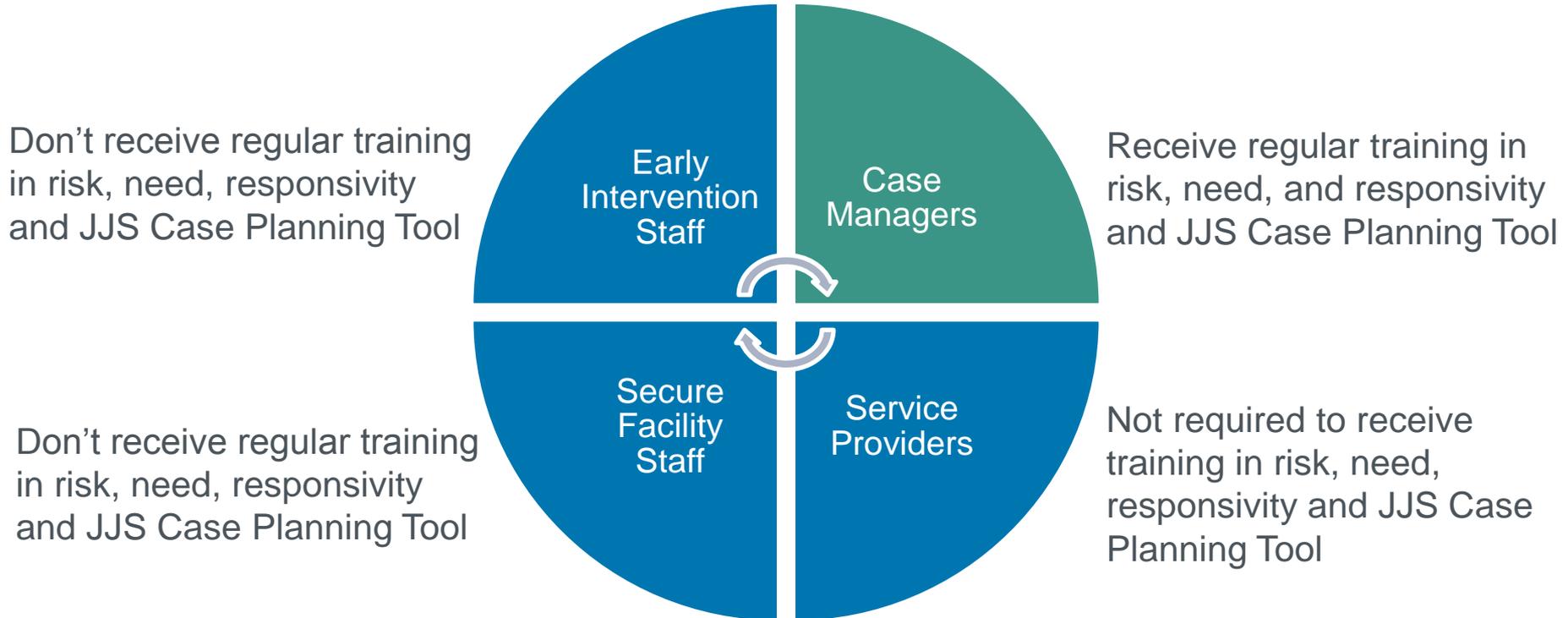
Lengths of Stay in Community Placements Are Based Largely on Service Provider Discretion

FIGURE 9: Average Community Placement Custody Days by Youth's Assessed Risk Level, 2014



- Most providers don't have a clearly defined "dosage" of services needed for effective treatment to guide LOS and release decisions
- JJS case managers leave LOS decisions to provider discretion
- Youth assessed as low risk have the longest LOS while high risk youth have the shortest length of stay (high proportion of low risk youth are likely youth who commit sex offenses)

Training Gaps Limit the Effective Use of Assessment Results for Case Planning

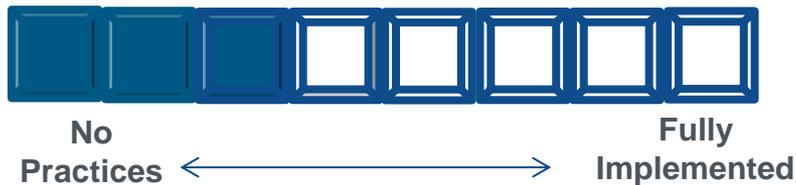


"We get the assessment results but we don't know what we are supposed to do with them, and even if we did, we don't have the services to do anything about it"

Secure Facility staff member

Steps Taken Towards Adopting Effective Programs and Evaluating Youth Outcomes

Principle 2: Programs that Work



- ✓ Undergoing improvement efforts to implement evidence based programs in secure facilities
- ✓ Transition coordinators broker reentry services and supports
- ✓ Partners with the University of Utah to assess and improve the quality of 8 programs using the Correctional Program Checklist
- ✓ Measures new juvenile/adult charges for all populations of youth served
- ✓ Robust capacity to collect and analyze recidivism and other outcome data
- ✓ C.A.R.E system enables comprehensive data collection and analysis
- ✓ Produces annual recidivism report

Areas in Need of Improvements

Lack of evidence-based programs in residential placements and the community

- While significant improvement efforts are underway, JJS currently uses few evidence-based program models in its secure facilities and in many of its contracted community placements
- There are limited evidence-based programs available in the community for use as alternatives to residential placement and to support successful reentry
- JJS lacks the resources to use the CPC to assess the service quality of the majority of its secure facilities and community placements
- JJS data collection and research capacity is not being maximized to guide agency decisions, planning, and performance improvement

Lack of Evidence Based Treatment Models Used in Residential Placements

Secure Facilities

- Few evidence-based cognitive behavioral programs
- Few evidence-based substance use programs
- Limited mental health services
- Lack of vocational training and certification programs

Community Placements

- Loose contract language on use of EBPs and no specific contractual requirements to establish/document:
 - Program model based on research on “what works”
 - Identified risk level of eligible population and the key risk factors that services address
 - Measureable treatment goals
 - “Dosage” and average LOS needed to achieve treatment goals
 - Quality assurance protocols

Lack of evidence-based service models negatively impacts service matching, LOS decisions, and ultimately, recidivism rates and the efficient use of resources

Few Evidence Based Services Are Available to Youth in the Community

- × Youth at Risk of Residential Placement
- × Mental Health
- × Substance Use
- × Youth Who Commit Sex Offenses
- × Rural Communities

- Utah is not one of 35 states to implement the “big 3” EBPs (MST, FFT, MTFC) at scale statewide
- Probation staff report limited service options for maintaining higher-risk youth in community
- Youth admitted to JJS custody from rural districts are more likely to be assessed as low/moderate risk than youth from urban districts though the seriousness of recent offenses is relatively similar for both populations
- JJS contracts for minimal formal aftercare services for youth leaving residential placements

40% of recidivism events that occur in the year after youth are released from residential placement occur within the first 3 months

Resources Are Not Being Maximized to Ensure Youth Receive Effective Services

Service Type	Expenditures	Mean Count	Mean Daily Cost per Youth	% Served High Risk	Evidence-Based Practices	Overall Recidivism
Diversion Programs	\$4,059,789	103	\$108	21%	Limited	19% (90 day)
Work Camps	\$2,877,638	33	\$239	56%	No	20% (90 day)
Community Placements	\$22,195,252	497	\$170	74%	Limited	51% (1 year)
Secure Facilities	\$15,892,583	145	\$300	77%	Limited	52% (1 year)

Missed Opportunities to Use Data Capacity to Improve Agency Decisions and Performance

Lack of Formal Processes and Tools to Review and Use Data to Improve Youth Outcomes

Not regularly tracking rearrest, readjudication, and reincarceration rates or other youth outcomes

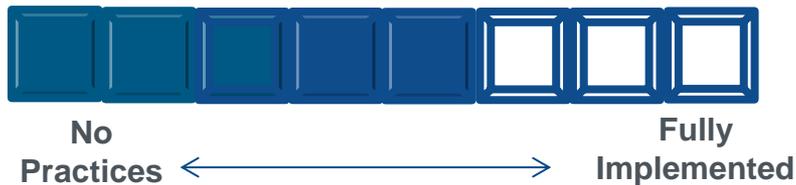
Capacity to conduct robust analysis but not regularly tracking recidivism by risk level or other key youth characteristics or system interventions

Limited formal processes to identify and regularly review key agency or service provider outcomes and to use this data for planning and performance improvement

Limited use of data to develop structured decision making tools to guide supervision, residential placement, and LOS decisions

Steps Taken Toward Government Agency and Service System Collaboration

Principle 3: Collaboration across Systems



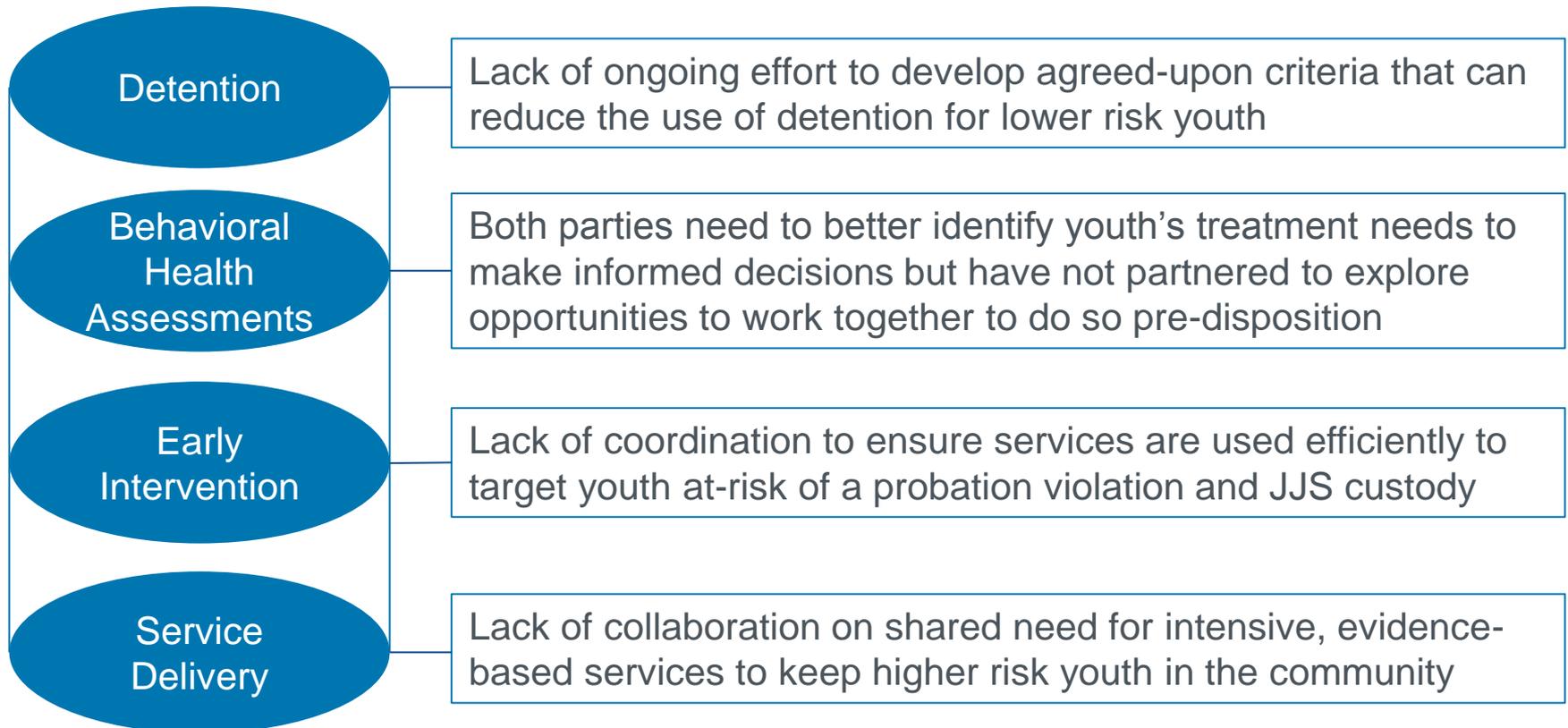
- ✓ Partners with the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and Utah Board of Juvenile Justice
- ✓ Department of Human Services funded to develop system of care to improve behavioral health services
- ✓ Partners with school districts to provide education in secure facilities and to facilitate reenrollment process
- ✓ Multiagency case staffing meetings occur in all court districts and for hard-to-place youth

Areas in Need of Improvements

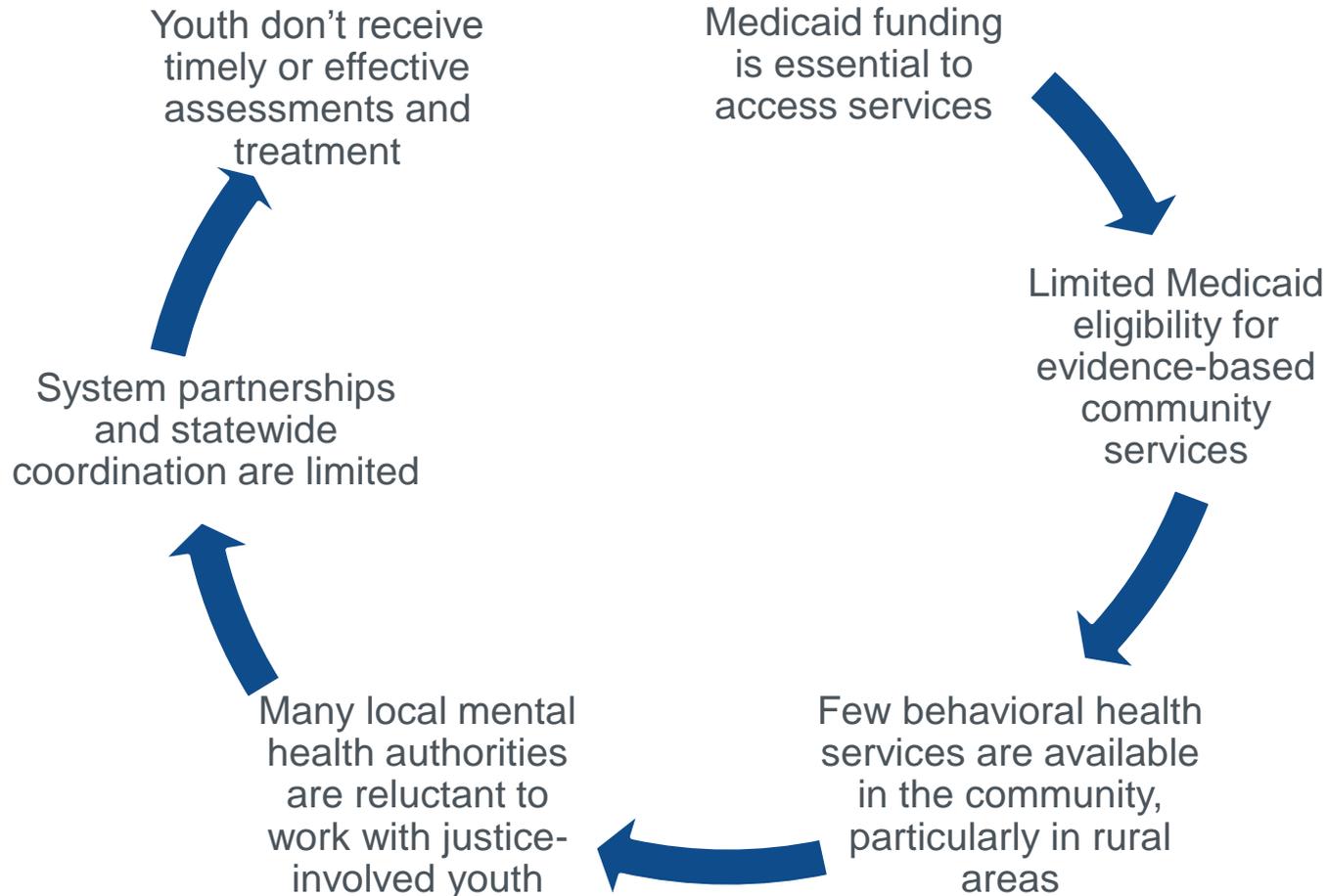
Insufficient collaboration across select agencies to address youth's needs

- Missed opportunities for collaboration between JJS and the Juvenile Court to better assess and address youth needs and use resources more efficiently
- There is a lack of accessible and high-quality treatment services for youth with mental and substance use disorders, and limited collaboration between JJS and local mental health authorities

Key Opportunities for JJS and Juvenile Court Collaboration Going Unrealized

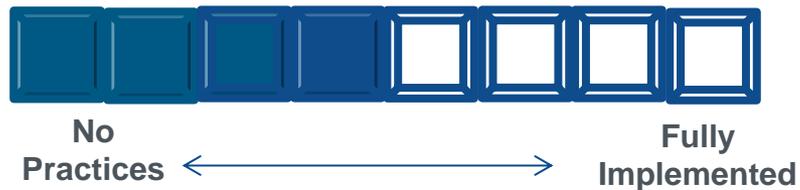


Limited Availability of Mental Health and Substance Use Services



Steps Taken Toward a Developmentally-Appropriate Approach

Principle 4: Policies and Practices Developmentally Appropriate



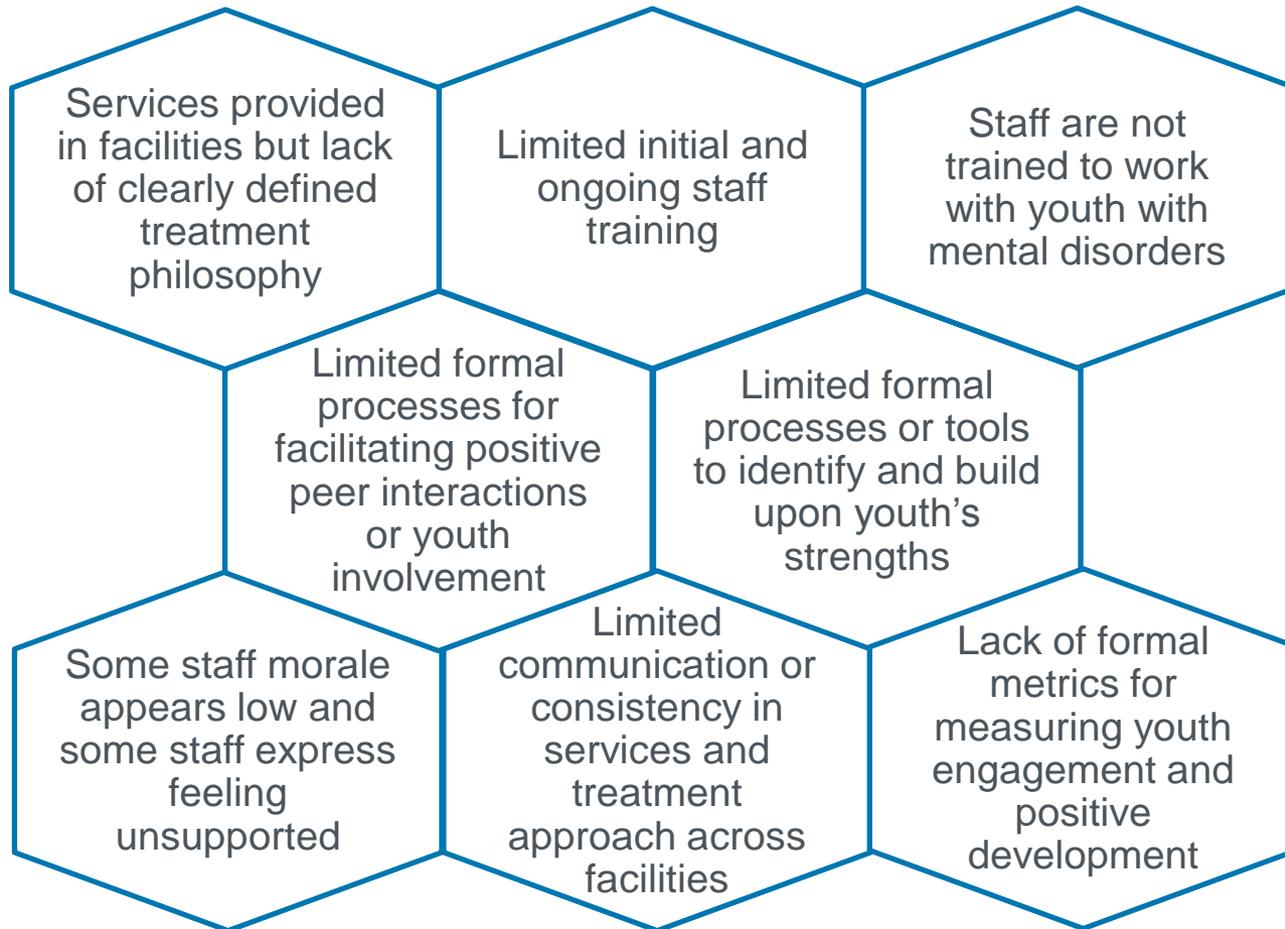
- ✓ Case managers strive to regularly engage youth and families in case planning and treatment
- ✓ Case managers are focused on promoting positive youth behaviors and trained in evidence-based approaches
- ✓ Guided by a philosophy of balanced and restorative justice, which includes restitution, community service, and victim mediation

Areas in Need of Improvements

Secure facility treatment and responses to technical violations are not developmentally appropriate

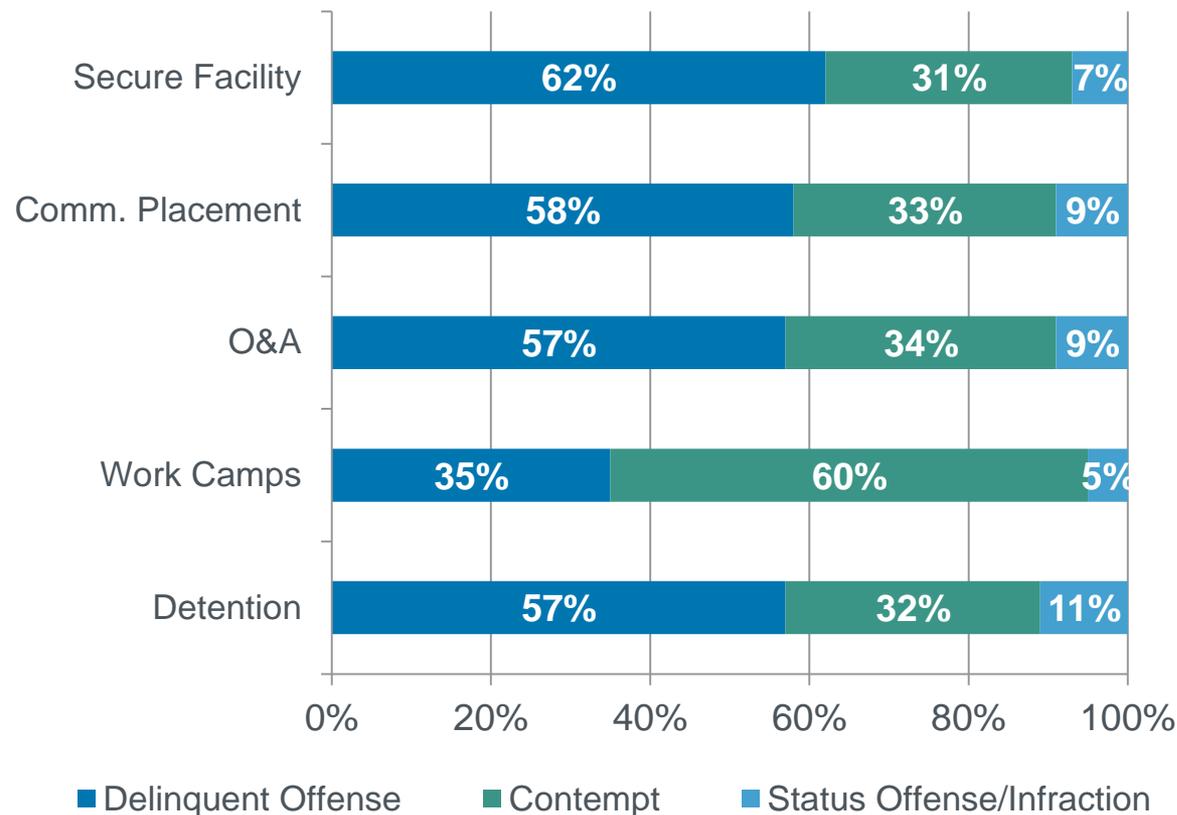
- JJS staff are committed to rehabilitation and provide an array of services to youth in facilities, but detention and long term secure facilities lack a clear treatment philosophy, associated policies/processes for promoting youth's positive development, and sufficient staff training
- While improvement efforts are underway, the Juvenile Court and JJS currently lack a graduated response policy, and technical violations are a significant driver of JJS residential placements/services

Secure Facilities Lack a Clear Treatment Philosophy and Sufficient Support for Staff



High Reliance on Residential Placement as a Response to Contempt Offenses

FIGURE 12: Most Recent Offense Type Prior to Admission to JJS Residential Placements, 2014

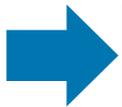


- The Juvenile Court and JJS lack a statewide graduated response matrix
- Some probation officers can file contempt charges without supervisor approval
- Detention is used as a post-disposition sanction despite no research on its effectiveness and its significant expense

Overview

Background and Overview of Assessment

Findings



Recommendations

Key Recommendations

High Recidivism Rates but Significant Opportunities for Improvement

1

JJS should explore how to best allocate existing resources to establish **evidence-based, community-based assessments and services** to reduce residential placements and improve reentry outcomes.

2

JJS should establish **evidence-based program models for all secure facilities and community placements**, and develop the training and processes needed to implement these approaches successfully.

3

JJS should establish **objective decision making criteria and policies** and **determine and share the key data** needed to identify and make system improvements that will improve supervision and service decisions and the efficient use of resources

Invest in Evidence-Based Community Services

Key changes to
use assessment
and service
resources more
efficiently

1. Consider how existing resources spent on Observation and Assessment Centers (\$6.6 million), diversion and work camp programs (\$7 million) and community placements (\$22 million) can be **most efficiently allocated** to accomplish the following goals:
 - A. Assess and address youth's mental health and substance use **treatment needs** in the community and in detention
 - B. Develop and/or expand existing **evidence-based programs** targeted, in partnership with the Court, that can be used as **alternatives to residential placement** for youth at risk of JJS custody. JJS could also use these programs to **reduce LOS and improve reentry outcomes** for youth released from secure facilities and community placements
 - C. Expand the use of the **CPC** to all community placements and secure facilities
2. Reinvest potential **savings** from reduced residential placements in evidence-based services in the community for probation and JJS youth
3. Amend the **state Medicaid plan** to cover a greater array of evidence-based, community-based behavioral health services

Establish Evidence-Based Program Models for All Secure Facilities and Community Placements

Key changes for secure facilities

1. Identify specific **evidence-based, cognitive behavioral therapy and substance use treatment models** for use in all secure facilities with clearly defined treatment goals, dosage requirements, staff training, and quality assurance protocols
2. Identify a specific **treatment philosophy** that includes formal processes and tools for assessing youth's strengths, involving youth in decisions, facilitating positive peer interactions, incentives for positive behaviors, and measuring youth's competency development. JJS should consider **brokering external technical assistance** to develop/implement this approach.
3. Provide all secure staff with **initial and ongoing required training** in adolescent development; risk, need, and responsivity; the Case Planning Tool; working with youth with mental and substance use disorders; and motivational/cognitive behavioral approaches

Establish Evidence-Based Program Models for All Secure Facilities and Community Placements (cont.)

Key changes for community placement contracts

1. Require providers to demonstrate that their services are **based on what research has shown works** to reduce recidivism
2. Require providers to document a **program framework** that specifies their population served, expected outcomes, service dosage, and quality assurance protocols
3. Require providers to accept for admission only youth whose risks and needs match this documented **referral criteria**
4. Ensure providers maintain **average lengths of stay** that adhere to agreed-upon treatment “dosage” criteria
5. Identify risk/need criteria for LOS adjustments and establish a **JJS approval process**, with case managers having final authority
6. Use the **CPC** to evaluate the service quality of all placements
7. Maintain contracts with only providers that **rate as “highly effective”** within an established time period

Use Objective Criteria to Improve Supervision and Service Decisions

Key changes to supervision decisions

1. Establish a **detention risk screening instrument** in partnership with the Court to guide detention decisions, and develop guidelines to divert youth who are low-risk to reoffend and not a flight risk
2. Restrict the **use of detention** for status offenders and youth who commit technical violations pre or post disposition based upon agreed-upon criteria with the Court/policymakers
3. Revise the secure facility **LOS matrix** in partnership with the YPA to base average LOS on severity of offenses, assessed risk level, and time needed to achieve treatment goals
4. Establish measureable treatment goals and risk reduction criteria for secure facility **LOS adjustments**, and use PRA reassessment results as a primary factor to guide release decisions
5. Develop a **service matrix** to guide case management placements
6. Develop a **statewide graduated response matrix** and policies in partnership with the Juvenile Court, with residential placements curtailed as a commonly-used response based on matrix criteria

Use Objective Criteria to Improve Supervision and Service Decisions (cont.)

Key changes to data practices

1. Measure re-arrest, **readjudication, reincarceration, and technical violation rates** for youth in all JJS programs
2. Measure **school enrollment and outcomes** for youth in all JJS residential placements and upon reentry, and identify, with DHS partner agencies, potential metrics and data collection methods to track **behavioral health and “dual status” youth outcomes**
3. Analyze, at least annually, recidivism and other youth outcome data **by youth’s risk level**, youth demographics, court district, facility, service provider, and lengths of stay
4. Use agency research capacity to **develop, evaluate, and improve the validity** of service, LOS, and graduated sanctions matrices
5. Identify **key quality assurance and outcome metrics and improvement targets**, and establish **regular performance management meetings** with the executive management team to review progress and identify and address barriers to improvement
6. Establish an annual **outcome data review** and improvement process with all community placement and other service providers

Looking Ahead

Over the next few months, the CSG Justice Center will support JJS to:

Form a working group of JJS staff and other system stakeholders

Establish an action plan to advance key policy and practice changes

Determine the highest priority and most viable recommendations and the best way to achieve them

Leverage resources and technical assistance from Models for Change

Join our distribution list to receive CSG Justice Center project updates!

www.csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe

Additional Resources

Core Principles:

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/publications/juvenile-justice-white-paper/>

Juvenile Reentry and Resources:

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/juvenile-reentry/>

Juvenile Justice Project:

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/juvenile-justice-project/>

For more information, contact Josh Weber (jweber@csg.org)

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