



Redirection Program Achieves Lower Recidivism and a \$14.4-Million Cost Savings Compared to DJJ Commitment

at a glance

Overall, the Redirection Program has operated at a lower cost than residential juvenile delinquency programs and has achieved better outcomes. Youth who successfully completed the Redirection Program were significantly less likely to be subsequently arrested for a felony or violent felony, adjudicated or convicted of any offense, or committed to a residential program or sentenced to prison after treatment than similar youth who successfully completed residential commitment. The Redirection Program has achieved \$14.4-million cost savings for the state since it began three and one-half years ago.

If the Legislature wishes to expand the program, options include

- restoring funds cut in 2008 due to the state budget shortfall,
- implementing intensive mental health services for some youth through the program,
- using Redirection in underserved counties to provide transition and aftercare services and reduce length of stay in residential delinquency programs, and
- using Redirection for juvenile sex offenders and/or gang members, which would be less expensive than residential commitment.

Scope

As directed by the Legislature, this report is the latest in a series of OPPAGA reports that examine the Redirection Program for juvenile offenders.¹

¹ *More Youth Are Admitted for Less Serious Offenses, in Part to Meet Treatment Needs*, [OPPAGA Report No. 03-76](#), December 2003. *Redirection as Effective as Residential Delinquency Programs*,

Background

The Redirection Program is a community-based, family-centered alternative to residential juvenile justice commitment programs. The Legislature initially authorized the Redirection Program to address a growing trend of committing juvenile offenders to residential delinquency programs for non-law violations of probation. Non-law violations occur when a youth does not follow court-ordered probation requirements such as keeping a specified curfew or attending school. The Redirection Program diverted appropriate youth from residential programs to less costly therapy-based community programs.²

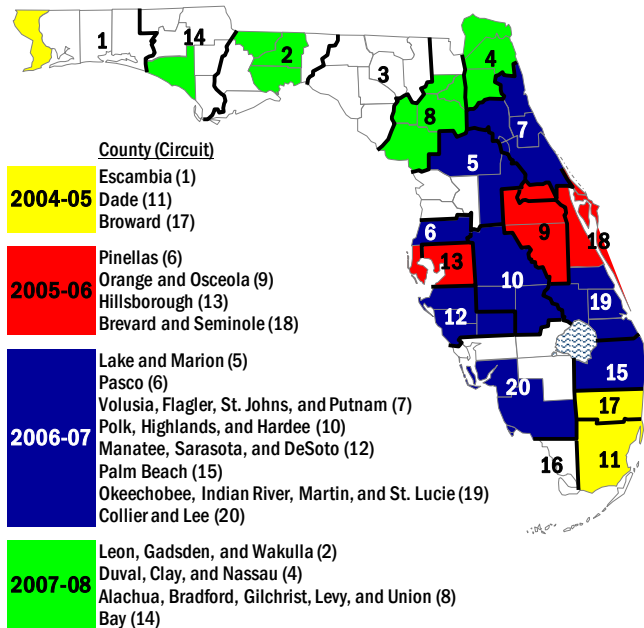
The 2006 Legislature expanded the program to serve additional youth, including those with no prior violent felony adjudications who are being considered for commitment due to a misdemeanor offense. In response to positive program outcomes, the 2007 Legislature appropriated an additional \$6 million to further expand the program to additional areas of the state and to serve non-violent youth being considered for commitment for non-violent third-degree felonies.

Achieved Substantial Cost Avoidance, [OPPAGA Report No. 06-34](#), March 2006. *Redirection Pilots Meet and Exceed Juvenile Residential Outcomes; \$5 Million Saved*, [OPPAGA Report No. 07-10](#), February 2007.

² Youth initially were not eligible for Redirection if they had been adjudicated or convicted of a prior violent crime or first-degree felony or otherwise had a criminal history of such offenses, or if they were before the court for any charge other than a violation of probation.

Exhibit 1 shows the Legislature’s expansion of the program over the past four legislative sessions.

**Exhibit 1
Redirection Has Been Expanded to 18 Judicial Circuits**



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice and Evidence-Based Associates.

The Legislature specified that Redirection provide Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy.³ These therapy models have been identified as Blueprint Programs for Violence Prevention by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, meaning that they have the highest level of experimental research showing sustained reductions in recidivism for serious and violent offenders compared to residential treatment programs. Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy programs provide therapy in the home and focus on helping parents implement more effective ways to communicate with, monitor, and discipline their adolescent children.

³ Multisystemic Therapy is an intensive family-based treatment that addresses multiple causes of serious antisocial behavior in youth; it generally lasts four months. Functional Family Therapy is a family-based treatment that focuses on family dynamics and accountability; it generally lasts three months.

Methodology. To assess the outcomes of the Redirection program, we analyzed a cohort of youth who successfully completed Redirection or residential commitment by August 31, 2007. We tracked the subsequent delinquency outcomes of these youth for a minimum of five months and a maximum of three years, depending on when they completed the program. We compared outcomes for Redirection youth to those of a comparable group of youth who had been committed to low, moderate, and high risk residential programs. We used statistical techniques to control for factors related to recidivism, including age, gender, race, number of prior referrals, a non-law violation of probation prior to admission, region, county of residence, and time out of the program. (See Appendix A for more information on our research methodology.)

Findings

The Redirection Program has continued to achieve positive outcomes. Youth completing Redirection were significantly less likely to be adjudicated or committed for subsequent crimes than similar youth who were committed to residential facilities. Overall, the program has saved the state \$14.4 million in initial residential costs and avoided \$2.4 million in subsequent juvenile commitment and adult prison costs. The Legislature may wish to further expand the Redirection Program by using Redirection as aftercare to residential commitment and serving special populations, such as gang members and sex offenders.

Redirection has continued to produce positive outcomes, saving the state \$14.4 million by avoiding residential costs

Redirection has continued to be successful in reducing recidivism of juvenile offenders. Youth who were treated by the program showed lower rates of felony and violent felony arrests, adjudications and convictions, and sentences to juvenile residential commitment or prison than similar youth treated through residential delinquency programs. These positive outcomes have produced \$14.4 million in state cost savings and an estimated \$2.4 million in cost avoidances since the program’s inception.

Redirection has achieved substantial cost savings and avoidance. As of November 15, 2007, a total of 1,132 youth had successfully completed the Redirection Program at a cost of approximately \$11.2 million. If these youth had been committed to residential programs instead of Redirection, they would have stayed an average of almost eight months until release, at an estimated cost of \$25.6 million.⁴ As a result, Redirection has saved \$14.4 million in state residential delinquency costs in its first three years of operation.

As discussed below, Redirection also has produced savings by reducing recidivism, thereby avoiding an estimated \$2.4 million in costs associated with future residential and prison commitments. The overall likelihood of being recommitted to a residential program after program completion was 36% lower for Redirection youth than for youth completing a residential delinquency program, resulting in an estimated cost avoidance of \$1.3 million. In addition, the likelihood of a prison sentence after release was 70% lower for youth completing Redirection, controlling for age, prior referrals, and other factors related to recidivism. The cost avoidance for this reduction in prison admissions is estimated at roughly \$222,000 annually or \$1.1 million if these youth had an average sentence length of five years.⁵

Youth served by Redirection showed significant reductions in recidivism

Youth who successfully completed the Redirection Program achieved significantly better outcomes than youth successfully completing residential juvenile delinquency commitment programs. We measured recidivism at three points in the criminal justice process:

- arrests, made by law enforcement officers of persons suspected of committing a crime;

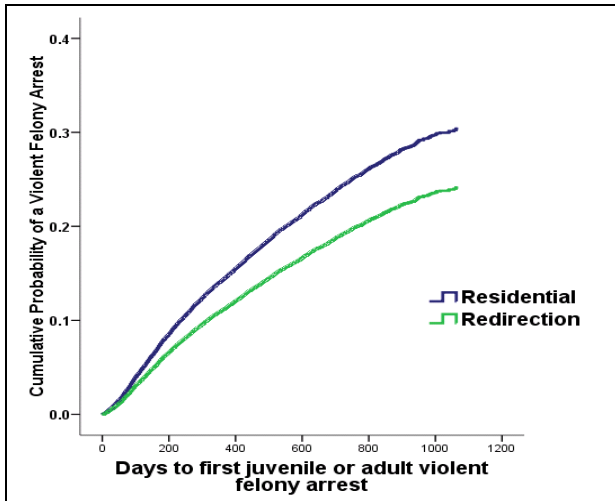
⁴ This estimate is based on an analysis of the length of stay and average per diem cost of serving youth in residential commitment programs. For some youth, this involves stays in more than one program.

⁵ It costs the state approximately \$19,300 per year to incarcerate an inmate in state prison. The average prison sentence for the small number of Redirection youth sentenced to prison after program completion was five years. Average sentence length expected for the Redirection population without treatment would likely be longer than average sentence length for Redirection completers, but cannot be predicted accurately based on currently available data.

- adjudication or conviction, when the court finds youth guilty (adjudication is the term used in the juvenile system and conviction in the adult system); and
- commitment or prison, when youth are sentenced to serve time in a secure juvenile residential facility or adult prison.
- **Youth served by Redirection had lower felony and violent felony arrests.** While overall arrest rates were similar for youth served by Redirection and residential delinquency programs, Redirection youth had fewer arrests for serious violations.⁶ Redirection youth were less likely to be arrested for a felony or violent felony than comparable youth completing residential programs. Youth completing the Redirection Program had an overall 14% lower probability of subsequent arrests for felony offenses, and an overall 24% lower probability of subsequent arrests for violent felony offenses, than youth who were released from residential commitment programs. Exhibit 2 shows that the difference between violent felony arrest rates for the two groups of youth increases over time. The upper line shows the increasing probability that a typical youth completing a residential program would be arrested for a violent felony over the three-year follow-up period, and the bottom line shows the probability for a similar youth completing Redirection. Thus, the positive benefits of Redirection compared to residential commitment are sustained and increase over time.

⁶ Over the follow-up period, the probability of an arrest for any violation, including a non-law violation of probation, was 2% less for youth completing Redirection than for youth completing residential commitment, a difference that was not statistically significant. Outcomes in terms of overall arrests were not significantly better for Redirection youth, while outcomes in terms of arrests for felonies and violent felonies, adjudicated offenses and adjudicated felonies were clearly better. Redirection youth had a higher proportion of arrests for misdemeanors and arrests that did not result in adjudication than residential youth. This may reflect the fact that Redirection youth were more likely to be continued on probation after program completion than youth released from residential delinquency programs, and this higher level of supervision may result in a greater proportion of arrests for lesser offenses, or arrests that did not lead to adjudication, relative to the comparison group.

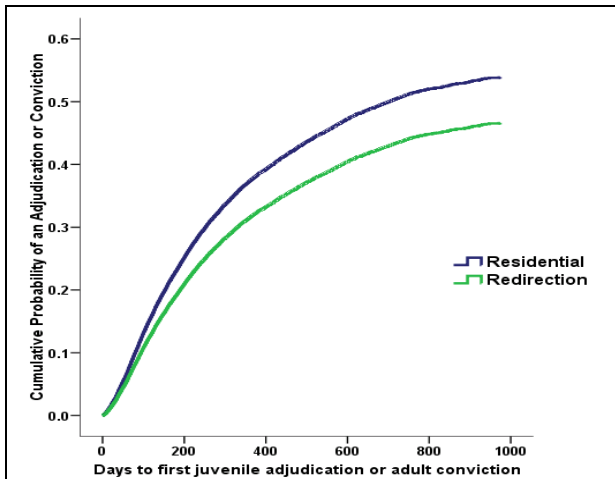
Exhibit 2
Youth Served by Redirection Had a Lower Likelihood of a Violent Felony Arrest After Treatment Compared to Youth Released from Delinquency Programs



Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement.

Youth served by Redirection had reduced adjudications and convictions, especially for felonies. Redirection had a similar positive outcome in reducing subsequent delinquency adjudications and convictions. Overall, youth completing Redirection were 19% less likely to be adjudicated or convicted of any offense after treatment than youth who were released from residential commitment programs. Exhibit 3 shows that this treatment effect was sustained and increased over time.

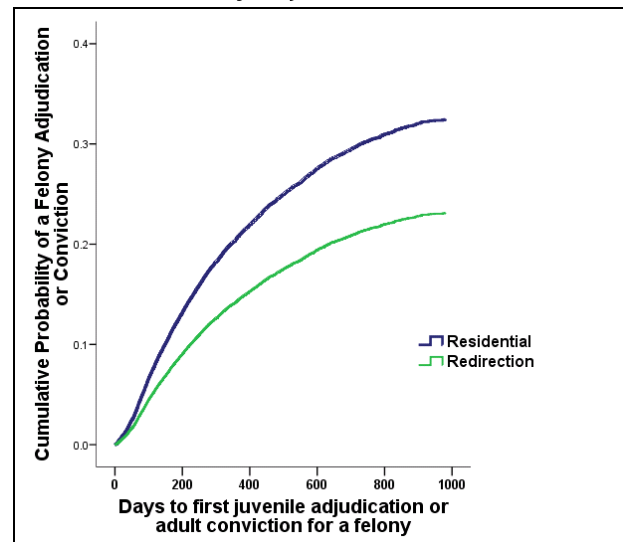
Exhibit 3
Youth Served by Redirection Had a Lower Likelihood of Subsequent Adjudications and Convictions



Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections.

The impact of Redirection was strongest in terms of reducing felony adjudications and convictions. The overall probability of a felony adjudication or conviction over time was 33% lower for youth completing Redirection than for youth completing residential commitment. As shown in Exhibit 4, this positive outcome was sustained and increased over time. This outcome is particularly relevant to achieving cost avoidance, since youth are more likely to be committed to residential programs or sentenced to prison after being convicted of a felony than a misdemeanor or a violation of probation.

Exhibit 4
Youth Served by Redirection Had a Significantly Lower Likelihood of Felony Adjudications and Convictions

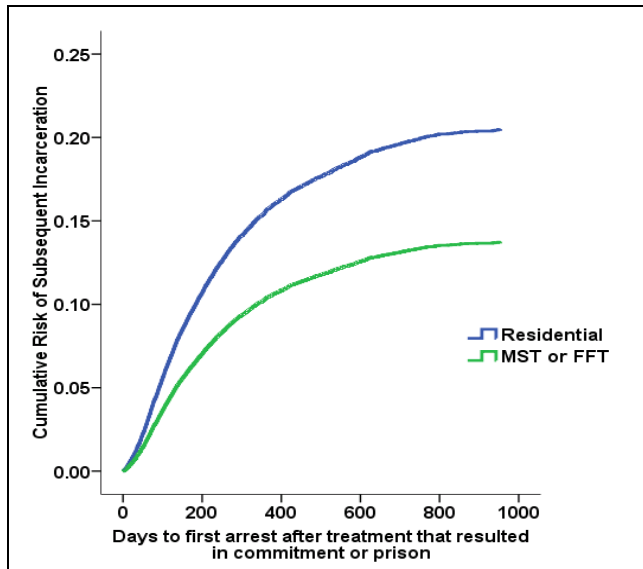


Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections.

Youth served by Redirection had fewer sentences to prison or juvenile residential commitment. Another important outcome was that Redirection youth were significantly less likely to be sentenced to a juvenile commitment program or adult prison. The overall probability of a sentence to juvenile residential commitment or adult prison was 36% lower for youth completing Redirection than for youth completing residential commitment. The difference for prison was particularly high, as the likelihood of a prison sentence after release was 70% less for youth completing Redirection, controlling for age, prior referrals, and other factors related to recidivism.

As shown in Exhibit 5, this positive outcome was sustained and increased over time. As discussed above, the reduced incidence of prison and residential commitment sentences for youth served by Redirection produced a combined estimated cost avoidance of \$2.4 million.

**Exhibit 5
Youth Served by Redirection Had a Significantly Lower Likelihood of Subsequent Sentence to Juvenile Commitment or Prison**



Source: OPPAGA analysis of data from the Departments of Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement, and Corrections.

The Legislature could consider further expanding the Redirection Program

Given the positive outcomes and cost savings attained by the Redirection Program, the Legislature may wish to consider further expanding the program. Five possible options include restoring funding cut in 2008 due to the state budget shortfall, implementing the intensive mental health program recommended in a previous report, expanding the program into underserved counties and partnering with residential programs to provide aftercare services, expanding the program to serve juvenile sex offenders, and expanding the program to serve gang members.

Redirection could be expanded by restoring funding lost in 2008 budget cuts. Due to the state budget shortfall, the Legislature reduced funding for the Redirection Program by \$1.4 million for

Fiscal Year 2008-09 from the prior year level. If resources permit, the Legislature could restore these funds in subsequent fiscal years. This would enable the program to serve an additional 184 youth in counties that currently have a Redirection Program, which would result in a potential cost savings of \$2.1 million.

Redirection could be expanded to provide some youth intensive mental health services. A second option would be to establish a pilot project to provide an intensive mental health treatment model of Multisystemic Therapy for youth, particularly girls currently being committed to intensive mental health programs. As discussed in OPPAGA Report No. 06-13, *Effective Community Programs Could Reduce Commitments of Girls to Residential Programs*, we estimated the cost of a pilot Multisystemic Therapy Psychiatric program to serve 24 girls at \$484,080. We projected that such a pilot project would result in an estimated cost savings of approximately \$300,000 when compared to special needs residential commitment.

Redirection could be expanded to provide transition and aftercare services in partnership with residential programs. The Legislature could also expand Redirection into counties not currently served, in combination with providing post-residential Redirection services. Redirection currently serves some counties within 18 of the 20 judicial circuits.⁷ However, in 4 circuits that currently have programs, there is a waiting list or no services are available for youth who meet the program’s criteria in additional counties. These circuits would have enough eligible youth to justify adding Redirection teams if the program were expanded to also provide aftercare services to youth who are released early from residential programs.

Some states have successfully used Multisystemic Therapy, one of the treatments used in the Redirection Program, for transition and aftercare services for youth who are released early from residential programs; this has enabled these states to reduce both the length of stay in commitment programs and the number of funded beds in these programs.

⁷ Evidence-based programs are provided through other non-Redirection programs in the other two circuits: Functional Family Therapy in Circuit 3 and Brief Strategic Family Therapy in Circuit 16.

To implement this option, the Legislature could direct the Redirection Program to establish an aftercare and transition pilot program. In this pilot, the program could contract with one or more large residential commitment programs to provide transition and aftercare Redirection services in the underserved circuits. The statewide Redirection provider would train and monitor staff who provide juvenile and family counseling services, as in the current Redirection Program, and the residential provider would offer a shorter residential length of stay and provide Redirection transition and aftercare services to the early released youth as well as youth in these counties who meet the current Redirection criteria. Youth released from the residential programs would receive three months of Redirection treatment when they returned home.⁸

This program could be piloted in counties currently underserved by Redirection, such as Circuits 1, 6, and 20.⁹ We estimate that 360 youth in these circuits could potentially be served in the traditional Redirection Program and that 110 additional youth could potentially be served in the post-release portion of the pilot program.¹⁰ If the length of stay in residential commitment programs were reduced to four months for these youth, the time period used in Pennsylvania for a similar program, the number of moderate risk residential beds needed to serve delinquent youth would be reduced.¹¹ We estimate that the total cost of serving 470 youth in such a pilot

program (including 360 traditional and 110 early release youth) would be \$3.5 million, substantially lower than the \$7.6 million to serve these youth in full-length residential programs.¹²

Redirection could be expanded to serve juvenile sex offenders. A fourth option would be to expand the Redirection Program to serve juvenile sex offenders. The Governor’s Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offenders and Their Victims recommended that the department develop a continuum of sex offender treatment services, particularly outpatient treatment services, in each circuit for youth who are appropriate for community-based treatment.

National research has shown that an adaptation of Multisystemic Therapy is effective in reducing recidivism for juvenile sex offenders. This adaptation program provides more intensive treatment services than regular Multisystemic Therapy, with a focus on ensuring client, victim, and community safety. Three evaluations of the program model as implemented in other states examined outcomes over a one- to nine-year follow-up period and concluded that the program reduced rearrests and adult incarceration for both sexual and non-sexual crimes.¹³

Prior to recent budget cuts, the Department of Juvenile Justice was planning to use current Redirection funds to pilot a treatment program for

⁸ To promote family participation in the pilot, the department could offer a waiver of residential fees that parents must pay while their children are in residential programs; the Legislature authorized such a waiver for pilot parent education programs in s. 985.039, *F.S.*

⁹ Circuit 1 includes Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties; Circuit 6 includes Pasco and Pinellas counties, and Circuit 20 includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties.

¹⁰ We based this estimate on data from three statewide or regional providers serving these districts. A total of 168 youth from these counties were released from residential programs of Associated Marine Institutes, Sunshine Youth Services, and Eckerd Youth Alternatives in Fiscal Year 2006-07. Based on DJJ and provider data of the current program, we estimate that 110 of the 168 families eligible for the program, or roughly 65%, would be enrolled in Redirection.

¹¹ The Pennsylvania program initially reduced length of stay to four months, and later was further reduced to three to four months. In OPPAGA’s analysis of the length of stay for youth in residential commitment programs, the average length of stay in a moderate risk program until release, recommitment, or transfer was 222 days. A reduction of 100 days would reduce this average length of stay to four months. Currently, Florida uses approximately 66 beds to serve 110 delinquent youth in moderate risk commitment programs; if the length of stay in these programs were reduced to four months, only 44 beds would be needed.

¹² This estimate is based on 270, or 75%, of the 360 youth served successfully completing the program and avoiding residential costs. During the 2007 contract year, Redirection exceeded its contract goal of a 70% successful completion rate. The successful completion rate for the current contract year is 77%.

¹³ In a study in which participants were randomly assigned to Multisystemic Therapy or individual therapy, follow-up after 21 to 49 months showed that 75% of the individual therapy group had been rearrested for a sexual offense, compared to 13% of the group receiving Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behaviors. See Borduin, C. M., Henggeler, S. W., Blaske, D. M. & Stein, R. (1990). “Multisystemic treatment of adolescent sexual offenders,” *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 35, 105-114; Borduin, C. M., & Schaeffer, C. M. (2001). “Multisystemic treatment of juvenile sexual offenders: A progress report,” *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, 13, 25-42; Borduin, C. M. (2008, March). Multisystemic therapy (MST): An overview of clinical and cost-effectiveness. Plenary address at the Systemic Research in Therapy, Education, and Organizational Development Conference, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany.

juvenile sex offenders. The Department and/or Legislature could fund a similar specialized Multisystemic Therapy-Problem Sexual Behavior program to serve appropriate youth in moderate risk sex offender programs for the last four months of their commitment. If the program had similar outcomes to those found in the national evaluations, subsequent sexual offending and bed needs could be reduced, offsetting a large part of program costs. We estimate that such a program could serve 50 youth at a cost of \$1.3 million. Serving such offenders in the community would reduce their average stay in residential treatment from 14 months to 10 months, eliminating the need for 14 beds in residential commitment programs. This would produce a potential cost avoidance of \$788,000 and offset much of the program's cost.

Redirection could be expanded to serve juvenile gang members. A fifth option would be to expand Redirection to serve gang-involved youth. The treatment programs used in the Redirection Program have been recommended by many experts on gangs and delinquency as an effective approach for addressing many of the issues that lead to gang involvement, such as negative peer relationships and lack of parental monitoring. Most gang experts also recommend providing intervention programs for young gang members and those who do not have a lengthy period of involvement in delinquency and gang activity. These services would be provided before these youth have exhausted all other community treatment alternatives and are at the point where a judge would otherwise commit them, as required under the current criteria for Redirection.

Available data indicates that Redirection is effective in treating juvenile gang members. We analyzed the outcomes of youth identified as gang members on the department's risk assessment instrument who were treated through Redirection and traditional residential commitment programs. Although the results were not statistically significant due to the small number of gang members in our analysis, youth who were identified by the department or identified themselves as gang members in the Redirection

Program had better outcomes than those who were committed to longer, more expensive residential programs.¹⁴

Based on our analysis of youth who were referred to the department in Fiscal Year 2006-07, we estimate that 960 gang members could potentially be served in counties that currently have Redirection programs.¹⁵ These youth identify themselves or are identified by the department as gang members, have not been adjudicated for any violent crime, and are evaluated as moderately high to high risk on the department's risk assessment instrument. If a program were implemented to serve these youth before they reach the point of being eligible for a residential commitment program, we estimate that 60%, or 576 of the 960 youth, could be served in Redirection, at a cost of \$4.3 million.¹⁶ Using an estimate that, without the Redirection Program, 46% of the high-risk youth who successfully complete the program would otherwise be committed to residential programs, the cost instead would be \$4.6 million to serve these

¹⁴ Using data from the Supervision Risk Classification, the probability of an adjudication or conviction during the follow-up period for youth identified as gang members was 34% less for youth who completed Redirection than for similar youth who completed residential programs; for felony adjudications, it was 47% less. The probability score for the reduction in adjudications and convictions was 0.077, and for felony adjudications and convictions was 0.066. Both results are significant at the 0.1 confidence level, but not at the 0.05 confidence level. Although a probability score of 0.1 is accepted by some researchers, a probability score of 0.05 or lower is the commonly accepted standard and is used by OPPAGA for determining statistical significance.

¹⁵ We analyzed data on all youth referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice for delinquency in Fiscal Year 2006-07, and identified 960 who met four criteria: (1) they had never been referred for a violent offense (2) they were identified as gang members by the department or identified themselves as gang members on the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) risk assessment instrument, (3) they scored as moderate-high risk or high risk on the PACT assessment, and (4) they resided in counties currently served by the Redirection Program.

¹⁶ Our analysis in OPPAGA Report No. 07-10 shows that roughly 60% of youth who meet eligibility criteria for Redirection are approved for participation by the department and the judge, and the family agrees to participate in the in-home counseling sessions. Cost savings are lower when youth are served before they are at the point of commitment because there is more risk of serving youth who would not have been committed even without the program. Requiring that these youth be assessed as moderately high or high risk on the department's risk assessment tool increases the chances of serving youth who would otherwise continue in delinquent offending.

youth.¹⁷ If beds are reduced as a result of reduced bed needs due to this program, the cost savings to the state would be \$342,000.

¹⁷ This estimate is based on projections that 403, or 70%, of the 576 youth served would successfully complete the program. Based on an analysis of moderately-high and high-risk gang members, we estimate that 185, or 46% of these youth, would have otherwise been committed and incurred residential costs. These cost savings would not all be realized in one fiscal year, but might be spread over several years.

Agency Response ---

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to review and respond. The Secretary's written response has been reproduced in Appendix B.

OPPAGA supports the Florida Legislature by providing evaluative research and objective analyses to promote government accountability and the efficient and effective use of public resources. This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by telephone (850/488-0021), by FAX (850/487-3804), in person, or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475). Cover photo by Mark Foley.

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Gary R. VanLandingham, Ph.D., OPPAGA Director

Appendix A

Methodology Used to Analyze Redirection and Residential Outcomes

To assess the outcomes of the Redirection Program, we analyzed data on two cohorts of juvenile offenders—those that successfully completed either the Redirection Program or a residential commitment program between February 1, 2005, and August 31, 2007. We compared these youths' juvenile and adult arrest records through January 31, 2008, a minimum period of five months and a maximum of three years after they had completed treatment.

Data. The Department of Juvenile Justice provided data on the youths' demographics, school attendance, drug use, prior delinquency and commitment history, and delinquency referrals, adjudications and commitments after release. The Department of Law Enforcement provided data on adult arrests and convictions, and the Department of Corrections provided data on probation and prison sentences.

Study population. The treatment group youth in our study successfully completed the Redirection Program between February 1, 2005, and August 31, 2007. These youth had been referred to the Redirection Program while being evaluated for commitment to a residential program for a non-law violation of probation or a misdemeanor. There were 738 youth in this population, who were served at 14 Redirection Program sites in 41 counties. Providers for each circuit and the number of youth in the outcome evaluation are shown in Table A-1.

Table A-1
738 Youth in the Study Population Successfully Completed the Redirection Program at 14 Program Sites

Provider and Circuit	Successful Completions
Institute for Child and Family Health, Circuit 11	133
The White Foundation, Circuit 1	88
Community Solutions, Inc., Circuit 9	79
Camelot Community Care, Circuits 15 and 17	76
Vision Quest, Circuit 13	70
Vision Quest, Circuit 6	61
The Starting Place, Inc., Circuit 17	60
Community Solutions, Inc., Circuit 18	52
Henderson Mental Health, Inc., Circuit 17	51
Community Solutions, Inc., Circuits 5 and 7	30
Human Service Associates, Circuit 19	16
Lee Mental Health, Circuit 20	8
Community Solutions, Inc., Circuit 10	7
Community Solutions, Inc., Circuit 12	7
Total Redirection Successful Completions	738

Our comparison group consisted of 17,119 youth who had been committed to a residential program, successfully completed their residential program after an average stay of approximately eight months, and were released from residential commitment between February 1, 2005, and August 31, 2007.

Methods of analysis. We examined six outcome measures combining juvenile and adult data for this study.

- Arrests for any offense, including violations of probation
- Arrests for a felony
- Arrest for a violent felony
- Adjudication or conviction for any offense
- Adjudication or conviction for a felony
- Commitment to a residential program or sentence to prison

We used survival analysis to conduct our analysis; this technique calculates the probability of an event, such as an arrest after program completion, given the number of days during which the event could happen, such as the number of days after the youth's release. Using Cox Regression to conduct this survival analysis, we compared the probability of a youth being arrested for various offenses, including felonies, violent felonies, or arrests resulting in adjudications, convictions, commitment, or prison, given the number of days from release until arrest or to the end of the study period.

Control variables. The survival analysis allowed us to control for differences between the treatment and comparison group on factors related to recidivism, including age, gender, race, number of prior referrals, whether the youth had a prior commitment, whether the youth was from a county that is part of an urbanized area with a population over 500,000, and time out of the program. We also included variables for region and whether or not the youth had a non-law violation of probation filed within 45 days prior to program admission.

We also tested variables from the department's Supervision Risk Classification Instrument that identified problems with school attendance and drug use; these variables significantly correlated with recidivism for this population, but did not change the overall results. Since the department began using a new risk classification instrument during the time of the study and some youth had only data from the new instrument, we did not include these variables in the final analysis. For all statistical techniques, we used a 0.05 confidence level, the most commonly accepted standard for statistical significance, in determining statistically significant differences.

Statistical results. Results for measures with statistically significant findings are reported below in Table A-2. The risk of recidivism is calculated in the survival analysis for treatment youth compared to residential commitment youth with a similar initial risk of recidivism. For the Redirection Program, a relative risk of rearrest for a violent felony of 0.762 means that the risk that youth who successfully completed Redirection will be rearrested for a felony after program completion is 76% of the risk for youth who complete residential commitment, controlling for factors related to recidivism. Likewise, a relative risk of rearrest for a felony adjudication or conviction of 0.670 means that the risk that a Redirection Program completer will be rearrested for a crime after program completion is 67% of the risk for a youth who completes residential commitment. In other words, Redirection Program completers are 24% less likely to be arrested for a violent felony and 33% less likely to be adjudicated or convicted of a felony than similar youth who complete residential commitment.

Table A-2
Redirection Programs Showed Significant Reductions in Felony Arrests, Violent Felony Arrests, Adjudications and Convictions, Felony Adjudications and Convictions, and Juvenile Commitments and Prison Sentences After Program Completion ¹

Measure	Relative Risk of Rearrest ²	Reduced Likelihood of Rearrest Compared to Residential Youth ²	Statistical Significance	Number of Youth
Arrest for a felony ²	0.861	14%	0.017	
Arrest for a violent felony ²	0.762	24%	0.006	
Any juvenile adjudication or adult conviction ²	0.810	19%	0.001	738
A juvenile adjudication or adult conviction for a felony ²	0.670	33%	0.000	
A juvenile commitment or adult prison sentence ²	0.644	36%	0.000	

¹ Compared to youth who successfully completed residential commitment programs, controlling for age, gender, race, number of prior referrals, prior commitments, time out of the program, region of Florida, whether the youth was from a county that is part of an urbanized area with a population over 500,000, and whether the youth had a non-law violation of probation within 45 days prior to admission.

² Statistically significant at the 0.05 level of confidence.

Graphs presented in the report (Exhibits 2 – 5) represent the cumulative probability of a juvenile violent felony arrest (Exhibit 2), any adjudication or conviction (Exhibit 3), a felony adjudication or conviction (Exhibit 4), and a juvenile commitment or adult prison term (Exhibit 5), estimated by the model at the mean of the covariates. In other words, the exhibit shows probabilities computed for the typical juvenile in the study population. The difference between the probability of each measure of recidivism after program completion for residential and Redirection is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix B



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Charlie Crist, Governor

Frank Peterman, Jr., Secretary

June 20, 2008

Mr. Gary VanLandingham, Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis and
Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

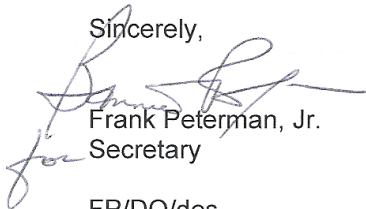
Dear Mr. VanLandingham:

We are pleased to see that the redirection program continues to produce good outcomes for our youth with lower recidivism than residential commitment and significant cost savings for the citizens of the State of Florida. Expanding services to include youth charged with misdemeanor and non-violent felony offenses has had a positive effect by allowing more youth to be served as well as reducing recidivism rates for more serious offenders.

The Department supports OPPAGA's recommendations to expand the Redirection program to serve other populations of youth such as sex offenders and youth in need of specialized mental health services. This will allow us an opportunity to serve youth who may otherwise be a candidate for long term residential commitment because of their treatment needs rather than their risk to re-offend. These services can be designed to provide a much more intensive level of supervision and services than traditional MultiSystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT). Additional options, such as Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT) are also needed for youth whose family structure does not support MST or FFT.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on your draft report. Please contact Assistant Secretary Darryl Olson if you have any questions regarding our response at 850-487-9575.

Sincerely,


Frank Peterman, Jr.
Secretary

FP/DO/des

Cc: Rod Love, Deputy Secretary
Bonnie Rogers, Chief of Staff
Mary Eubanks, Inspector General

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The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.