



FLORIDA GETS IT RIGHT!

Independent evaluation demonstrates Redirection Program for at-risk youth significantly reduces crime and ***saves Florida more than \$36 million.***



Special Issue

Redirection Saves \$36.4 Million and Avoids \$5.2 Million in Recombitment and Prison Costs

The following overview contains excerpts from OPPAGA's May 2009 report. The full report can be downloaded at www.oppaga.state.fl.us (reference report No. 09-27).

The Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability, an office of the Florida Legislature, has concluded that the Redirection Program in the state of Florida has saved \$36.4 million and avoids \$5.2 million in recommitment and prison costs.

The state of Florida and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice contracted with Evidence-Based Associates in 2004, to launch the Redirection project in an effort to "redirect" troubled youth from residential placements to more effective, family-focused, evidence-based treatment options.

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. The Redirection Program diverts appropriate youth from residential programs to less costly therapy-based community programs.

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.

The Legislature specified that Redirection provide Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy. These therapy models have been identified as Blueprint Programs for Violence Prevention by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, based on high-quality evaluations showing sustained reductions in recidivism for serious and violent offenders. In 2008, Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT) was added to the Redirection Program because of its success with Latino and African-American families.

Findings

For the fourth year in a row, OPPAGA has found that the Redirection Program reduced juvenile justice costs and lowered recidivism for youth involved in the program. Over the past four years, the program has saved the state \$36.4 million in initial juvenile commitment costs and avoided \$5.2 million in subsequent juvenile commitment and adult prison costs.



In addition, youth completing Redirection were significantly less likely to be arrested, adjudicated or committed for subsequent crimes than similar youth released from residential commitment facilities.

Cost-Analysis

Redirection has allowed the state of Florida to save \$36.4 million and avoid \$5.2 million in incarceration costs.

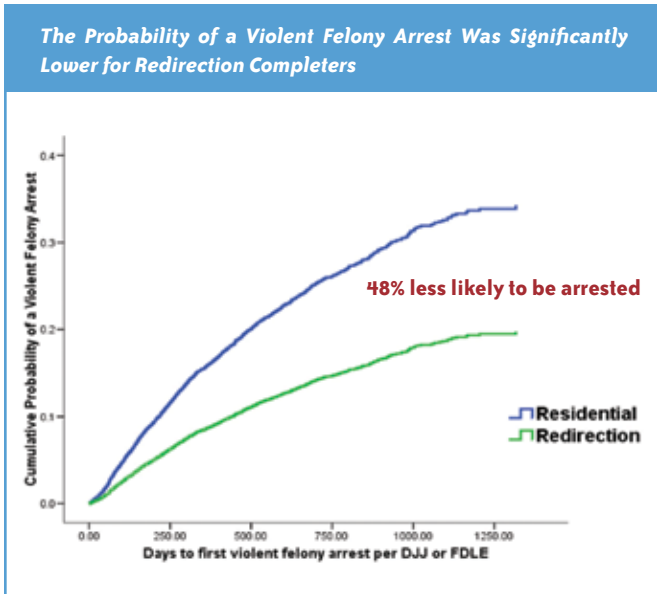
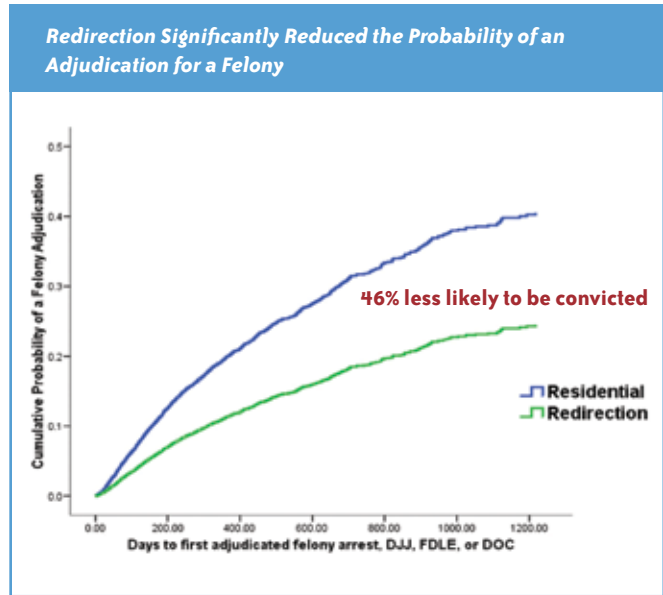
Redirection has achieved substantial cost savings and avoidance. As of December 31, 2008, total Redirection costs for 2,867 youth discharged, both those who successfully completed and those who failed to complete the program, were approximately \$14.4 million, and a total of 2,033 youth had successfully completed the Redirection Program. If these successful completers had been committed to residential commitment programs instead of Redirection, they would have stayed an average of almost eight months until release, at an estimated cost of \$50.8 million. As a result, Redirection has saved \$36.4 million in state residential delinquency costs in its first four years of operation. Due to reductions in recidivism, the state also has avoided an estimated \$5.2 million in costs associated with future juvenile residential and adult prison commitments. The reduction

46% fewer felony convictions • 35% fewer juvenile c

in recidivism allowed the state of Florida to avoid 144 additional juvenile commitments and \$3.5 million in juvenile commitment costs. In addition, prison costs avoided by reductions in adult prison commitments are estimated at \$370,000 annually, or a total of \$1.7 million given an average sentence length of 4.7 years for the comparison group youth.

Juvenile Outcomes

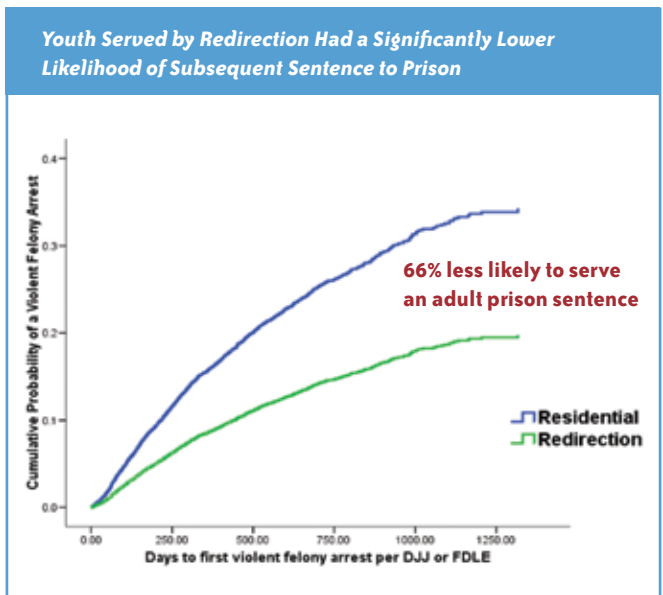
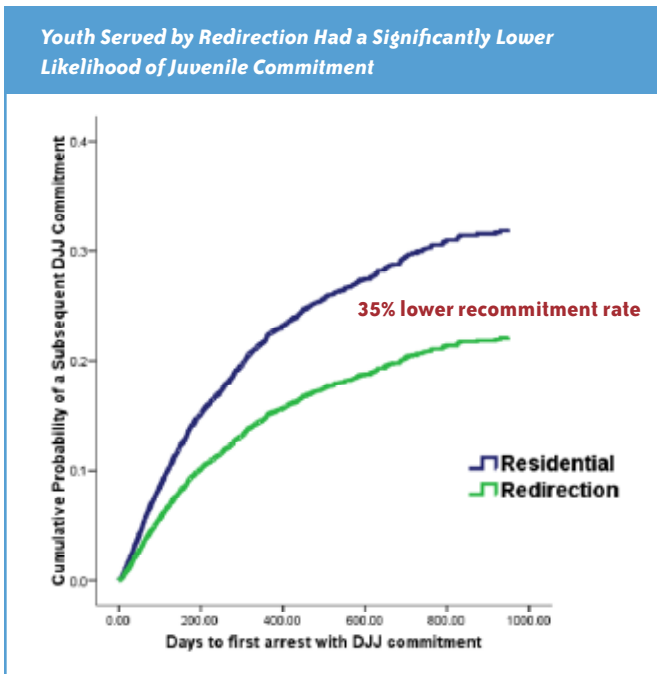
Youth served by Redirection showed significant reductions in recidivism.



Adult Outcomes

Redirection cut adult prison admissions by 66 percent among youth who turned 18 during the study period.

Almost four years have passed since the first Redirection youth were released. Consequently, during the follow-up period, enough Redirection and comparison group youth had reached age 18 to sufficiently evaluate the initial impact of Redirection on prison outcomes. The likelihood of a prison sentence after release for those who were age 18 or older during the study period was 66 percent less for youth completing Redirection, than for similar residential youth, controlling for age, prior referrals, and other factors related to recidivism. Additionally, since many youth in the study had not yet reached age 18 by the end of the follow-up period, the impact of this recidivism reduction is likely to increase with time.



For additional information about Evidence-Based Associates, visit www.evidencebasedassociates.com.

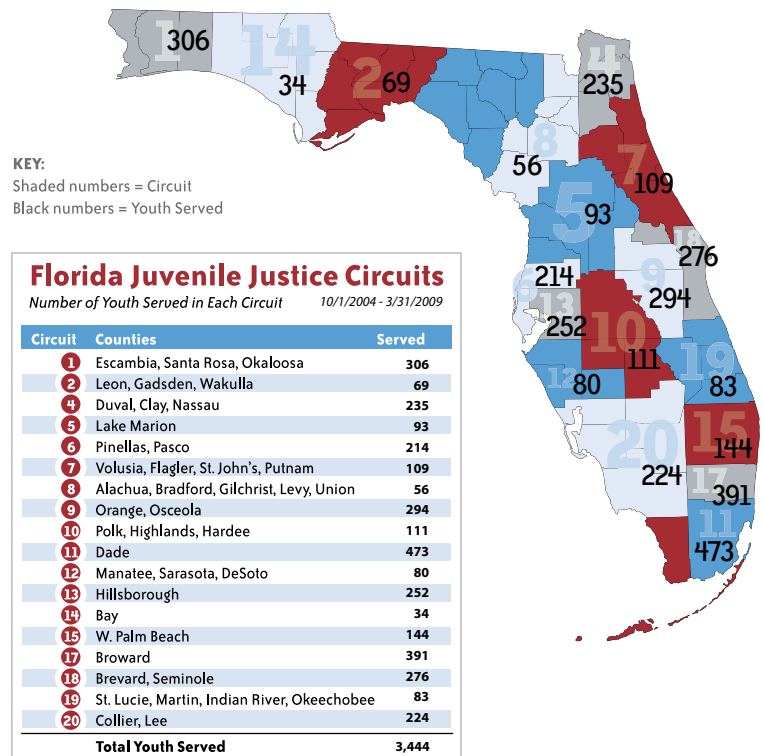
REDIRECTION

Florida's commitment to helping at-risk youth

In 2004, the Florida Legislature voted to initiate the Department of Juvenile Justice's Redirection project to address the growing number of juvenile offenders who were being committed to residential facilities for non-law violations of probation. The Redirection project was designed to divert, or redirect, these youth from residential placement to highly effective, evidence-based, community-based treatments.

For additional information, contact Nicole Janer:
njaner@evidencebasedassociates.com

(315) 317-6025 | www.evidencebasedassociates.com



Sponsored by: The State of Florida,
Department of Juvenile Justice; the Florida
Legislature; and Evidence-Based Associates.

