



Evaluation of Evidence-Based Associates

Redirection Services in Florida: One-Year Outcomes

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A Research Report Submitted to:

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Executive Summary

In 2004, the Florida Legislature funded a pilot program to address the growing number of juvenile offenders committed to residential programs for non-law violations of probation. A non-law violation of probation results when a youth fails to adhere to court-ordered probation requirements, such as breaking curfew, skipping school, or engaging in other non-criminal acts prohibited by the terms of probation. The pilot initiative was designed to divert, or redirect, these non-law violators from residential placement to community-based treatments.

Under this Redirection Initiative, the following two commitment alternatives are available for youth meeting specified eligibility criteria: Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT). Prior research suggests that both of these programs are successful in preventing youth violence and delinquency. The purpose of the current evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of Redirection services in reducing recidivism. Recidivism is defined here as a subsequent juvenile adjudication or adult conviction within one year of program release. Additionally adult and juvenile outcomes include felony adjudication or conviction, arrest and felony arrest within one year of service completion. All youth released from and completing MST or FFT services or low, moderate or high-restrictiveness commitment programming between February 2005 and August 31, 2006 are examined in this evaluation. The effectiveness of Redirection was determined by comparing those completing Redirection programs to those in residential facilities. Finally, a cost analysis was prepared to demonstrate the potential financial savings of Redirection as an alternative to residential placement.

The results demonstrate that:

- **Youth who complete Redirection programming have better recidivism outcomes when compared to youth released from residential programming.**
 - **Redirection youth are less likely to have a subsequent conviction or adjudication, and**
 - **The odds of felony adjudication or conviction are substantially lower for Redirection completers than residential placements.**
- **Redirection services save the state approximately \$27,059 per completion when compared to those completing low, moderate and high-risk residential placements.**
 - **Diverting just 75 youth from residential to Redirection services has the potential to save the state over two million dollars.**

Redirection services are consistently linked to lower recidivism and significantly lower felony adjudication or conviction when contrasted with commitment placements. Furthermore, Redirection programming achieves these positive outcomes at considerably lower cost than more restrictive residential services. These outcomes collectively demonstrate that Redirection is a valuable and cost-effective alternative to committing youth to residential facilities.

Florida Redirection Services and Evaluation

Seeking effective community-based alternatives to residential commitment for youth with non-law violations of probation, the Florida Legislature initiated the Redirection Pilot Program in 2004. Non-law violations are infractions of court-specified terms of supervision and can include such problems as missing school and breaking curfew. This type of violation is often associated with behaviors that violate the parameters of supervision but are not per se illegal activities. The Redirection Initiative was developed as a cost-effective alternative for juvenile offenders with non-law violations of probation, diverting them from commitment facilities into one of two community-based treatment placements: Multisystemic Therapy or Functional Family Therapy.

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT) are both evidenced-based treatment models, and are recognized as highly effective strategies for preventing juvenile violence. A 2004 national review of juvenile violence prevention programs reports that there are “two programs that are clearly effective in reducing arrests and out-of-home placements: Functional Family Therapy, and Multisystemic Therapy. Among the important characteristics that these programs have in common are a focus on developing social competency skills, a long-term approach, and family involvement” (National Institute of Health, 2004). The U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has also designated MST and FFT as “Blueprint Programs,” which indicates that these treatments “have the highest level of experimental research showing sustained reductions in recidivism for serious and violent offenders compared to residential treatment programs” (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, 2006).

The Redirection Pilot Initiative was initially funded in fiscal year 2004-05 in three counties with high juvenile commitment rates for non-law violations of probation, including Dade, Broward and Escambia. Redirection services were expanded in the following fiscal year to include Osceola, Hillsborough, Brevard, Orange, Seminole and Pinellas counties. The primary goal of the initial pilot was to demonstrate the value of Redirection in terms of reducing juvenile delinquency and providing a cost-effective alternative to residential commitment. To this end, the Florida Legislature provided funding for an evaluation of the Redirection program by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). The preliminary OPPAGA report (2006) and follow-up (2007) indicated that the program was as efficient as residential placements at reducing juvenile arrest, and did so at significantly lower costs to the taxpayer. The following report presents the results of a one year outcome evaluation of Redirection services in Florida conducted by the Justice Research Center (JRC). The report is separated into two sections: program evaluation and cost analysis. Data and analyses vary for each component and are outlined within the corresponding sections.

Data Sources

The primary source of data was the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). JJIS contains demographic, delinquency referral and placement information, including a record of admission and release dates, and admission and release reasons for every youth admitted to a program. Arrest and disposition information for youth who reached age 18 or who had cases transferred to adult court was obtained from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's (FDLE) Florida Crime Information Center, while adult sentencing and conviction data were obtained from the Florida Department of Corrections (DOC). Risk assessment information was acquired from the Supervision Risk Classification Instrument (SRCI) and the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) which are completed and maintained on the JJIS. Information on the youth served by the Redirection program and treatment information, such as therapist and therapist adherence, was provided by Evidence-Based Associates (EBA).

General Methodology

This study closely follows the methodology described in the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice *2007 Comprehensive Accountability Report (CAR)*. The methodology for the CAR is determined annually by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice in conjunction with key stakeholders, policymakers and juvenile justice providers. Each year a *Common Definitions Report* is developed that outlines the CAR methods, specifying the accepted procedures for classifying youth, selecting cases and determining outcomes.¹

Program Evaluation

There are many ways of evaluating 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 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 moderate the effects of risk factors and reduce youths' involvement in further delinquent behaviors. Redirection services will be assessed for how well they meet this expectation following the methodology outlined in the 2007 CAR (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice).

Research Questions

There are five research questions that will be addressed as part of the program evaluation:

1. Are there fewer Redirection youth being adjudicated or convicted when compared to juvenile offenders completing residential services?

¹ The most recent version of the Common Definitions Report is available for review upon request.

2. Are there fewer Redirection youth being adjudicated or convicted for felony offenses when compared to juvenile offenders completing residential services?
3. Are there fewer Redirection youth being arrested within one year of the program release when judged against youth completing commitment programs?
4. Are there fewer Redirection youth being arrested for felony offenses within one year of program completion than juvenile offenders who exit residential placements?
5. Are there significant differences in these outcomes for Redirection youth contrasted to residential commitment youth?

Data and Methods

Redirection provides MST and FFT to juvenile offenders in the community, thereby diverting these youth from residential commitment placements. According to legislation regarding Redirection services, the program is supposed to target offenders with non-law violations of probation who are not violent felony offenders (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, 2006; Florida Statutes). Given that Redirection operates as an alternative to commitment the logical comparison group is juvenile offenders placed in residential facilities.

The analyses presented only include juvenile offenders who completed a residential commitment or Redirection program between February 2005 and August 31, 2006.² As stated in the FDJJ *Outcome Evaluation Report* (2006), including only those youth *completing* programs and/or services in recidivism studies “is done in an effort to determine the effectiveness of the program based on youth who actually received the services offered” (p. 4). A completion is defined as any youth designated in JJIS as having successfully completed the program or been assigned to community control; been directly discharged without subsequent supervision; or youth who reach the maximum allowable age and are released from the facility.

The Redirection assessment consists of four independent evaluation samples and sets of analyses. The first outcome analysis is conducted for all juvenile offenders completing Redirection or residential services between February 2005 and August 31, 2006. All juvenile offenders entering commitment programs are assigned to one of four restrictiveness levels: low-risk, moderate-risk, high-risk and maximum-risk. These levels are related to security issues, offense severity and treatment needs. As is customary in the FDJJ CAR, this study will also be conducted and presented separately for three of the four restrictiveness levels.³ The second, third

² This time period was chosen because it allows for a one follow-up for all youth who completed a Redirection or residential program on or before August 31, 2006.

³ Given substantive differences (prior offending, length of stay, age) between youth assigned to Redirection services and those placed in maximum-risk residential services; this group will be excluded from the outcome study.

and fourth analyses compare juvenile outcomes for those assigned to Redirection as opposed to low-risk, moderate-risk or high-risk residential facilities.

Following the official DJJ definition, recidivism is operationalized as any subsequent juvenile adjudication (including adjudication withheld) or adult conviction within one year of release. The 2003 DJJ *Common Definitions Report* states that this measurement of recidivism is preferable to other dimensions of post program success because it “provides a reliable indication that the youth was found to have committed the offense” (pg. 28). The analysis will also include alternate youth outcome measures including felony adjudication or conviction, arrest and felony arrest within one year of program release. Given the available data, recidivism was tracked for each youth for one year following completion of residential or Redirection services.

The program assessment will incorporate several analytic techniques including descriptive statistics, logistic regression, and propensity score matching. The descriptive statistics demonstrate the baselines, such as the total number (and percentage) of juvenile offenders with a subsequent arrest, felony arrest, adult conviction/juvenile adjudication, or felony adjudication or conviction within one year of Redirection and residential completion. Simple statistics can highlight potentially important differences between the Redirection group and the comparison groups.

Logistic regression, a more complex statistical tool, allows for a comparison of Redirection and residential outcomes after completion, while controlling for factors known to impact juvenile recidivism including age, race, gender, region of the state, prior record and type of offense. Propensity score matching provides a comprehensive approach to estimating treatment effects with observational data (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983, 1984, 1985). Propensity score matching controls for pre-program differences in juvenile offenders that could impact the probability of receiving Redirection services and the potential effect of the treatment. This is accomplished by statistically “balancing” the treatment and comparison groups and then estimating the effect of the Redirection and commitment programs on recidivism.

The combined JJIS, DRAI, SRCI, FDLE and DOC data provide demographic, risk, offense and re-offending information for all program completers, including those from all commitment restrictiveness levels and those from Redirection. Youth were matched from the JJIS data files to the DRAI and SRCI files by a unique JJIS identifier using deterministic matching procedures. A small portion of cases, 1.1 percent, did not have DRAI or SRCI risk data and were recoded to reflect the absence of the attribute measured in each of the risk variables, as that would have been what was presented to the court at the time of adjudication and disposition.

The final sample composition, excluding non-completions and duplicative cases, is presented below in Table 1 for Redirection and residential completions between February 2005 and August 31, 2006. There were some juvenile offenders who received Redirection services as well as commitment programming during the time period examined. If the youth had a successful Redirection completion, the additional residential observation(s) for that juvenile offender was excluded from the assessment.

Table 1. Redirection and Residential Comparison Samples

Total Redirection Releases	455
Redirection Duplicate Cases	3
Unsuccessful Redirection Releases	147
Total Redirection Sample	305
Total Residential Releases	14,406
Residential Duplicates	1,515
Redirection/Residential Duplicates	137
Unsuccessful Residential Releases	931
Low-risk Residential	1,369
Moderate-risk Residential	7,960
High-risk Residential	2,494
Total Residential Sample	11,823
Total Outcome Evaluation Sample	12,128

Redirection and Residential Comparison and Results

The residential and Redirection sample descriptive statistics are presented below in Table 2. There are a total of 12,128 completion cases from February 2005 and August 31, 2006 (305 Redirection youth and 11,823 low-, moderate-, and high-risk residential youth). The Redirection successful completion rate is sixty-eight percent. The majority of youth who did not complete the program successfully were placed into a more restrictive setting (48%). Additional youth were terminated prior to completion because the youth or family lacked engagement in the program (37%) or the family moved from the service area (14%).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics: Residential and Redirection Comparison Samples

<i>Redirection and Residential (Low-High) Comparison (N = 12,128)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.57	0.49
Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.46	0.50
Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.36	0.48
Felony Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.20	0.40
Program (Residential = 0, Redirection = 1)	0.03	0.16
Race (Non-white = 0, White = 1)	0.51	0.50
Gender (Female = 0, Male = 1)	0.82	0.38
Age at Release	16.24	1.37

The total outcome sample included both male (82 percent) and female (18 percent) program completers. Over half of the sample (51 percent) was comprised of white juvenile offenders and the average age of those released from Redirection or residential services was 16.24 years of age. Thirty-six percent of those in the sample were convicted or adjudicated within one year of completing the residential or Redirection services, and twenty percent had a felony adjudication

or conviction within one year of release. More than half of all program participants under observation had an arrest within one year of completing services. Those arrested for a felony offense was slightly lower at forty-six percent. .

Exhibit 1 presents the total number (and proportion) of adult convictions or juvenile adjudications and felony adjudications or convictions within one year of program release for those placed in Redirection and commitment services.

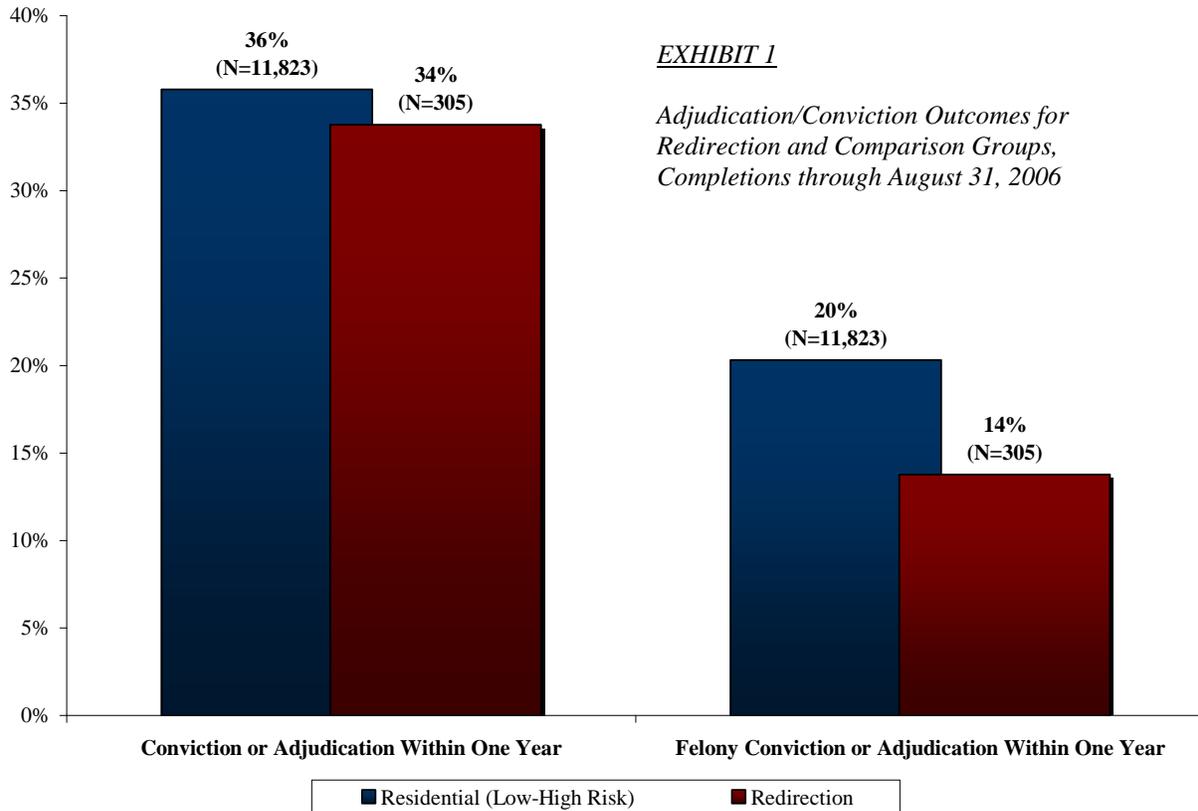


Exhibit 1 demonstrates that the proportion of those convicted or adjudicated within one year of completion is somewhat lower for Redirection youth (34%) in comparison to committed youth (36%), but not enough so to achieve statistical significance. Additionally, the percentage of those adjudicated or convicted for more serious felony offenses within one year of release is *significantly* lower for Redirection youth (14%) when compared to Residential completers (20%).

EXHIBIT 1A

Juvenile/Adult Arrest Outcomes for Redirection and Comparison Groups, Completions through August 31, 2006

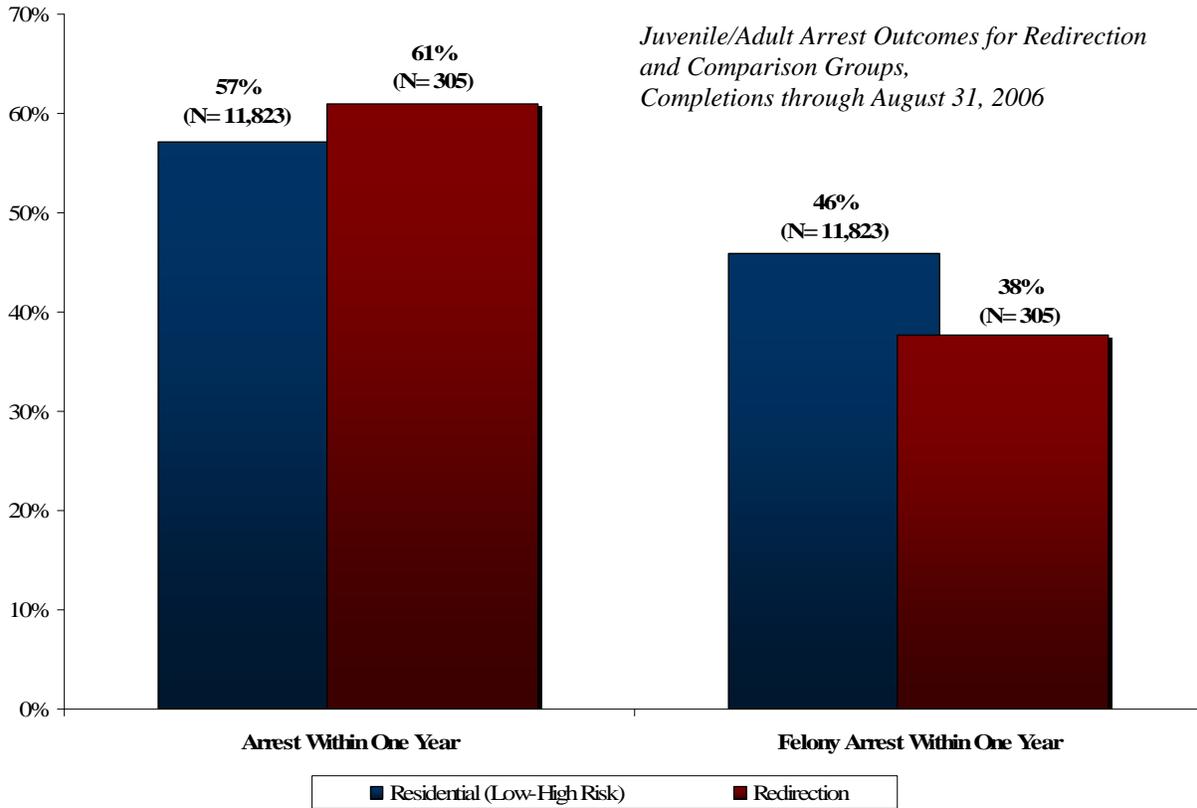


Exhibit 1A reveals that the percentage of those arrested within one year of program completion is slightly higher for Redirection youth (61%) in comparison to residential youth (57%), but the difference is not statistically significant. The slightly higher proportion of arrest among Redirection participants may be attributable to the fact that a greater percentage of these youth (84%), in comparison to residential placements (74%), are formally supervised after program completion. Finally, the proportion of those arrested for a felony offense is lower for Redirection youth (38%) in contrast to commitment youth (46%); a difference that is *statistically significant*.

Table 3. Logistic Analysis: Arrest, Felony Arrest, Adjudication/Conviction, and Felony Adjudication/Conviction within One Year of Program Completion ⁴

	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>Sig.</u>	<u>Exp(B)</u>	<u>Probability</u>
Redirection (Residential = 0, Redirection = 1)					
Adjudication/Conviction within One Year of Release	-0.001	0.135	0.994	0.999	0.500
Felony Adjudication within One Year of Release	-0.367*	0.194	0.058	0.693	0.409
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.490***	0.131	0.000	1.633	0.620
Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.149	0.133	0.264	1.161	0.537

⁴ Logistic analyses control for age, gender, race, prior offenses, prior commitments, risk factors, prior non-law violations of probation, offense seriousness, and region.

The logistic regression results (Table 3) indicate that the predicted odds of felony arrest and adjudication/conviction within one year of release *is not significantly* different for Redirection and residential youth. When examining felony adjudication/conviction within one year of release, the results demonstrate that Redirection youth have *significantly* lower odds than those of residential youth. The predicted probability of felony adjudication/conviction within one year is 41 percent for Redirection youth compared to 59 percent for residential completions.⁵ Additionally, the predicted odds of arrest are approximately sixteen percent higher for those released from Redirection services when compared to residential completers, a *significant* result.

Redirection-Residential Comparison and Results by Restrictiveness Level

The restrictiveness level residential and Redirection comparison descriptive statistics are presented below in Table 4. There are a total of 1,674 low-risk residential and Redirection, 8,265 moderate-risk residential and Redirection, and 2,799 high-risk restrictiveness level and Redirection completion cases from February 2005 through August 31, 2006.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics: Residential and Redirection Comparison by Restrictiveness Level

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Redirection and Low-risk Residential Comparison (N = 1,674)</i>		
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.54	0.5
Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.38	0.49
Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.38	0.48
Felony Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.18	0.39
Program (Residential = 0, Redirection = 1)	0.18	0.39
Race (Non-white = 0, White = 1)	0.42	0.49
Gender (Female = 0, Male = 1)	0.75	0.43
Age at Release	15.90	1.48

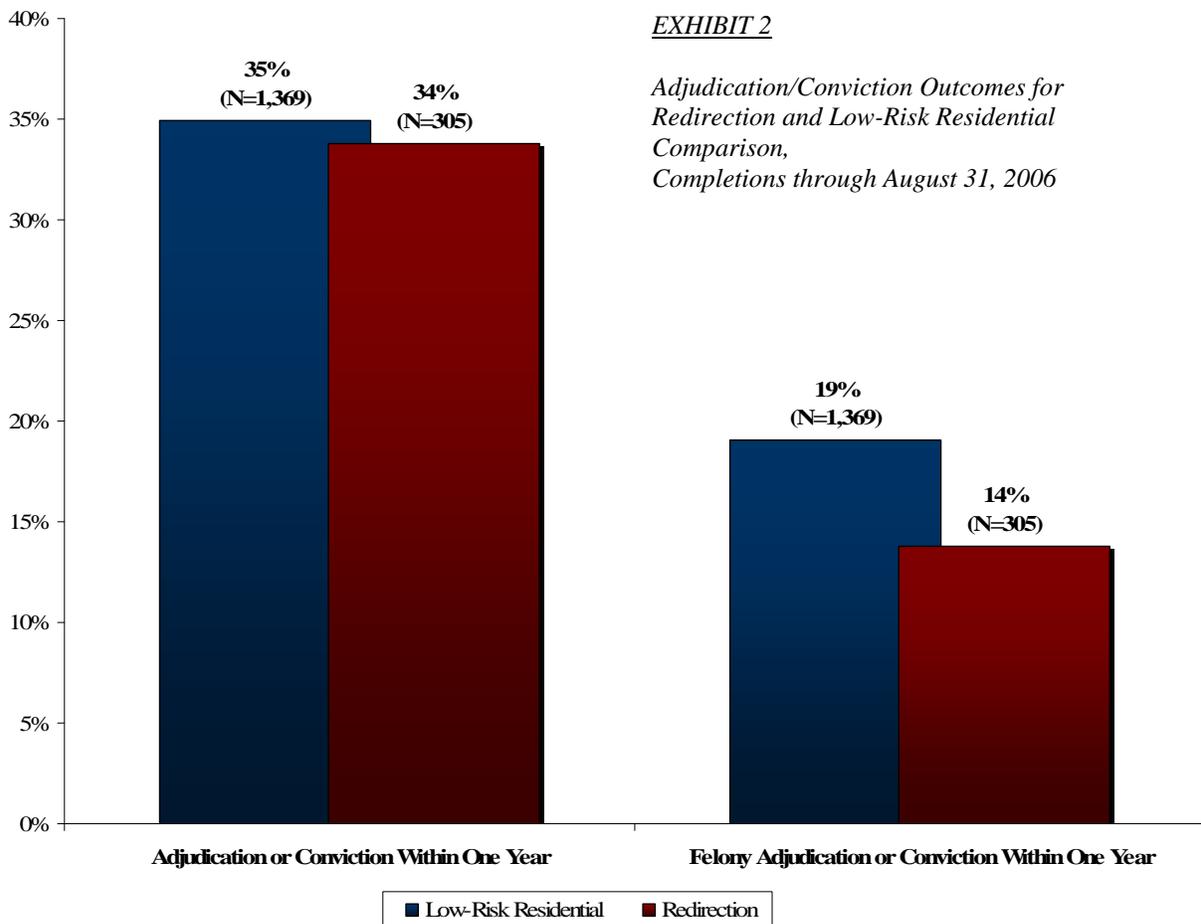
Table 4. Descriptive Statistics: Residential and Redirection Comparison by Restrictiveness Level Cont.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Redirection and Moderate-risk Residential Comparison (N = 8,265)</i>		
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.57	0.50
Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.45	0.50
Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.36	0.48
Felony Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.20	0.40
Program (Residential = 0, Redirection = 1)	0.04	0.19
Race (Non-white = 0, White = 1)	0.54	0.50
Gender (Female = 0, Male = 1)	0.81	0.39
Age at Release	16.21	1.35
<i>Redirection and High-risk Residential Comparison (N = 2,799)</i>		
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.61	0.49

⁵ A propensity score was calculated for youth who completed Redirection or residential services between February 2005 and August 31, 2006. Using this matching procedure resulted in the exclusion of 43 (14%) similar Redirection cases. This introduces unwanted bias into the modeling process and further propensity score analysis was not conducted.

Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.52	0.50
Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.36	0.48
Felony Adjudication or Conviction within One Year of Release	0.21	0.41
Program (Residential = 0, Redirection = 1)	0.11	0.31
Race (Non-white = 0, White = 1)	0.45	0.50
Gender (Female = 0, Male = 1)	0.86	0.35
Age at Release	16.47	1.36

The low-risk comparison sample includes female (25 percent) and male (75 percent) youth. Almost half of the low-restrictiveness sample is comprised of white (42 percent) juvenile offenders and roughly thirty-eight percent of those in the group have a subsequent adjudication or conviction. Male (81 percent) and white (54 percent) juvenile offenders make up the majority of the moderate-risk comparison sample (total sample includes 8,265 cases). Thirty-six percent of those in the moderate-restrictiveness group have a conviction or adjudication within one year of release. Finally, the high-risk sample consists of mostly male (86 percent) and non-white (55 percent) program completers. The average age of those in the high-restrictiveness sample is 16.47 years of age, and thirty-six percent of those in this group have a conviction or adjudication within one year of graduation.



Exhibits 2 and 2A demonstrate the total number (and percentage) of adult convictions or juvenile adjudications, felony adjudication/conviction, arrests and felony arrests, within one year of program release for those placed in Redirection and low-risk commitment services.

The results show (Exhibit 2) that the proportion of those convicted or adjudicated is *not significantly* lower for Redirection youth (34%) in comparison to commitment youth (35%). However, the percentage of Redirection youth (14%) with a felony adjudication or conviction within one year of completing the program was *significantly lower* than that of youth released from low-risk residential facilities (19%).

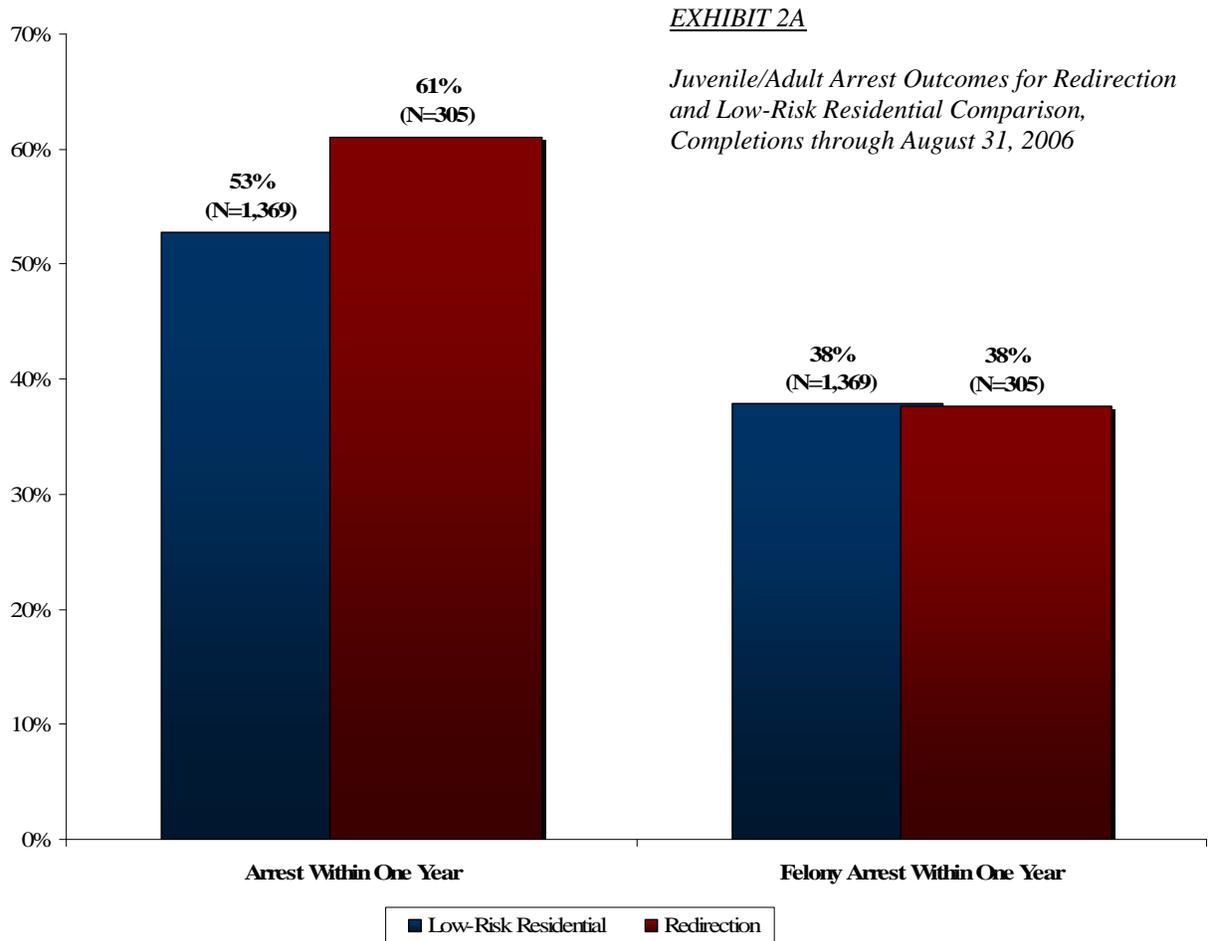
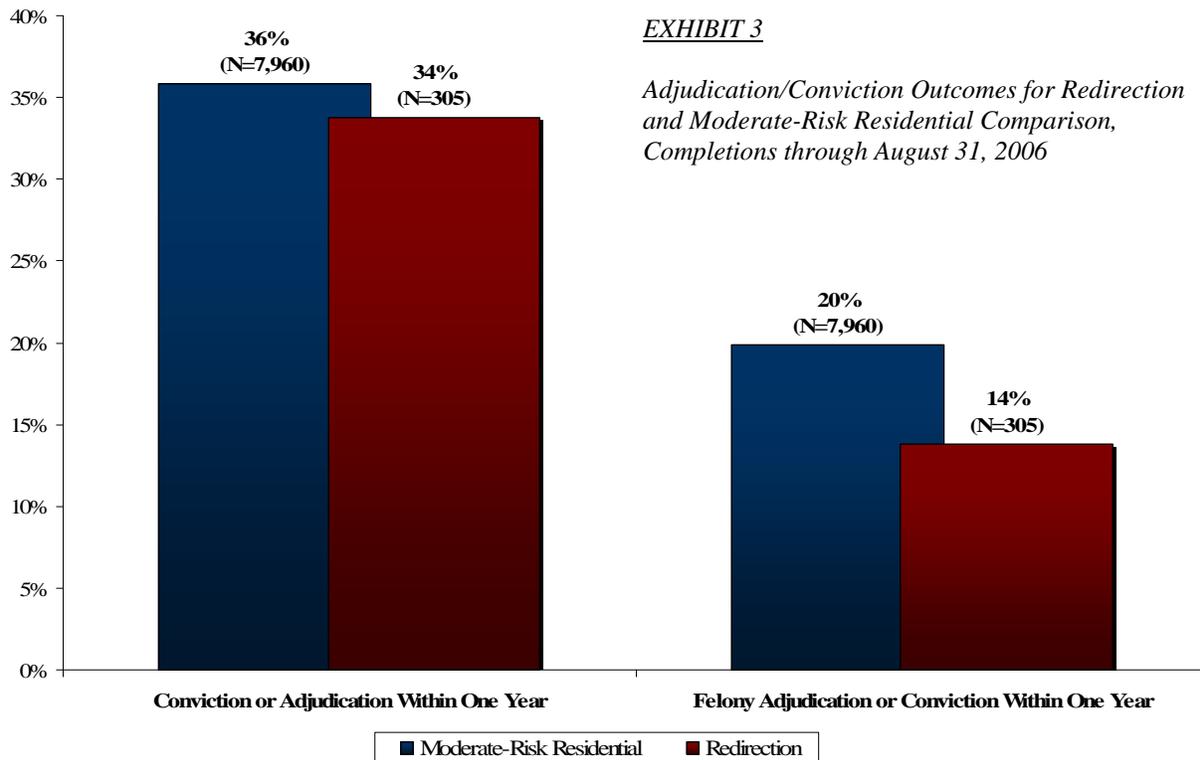
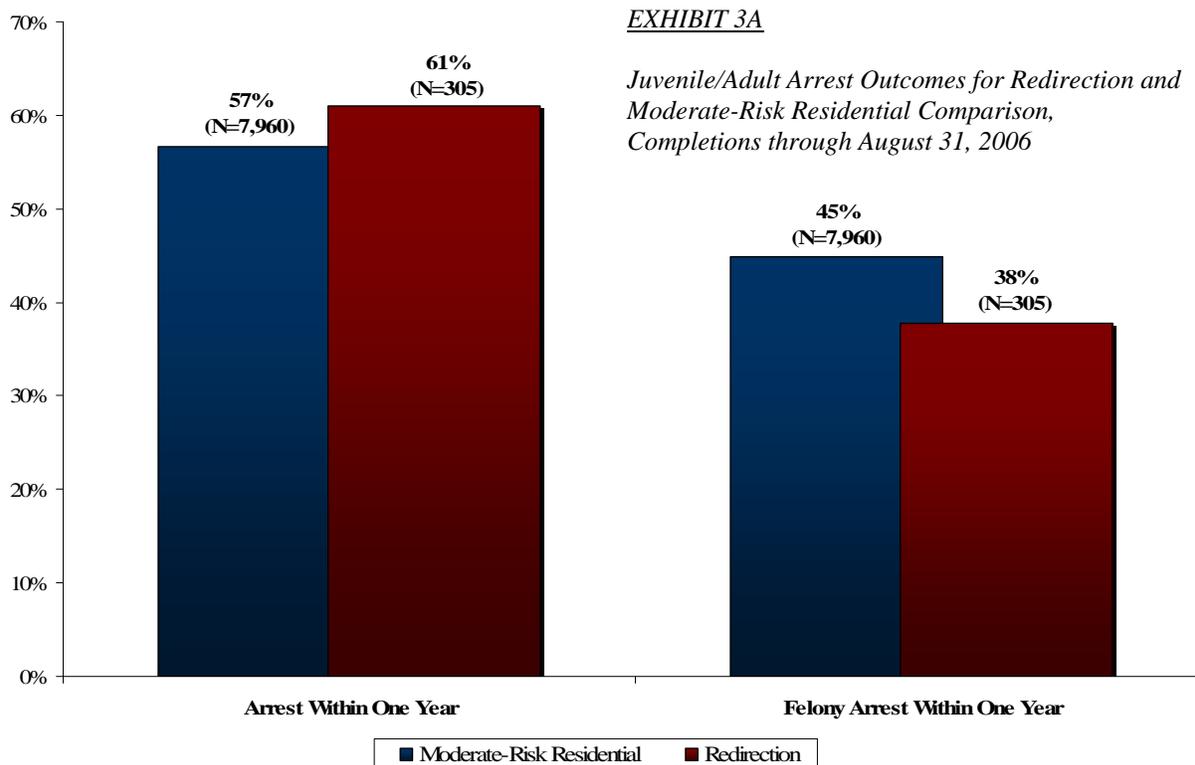


Exhibit 2A demonstrates that the proportion of those arrested within one year of completion is *significantly* higher for Redirection youth (61%) in comparison to low-restriction residential youth (53%). This result is potentially impacted by the high rate of supervision for those released from Redirection services (84% compared to 74% for residential completers). Finally, the percentage of those arrested for a felony offense within the follow-up period is equal for both groups (38%).

Conviction/Adjudication, felony adjudication or conviction, arrest and felony arrest within one year of program completion for Redirection and moderate-risk commitment placements are shown in Exhibits 3 and 3A.



The findings (Exhibit 3) demonstrate that the percentage of juveniles from moderate-risk programs with a conviction or adjudication is 36 percent in contrast to 34 percent for Redirection youth. However, this outcome is *not statistically significant*. However, the proportion of youth with a felony conviction or adjudication is *significantly lower* for Redirection youth (14%) when compared to residential releases (20%) during the same time period.



The results in Exhibit 3A show that the percentage of Redirection youth with an arrest is slightly higher (61 percent) than that for moderate-risk youth (57 percent). This finding is *not statistically significant*. The opposite is true for felony arrest, the proportion of Redirection juvenile offenders with a subsequent felony arrest is 38 percent compared to 45 percent for moderate-restrictiveness youth, a difference that is *statistically significant*.

The proportion and number of juvenile offenders with an adult conviction or juvenile adjudication, felony adjudication/conviction, arrest or felony arrest, within one year of program release is shown on the following pages in Exhibits 4 and 4A for Redirection and high-restrictiveness completions.

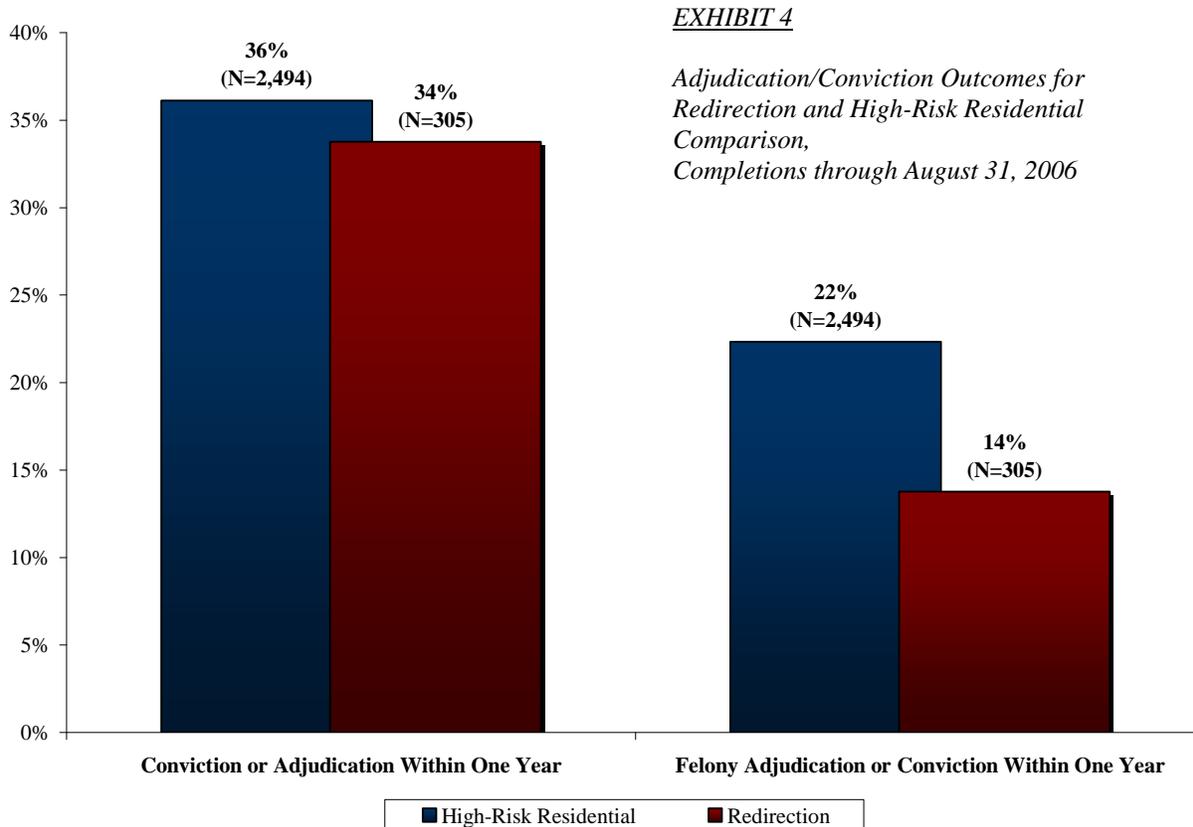
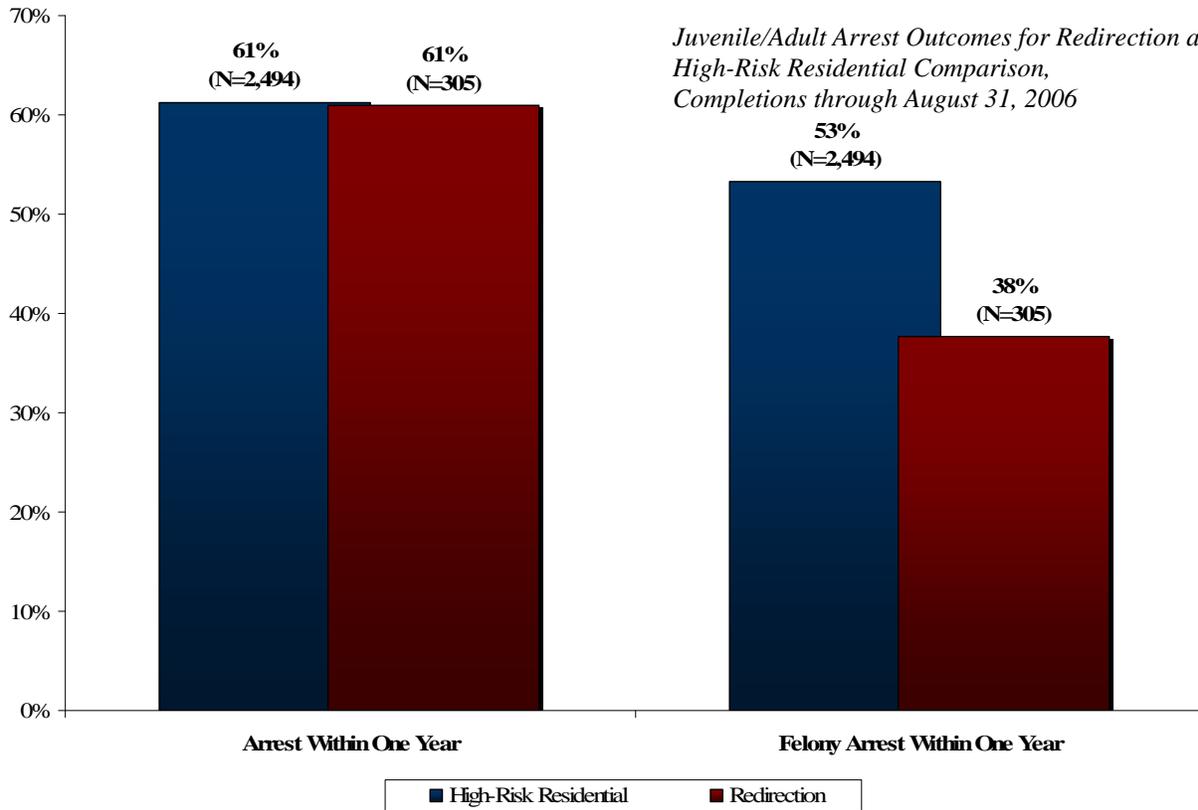


Exhibit 4 reveals that the proportion of those convicted or adjudicated within one year of completion is slightly lower for Redirection youth (34%) in comparison to commitment youth (36%), but this small difference is *not significant*. The observed difference in felony adjudication/conviction between Redirection (14%) and high-risk residential releases (22%) is *statistically significant*.

Exhibit 4A demonstrates that the percentage of those arrested within one year of program graduation is equal (61%) for high-risk residential and Redirection youth. The proportion of those with a felony arrest within one year is fifty-three percent for high-restrictiveness youth and thirty-eight percent for Redirection placements, a difference that is *statistically significant*.

EXHIBIT 4A

Juvenile/Adult Arrest Outcomes for Redirection and High-Risk Residential Comparison, Completions through August 31, 2006



Moving from observed to predicted differences, the logistic regression analyses (which control for factors such as age, race, gender, prior probation violations, crime type, region and prior record) shown in Table 5, demonstrate that the odds of felony conviction or adjudication are significantly lower for Redirection youth when compared to low and moderate-risk residential completions. However, arrests are significantly higher for Redirection youth in comparison to the low, moderate and high-risk releases within the same time period. The remaining differences were not statistically significant.

Table 5. Logistic Analyses by Restrictiveness Level: Conviction or Adjudication within One Year of Program Completion⁶

	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>Sig.</u>	<u>Exp(B)</u>	<u>Probability</u>
Redirection (Residential = 0, Redirection = 1)					
<u>Low-Risk Comparison</u>					
Adjudication/Conviction within One Year of Release	0.124	0.167	0.460	1.132	0.531
Felony Adjudication within One Year of Release	-0.479**	0.226	0.034	0.620	0.383
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.470**	0.164	0.004	1.600	0.615
Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.107	0.167	0.521	1.113	0.527

⁶ Logistic analyses control for age, gender, race, prior offenses, prior probation violations, risk factors, offense seriousness, and region.

Moderate-Risk Comparison

Adjudication/Conviction within One Year of Release	-0.031	0.141	0.825	0.969	0.492
Felony Adjudication within One Year of Release	-0.381*	0.199	0.056	0.683	0.406
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.461***	0.134	0.001	1.586	0.613
Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.150	0.139	0.279	1.162	0.537

High-Risk Comparison

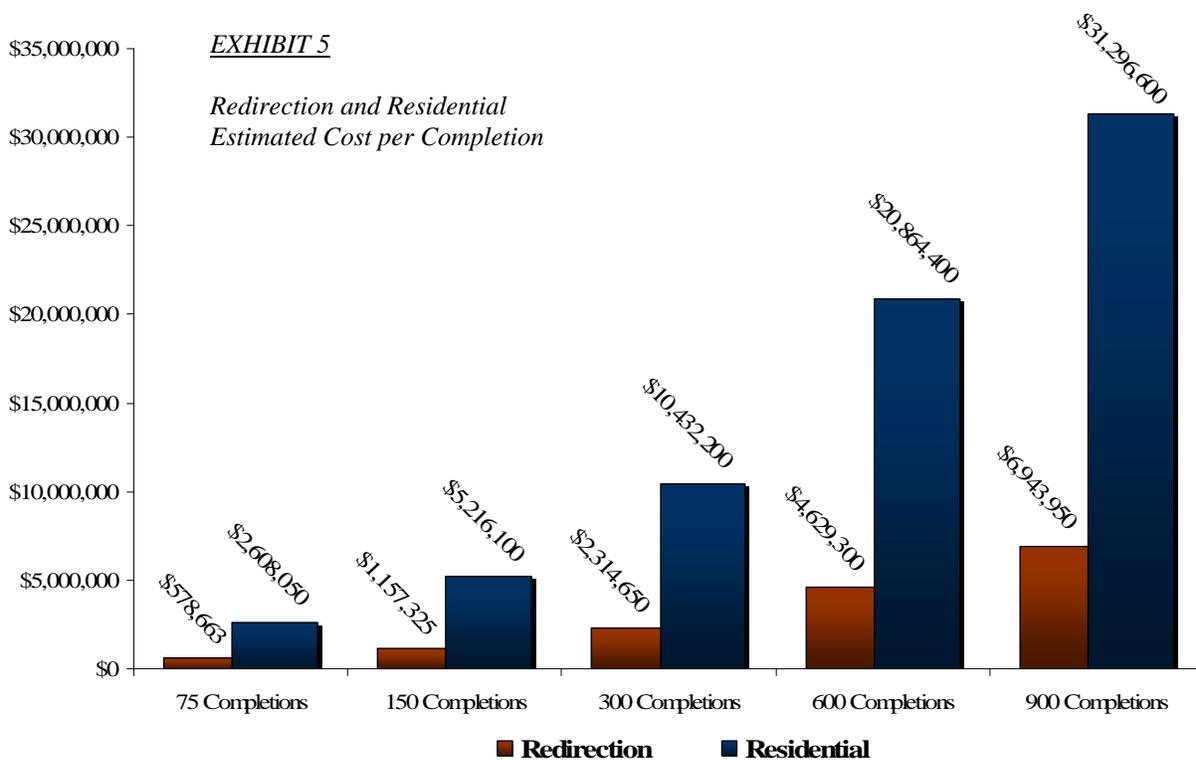
Adjudication/Conviction within One Year of Release	0.078	0.173	0.654	1.081	0.519
Felony Adjudication within One Year of Release	-0.296	0.237	0.212	0.744	0.427
Arrest within One Year of Release	0.616***	0.164	0.000	1.852	0.649
Felony Arrest within One Year of Release	0.201	0.184	0.276	1.222	0.550

*p<.10 **p<.05 ***p<.001

Cost Benefit Analysis

The relative expense of Redirection and residential services is established using the standard FDJJ method for calculating program costs. The cost figures used for official recidivism pools and presented in the 2007 FDJJ CAR are based on actual expenditures by commitment programs. These expenditures are derived from provider invoices and include both state and federal expenditures for residential services. The total costs are then divided by all youth *completing* services. The “average cost per completion” is an accurate indication of how much it costs a given program to successfully complete a youth.

According to the 2007 FDJJ CAR, it costs, on average, \$34,774 for every juvenile offender who completes low, moderate or high residential commitment programming (based on 2005-06 commitment expenditures). In comparison, Redirection services cost approximately \$7,715 for each youth who served by the program (based on Redirection expenditures through August 2006). The difference in expense between Redirection and residential programming is \$27,059 dollars for each youth receiving programming. Exhibit 5 demonstrates the projected expenditures for graduating 75, 150, 300, 600, and 900 youth from Redirection or commitment programs. The cost analysis demonstrates that the state saves approximately two million dollars for every 75 youth who complete Redirection instead of commitment services. The potential cost savings for completing 900 youth through Redirection, as an alternative to commitment programming, is over 24 million dollars.



Findings and Recommendations

There were five initial questions to be answered by the program evaluation:

1. Are there fewer Redirection youth being adjudicated or convicted when compared to juvenile offenders completing residential services?
2. Are there fewer Redirection youth being adjudicated or convicted for felony offenses when compared to juvenile offenders completing residential services?
3. Are there fewer Redirection youth being arrested within one year of the program release when judged against youth completing commitment programs?
4. Are there fewer Redirection youth being arrested for felony offenses within one year of program completion than juvenile offenders who exit residential placements?
5. Are there significant differences in these outcomes for Redirection youth contrasted to residential commitment youth?

The results presented in this program evaluation indicate that those released from Redirection have a higher probability of arrest than those completing residential services. This difference; however, is insignificant or reverses when examining more serious felony arrest within one year of release. The observed proportions of Redirection youth arrested within one year for felony offenses was consistently equal to or lower than the percentages for those completing residential placements. In three instances the differences in felony arrest within one year were statistically significant: the comparison of Redirection to all residential placements, and the contrast between Redirection and moderate- and high-risk commitment releases. These results demonstrate that Redirection is equally or more effective at reducing felony arrest as more restrictive placements.

There is a statistically insignificant difference in adjudication or conviction within one year of program completion. An examination of recidivism shows that there is a lower proportion of Redirection, in contrast to residential, youth with a subsequent conviction or adjudication within one year of completion. These differences are generally small and statistically insignificant. However, the uniformity of this finding across different comparison samples indicates that Redirection services are better or equally effective as residential facilities at reducing recidivism within one year of completing the program.

The logistic analysis advances the evaluation of Redirection effectiveness by estimating the predicted effect of program participation and completion on recidivism, while accounting for legally relevant factors and demographic characteristics. The findings from the logistic analyses demonstrate that there are no significant differences in predicted recidivism for Redirection and

residential placements. This suggests that Redirection is at least as effective in reducing recidivism when compared to residential services.

Furthermore, Redirection programming appears to substantially reduce the probability of more grave felony convictions or adjudications for those completing services when compared to those released from residential facilities. This is demonstrated by the observed disparity between Redirection and all residential placements and the predicted differences in felony conviction/adjudication produced by logistic modeling. The logistic results show that the probability of felony adjudication/conviction is 41 percent for Redirection youth and 59 percent for residential placements. The effectiveness of Redirection in reducing felony juvenile adjudications or adult convictions prevents youthful offenders from entering additional juvenile programs and/or adult correctional facilities.

The findings of this assessment reliably establish that youth who complete Redirection programs did as well or better upon release as juvenile offenders who went to more restrictive commitment facilities. This result was consistent across four independent comparison samples: Redirection and all residential completers and all Redirection and low-, moderate-, and high-risk residential completions by restrictiveness level. Finally, the findings were consistent across different measures of subsequent re-offending such as felony re-arrest, adjudication/conviction or felony adjudication/conviction.

Finally, the cost-benefit comparison of services reveals that Redirection programming is a cost-effective alternative to commitment placements. At a cost savings of \$27,059 per youth served, Redirection has the potential to save the state millions of dollars in juvenile offender treatment programming.

These outcomes collectively demonstrate that Redirection is a valuable and cost-effective alternative to committing youth to residential placements. Redirection services are consistently linked to fewer felony arrests, lower recidivism and substantially lower felony recidivism when contrasted with commitment placements. In addition, the risk level comparison findings presented here indicate that Redirection services, MST and FFT, could potentially be expanded to include higher risk and more serious juvenile offenders, with as much success at reducing subsequent offending as residential programs.⁷

There are several recommendations for furthering the evaluation of Redirection services:

- First, a more complete assessment, similar to the logistic modeling presented here, should be conducted using alternate measures of recidivism including offense specific arrest and conviction, probation outcomes, and offenses during services.
- There should also be an examination of how successful the Redirection program has been at addressing criminogenic risk factors such as anti-social thoughts, beliefs and attitudes.

⁷ MST and FFT have both proven effective in treating high-risk, serious, chronic and violent juvenile offenders. See Henggeler et.al., 1992 and Borduin, 1995 for research results.

- An empirical assessment of family outcomes for those participating in Redirection is also warranted as family functioning is a primary component of both MST and FFT treatments.
- Additionally, an expanded evaluation should incorporate a longer follow-up period (for instance 18 and 24 months) and integrate process evaluation techniques to provide a better understanding of the decision making practices that result in a juvenile offender being placed in Redirection as opposed to a commitment program.
- Additional analyses should compare Redirection services to other community based treatment programs for juvenile offenders in Florida.
- Furthermore, additional inquiry should focus on a broader range of outcomes including improvement in education, employment and quality of life for Redirection participants.
- Finally, a more systematic cost-benefit assessment should be included in the evaluation of Redirection services.

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