



# North Carolina Department of Public Safety

## Juvenile Justice

Roy Cooper, Governor  
Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

Timothy D. Moose, Chief Deputy Secretary  
William L. Lassiter, Deputy Secretary

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Erik A. Hooks, Secretary *EAH*  
Timothy D. Moose, Chief Deputy Secretary *TD*  
William L. Lassiter, Deputy Secretary *WL*

RE: Alternatives to Commitment Report

DATE: March 1, 2021

*Pursuant to S.L. 2005-276, 16.11(c), the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety shall report to the Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety no later than March 1, 2006, and annually thereafter, on the results of the alternatives to commitment demonstration programs funded by Section 16.7 of S.L. 2004-124. The 2007 report and all annual reports thereafter shall also include projects funded by Section 16.11 of S.L. 2005-276 for the 2005-2006 fiscal year. Specifically, the report shall provide a detailed description of each of the demonstration programs, including the numbers of juveniles served, their adjudication status at the time of service, the services/treatments provided, the length of service, the total cost per juvenile, and the six- and 12-month recidivism rates for the juveniles after the termination of program services.*



**Alternatives to Commitment Programs  
Annual Evaluation Report  
March 2021**

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**Session Law 2005-276, Section 16.11**

**Submitted by:  
Department of Public Safety  
Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice  
Juvenile Community Programs Section**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is required by Session Law 2005-276, Section 16.11(c) to report on the alternatives to commitment services through the Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils authorized by Session Law 2004-124, Section 16.7. This report focuses on the youth served in programs for FY 2019-2020 that delivered services to youth in Level III disposition (commitment), youth in Level II disposition (intermediate) who were at risk of a Level III disposition, and youth reentering the community after youth development center commitment (post-release supervision). In FY 2019-2020, the General Assembly allocated \$750,000 for these services. Statewide, the Alternatives to Commitment Programs delivered a variety of program types within regions of North Carolina based on the targeted service needs of the juveniles and families. Typical services included home-based family counseling, mentoring, specialized foster care, individual counseling, parent and family skill building, and vocational skills. Projects coordinated a 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-per-week adult supervision plan for each Level III youth. Program providers and court counselors supported and planned for youth services as they integrated into the community. The programs also managed referrals to a variety of other community services including such education programs as structured day, after-school programming, and tutoring. On occasion, court counselors used electronic monitoring as a resource for supervision of youth.

Alternatives to Commitment Programs served 116 youth during FY 2019-2020. Of the 78 youth who exited the programs in FY 2019-2020, 56 youth completed the program, meeting the goals of the program with a high or acceptable level of participation and achievement of behavior improvement goals.

For FY 2019-2020, the average annual cost per youth from Juvenile Justice allocated funds and actual expenditures in Alternatives to Commitment Programs was \$6,221.83. In comparison, the average annual cost per youth in a youth development center was \$106,314.

This report is in response to the legislation and provides a description of the programs; the number of youth served; their adjudication status at the time of service; services and treatments provided; the length of service; the total cost per youth; and the six (6) and twelve (12) month recidivism rates for youth after the termination of program services. In this report, data supports the need for the continued development and delivery of Alternatives to Commitment Programs at the local level to address unmet gaps in the continuum of services within the communities. It should be noted that in Fiscal Year 2020-2021, funds for Alternative to Commitment were combined via Session Law 2020-83 with Level II Endorsed Funds to create Intensive Intervention Services. The legislation removed the requirement for a cap on these services allowing the services to expand their capacity to serve our most vulnerable population. On March 1, 2022, a combined report of Level II Endorsed funds and Alternatives to Commitment Funds will be published.

It should be noted that the Community Programs Section of Juvenile Justice is involved in the Governor's assigned Results First Project. As a result of this involvement, the section is looking more closely at the use of funds throughout programming. This enhanced approach is reflected in the program cost section of this report. The Results First initiative is providing an opportunity for Juvenile Community Programs to examine programs through a cost benefit analysis lens, and future reporting will reflect the use of Results First's influence through potential policy decisions regarding effective programming.

## Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Alternatives to Commitment Programs

### Project Background

Session Laws 2004-124, Section 16.7 and 2005-276, Section 16.11 made available a total of \$750,000 to establish community programs for youth who otherwise would be placed in a youth development center. This legislation required that funded programs provide residential and/or community-based intensive services to juveniles who have been adjudicated delinquent and have been given a Level II or Level III disposition or provide programming to juveniles who are re-entering the community after receiving commitment programming in a youth development center. Data analysis from the inception of these services in FY 2004-2005 confirms that that intensive, evidence-based, research-supported services provided to juveniles and their families continue to be effective and cost-efficient. Programs funded in FY 2019-2020 as Alternatives to Commitment continued to provide cost effective services to this target population.

By statute, there are three disposition levels for adjudicated youth in North Carolina: Level I, Community Disposition; Level II, Intermediate Disposition; and Level III, Commitment. The intent of the 2004 legislation was that programs be established to serve youth who were at either a Level II or Level III disposition.

### Program Data

The following tables provide detailed data of the ten (10) Alternatives to Commitment Programs funded in FY 2019-2020. These tables include the number of youth served, adjudication status at the time of service, the services/treatments provided, average length of service, total cost per youth, status when exiting the program, living arrangements after exit, and the six (6) and twelve (12) month recidivism rates. The projects are identified by their host county.

### Youth Served and Adjudication Status

In FY 2019-2020 the Alternatives to Commitment programs served a total of 116 youth. Table 1 below identifies the number of youth served and their adjudication status at admission.

**Table 1. Youth Served and Adjudication Status**

Host County	Petition Filed	Adjudicated Delinquent Disposition Pending	Probation	Commitment	Post Release Supervision	Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ)	Total
Burke	0	0	7	0	3	0	10
Cabarrus	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Cumberland	0	1	10	0	1	0	12
Davidson	0	0	20	0	2	0	22
Mecklenburg	0	0	0	11	1	0	12
Nash	1	0	3	0	2	0	6
New Hanover	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Onslow	1	0	22	0	3	1	27
Richmond	0	0	10	0	0	0	10
Wayne	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>116</b>

## Services and Treatments Provided

Through the development of program agreements, the program providers provide a variety of evidence-based program models to support service needs of a targeted Level II and Level III juvenile population. Services require multi-county/district catchment areas for specific program types. Statewide, the programs delivered services that “wraparound” the youth and family to meet their needs. Typical services included home-based family counseling, parent/family skills building, sexual offender assessment and treatment, therapeutic foster care, mentoring, and vocational skills. Projects coordinated a 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-per-week adult supervision plan for each Level III youth. Program providers and court counselors supported and planned for youth as they integrated into the community on post-release supervision (PRS). On occasion, court counselors used electronic monitoring as a resource for supervision of youth.

Table 2 describes the services and treatments provided by the Alternatives to Commitment Programs in FY 2019-2020. The host county, sponsoring agency, the counties receiving services, and the number of youth who could be served at one time (capacity) are identified.

**Table 2. Program Services and Treatments**

Host County (Sponsoring Agency)	Counties Served	Services Provided (includes 24/7 staff availability)	Capacity
Burke (Barium Springs Home Remedies)	Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Gaston, Cleveland, and Lincoln	<b>Program Type: Parent/Family Skill Building</b> Through the use of evidence-based strategies that are family-centered, strength-based, and delivered in the home setting, the goals of the program are to increase parenting skills by teaching parents behavior management skills/techniques, communication skills, limit setting, how to establish expectations, behavior contracting, and how to avoid power struggles. Youth goals include increasing the ability to learn, master, and effectively use social and life skills.	4
Cabarrus (Transforming Youth Movement)	Cabarrus, Rowan, and Union	<b>Program Type: Vocational Skills Level Up</b> provides youth ages 15-19 with vocational services through the HBI Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training (PACT) Program. PACT is an industry-recognized, evidence-based, job training and certification program designed to prepare and train court-involved youth for general employability and high-demand positions in the building and construction industry.	10
Cumberland (Cumberland County Communicare)	Cumberland	<b>Program Type: Parent/Family Skill Building</b> The Intensive Services Network (ISN) program works intensively with the highest risk offenders to address family management problems; chronic delinquency; and develop moral reasoning skills and accountability for all youth served. Services are prioritized for commitment-level, level II, level III eligible, and youth on post-release supervision. ISN creates an individualized treatment plan that provides community commitment and accountability-based sanctions as well as therapeutic and skill-building options for these highest risk/needs youth and family.	5
Davidson (Family Services of Davidson County)	Davidson	<b>Program Type: Mentoring Family Services</b> Mentoring and Counseling Program will provide professional mentoring services to Level II and Level III youth in Davidson County who are most at risk of commitment to a YDC. The program will offer behavioral contracting and mixed counseling as supplementary services, as needed.	12

Mecklenburg (Mecklenburg County)	Mecklenburg	<b>Program Type: Vocational Skills</b> ASSET ATC will provide community-based re-entry services to juveniles, disposition levels II/III, from Mecklenburg County. The primary focus is to provide juveniles with vocational, employment, and educational supports for continued development and to reduce the likelihood of further legal involvement. ASSET uses Working Smart: Soft Skills for Workplace Success, a field-tested curriculum focused on developing critical soft skills relevant to workplace success.	30
Nash (Methodist Home for Children)	Edgecombe, Nash, and Wilson	<b>Program Type: Specialized Foster Care</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> District TFC provides therapeutic foster care for youth (male or female) age 10-17 involved with the Division of Juvenile Justice in the 7th Judicial District. Therapeutic Foster Care caters to the physical, emotional, and social needs of the youth in a supportive family setting.	2
New Hanover (Coastal Horizons Center)	New Hanover and Pender	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> Homebuilders Family Preservation uses the Homebuilders model, an evidence-based program that is highly successful at reducing out-of-home placement and providing concrete support in times of crisis. This program helps eliminate existing service gaps in the current continuum of care, while additionally diversifying family centered treatment. The model requires caseloads to remain on average at 2 families with ten hours of treatment per week completed by one professional. Services are rendered in the home or community for 4-6 weeks.	2
Onslow (Onslow County Government)	Onslow and Sampson	<b>Program Type: Individual Counseling</b> Day Services Commitment Program provides individual counseling services to juveniles and their parent(s)/guardian(s) that are referred by juvenile court counselors as juveniles are returning to the community from a Youth Development Center (Post Release Supervision legal status). Services are also provided to juveniles that are at risk for commitment (Level II legal status) through the delivery of multiple services to meet the specific juvenile's complex needs.	8
Richmond (Life Connections of the Carolinas)	Anson, Montgomery, and Richmond	<b>Program Type: Mentoring</b> D-A-S-H- Mentoring is a youth-initiated mentoring model that works with young people between the ages of 7 and 17 who have been identified as Level II and Level III youth by the Department of Public Safety. By focusing on increasing bonding and bridging social capital, they expand their social networks, and connections to people, ideas, and opportunities. D-A-S-H- Mentoring will serve Richmond, Anson, and Montgomery counties.	15
Wayne (Methodist Home for Children)	Wayne	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> Family Preservation serves youth between the ages 6-17, and their families, who are either currently in a Youth Development Center (Level III) or most at risk of placement in a YDC (Level II). All referrals are made by the juvenile court services office. Weekly visits to the home are provided and families are encouraged in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Parents are taught effective skills in communication and conflict resolution to increase the family's functioning.	3

## Length of Service

Alternatives to Commitment Programs continued to serve youth who were high risk and in need of intensive interventions for a length of stay supported by the evidence-based model of the service duration defined by the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) research-supported program types. Table 3 illustrates youth being served by a program for an average length of stay ranging from 35 days to 278 days. The statewide average length of stay was 153 days.

**Table 3. Days in Program**

Host County	Average Length of Stay	Number of Terminations*
Burke	97	7
Cabarrus	278	3
Cumberland	161	8
Davidson	166	13
Mecklenburg	209	12
Nash	73	3
New Hanover	35	8
Onslow	168	18
Richmond	129	1
Wayne	163	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>78</b>

\*Termination is the juvenile's discharge from the program and includes both successful and unsuccessful discharges.

### Program Cost

As legislatively mandated, no one program received more than \$100,000 of DACJJ funds. Table 4 provides the amount of Juvenile Justice funds allocated to each ACP program at the beginning of the fiscal year. At times, the actual expenditure of funds may be different than those allocated due to braiding of other revenue sources to support the program.

**Table 4. Program Cost**

Host County	Total Youth Served	Actual Expenditure	Cost Per Youth
Burke	10	\$110,406	\$11,040.59
Cabarrus	3	\$47,733	\$15,911.08
Cumberland	12	\$47,087	\$3,923.89
Davidson	22	\$86,113	\$3,914.21
Mecklenburg	12	\$41,152	\$3,429.35
Nash	6	\$72,209	\$12,034.92
New Hanover	8	\$63,047	\$7,880.90
Onslow	27	\$112,229	\$4,156.64
Richmond	10	\$44,988	\$4,498.85
Wayne	6	\$96,767	\$16,127.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>\$721,732</b>	<b>\$6,221.83</b>

Table 5 illustrates the 78 youth who exited the programs in FY 2019-2020. Fifty-six (56) youth (72%) completed their programming at a high or acceptable level of participation and achievement of behavior improvement goals. Program completion was categorized as successful, satisfactory, unsuccessful, or non-compliance.

**Table 5. Status of Youth at Exit**

County	Successful Completion	Satisfactory Completion	Unsuccessful Completion	Non-compliance	Total
Burke	4	0	0	3	7
Cabarrus	0	2	1	0	3
Cumberland	2	5	1	0	8
Davidson	0	9	3	1	13
Mecklenburg	7	2	3	0	12
Nash	1	2	0	0	3
New Hanover	4	3	1	0	8
Onslow	9	2	7	0	18
Richmond	0	0	1	0	1
Wayne	4	0	1	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>78</b>

Table 6 illustrates the living arrangements for those 78 youth upon exit from the program, which shows 68 youth (87%) were living in the community with their parent(s) or guardian; three (3) youth (4%) were in a treatment facility; and five (5) youth (6%) were in a youth development center, detention center, or county jail.

**Table 6. Youth Living Arrangement at Exit**

County	At Home with Parent(s) or Guardian	Treatment Facility	YDC/Detention/County Jail	Other	Total
Burke	7	0	0	0	7
Cabarrus	2	0	0	1	3
Cumberland	8	0	0	0	8
Davidson	13	0	0	0	13
Mecklenburg	9	1	2	0	12
Nash	3	0	0	0	3
New Hanover	8	0	0	0	8
Onslow	14	1	3	0	18
Richmond	0	0	0	1	1
Wayne	4	1	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>78</b>

## Recidivism

Table 7 below shows the percentage of youth of the two-year sample who recidivated by receiving a juvenile adjudication or adult conviction post-discharge from the programs.



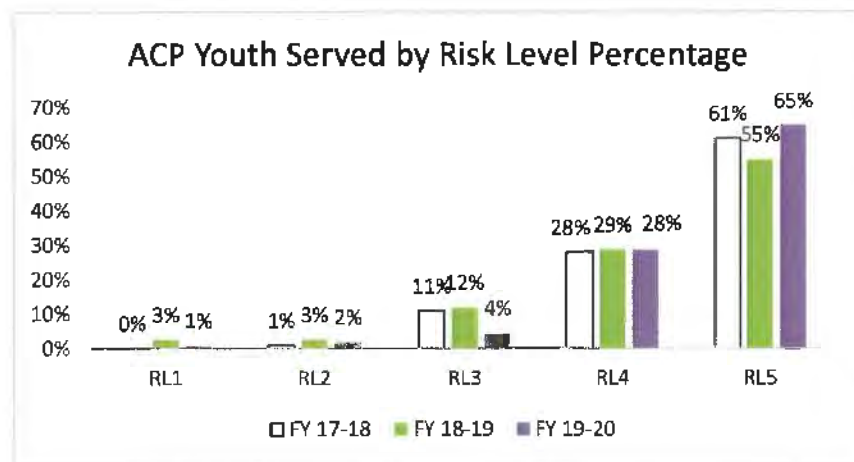
While the section is pleased with the overall low recidivism percentages within this report, the recidivism percentage decreases represented in the adult criminal conviction data may have been affected by COVID-19 and closure/case backlog in the adult criminal court proceedings across North Carolina.

**Table 7. Recidivism Measure**

Youth Receiving a Juvenile Adjudication or Adult Conviction Post-Discharge		
Measure	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Youth who had at Least 6 or 12 Months in the Community	161	118
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Delinquent Adjudications	18	19
Percentage of Youth with Delinquent Adjudications	11%	16%
Distinct Youth with Adult Convictions	10	12
Percentage of Youth with Adult Convictions	6%	10%
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Adjudication(s) or Adult Conviction(s)	28	31
<b>Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>26%</b>

**Graph 1. Youth Risk Level**

An analysis of the risk levels of juveniles served by Alternative to Commitment programs in FY 19-20 indicates the programs distinctly serve higher risk youth in that 93% of the 116 juveniles served have risk scores of RL4 and RL5.



## Summary and Conclusion

Alternatives to Commitment programs served successfully in the community high-risk youth who were in need of intensive interventions. Without the programs, these youth may have been served in a more costly youth development center. Noteworthy outcomes of the programs are:

- Eighty seven percent (87%) of the youth exiting the projects were in a non-secure living arrangement while only six percent (6%) of the youth exiting the projects were in a youth development center or were placed in county jail.

- Seventy-two percent (72%) of the youth exiting the projects completed their programming at a high or acceptable level of participation and with achievement of behavior improvement goals.
- Seventeen percent (17%) of the distinct juveniles who could be followed for a full 6 months post-discharge received a delinquent adjudication or an adult conviction while twenty-six percent (26%) received a delinquent adjudication or an adult conviction at 12 months post discharge.
- The average cost per youth in the Alternatives for Commitment programs was \$6,221.83 while the average annual cost per youth in a youth development center was \$106,314. The data indicate that Alternatives to Commitment programs continue to be effective and cost-efficient programs that develop and deliver programming for committed youth at the local level, while also addressing unmet gaps in the continuum of services within those communities.
- It should be noted that these programs will be identified within our “intensive services” funding allocation per passage of HB593/S.L. 2020-83 and reported upon accordingly.