



# North Carolina Department of Public Safety

## Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

Roy Cooper, Governor  
Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

Reuben Young, Interim Chief Deputy Secretary  
William L. Lassiter, Deputy Secretary

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety  
Chairs of the Senate Appropriations Committees on Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Erik A. Hooks, Secretary *EAH*  
Reuben Young, Interim Chief Deputy Secretary *RY*

RE: Alternatives to Commitment Report

DATE: March 1, 2019

Pursuant to G.S. 143B-1104(c), *The Juvenile Justice Section of the Division of Adult Correction and 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. (1998-202, s. 1(b); 2000-137, s. 1(b); 2005-276, s. 16.11(c); 2011-145, ss. 19.1(l), (x), (ggg); 2017-186, s. 2(l))))).*



**Alternatives to Commitment Programs  
Annual Evaluation Report  
March 2019**

---

**G.S. 143B-1104(c)**

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is required by G.S. 143B-1104(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 2017-2018 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 2017-2018, 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, specialized foster care, temporary foster care supported by family counseling services, mentoring, and vocational skill-building. 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 educational programs as structured day, after-school programming, and tutoring. On occasion, court counselors used electronic monitoring as an additional resource to support supervision of youth.

Alternatives to Commitment Programs served 157 juveniles and exits from the programs totaled 99 during FY 2017-2018. Of the 99 youth who exited the programs in FY 2017-2018, 70 youth completed their assigned program, meeting the programming goals with a high or acceptable level of participation while also achieving behavior improvement goals.

For FY 2017-2018, the average annual cost (based on actual expenditures) per youth in Alternatives to Commitment Programs was \$4,879 while the average annual cost per bed in a youth development center was \$108,862.

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 treatment provided, the length of service, the total cost per youth, and the six (6) and twelve (12) month recidivism rates for youth post 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 alternative to commitment funding has not been increased since 2005. While capacity increases are currently needed, the section recognizes that alternative to commitment expansion funding will be needed to meet the needs of juveniles entering the juvenile justice system due to recent legislation which raises the age of juvenile jurisdiction. Since the alternative to commitment funding cycle mirrors that of the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, program capacity expansion requires an annual release of a request for proposals (RFP), program application review by local teams, and final award notification, in addition to orientation and training for potential new providers. Early preparation for expansion efforts prompts early planning at the state and local level. This is vitally important to prepare for program expansion to meet programming needs by December 2019. The Community Programs section continues to strongly recommend expansion funding for these services to be considered to allow for completion of request for proposal and funding award processes well before the legislative effect date of raising the juvenile age of jurisdiction.

Also, the section recommends removal of the \$100,000 cap placed on individual program awards based on the general statute language. Alternative to Commitment programs serve youth with the highest risk and needs levels and require more costly intervention services. Program capacity is compromised by the current program funding caps.

## **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 III or Level II disposition or juveniles who are re-entering the community after receiving commitment programming in a youth development center. Data analysis from the inception of these services since FY 2004-2005 confirms that intensive evidence-based, research supported services provided to juveniles and their families continue to be effective and cost-efficient.

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 juveniles who were at either a Level II or Level III disposition.

### **Program Data**

The following tables provide detailed data of the eleven (11) Alternatives to Commitment Programs funded in FY 2017-2018. 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 2017-2018 the Alternatives to Commitment programs served a total of 157 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	Adjudicated Undisciplined Disposition Pending	Petition Filed	Probation	Commitment	Post Release Supervision	Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ)	Total
Burke	0	0	5	0	9	0	14
Cumberland	0	0	6	0	3	0	9
Davidson	0	0	14	0	2	0	16
Mecklenburg	0	0	5	2	26	0	33
Nash	1	0	3	0	1	0	5
New Hanover	0	1	15	0	2	0	18
Onslow	0	0	31	0	0	1	32
Randolph	0	0	6	0	1	0	7
Richmond	0	0	10	0	1	0	11
Wayne	0	0	7	5	0	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>157</b>

### Services and Treatments Provided

Through the development of program agreements, program providers provide a variety of evidence-based program models to support service needs of a targeted Level II and Level III juvenile population. Programs are designed to respond to specific program needs within specific regions or judicial districts of the state. Services require multi-county/district catchment areas for specific program types. Statewide, the programs included home-based family counseling, specialized foster care, temporary foster care with supportive family counseling services, mentoring, and vocational skill-building. All programs receiving Level III juveniles are required to provide a coordinated a 24 hour a day, 7 days per week adult supervision plan for each Level III juvenile admitted. Jointly, program providers and court counselors plan for juveniles integrating back into communities on post release supervision (PRS). On occasion, court counselors use electronic monitoring as an additional support to the supervision of juveniles.

Table 2 indicates the services and treatments provided by Alternatives to Commitment Programs in FY 2017-2018 and also identifies the host county for the program service, sponsoring agency, additional counties identified in the catchment area for each service funded, and the number of juveniles who could be served at one time (capacity).

**Table 2. Program Services and Treatments**

Host County (Sponsoring Agency)	Counties Served	Services Provided (includes 24/7 staff availability)	Capacity
Burke (Barium Springs Home for Children)	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 youth's ability to learn, master, and use social skills and life skills.	4
Cumberland (Cumberland County CommuniCare, Inc.)	Cumberland	<b>Program Type: Parent/Family Skill Building</b> The ISN program works intensively with the highest risk offenders to address family management problems and 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 PRS youth. ISN creates an individualized treatment plan that provides community commitment, accountability-based sanctions as well as therapeutic and skill-building options for these highest risk/needs youth and family.	15
Davidson (Family Services of Davidson County, Inc.)	Davidson	<b>Program Type: Mentoring</b> This program will provide professional mentoring services to Level III and Level II youth who are most at-risk of commitment to a YDC in Davidson County. 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 on disposition levels II/III residing in 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 system 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> Provide therapeutic foster care for youth (male or female) ages 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, Inc.)	New Hanover and Pender	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> The Homebuilders model is an evidence-based program that is highly successful at reducing out-of-home placement and providing concrete support in times of crisis. This program would 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 (DSS) - Youth Services)	Onslow and Sampson	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> Provides intensive in-home social work and other needed services in Onslow and Sampson counties for Level III juveniles committed to a Youth Development Center or Level II juveniles that are at risk for commitment and their families through a package of multiple services to meet the specific client's complex needs to include counseling and social/life skills.	8

Host County (Sponsoring Agency)	Counties Served	Services Provided (includes 24/7 staff availability)	Capacity
Randolph (Family Centered Treatment Foundation, Inc.)	Cabarrus, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, and Rowan	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> FCT Foundation/Pinnacle Family Services will provide the following services as an alternative to commitment: 1. Comprehensive clinical assessment and 2. Family Centered Treatment (in-home service model). With many of these youth, the youth can be managed at home with in-home support and treatment given to the whole family. 3. Crisis stabilization using FCT 4. Crisis bed (Fostering Solutions) will be utilized as needed when determined appropriate by the FCT clinician and/or Child and Family Team.	5
Randolph (Family Centered Treatment Foundation, Inc.)	Cabarrus, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, and Rowan	<b>Program Type: Temporary Foster Care</b> Pinnacle Family Services will provide crisis stabilization using a crisis bed (Fostering Solutions) when there is too much current risk to maintain at home. Crisis bed will be utilized as needed. The child may enter into the program through the crisis bed and then transition to Family Centered Treatment or may enter through FCT and utilize the crisis bed as needed for crisis stabilization and continue with FCT. PFS is a subcontractor and a licensed FCT provider of the FCT Foundation.	5
Richmond (International Association of Applied Control Theory (IAACT))	Richmond and Anson	<b>Program Type: Mentoring D-A-S-H-</b> Mentoring is a youth-initiated mentoring model that works with young people between the ages of 10 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.	20
Wayne (Methodist Home for Children)	Wayne, Greene, and Lenoir	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> This program 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 juveniles who were high risk and in need of intensive interventions for a length of stay supported by the evidence-based model or the service duration defined by the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) research-supported program types. Table 3 illustrates juveniles being served by each specific host county program for an average length of stay ranging from 19 days to 213 days. The statewide average length of stay was 116 days.



**Table 3. Days in Program**

Host County	Average Length of Stay	Number of Terminations
Burke	95	10
Cumberland	148	5
Davidson	213	11
Mecklenburg	124	20
Nash	117	3
New Hanover	32	11
Onslow	151	18
Randolph	19	7
Richmond	78	9
Wayne	148	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>99</b>

**Program Cost**

As legislatively mandated, no one program received more than \$100,000 of DACJJ funds. Table 4 illustrates the total youth served; *actual* program expenditures (includes DJJ and other revenues to support the program); and annual cost for FY 2017-2018, which averaged \$4,879 per youth.

**Table 4. Program Cost**

Host County (Program Type)	Total Youth Served	Actual Expenditure	Cost Per Youth
Burke (Parent/Family Skill Building)	14	\$114,817	\$8,201
Cumberland (Parent/Family Skill Building)	9	\$79,999	\$8,889
Davidson (Mentoring)	16	\$83,900	\$5,244
Mecklenburg (Vocational Skills)	33	\$65,487	\$1,984
Nash (Specialized Foster Care)	5	\$63,856	\$12,771
New Hanover (Home Based Family Counseling)	18	\$78,451	\$4,358
Onslow (Home Based Family Counseling)	32	\$104,807	\$3,275
Randolph (Home Based Family Counseling & Temporary Foster Care)	7	\$17,110	\$2,444
Richmond (Mentoring)	11	\$49,443	\$4,495
Wayne (Home Based Family Counseling)	12	\$108,169	\$9,014
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>\$766,039</b>	<b>\$4,879</b>

Table 5 illustrates the 99 youth who exited the programs in FY 2017-2018. Seventy (70) youth (71%) completed their programming at a high or acceptable level of participation and achievement of behavior improvement goals (successful and satisfactory completion exits). Program completions are 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	5	0	3	2	10
Cumberland	4	1	0	0	5
Davidson	5	4	2	0	11
Mecklenburg	3	2	13	2	20
Nash	1	1	0	1	3
New Hanover	8	3	0	0	11
Onslow	10	6	1	1	18
Randolph	3	2	1	1	7
Richmond	7	1	1	0	9
Wayne	2	2	1	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>99</b>

Table 6 illustrates the living arrangements for those 99 youth upon exit from the program, which indicates that 93 youth (93.9%) were living in the community with their parent(s) or guardian; four (4) youth (4%) were in a treatment facility; and two (2) youth (2%) 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	Total
Burke	8	1	1	10
Cumberland	5	0	0	5
Davidson	11	0	0	11
Mecklenburg	20	0	0	20
Nash	2	1	0	3
New Hanover	11	0	0	11
Onslow	16	2	0	18
Randolph	7	0	0	7
Richmond	9	0	0	9
Wayne	4	0	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>99</b>

### Recidivism

Table 7 illustrates youth who exited the Alternative to Commitment programs during the past two fiscal years (FY 2016-2017 and 2017-2018) and incurred additional delinquent complaints in the juvenile justice system.

**Table 7. Recidivism Measure 1**

<b>Recidivism Measure 1: Youth Receiving an Additional Juvenile Complaint Post-Discharge</b>		
Measure	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Youth who had at Least 6 or 12 Months in the Community	181	118
Distinct Youth with Additional Delinquent Complaints	16	23
<b>Percentage of Youth with Additional Delinquent Complaints</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>19%</b>

Table 8 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.

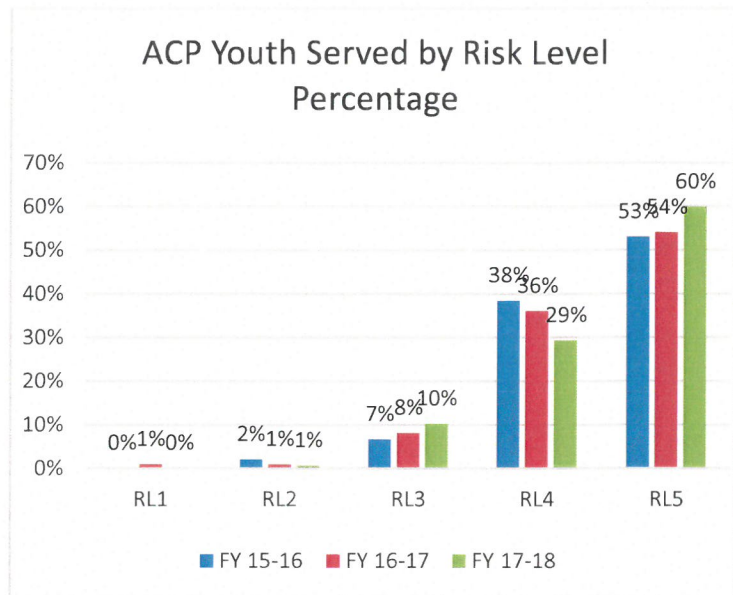
**Table 8. Recidivism Measure 2**

<b>Recidivism Measure 2: Youth Receiving a Juvenile Adjudication or Adult Conviction Post-Discharge</b>		
Measure	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Youth who had at Least 6 or 12 Months in the Community	181	118
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Delinquent Adjudications	10	15
Percentage of Youth with Delinquent Adjudications	6%	13%
Distinct Youth with Adult Convictions	21	20
Percentage of Youth with Adult Convictions	12%	17%
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Adjudication(s) or Adult Conviction(s)	31	34
<b>Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>29%</b>

According to the most recent NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission’s (SPAC) *Juvenile Recidivism Study: Sample FY 2012/13*<sup>1</sup>, 21% of all juveniles who were adjudicated received an additional adjudication or conviction within 12 months. Also, based on the recommendation of the May 2015 NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission biennial juvenile recidivism study and the subsequent re-norming analysis of the NCAR performed by DPS’s Rehabilitative Programs and Services, Research and Support Division in September 2015, 23% of juveniles in the RL3 category, 38% of juveniles in the RL4 category, and 49% of juveniles in the RL5 category are expected to be re-arrested or have a new complaint filed within one year. (*DPS Statistics Memo, Re-norming the North Carolina Juvenile Risk Assessment*,

<sup>1</sup> *Juvenile Recidivism Study, FY 2013 Juvenile Sample*, Raleigh, NC. Table 4.6, page 55, found at: <http://www.nccourts.org/Courts/CRS/Councils/spac/Publication/Recidivism/JuvenileRec.asp>

September 2015). An analysis of the risk levels of juveniles served by Alternative to Commitment programs indicates that 89% of the 157 juveniles served have risk scores of RL4 and RL5. Clearly, most juveniles receiving Alternative to Commitment programming services are recidivating at a much lower rate than statistically expected, given that the majority of juveniles served by them are RL4 and RL5 risk juveniles.



### Summary and Conclusion

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

- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of youth served are assessed as high-risk juveniles with risk scores of RL3, RL4, and RL5. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of juveniles served were assessed to be at the highest risk for re-offending, RL4 and RL5 risk scores.
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the youth exiting the projects were in a non-secure living arrangement while only two percent (2%) of the youth exiting the projects were committed to a youth development center or were placed in county jail.
- Seventy percent (70%) of the youth exiting the projects completed their programming at a high or acceptable level of participation and 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-nine percent (29%) 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 \$4,879 while the average annual cost per bed in a youth development center was \$108,862. 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 addressing unmet gaps in the continuum of services within communities.



