





**North Carolina Department of Public Safety**  
**Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice**

Roy Cooper, Governor  
Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

W. David Guice, Chief Deputy Secretary  
William L. Lassiter, Deputy Secretary

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Chairs of Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety  
Chairs of House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Erik A. Hooks, Secretary   
W. David Guice, Chief Deputy Secretary 

RE: Alternatives to Commitment Report

DATE: March 1, 2017

*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. (1998-202, s. 1(b); 2000-137, s. 1(b); 2005-276, s. 16.11(c); 2011-145, s. 19.1(l), (x), (ggg).)*



**Alternatives to Commitment Programs  
Annual Evaluation Report  
March 2017**

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**Session Law 2004-124, Section 16.7**

**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 2004-124, Section 16.7 to provide alternatives to juvenile commitment services through the Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils. This report focuses on the youth served in programs for FY 2015-2016 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 2015-2016, the General Assembly allocated \$750,000 for these services.

Statewide, the Alternatives to Commitment Programs delivered somewhat similar intensive case management services that “wrapped services around” the juvenile and family. Typical services included home-based family counseling, individual counseling, tutoring, interpersonal skill-building, behavior management, cognitive behavior training and mentoring. 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. 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 support for supervision of youth.

Alternatives to Commitment Programs served 152 youth and exits from the programs totaled 122 during FY 2015-2016. Of the 122 youth who exited the programs in FY 2015-2016, 103 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 2015-2016, the average annual cost (based on actual expenditures) per youth in Alternatives to Commitment Programs was \$5,292 while the average annual cost per youth in a youth development center was \$122,445.

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 support 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.

## **Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Alternatives to Commitment Programs**

### **Project Background**

Session Law 2004-124, Section 16.7 made available \$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 since the implementation of services since FY 2004-2005 confirm that intensive case management that provides wrap-around services to the juvenile and family continue to be effective and cost-efficient programs. Programs funded in FY 2015-2016 as Alternatives to Commitment continued to provide those services.

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 eleven (11) Alternatives to Commitment Programs funded in FY 2015-2016. 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 the host county.

### **Youth Served and Adjudication Status**

In FY 2015-2016 projects served a total of 152 youth. Table 1 below identifies the number of youth served and their adjudication status at admission.

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

<b>Host County</b>	<b>Petition Filed</b>	<b>Adjudicated Delinquent Disposition Pending</b>	<b>Probation</b>	<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Post Release Supervision</b>	<b>Total</b>
Burke	0	0	4	1	5	10
Cumberland	0	0	7	0	7	14
Dare	0	0	6	0	3	9
Davidson	0	2	16	0	1	19
Durham	2	0	8	3	0	13
Guilford	0	0	2	0	2	4
New Hanover	0	0	4	0	9	13
Onslow	0	0	27	0	0	27
Rockingham	0	0	21	0	1	22
Wake	0	0	12	0	1	13
Wayne	0	0	4	2	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>152</b>

### **Services and Treatments Provided**

Through the development of program agreements, the program providers worked to match the services they provided to services that are identified through research to be characteristic of effective services. Statewide, the programs delivered somewhat similar intensive case management services that “wrapped services around” the youth and family. Typical services included family counseling, individual counseling, tutoring, mentoring, interpersonal skill-building, behavioral management, cognitive behavioral training and mentoring. 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 occasion, court counselors used electronic monitoring as a support for supervision of youth.

Table 2 describes the services and treatments provided by the Alternatives to Commitment Programs in FY 2015-2016. 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**

<b>Host County (Sponsoring Agency)</b>	<b>Counties Served</b>	<b>Services Provided (includes 24/7 staff availability)</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Burke (Barium Springs Home for Children)	Burke, Caldwell and Catawba	<b>Program Type: Parent/Family Skill Building</b> Through the use of evidence based Home Remedies family-centered home visitation, 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.	2
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; 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 specific skill building options for these highest risk/needs youth.	5
Dare (Dare County Schools)	Dare	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> Primary services are family/individual counseling with intensive case management services focusing on family interactions/dynamics linked to delinquent behavior and interpersonal skill building through Cognitive Behavior Therapy provided in home, school and community. Collaboration with stakeholders to support client in meeting treatment goals and referring client/family to other services are also a focus.	5
Davidson (Family Services of Davidson County, Inc.)	Davidson	<b>Program Type: Mentoring</b> This program provides 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 offers behavioral contracting and mixed counseling as supplementary services, as needed.	8
Durham (Exchange Clubs' Child Abuse Prevention Center)	Durham	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> The Parenting of Adolescents program provides evidence-based Multidimensional Family Therapy to Juvenile Court referred Level III youth re-entering the community, high risk Level II youth who are most at risk of a commitment to a YDC, and Level III or Level II youth re-entering the community from an out of home placement. Therapy with the youth and the parent/caregiver begins 2 months prior to the youth's return to the community and continues 4 months after their return to the community.	8
Guilford (CARING for Children, Inc.)	Guilford	<b>Program Type: Vocational Skills</b> Eckerd Project Bridge provides vocational credentialing, job placement and related support through community linkages. Services are provided to approximately 18 Guilford County youth classified as Level III returning from residential placement or Level II at risk of residential placement. Youth will receive certifications in SafeStaff food handling credential and/or Customer Service Credential. Remedial academic assistance will be facilitated through the school system as needed by youth.	12

Host County (Sponsoring Agency)	Counties Served	Services Provided (includes 24/7 staff availability)	Capacity
New Hanover (Coastal Horizons Center, Inc.)	New Hanover	<p><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 will 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.</p>	2
Onslow (Onslow County Government (DSS) - Youth Services)	Onslow, Sampson	<p><b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b>            Provides intensive in-home social work and other needed services in Onslow and Sampson County for Level III juveniles committed to a Youth Development Center or Level II juveniles that are at-risk for commitment and their families including alternative education, counseling, residential services, and social/life skills.</p>	8
Rockingham (Rockingham County Youth Services)	Rockingham, Stokes, and Surry	<p><b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b>            Program provides home-based family counseling, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, parenting classes and therapeutic enrichment to male and female Level III youth and/or Level II youth ages 10-17 referred by Juvenile Court in need of Level II services in Rockingham, Stokes and Surry Counties. Program utilizes evidence-based programs including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Brief Strategic Family Therapy and Strengthening Families curriculum.</p>	8
Wake (CARING for Children, Inc.)	Wake	<p><b>Program Type: Vocational Skills</b>            Eckerd Project Bridge will provide vocational credentialing, job placement and related support through community linkages. Services will be provided to 36 Wake youth classified as Level III returning from residential placement or Level II at risk of residential placement. Youth will receive certifications in SafeStaff food handling credential and/or Customer Service Credential. Remedial academic assistance will be facilitated through the school system as needed by youth.</p>	12
Wayne (Methodist Home for Children)	Greene, Lenoir and Wayne	<p><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.</p>	2

### Length of Service

Alternatives to Commitment Programs continued to serve youth who were high risk and in need of intensive interventions for a considerable length of time. Table 3 illustrates youth being served by a program for an average length of stay ranging from 30 days to 371 days. The statewide average length of stay was 145 days.

**Table 3. Days in Program**

<b>Host County</b>	<b>Average Length of Stay</b>	<b>Number of Terminations</b>
Burke	90	9
Cumberland	136	11
Dare	371	8
Davidson	207	14
Durham	120	7
Guilford	116	4
New Hanover	30	13
Onslow	175	20
Rockingham	109	16
Wake	137	13
Wayne	121	7
<b>Average</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>122</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, and annual cost for FY 2015-2016 which averaged \$5,292 per youth. One program (in Burke county) spent additional funds that were secured by the sponsoring agency from other funding sources.

**Table 4. Program Cost**

<b>Host County (Program Type)</b>	<b>Total Youth Served</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure</b>	<b>Cost Per Youth</b>
Burke (Parent/Family Skill Building)	10	\$115,091	\$11,509
Cumberland (Parent/Family Skill Building)	14	\$74,074	\$5,291
Dare (Home Based Family Counseling)	9	\$15,408	\$1,712
Davidson (Mentoring)	19	\$84,001	\$4,421
Durham (Home Based Family Counseling)	13	\$99,924	\$7,686
Guilford (Vocational Skills)	4	\$46,368	\$11,592
New Hanover (Home Based Family Counseling)	13	\$79,395	\$6,107
Onslow (Home Based Family Counseling)	27	\$94,093	\$3,485
Rockingham (Home Based Family Counseling)	22	\$69,442	\$3,156
Wake (Vocational Skills)	13	\$46,368	\$3,567
Wayne (Home Based Family Counseling)	8	\$80,232	\$10,029
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>\$804,397</b>	<b>\$5,292</b>



## Exit from Program

Table 5 illustrates the 122 youth who exited the programs in FY 2015-2016. One hundred and three youth (84%) 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	8	0	1	0	9
Cumberland	8	2	1	0	11
Dare	4	4	0	0	8
Davidson	4	8	2	0	14
Durham	0	4	3	0	7
Guilford	2	0	2	0	4
New Hanover	7	5	0	1	13
Onslow	13	4	1	2	20
Rockingham	11	2	1	2	16
Wake	10	2	1	0	13
Wayne	3	2	1	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>122</b>

Table 6 illustrates the living arrangements for those 122 youth upon exit from the program which shows 111 youth (91%) were living in the community with their parent(s) or guardian; four youth (3.3%) were in a treatment facility; and seven youth (5.7%) were in a youth development center, detention 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	0	1	9
Cumberland	11	0	0	11
Dare	8	0	0	8
Davidson	14	0	0	14
Durham	5	0	2	7
Guilford	4	0	0	4
New Hanover	13	0	0	13
Onslow	17	3	0	20
Rockingham	15	1	0	16
Wake	13	0	0	13
Wayne	3	0	4	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>122</b>

## Recidivism

Table 7 illustrates youth who exited the projects during the past two fiscal years (FY 2014-2015 and 2015-2016) and incurred additional delinquent complaints in the juvenile justice system.

**Table 7. Recidivism Measure 1**

<b>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	188	125
Distinct Youth with Additional Delinquent Complaints	13	16
<b>Percentage of Youth with Additional Delinquent Complaints</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>13%</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>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	188	125
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Delinquent Adjudications	11	14
Percentage of Youth with Delinquent Adjudications	6%	11%
Distinct Youth with Adult Convictions	14	16
Percentage of Youth with Adult Convictions	7%	13%
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Adjudication(s) or Adult Conviction(s)	25	30
<b>Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>24%</b>

In comparison, according to the most recent NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission's (SPAC) *Juvenile Recidivism Study: Sample FY 2010/11*, 36.0% of juveniles who were both adjudicated and disposed received an additional adjudication or conviction within 36 months. Although the time span for the SPAC's study was longer than the recidivism study conducted by the Department, the SPAC recidivism study shows that the average juvenile will recidivate within the first 12 months.

## 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 been served in a more costly youth development center. Noteworthy outcomes of the programs are:

- Ninety-four percent (94.3%) of the youth exiting the projects were in a non-secure living arrangement while only five percent (5.7%) of the youth exiting the projects were committed to a youth development center or were placed in county jail.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of the youth exiting the projects completed their programming at a high or acceptable level of participation and achievement of behavior improvement goals.
- Thirteen percent (13%) of the distinct juveniles who could be followed for a full 6 months post-discharge received a delinquent adjudication or an adult conviction while 24% 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 \$5,292 while the average annual cost per youth in a youth development center was \$122,445. 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.

