



# 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 House Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety  
Chairs of Senate Appropriations Committees on Justice and Public Safety

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

RE: Alternatives to Commitment Report

DATE: March 1, 2018

*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).)*

**MAILING ADDRESS:**  
4201 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-4201  
[www.ncdps.gov](http://www.ncdps.gov)



An Equal Opportunity Employer

**OFFICE LOCATION:**  
512 N. Salisbury Street  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
Telephone: (919) 825-2761



**Alternatives to Commitment Programs  
Annual Evaluation Report  
March 1, 2018**

---

**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 2016-2017 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 2016-2017, 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, mentoring, behavior contracting, 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 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 111 youth and exits from the programs totaled 84 during FY 2016-2017. Of the 84 youth who exited the programs in FY 2016-2017, 59 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 2016-2017, the average annual cost (based on actual expenditures) per youth in Alternatives to Commitment Programs was \$7,025 while the average annual cost per youth in a youth development center was \$106,878.

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 exit from 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. 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 because of 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. This will ensure conservative program expansion to meet programming needs slightly ahead in the expected up-tic in service needs beginning in December, 2019. It is recommended, therefore, that expansion funding for these services be considered for the 2018-2019 budget. Also, the section recommends that the \$100,000 cap placed on individual program awards be removed from the general statute language, given that alternative to commitment programs are serving youth with the highest risk and needs levels in more costly intervention services.

## 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 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 2016-2017 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 ten (10) Alternatives to Commitment Programs funded in FY 2016-2017. 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 2016-2017 projects served a total of 111 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	Total
Burke	0	1	1	1	6	9
Cumberland	0	0	9	0	1	10
Davidson	0	0	11	0	3	14
Durham	1	0	9	2	0	12
Hoke	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mecklenburg	0	0	2	1	6	9
New Hanover	0	0	3	1	5	9
Onslow	0	0	20	0	3	23
Rockingham	0	0	13	0	3	16
Wayne	0	0	4	4	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>111</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 2016-2017. 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 for Children)	Burke, Caldwell and Catawba	<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 youths 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; chronic delinquency; 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 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.	12
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 returning to the community and continues 4 months after their return to the community.	8

Host County (Sponsoring Agency)	Counties Served	Services Provided (includes 24/7 staff availability)	Capacity
Hoke (Hope-thru-Horses of Lumber Bridge, Inc.)	Hoke	<b>Program Type: Parent/Family Skill Building</b> The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) involves children, 7 to 17 years of age, and their families in 14 family training sessions using family systems and cognitive behavioral approaches to increase resilience and reduce risk factors. It seeks to improve family relationships, parenting skills, and youth's social and life skills.	10
Mecklenburg (Mecklenburg County)	Mecklenburg	<b>Program Type: Vocational Skills</b> ASSET ATC provides community based re-entry services to juveniles on disposition Levels II/III residing in Mecklenburg County. The primary focus of the ASSET program is to provide juveniles with vocational, employment, and educational supports for their continued development and to reduce the likelihood of further involvement in the juvenile or adult legal system. Additionally, transitional living services are available for up to 30 days each for 2 juveniles enrolled in the program.	25
New Hanover (Coastal Horizons Center, Inc.)	New Hanover	<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 eliminates 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, Sampson	<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.	8
Rockingham (Rockingham County Youth Services)	Rockingham, Stokes, and Surry	<b>Program Type: Home Based Family Counseling</b> Program provides home-based family counseling, Cognitive Behavioral group 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.	6
Wayne (Methodist Home for Children)	Greene, Lenoir and Wayne	<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 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 31 days to 194 days. The statewide average length of stay was 138 days. Youth classified as Successful completed the programs in an average of 149 days. Youth classified as Unsuccessful exited the programs in an average of 110 days.

**Table 3. Days in Program**

<b>Host County</b>	<b>Average Length of Stay</b>	<b>Number of Exits</b>
Burke	99	7
Cumberland	139	9
Davidson	194	9
Durham	147	12
Hoke <sup>1</sup>	43	1
Mecklenburg <sup>2</sup>	72	1
New Hanover	31	7
Onslow	186	17
Rockingham	111	16
Wayne	177	5
<b>Average</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>84</b>

---

<sup>1</sup> Only one (1) juvenile was referred by DPS Court Services (the only permissible referral source).

<sup>2</sup> Nine (9) juveniles were served in FY, eight (8) completed the program in the beginning of FY 17-18.

## 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 2016-2017 which averaged \$7,025 per youth.

**Table 4. Program Cost**

<b>Host County (Program Type)</b>	<b>Youth Served</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure</b>	<b>Cost Per Youth</b>
Burke (Parent/Family Skill Building)	9	\$111,085 <sup>3</sup>	\$12,343
Cumberland (Parent/Family Skill Building)	10	\$79,973	\$7,997
Davidson (Mentoring)	14	\$98,868	\$7,062
Durham (Home Based Family Counseling)	12	\$99,999	\$8,333
Hoke (Parent/Family Skill Building)	1	\$32,359	\$32,359
Mecklenburg (Vocational Skills)	9	\$24,840	\$2,760
New Hanover (Home Based Family Counseling)	9	\$72,948	\$8,105
Onslow (Home Based Family Counseling)	23	\$105,540 <sup>4</sup>	\$4,589
Rockingham (Home Based Family Counseling)	16	\$64,921	\$4,058
Wayne (Home Based Family Counseling)	8	\$89,189	\$11,149
<i>Dare County – closeout funds<sup>5</sup></i>	0	\$15,408	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Total<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>111</b>	<b>\$779,722</b>	<b>\$7,025</b>

The Hoke County Hope-Thru-Horses alternative to commitment program was not funded for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Underutilization of the program by the only permissible referral source, coupled with audit findings via the section's fiscal and programmatic accountability and review protocols, halted all continuation funding sources from the community programs section for this non-profit for FY2017-18.

<sup>3</sup> Over expenditures are absorbed by the sponsoring agency.

<sup>4</sup> Over expenditures are absorbed by the sponsoring agency.

<sup>5</sup> As the funding decision for the Dare County was not made until late June 2016, and the program was actively providing clinical services to youth, it was not possible for the program to shut down by June 30 to transfer active clients to other services, and provide administrative closure without some additional weeks of funding. Cost of closeout not included in calculation of cost per youth

<sup>6</sup> Actual FY 16-17 total expenditures: \$795,130



## Exit from Program

Table 5 illustrates the 84 youth who exited the programs in FY 2016-2017. Fifty-nine (59) youth (70%) 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	3	2	2	0	7
Cumberland	3	2	4	0	9
Davidson	3	4	2	0	9
Durham	0	5	6	1	12
Hoke	0	0	1	0	1
Mecklenburg	0	0	1	0	1
New Hanover	2	4	1	0	7
Onslow	12	2	2	1	17
Rockingham	8	4	4	0	16
Wayne	5	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>84</b>

Table 6 illustrates the living arrangements for those 84 youth upon exit from the program which shows 70 youth (83.3%) were living in the community with their parent(s) or guardian; five (5) youth (6%) were in a treatment facility; seven (7) youth (8.3%) were in a youth development center, detention or county jail; and two (2) youth (2.4%) had an “Other” residential situation.

**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
Cumberland	7	1	0	1	9
Davidson	8	0	1	0	9
Durham	9	0	3	0	12
Hoke	1	0	0	0	1
Mecklenburg	1	0	0	0	1
New Hanover	4	0	2	1	7
Onslow	13	4	0	0	17
Rockingham	15	0	1	0	16
Wayne	5	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>84</b>

## Recidivism

Table 7 illustrates youth who exited the programs during the past two fiscal years (FY 2015-2016 and 2016-2017) 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	203	161
Distinct Youth with Additional Delinquent Complaints	17	22
<b>Percentage of Youth with Additional Delinquent Complaints</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>14%</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	203	161
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Delinquent Adjudications	11	15
Percentage of Youth with Delinquent Adjudications	5%	9%
Distinct Youth with Adult Convictions	26	27
Percentage of Youth with Adult Convictions	13%	17%
Distinct Youth with Juvenile Adjudication(s) or Adult Conviction(s)	37	42
<b>Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>26%</b>

In comparison, according to the most recent NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission's (SPAC) *Juvenile Recidivism Study: Sample FY 2012/13*<sup>7</sup>, 21% of juveniles who were adjudicated received an additional adjudication or conviction within 12 months.

<sup>7</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>

## 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-one percent (91.7%) of the youth exiting the projects were in a non-secure living arrangement while only eight percent (8.3%) 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.
- Eighteen percent (18%) of the distinct juveniles who could be followed for a full 6 months post-discharge received a delinquent adjudication or an adult conviction while 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 \$7,025 while the average annual cost per youth in a youth development center was \$106,878. 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. In addition, the youth who exited programs in FY 16-17 who were classified as Successful, remained in the programs longer.