



**Eckerd Youth Alternatives  
Annual Legislative Report  
March 2011**

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**Special Provision: S.L. 2009-451  
Section 18.1**

Submitted by:  
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

**Linda Wheeler Hayes, Secretary**

## **Executive Summary**

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During the fiscal year of 2009-2010, The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (hereinafter referred to as the Department) continued its partnership with Eckerd Youth Alternatives (hereinafter referred to as EYA) to provide a residential camp placement for youth who are at risk of involvement, or who have become involved, with juvenile court. The Department contracted with EYA to provide 275 beds at 5 wilderness camps, in which 681 youth (including youth in camp on 7/01/09) were able to be served. Highlights of the Eckerd Wilderness Camps in FY 2009-2010 include a low recidivism rate, improved academic achievement, and a high percentage of successful completers.

- The post-completion adjudication rate for successful completers in FY 2008-2009 was 33% at 12 months.
- Using the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement at entry and exit, successful completers were able to show an average increase of 1.0 grade levels in reading and 1.1 grade levels in math within an average of 10.5 months length of stay.
- The average grade placement at intake was 8.3 and the average grade placement at exit was 9.3 (one youth exited with GED).
- Of the 399 youth exiting the program in FY 2009-2010, 270 or 68% completed the program successfully.
- Eighty-eight (88%) of youth completing the program in FY 2008-2009 were either working, attending school, or both at 12 months post completion.
- The average utilization rate for all five (5) camps operating under the contract was 95.2%.
- Youth admitted into the Wilderness Commitment Program were able to be served at a significantly lower daily rate (\$134.94) than a youth being served in a Youth Development Center (\$224).

## **Introduction**

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In response to North Carolina *Session Law 2009-451, Section 18.1, Annual Evaluation of Community Programs*, the Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention submits its annual evaluation of the Eckerd Wilderness Program for FY 2009-2010. The Department's evaluation will measure subsequent court involvement by youth completing the Eckerd Wilderness Program and whether the Eckerd Wilderness Program is achieving the goals and objectives of the *Juvenile Justice Reform Act, S. L. 1998-202*.

## **Description of Services**

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For FY 2009-2010, the Department contracted with EYA to provide 275 beds for boys and girls between the ages of 10 through 17 who are at risk of involvement, or who are involved, with juvenile court. These services were provided at the following five camps:

- 1) Camp E-Mun-Talee located in Surry County (boys)
- 2) Camp E-Ma-Etu located in Wilkes County (boys and girls)
- 3) Camp E-Ku-Sumee located in Montgomery County (boys and girls)
- 4) Camp E-Ten-Etu located in Vance County (boys)
- 5) Camp E-Tik-Etu located in Bladen County (boys)

Eckerd Wilderness Camps is a staff secure, residential program that provides an alternative to a more restrictive setting. Eckerd Youth Counselors live with the youth in groups of ten and are responsible for facilitating the group process. The EYA Model focuses on the importance of the group dynamic as it relates to planning, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Each youth must learn to fulfill his/her respective roles and responsibilities within that group in order to effectively master the group process. The process is intended to promote an understanding of cause and effect relationships, personal responsibility, communication skills, self-discipline, and self-esteem. Each youth has his/her own individualized treatment plan that is linked directly to their needs. As treatment goals are mastered, new goals are set with input from the youth, family, referring agency worker, and EYA staff. Eckerd Camps in North Carolina are licensed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services as "Foster Care Camps."

The camps provide experiential education services designed to promote a positive attitude towards learning. EYA education services follow the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction course of study, and the camps provide 30-33 hours of instruction per week. Each camp is budgeted for 4 certified teaching positions, 1 education coordinator, and 1 teacher certified in special education services. EYA educational services are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS/CASI) as a special purpose school. Youth are given the opportunity to earn credit for all the coursework completed while in the program and, in most cases, are able to improve by one or more grade levels during their camp stay.

During the admission process each youth is assigned a family worker. The family worker serves as the liaison between the referring agency, youth's family, and camp. Family workers assist youth in their transition back to the community during homesdays<sup>1</sup> and upon exiting the program. Their responsibilities include assisting families with strengthening their parental skills, providing a positive home environment and helping families connect to community resources.

## **Program Cost**

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For FY 2009-2010, the state appropriation for Eckerd Youth Alternatives was \$13,559,215 and was determined by the following formula: \$134.94 (daily rate) x 275(number of beds contracted for) x 365 days. Additional funding included federal education dollars for Title I, Neglected and Delinquent P. L. 105-220 services (\$329,500) and Individual with Disabilities Education Act P. L. 101-476 services (\$84,206).

The EYA state appropriation for FY2009-2010 was reduced by \$3,482,357 from the FY 2008-2009 appropriation of \$17,041,572. This reduction resulted in a loss of 71 beds and led to the closure of Camp E-Ma-Henwu/Carteret County and Camp E-Toh-Kalu/Henderson County in June 2009.

## **Utilization Rate for Eckerd Camps in FY 2009-2010**

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<b>Camp</b>	<b>% Utilization</b>
E-Mun-Talee/Surry County	94.0%
E-Ma-Etu/Wilkes County	96.0%
E-Ku-Sumee/Montgomery County	99.0%
E-Ten-Etu/Vance County	90.0%
E-Tik-Etu/Bladen County	97.0%
<b>Average for all (5) Camps</b>	<b>95.2%</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Days youth are at home occurring every fifth weekend of their camp stay.

## **Demographic Profile**

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In FY 2009-2010, eligibility requirements were changed to allow only youth with juvenile court involvement admittance into the program. Juvenile Court involvement is defined as having any juvenile complaint (status or criminal) filed against youth or participation in a Department funded program.

For FY 2009-2010, there were a total of 406 new admissions possessing the following characteristics at intake<sup>2</sup>:

- Seventeen percent (17%) of the new admissions were female.
- Forty-eight percent (48%) of new admissions were white, 40% were African-American, and 12% were Latino/Multi-Racial/Asian.
- The average age at admission was 14.6, and 83% of youth admitted were 14 years old or older at time of admission.
- The average IQ score of new admissions was 89, and the average grade level for new admissions was 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Forty-one percent (41%) of youth admitted were from single parent homes, with only 23% coming from a two parent home.
- Wake County had the highest number of admissions with 60 youth and accounted for 15% of all new admissions.
- Sixty-six percent (66%) of all new admissions were referred by Department sources, 23% by NC Department of Public Instruction, 8% from Mental Health, and 3% from other sources including private agencies.

### **Referral Sources for Admissions FY2009-2010**

<b>Referral Source</b>	<b>Percent of Overall Admissions</b>
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	66.0%
Department of Public Instruction	23.0%
Mental Health	8.0%
Other (Private Agencies)	3.0%

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<sup>2</sup> Fiscal year runs from July 01 – June 30

## Admission by Gender FY 2009-2010

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Percent Male Admissions</b>	<b>Percent Female Admissions</b>
E-Ma-Etu/Wilkes County	53.0%	47.0%
E-Ku-Sumee/Montgomery County	63.0%	37.0%
E-Mun-Talee/Surry County	100%	0.0%
E-Tik-Etu	100%	0.0%
E-Ten-Etu	100%	0.0%
<b>Average for all Admissions</b>	<b>83.0%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>

The data over the last several years indicate that EYA continues to admit significantly more males than females; however, the percentages are somewhat proportionate to the number of males and females coming into contact with the juvenile court system. In FY 2009-2010, 75% of all juvenile complaints received were male, indicating a greater need for more male beds<sup>3</sup>.

## Admission of Minority Population(s) FY 2009-2010

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Percent of Minority Admissions</b>
E-Mun-Talee/Surry County	34.0%
E-Ma-Etu/Wilkes County	19.0%
E-Ku-Sumee/Montgomery County	65.0%
E-Ten-Etu/Vance County	73.0%
E-Tik-Etu/Bladen County	62.0%
<b>Average for all (5) Camps</b>	<b>52.0%</b>
Minority Populations include all non-white admissions	

For FY 2009-2010, 52% of admissions into camp were minority or non-white. Camps in the eastern and central areas of the state had higher percentages of minority admissions, while camps in the west admitted mostly white youth. Data from the NC DJJDP 2009 Annual Report indicate 79% of all commitments to a youth development center and 70% of all detention admissions were of minority descent<sup>4</sup>. To be more reflective of the Department's needs, EYA needs to continue increasing minority admissions.

<sup>3</sup> The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 2009 Annual Report, p.16.

<sup>4</sup> The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 2009 Annual Report, p.27.

## **Delinquency Involvement for Youth Admitted FY 2009-2010**

- Eighty-six percent (86%) of the 406 new admissions had either a criminal or status compliant filed against them prior to entering camp.
- Fourteen percent (14%) of new admissions were admitted into camp without having any previous court involvement.
- Person Offenses (30%) and Property Offenses (28%) were the most common offense types admitted into camp.

### **Offenses at Intake**

<b>Offense</b>	<b>Percent of Overall Admission FY2008-2009</b>
Person Offense	30.0%
Property Offense	28.0%
Undisciplined	14.0%
No Offense	14.0%
Victimless Offense	13.0%
Other	1.0%

## **Exit Cohort for Youth Leaving Camp FY 2009-2010**

In FY 2009-2010, there were a total of 399 exits from the program with 270 or 68% of youth successfully completing the program. Fifteen percent (15%) of youth were terminated from the program, and 14% withdrew prior to completing. The average length of stay for successful completers was 10.5 months and 3.7 months for youth who were unsuccessful or withdrew.

### **Reasons for Exiting Program**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Percentage of Campers</b>
Completion	68.0%
Withdrawal	14.0%
Program Termination	15.0%
Other	3.0%

## **Academic Growth for Youth Exiting Camp FY 2009-2010**

The majority of youth served by Eckerd in FY 2009-2010 achieved academic progress through experiential learning at camp. Eckerd administers the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement as a way to measure academic progress in reading and math while youth are at camp. Campers are given a pre-test upon their arrival and post-test at their completion. For youth successfully completing the program in FY 2009-2010, results show an average increase in reading scores of 1.0 grade levels and an average increase in math scores of 1.1 grade levels.

### **Woodcock-Johnson III Average Test Score Growth**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Intake Score</b>	<b>Exit Score</b>	<b>Grade Level Improvement</b>
Reading	7.2	8.2	1.0
Mathematics	6.8	7.9	1.1



## Outcomes

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The Department is charged with determining subsequent court involvement of youth completing the EYA Program as referenced in *Session Law 2009-451, Section 18.1, Annual Evaluation of Community Programs*. In FY 2008-2009, there were 341 successful completions from the wilderness camps. The subsequent juvenile court involvement was determined by running the names of the successful completers through the Department's North Carolina Juvenile On-Line Information Network (NC JOIN) to determine if there was subsequent court involvement after completion.

This analysis focuses on the 195 youth completing the program under the age of 16. Only 86 youth completing the program in FY 2009-2010 were able to be examined at 12 months post-completion for new adjudications. One hundred nine (109) youth were able to be examined for new adjudications occurring less than 12 months post-completion, as they turned 16 at some point during those 12 months. There were 146 youth who were 16 at time of completion from the program and were not included in this analysis, as 16 year old youth would be charged as adults, and adult convictions are not recorded in NC-JOIN.

### Subsequent Juvenile Justice Involvement Youth Completing in FY2008-2009

	<b>At 12 months post-completion</b>	<b>Less than 12 months</b>	<b>16 at Completion</b>
<b>New Adjudication</b>	28	7	
<b>No New Adjudications</b>	58	102	
<b>16 at End of Camp</b>	0	0	146
<b>Total</b>	86	109	
<b>Post-Completion Adjudication Rate</b>	<b>33.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	

Eighty-eight (88%) of the youth completing the program in FY 2008-2009 were attending school, working, or both at 12 months post-completion. The data indicate that the EYA Wilderness Program is successful in helping youth continue their educational pursuits and develop necessary vocational skills.

### Educational and Vocational Status Youth Completing in FY2008-2009 at 12 months post-completion

<b>Status at 12 Months Post-Completion</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Youth in school and not working	66.0%
Youth not in school and not working	12.0%
Youth working and in school	18.0%
Youth working and not in school	4.0%

## **Wilderness Commitment Program (WCP)**

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In 2003 the Department and EYA began a pilot program to admit youth who were in commitment status as an alternative to a youth development center. A motion in court must be filed stating reasons why a youth is a good candidate for a community commitment. The committing judge must approve the motion before the placement in camp can occur. WCP youth participate in the same model of care as regular campers. If it is determined by the treatment team that youth is non-compliant with the WCP Program, the decision can be made to return the youth to their assigned Youth Development Center.

### **Residential Cost Comparisons FY 2009-2010**

Eckerd Camp Placements (daily cost)	\$134.94
Secure Detention (daily cost)	\$190*
Youth Development Centers (daily cost)	\$224

\*Both Detention and YDC amounts represent cost to the Department for FY 2008-2009.

### **Demographics of WCP Youth Admitted in FY 2009-2010**

Minority Admissions	82%
Male Admissions	100%
Average Age of Youth at Intake	15.5
Average Number of Adjudicated Complaints at Intake	5

In FY 2009-2010 EYA admitted 11 youth under the Wilderness Commitment Program, of which 4 still remain active. Outcomes for FY 2009-2010 include 6 youth who completed the program and 7 were terminated and returned to a Youth Development Center. A WCP youth in FY 2009-2010 had a 46% probability of graduating from camp.

### **WCP Program Success for FY 2009-2010**

<b>Total Number of Exits</b>	<b>Number of Graduated Campers</b>	<b>Success Rate</b>
13	6	46%