



Reducing Recidivism for Youth in the Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services

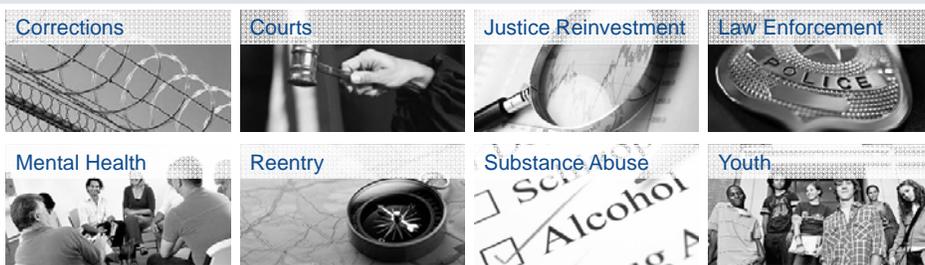
Analyses and Recommendations

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The Council Of State Governments Justice Center



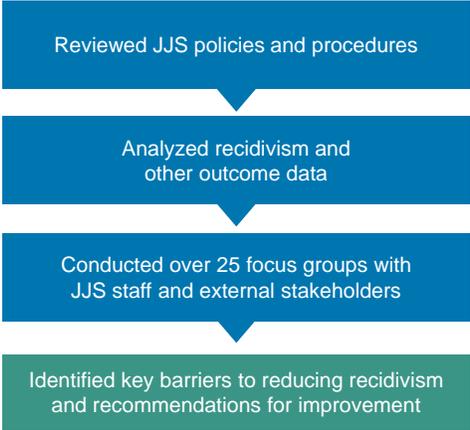
<p>National nonprofit, nonpartisan membership association of state government officials</p>	<p>Represents all three branches of state government</p>	<p>Provides practical advice informed by the best available evidence</p>
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Assessment of Policies and Practices

Youth Served by the Utah Division of Juvenile Justice Services (JJS)

No juvenile justice system has fully implemented all or even most of “what works” to reduce recidivism

JJS has engaged in a **robust and transparent evaluation** of its efforts and is committed to improvement



High Recidivism Rates for Youth in Long-Term JJS Custody

51%

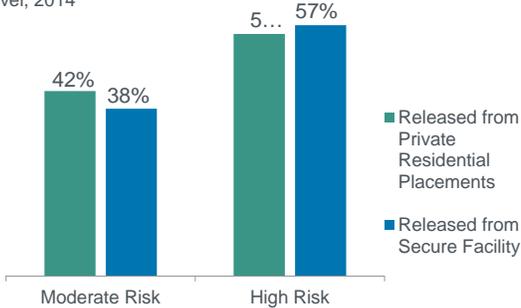
of youth in private residential placements

52%

of youth in secure facilities

Receive new misdemeanor or felony charges within **one year** of release

FIGURE 1: New Charges for Youth Released from Private Residential Placements and Secure Facilities by Assessed Risk Level, 2014



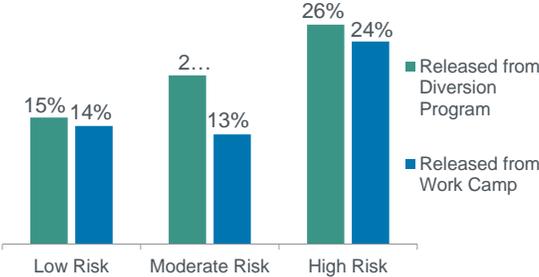
Recidivism Also a Concern for Early Intervention Programs

19%
of youth in diversion programs

20%
of youth in work camps

Receive new misdemeanor or felony charges within **90 days** of release

FIGURE 2: New Charges for Youth Released from Diversion and Work Camp Programs by Assessed Risk Level, 2014



Steps Taken Towards Adopting and Implementing Best Practices

Principle 1: Use Validated Assessments

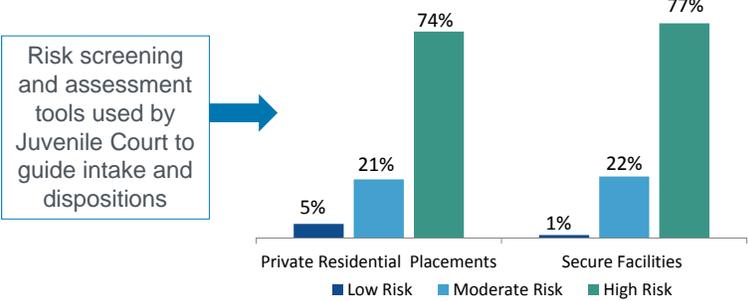


- ✓ Validated risk screening and assessment tools used statewide
- ✓ Established standard case planning tool based on youth's assessed risks/needs
- ✓ Uses Court and Agencies' Record Exchange system to track assessments
- ✓ Conducts fidelity audits of assessments

CORE PRINCIPLE 1

The Majority of Youth in JJS Long-Term Custody Are Assessed as High-Risk of Reoffending

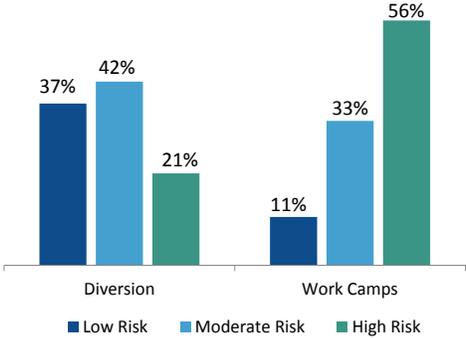
FIGURE 3: Assessed Risk Level of Youth Admitted to Private Residential Placements and Secure Facilities, 2014



CORE PRINCIPLE 1

A High Proportion of Youth in Early Intervention Programs Are Low/Moderate Risk to Reoffend

FIGURE 4: Assessed Risk Level of Youth Discharged from Diversion Programs and Admitted to Work Camp Programs, 2014



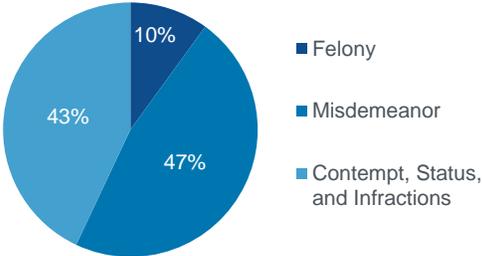
- **Judicial discretion, rather than risk assessments,** are generally used to determine eligibility for diversion or work camp programs.

\$7 million per year spent on diversion and work camp programs

CORE PRINCIPLE 1

Majority of Youth Admitted to Detention Not Due to Felony Offenses

FIGURE 5: Most Recent Offense Prior to Detention Admission, 2014



- **Juvenile Court/JJS lack a risk screening tool** to make objective detention decisions

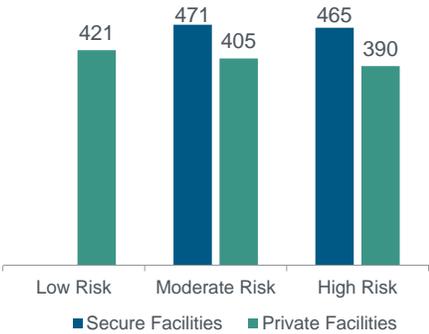
\$21 million per year spent on detention

\$340 average daily cost per youth in detention, **3x** more than the average daily cost (\$108) for JJS diversion programs

CORE PRINCIPLE 1

Lengths of Stay in Facilities Are Not Based on the Time Needed for Effective Treatment and Efficient Use of Resources

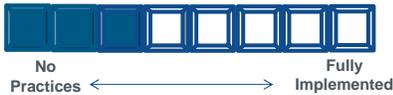
FIGURE 6: Average Secure and Private Facility Custody Days by Youth's Assessed Risk Level, 2014



- Lengths of stay are **generally longer than needed** to provide effective treatment (approximately 4-8 months)
- Release decisions are based on **subjective ratings** of progress
- Youth with a lower risk to offend are staying longer

Steps Taken Towards Adopting Effective Programs and Evaluating Youth Outcomes

Principle 2: Programs that Work



- ✓ Improvement efforts to implement EBPs in secure facilities
- ✓ Transition coordinators broker reentry services and supports
- ✓ Partners with University of Utah to assess services using the Correctional Program Checklist
- ✓ Robust capacity to collect/analyze data

CORE PRINCIPLE 2

Youth's Treatment Needs Are Not Assessed Fully or in an Efficient Manner

Insufficient Communication		Lack of Formal Assessments		Reliance on Residential Placement
Youth receive a mental health screen but JJS staff don't routinely share the results with the Court	+	Juvenile Court does not employ validated behavioral health assessments	+	Youth are placed in Observation and Assessment Centers for 45 days for the sole purpose of assessment

\$6.6 million per year spent on Observation and Assessment

\$11,395 average cost per youth at O&A, up to **50x** times more than the cost of in-depth validated assessment in the community

CORE PRINCIPLE 2

Lack of Evidence Based Treatment Models Used in Residential Placements

Secure Facilities

- Few evidence-based cognitive behavioral programs
- Few evidence-based substance use programs
- Limited mental health services
- Lack of vocational training and certification programs

Private Residential Placements

- No specific contractual requirements to establish/document:
 - Program model based on “what works”
 - Measureable treatment goals
 - Average LOS needed to achieve treatment goals

CORE PRINCIPLE 2

Few Evidence Based Services Are Available to Youth in the Community

- × Youth at Risk of Residential Placement
- × Mental Health
- × Substance Use
- × Youth Who Commit Sex Offenses
- × Rural Communities

- Utah is not one of 35 states to implement the “big 3” EBPs (MST, FFT, MTFC) at scale statewide
- Probation reports limited services to keep higher-risk youth in community
- JJS contracts for minimal formal aftercare services for youth leaving residential placements

40% of recidivism events that occur in the year after youth are released from residential placement occur within the first 3 months

Steps Taken Toward Government Agency and Service System Collaboration

Principle 3: Collaboration across Systems



- ✓ Partners with the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and Utah Board of Juvenile Justice
- ✓ Department of Human Services received System of Care funding from SAMSHA
- ✓ Partners with local school districts to provide high quality education
- ✓ Multiagency case staffing meetings occur with probation in all court districts

CORE PRINCIPLE 3

Limited Availability of Mental Health and Substance Use Services



Steps Taken Toward a Developmentally-Appropriate Approach

Principle 4: Policies and Practices Developmentally Appropriate

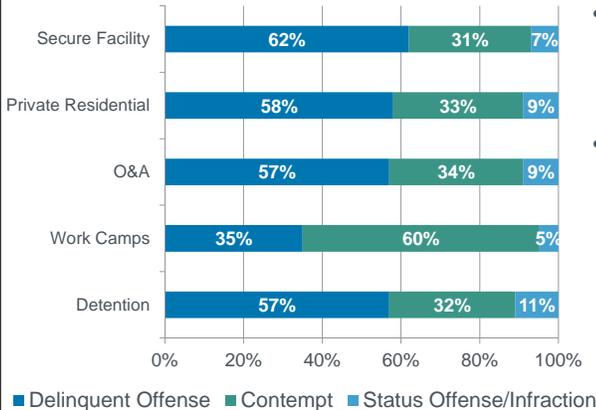


- ✓ Case managers engage youth and families in case planning/treatment
- ✓ Case managers focused on promoting positive behaviors and trained in EBPs
- ✓ Guided by philosophy of balanced and restorative justice, which includes restitution, community service, and victim mediation

CORE PRINCIPLE 4

High Reliance on Residential Placement as a Response to Contempt Offenses

FIGURE 8: Most Recent Offense Type Prior to Admission to JJS Residential Placements, 2014



- The Juvenile Court and JJS **lack a statewide graduated response matrix** (in progress)
- Detention is used as a post-disposition sanction **despite no research on its effectiveness and its significant expense**

Key Recommendations

High Recidivism Rates but Significant Opportunities for Improvement

- 1 Reduce reliance on expensive residential placements and reallocate resources into community-based, evidence-based programs.
- 2 Use objective criteria to improve the efficiency of key supervision decisions.
- 3 Require the use of evidence-based programs in facilities, and hold staff/providers accountable for improved youth outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Reallocate Resources into Evidence-Based Community Services

Key changes to use assessment and service resources more efficiently

1. Consider how \$36 million spent on O&A, diversion and work camp programs, and private residential placements can be **most efficiently allocated to**:
 - A. Assess and address youth's mental health and substance use **treatment needs**
 - B. Expand the use of **evidence-based programs** that can be used as **alternatives to placement** for youth at risk of JJS custody and at-risk of a probation violation.
 - C. Expand the use of the **CPC** to all residential placements
2. Reinvest potential **savings** from reduced residential placements in evidence-based, community-based services
3. Amend the **state Medicaid plan** to cover evidence-based, community-based behavioral health services

RECOMMENDATION 2

Use Objective Criteria to Improve Supervision and Service Decisions

Key changes to use supervision resources more efficiently

1. JJS and Juvenile Court should partner to establish a **detention risk screening instrument** and divert youth who are low-risk to reoffend and not a flight risk
2. JJS and Juvenile Court should partner to **restrict the use of detention** for status offenders and youth who commit technical violations
3. Revise facility **LOS policies and release criteria** to base these decisions on offenses, risk level, and treatment progress
4. Develop a **statewide graduated response matrix**, with residential placements curtailed as commonly-used response

RECOMMENDATION 3

Establish Evidence-Based Program Models for All Secure Facilities and Community Placements

Key changes for secure facilities and community placements

1. Identify specific **evidence-based programs** for use in secure facilities
2. Revamp **private residential provider contracts** to require the use of evidence-based programs
3. Use **CPC** to evaluate service quality of all providers and maintain contracts with only those **rated "highly effective"**