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# Improving Outcomes for Youth in Connecticut: Second Presentation to the Task Force

**November 14, 2019**

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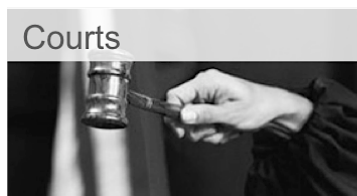
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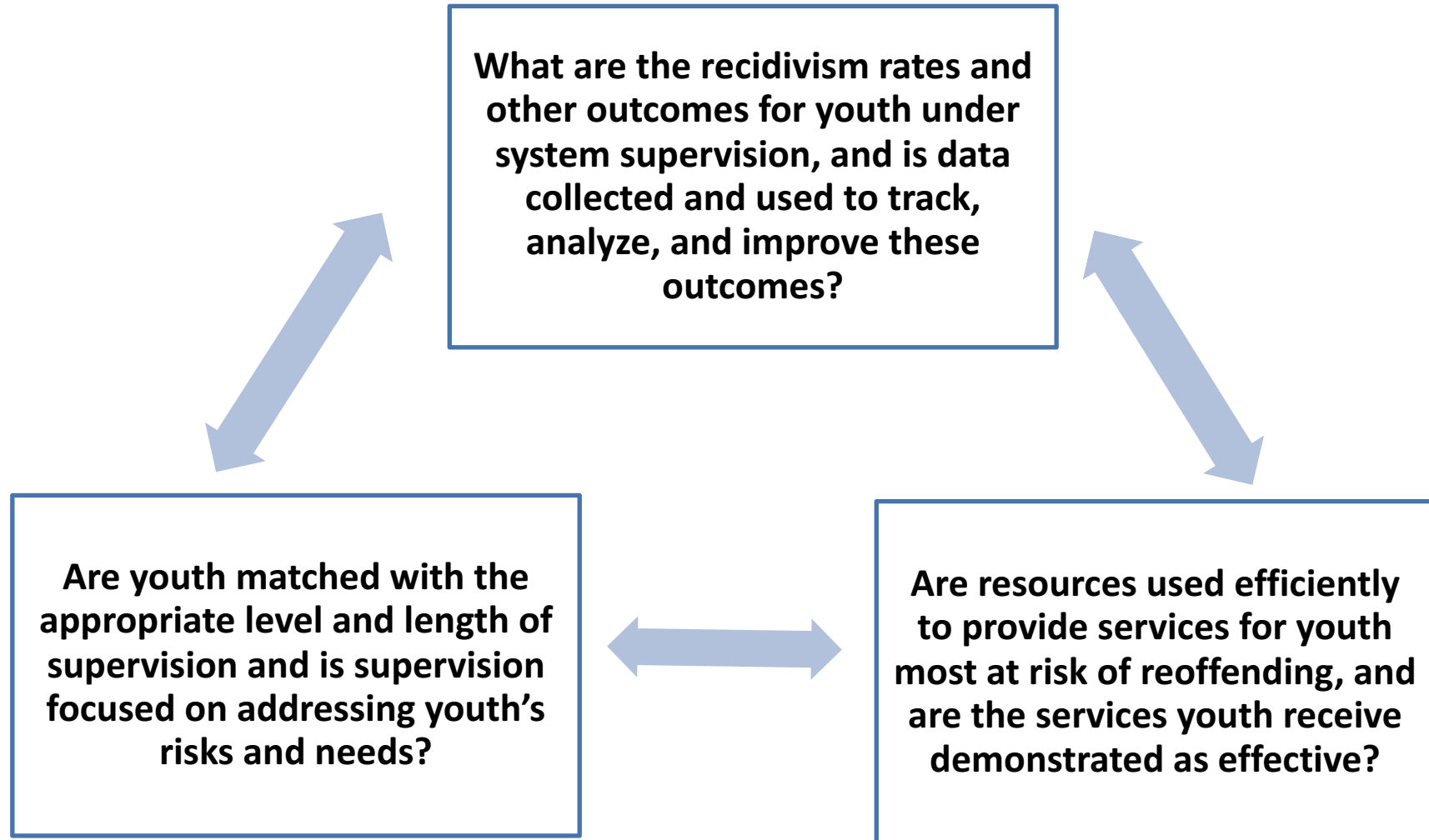
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# Improving Outcomes for Youth Initiative (IOYouth) in Connecticut

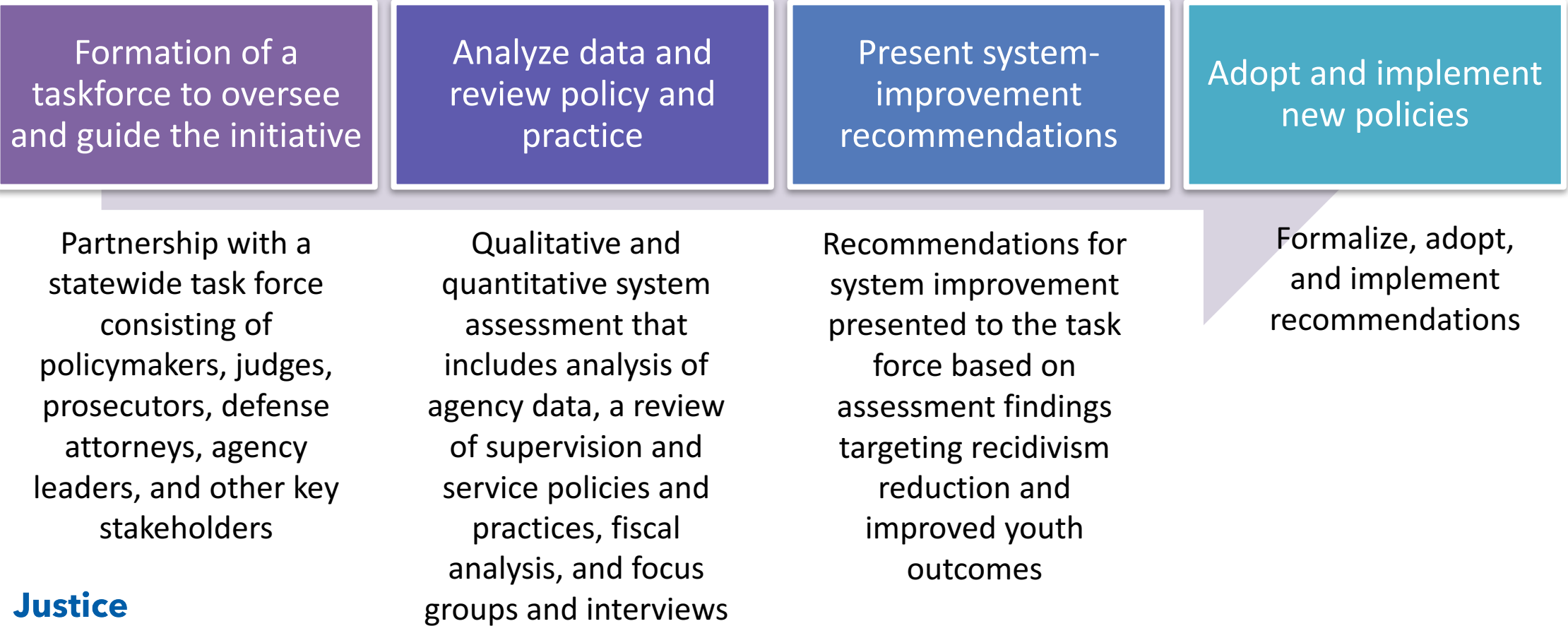
IOYouth is a data-driven initiative that helps states and counties align their policies, practices, and resource allocation with what research shows works.



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# The IOYouth Initiative has four key phases of work:

## 9-12 month process



# Connecticut established a task force chaired by Rep. Walker and Secretary McCaw to oversee and guide the IOYouth initiative.

**Rep. Toni Walker**, Co-chair, Appropriations Committee, Connecticut General Assembly

**Melissa McCaw**, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management

Abby Anderson, Executive Director, CT Juvenile Justice Alliance

Erica Bromley, Juvenile Justice Liaison, Connecticut Youth Services Association

Francis Carino, Supervisory Juvenile Prosecutor, Office of the Chief State's Attorney

Judge Bernadette Conway, Chief Administrative Judge, Juvenile Matters

John Frassinelli, State Department of Education

Deborah Fuller, Director, Family and Juvenile Services, Court Support Services Division, Judicial Branch

Eulalia Garcia, Deputy Warden, Manson Youth Institution, Department of Corrections

Hector Glynn, Senior Vice President, The Village for Children and Families

Dr. Derrick Gordon, Director, Research, Policy and Program on Male Development, The Consultation Center, Yale University

Brian Hill, Director of Human Resources, Judicial Branch

Senator George Logan, Human Services Committee, Connecticut General Assembly

Eleanor Michael, Policy Development Coordinator, Office of Policy and Management

Ken Mysogland, Bureau Chief, External Affairs, Department of Children and Families

Marc Pelka, Undersecretary for Criminal Justice, Office of Policy and Management

Rep. Robyn Porter, Appropriations & Judiciary Committees, Connecticut General Assembly

Christine Rapillo, Chief Public Defender, Connecticut Office of Chief Public Defender

Janeen Reid, Executive Director, Full Circle Youth Empowerment

Gary Roberge, Executive Director, Court Support Services Division, Judicial Branch

Fred Spagnolo, Chief of Police, Waterbury Police Department

Martha Stone, Executive Director, Center for Children's Advocacy



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# Status Update and Revised Timeline of Deliverables

Since the last IOYouth Task Force meeting in June, CSG Justice Center staff have conducted 4 site visits to Connecticut, and spoken with over 100 stakeholders in focus groups and individual interviews.



**CSG staff also visited detention, REGIONS, and DOC facilities to meet with youth, facility leadership, custody staff, mental health and education providers:**

- Bridgeport Juvenile Detention Center
- Hartford Juvenile Detention Center
- Journey House
- Manson Youth Institution
- Boys and Girls Village
- Connecticut Junior Republic

# The CSG Justice Center received system data through agreements with UNH and the SDE in late September and early October.

## **Juvenile Justice System Data**

- CSG Justice Center entered into an agreement with the University of New Haven (UNH) to receive de-identified datasets from JB-CSSD, DOC, and DCF.
- State agencies compiled and processed the data requested through an MOA with UNH.
- State agencies submitted data to UNH Center for Analytics (CFA) who then processed the data to remove identifying information and create a method for matching individuals across systems.
- CSG Justice Center received updated datasets from CFA on September 23.
- CSG Justice Center began processing and analyzing data while communicating with CFA and state agencies to answer questions about how to interpret data.

## **Diversion Data**

- CSG Justice Center requested data on the YSBs in spring 2019.
- MOA with SDE was signed on September 23, and data was received October 7.

# Anticipated analyses for future task force findings presentations:

| January/February Presentation | 5-Year Trend   | Demographics | Recidivism |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|
| Diversion                     | No             | Yes          | No         |
| Arrests/Referrals             | Yes            | Yes          | Yes        |
| Detention                     | Yes            | Yes          | Yes        |
| Assessments                   | Yes            | Yes          | N/A        |
| Disposition                   | Yes            | Yes          | Yes        |
| March/April Presentation      | 5-Year Trend   | Demographics | Recidivism |
| Community Supervision         | Yes            | Yes          | Yes        |
| Services                      | Yes            | Yes          | N/A        |
| Out of Home Placement         | DCF Placements | No           | No         |

In partnership with the co-chairs and state leadership, we revised the timeline and key deliverables for the IOYouth initiative.

| June, July and September 2019                                                                                                    | November 2019                                                                                                              | January/ February 2020                                                                                                                                                                                  | March/April 2020                                                                                                                                                                                          | May/June 2020                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Launch event</li><li>• Focus groups, interviews, and site visits to facilities</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation with qualitative takeaways</li><li>• Continued focus groups</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task Force presentation of data findings on referrals, diversion, detention</li><li>• Focus groups to discuss potential system improvement strategies</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task Force presentation of findings on disposition, supervision, and services</li><li>• Focus groups to discuss potential system improvement strategies</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task Force meeting to reach consensus on recommendations</li><li>• Develop an action plan for adoption of recommendations</li></ul> |



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# Key Takeaways from Qualitative Assessment

## Best Practices in Juvenile Diversion

- ❖ Divert youth who are assessed as low risk from system involvement and provide minimal or no supervision for these youth.
- ❖ Use risk screening tools to objectively identify low-risk youth who are appropriate for diversion.
- ❖ Establish clear criteria to identify youth that should be eligible for and/or automatically participate in diversion programs.
- ❖ Use needs screening tools to identify youth with potential mental health and substance use needs to match youth with appropriate services.
- ❖ Collect data on diversion program participation and quality to evaluate performance.



The JJPOC developed the Community-Based Diversion System Plan, a roadmap for effective, developmentally appropriate, community-based responses to divert youth from the juvenile justice system.



- **2017:** The plan **creates a system of early identification, assessment and intervention**, to address youth's needs within the context of their family, school, and community such that no child is entered into the juvenile justice system without having exhausted appropriate community resources.
  - Designated the **Youth Service Bureaus (YSB) as the coordinating hub** for the Community-Based Diversion system. The YSB is responsible for:
    - **Educating** the community about diversion and accessing diversion resources
    - Acting as the **screening and referral** mechanism for youth who are referred to the hub
    - **Facilitating the integration of data collection** for system wide accountability and improvement
    - **Identifying communitywide training needs and facilitate the delivery of cross-sector trainings**

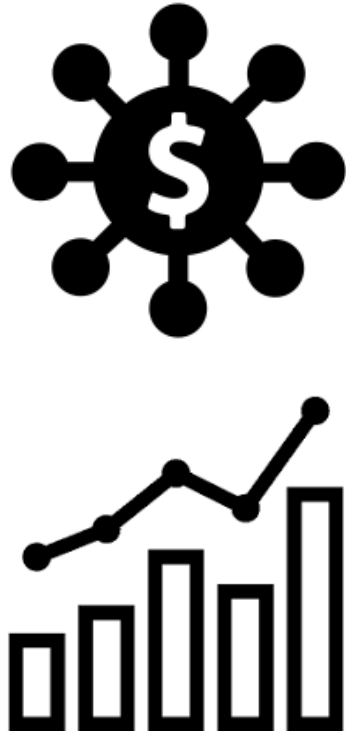
Youth Service  
Bureaus (YSBs) and  
Juvenile Review  
Boards (JRBs) vary  
across the state in  
terms of how they are  
structured, and  
eligibility is often  
offense-based.



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- There are currently **103 YSBs serving 146 communities in Connecticut, and 88 JRBs serving 135 communities**. YSBs are coordinating units of community-based services that provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment and follow-up services. JRBs, coordinated by YSBs, are groups of local professionals who meet regularly to offer children and their families a positive alternative to the juvenile justice system.
- JRBs and YSBs **primarily serve youth with low level offenses**. While most JRBs serve youth with first and second time misdemeanor offenses, they also serve youth with school violations, and some address non-arrest or pre-arrest cases. YSBs serve mostly young people that are referred by schools for school violations. but they also provide services to youth referred by parents, other organizations, or through self-referrals.
- While YSBs and JRBs started using the Ohio Scales Screener for their JRB and truancy cases as of July 1, 2018, **it unclear how this and other screening tools are being used to inform eligibility decisions or service matching**.
- Following a referral to a JRB, stakeholders reported that **youth can wait** upwards of 30 days before being contacted by a program to begin services. At the same time, stakeholders report that some **programs are underutilized given needs that may exist in a community**.

Stakeholders expressed a need for greater funding for YSBs and JRBs, but it is unclear if existing funding is being used efficiently and whether programs are effective.



- **Interventions being offered can vary widely by JRB.** Stakeholders reported that some YSBs and JRBs **struggle to respond to the multiple array of needs** of youth and families with more some JRBs having greater access to services.
- Stakeholders expressed concern that the **uncertainty around funding** for diversion may lead JRB programs to reengage youth repeatedly in the same services rather than referring the youth elsewhere if they are unsuccessful, so that programs can demonstrate higher completion rates.
- **More can be done to collect and track outcome data on the effectiveness of JRBs and YSBs,** and outcome data that is available is not always shared with relevant parties or reported statewide. JRBs are required to report service completion information for direct services, but if they contract for services often times that information is not collected.



Probation also diverts youth from the juvenile justice system through non-judicial handling based on the criteria set forth in the Connecticut Practice Book.

- If a case is referred to probation by law enforcement, probation can decide to discharge a case with a warning, or refer a case for non-judicial supervision or administrative supervision based on criteria in the CT Practice Book (offense and prior history). In making this determination, **probation also utilizes the results of a risk screening tool**, records, and collateral information..
- While prosecutors have the right to object to non-judicial handlings, most often they don't see those cases and rely on probation to provide them with non-judicial records. **In certain jurisdictions, probation supervisors may consult with prosecutors** in cases where there are questions around whether to handle a situation non-judicially.
- **Non-judicial supervision** is based on the client's risk and needs, and **can resemble probation supervision**; cases handled non-judicially have similar conditions of supervision as those youth on probation, and youth can be supervised non-judicially up to 6 months, with a possible extension of another 6 months.
- **The availability of community-based services** for youth on administrative or non-judicial supervision **vary by location**, and often times there are waitlists for programming.



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## Diversion questions to be answered by CSG's data analysis:

| YSB/JRB Diversion                                                                                              | Non-Judicial Handling                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Who is getting diverted and referred to YSBs and JRBs? (Offense, referral source, race/ethnicity, gender, age) | Who is being diverted through non-judicial handling by the probation department? (Offense, history, race/ethnicity, gender, age) |
| What entities are referring youth to YSBs and JRBs?                                                            | How long are youth on administrative vs. non-judicial supervision?                                                               |
| How long are youth served through YSBs and JRBs?                                                               | What types of services do youth receive while on non-judicial or administrative supervision?                                     |
| What do outcomes (completion rates) look like for youth served by YSBs and JRBs?                               | What do outcomes look like for youth served handled non-judicially?                                                              |
| How are resources allocated across YSBs and JRBs and what is the breakdown of expenditures?                    |                                                                                                                                  |

# Best Practices in the Use of Detention

- ❖ Reserve costly secure detention beds for youth who pose a direct risk to public safety or flight risk.
- ❖ Establish specific criteria, policies, and training on the use of detention screening instruments, overrides, and secure vs. alternative vs. no detention.
- ❖ Establish a continuum of alternatives to detention supervision and services in the community that are matched to the risk and needs of youth.
- ❖ Limit the use of detention as a response to technical violations or failures to comply with supervision, unless youth are at imminent risk of harming themselves or others.

In 2017, Connecticut adopted new criteria for the use of detention and implemented a screening tool to inform detention decisions.



**2017:** LIMITED USE OF PRE-TRIAL  
DETENTION



**2017:** DEVELOPED AND  
IMPLEMENTED A DETENTION RISK  
ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT



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While some stakeholders believe that current detention criteria is inadequate to address public safety, others report that the current process and lack of alternatives can lead to the over use of detention for youth.

- Law enforcement officials report **a lack of clarity from judicial officials and probation** around which youth are appropriate to refer to secure detention. Law enforcement, prosecutors, and probation staff also expressed concern that the new process makes it more challenging to detain youth that may be a public safety risk.
- At the same time, public defenders perceive that **some judicial officials have expanded the definition of failure to comply** as a way to continue detaining youth and they are often overriding the DRAI.
- **Limited alternatives to detention exist in Connecticut**; there are a few respite facilities in the state (male only) and a shortage of mental health beds. Additionally, electronic monitoring is often used, but GPS tracking is not as available.

Stakeholders generally report that pre-adjudicated youth charged as adults could be better served in juvenile facilities than in DOC custody.



Pre-adjudicated **youth charged as adults do not have similar detention hearing requirements** as youth in the juvenile justice system.



According to Department of Corrections data, as of September 19, 2019, **more than half of young people under age 18 at MYI** are **pre-sentenced youth**, and stakeholders across the system describe lengths of stay for pre-sentenced youth as long.



Stakeholders report that many times youth placed in **pre-adjudicated detention at Bridgeport or Hartford** have similar offense and history profiles to pre-sentenced youth placed at MYI, and that these youth would be **better served in a juvenile facility**.

Staff in pre-adjudication juvenile detention facilities report challenges in addressing the needs of young people for a variety of reasons.

- Staff expressed concerns with **males and females placed at the same facility** (though they are housed separately), and an increase of youth with **more intensive mental health issues that they feel they are unable to serve adequately**.
- **Limited family engagement** is also an issue raised by staff in the detention facilities, in part due to transportation issues.
- **Substance use treatment/education, anger management, and gang intervention** are services that staff identified as gaps in pre-adjudication detention.



## Detention questions to be answered by CSG's data analysis

What trend are we seeing with detention rates?

Who is getting detained? (Offense, race/ethnicity, gender, age)

What are the primary reasons that youth are placed in pre-adjudication detention? (offense, DRAI override, violation, mandatory holds, etc.)

How long are youth staying in detention pre-adjudication?

How are alternatives to detention being used?



Over the last several years, Connecticut has adopted numerous changes that impact dispositional decision making for youth in the juvenile justice system.



**2012:** Changed definition of juvenile to **include 17 year-olds**



**2017: Removed *truancy*** and defiance of school rules and regulations as grounds for a delinquency offense



**2018: Closed** Connecticut Juvenile Training School



**2018:** Transferred legal authority and responsibility over all adjudicated youth to the **Court Support Services Division** of the Judicial Branch

Stakeholders expressed challenges with the implementation of the new PrediCT risk assessment tool and how it is being used to inform disposition and service matching decisions.

- Most stakeholders have a **favorable view of the PrediCT**, however a few challenges with the tool were identified:
  - Pre-dispositional studies **often take as long as 6 weeks to complete**, and they can be waived by the court
  - **Not everyone** on a case receives the full results from the assessment
  - The tool is **not always effective in matching low risk, high need youth** with the most appropriate supervision and programming
  - The tool can **identify a need where a service isn't available**, whether due to waitlists, insurance challenges, or availability based on geography
  - Prosecutors are **concerned that the tool does not place enough weight on the youth's offense**



Challenges were identified in connecting youth with the most appropriate and timely residential services, if those placements are deemed necessary.

- **Youth often await placement in REGIONS programs for significant periods of time** due to waitlists, and wait for their placement in pre-adjudication detention.
- Recommendations for REGIONS must include an evaluation by a clinical coordinator; however, the time it takes for an evaluation to be conducted has **created some delays** for youth getting placed into REGIONS. Additionally, the closure of CJTS has resulted in **limited options** for secure placement even if the evaluation recommends this type of setting.
- Since a new referral process was initiated, residential providers feel that **they do not always receive the information that they need on youth** from the referral source to develop adequate case planning, with data on youth's risk areas or medical/psychiatric information missing.
- Residential providers often feel that they are **getting referrals for youth that are not appropriate** for their programming due to youth's more acute behavioral health needs or offense severity. Some providers believe an overflow of youth awaiting secure placement also leads to inappropriate youth being referred to providers.

## Filings and disposition questions to be answered by CSG's data analysis

Have judicial filing rates decreased over time?

What cases are handled judicially? (Offense, race/ethnicity, gender, age)

What cases are being disposed to probation, residential placements, and transferred to adult court? (Offense, race/ethnicity, gender, age)

How long are youth staying on probation supervision?

How long are youth staying in secure or staff secure placements? Other out of home placements? Adult secure placements?

# Best Practices in Juvenile Probation Supervision and Services

- ❖ Position probation officers as agents of positive behavior change rather than compliance monitors by reducing caseloads and focusing supervision on skill development.
- ❖ Focus conditions of supervision on the root causes of behavior and restorative justice practices.
- ❖ Engage youth and families in the development of case plans and in case decision making.
- ❖ Promote and fund only those system interventions demonstrated by research to be effective at reducing recidivism and improving other youth outcomes.
- ❖ Employ graduated responses and incentives to hold youth accountable, promote behavior change, and minimize probation violations.



While many juvenile probation policies in Connecticut are aligned with the research, stakeholders' perspectives suggest that challenges may remain in implementing them with fidelity.



Connecticut statutes include a list of **standard conditions** that are utilized for youth on juvenile probation, not all of which are developmentally appropriate, and judges can also add conditions that are tailored to each individual youth.



Probation officers follow youth throughout their time in the juvenile justice system, from pre-adjudication to supervision and aftercare, allowing officers to **build relationships and trust** with youth and families.



The balance of **caseloads for probation officers** has been a challenge as referrals to the juvenile justice system has decreased, with some probation officers now handling **mixed caseloads or caseloads that span larger geographic regions**. At the same time, caseloads in certain jurisdictions are higher than others in comparison.



While probation officers use a statewide system of graduated responses/incentives to address youth behavior, stakeholders reported seeing an **increase in filings for take into custody orders**, which may be the result of probation trying to limit the use of violation of probation charges.

Service availability for youth on community supervision can be limited in certain regions, and it is unclear to the extent that community-based services are effective.

- As mentioned earlier, the PrediCT tool is used to help match youth to services based on their risk and needs. However, **sometimes the tool will identify a need where a service is not available** in the youth's jurisdiction. Additionally, **insurance often plays a large role** in the type of service that youth actually receives.
- Service availability for youth supervised in the community **depends largely on geography**, with more services available in urban areas.
- While CSSD is collecting data for contracted community-based services and have a quality assurance process in place, probation officers report that they are **not always receiving and reviewing these outcome data to help them inform referrals**, and much of the information they have about service effectiveness (CSSD contracted and non-contracted) is anecdotal.

## Probation supervision and services questions to be answered by CSG's data analysis

What probation conditions do youth receive and are they tailored to the risk and needs of youth?

What is the average daily population for youth on probation? (by demographics, offense, caseload type, etc.)

What is the cost per day of serving a youth on probation?

What do outcomes look like for youth on probation? (Recidivism, violations, revocations/failures)



# Best Practices in Commitment (Probation with Placement)

- ❖ Match youth with the most appropriate level and length of supervision based primarily on the youth's assessed risk of reoffending.
- ❖ Minimize system interventions for low risk youth and focus system resources on high risk youth.
- ❖ Base supervision terms on youth's risk level and offense and their progress under supervision.
- ❖ Minimize supervision lengths beyond 12 months due to diminishing returns (high cost of incarceration and research demonstrating reduced outcomes).

The closure of the CJTS has resulted in limited secure placement options that can offer youth the most appropriate supervision and services.

- When REGIONS first started, time spent by a youth in pre-adjudication detention **did not count towards their progress in completing the REGIONS** treatment program, thus increasing the time that youth spend in secure placement. However this practice has been modified.
- Stakeholders interviewed expressed concern with secure REGIONS programs in both Bridgeport and Hartford, and the **limited options that the physical structure and space presents for long term service and treatment** provision.
- Additional concerns expressed about REGIONS detention facilities include **limited family engagement and a lack of involvement from community providers in programming.**
- Staff in secure REGIONS programs report particular challenges engaging youth that may have more **intensive behavioral issues** (older youth population and younger youth with more serious offenses) due to limited treatment programs these facilities have to address these needs.



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There is a lack of consistency in policy and practice across staff secure facilities around eligibility criteria, program availability, and quality assurance.

- Most youth upon reentry from secure REGIONS programs are placed in a step down facility (staff secure) in the community. It **remains unclear what criteria is being used to determine the best transition for youth** returning from secure REGIONS programs, and whether youth can return back home or if a step down is more appropriate.
- **REGIONS staff report that youth at staff secure facilities often run**, in part due to a lack of consistency in rules and a perception that the step down is stricter than CJTS. **The mixture of youth** (REGIONS youth directly admitted into the facility and youth stepping down from a secure REGIONS facility) in staff secure facilities can make supervision and programming more challenging.
- Stakeholders also discussed a need for agency leadership to provide them with best practices in treatment models for staff secure facilities, and staff secure programs identified the **need for more differentiation by program based on each program's capacity and expertise**.
- Currently, standard measures exist that programs must report to CSSD, but measures are **not really looking at youth or program outcomes**.

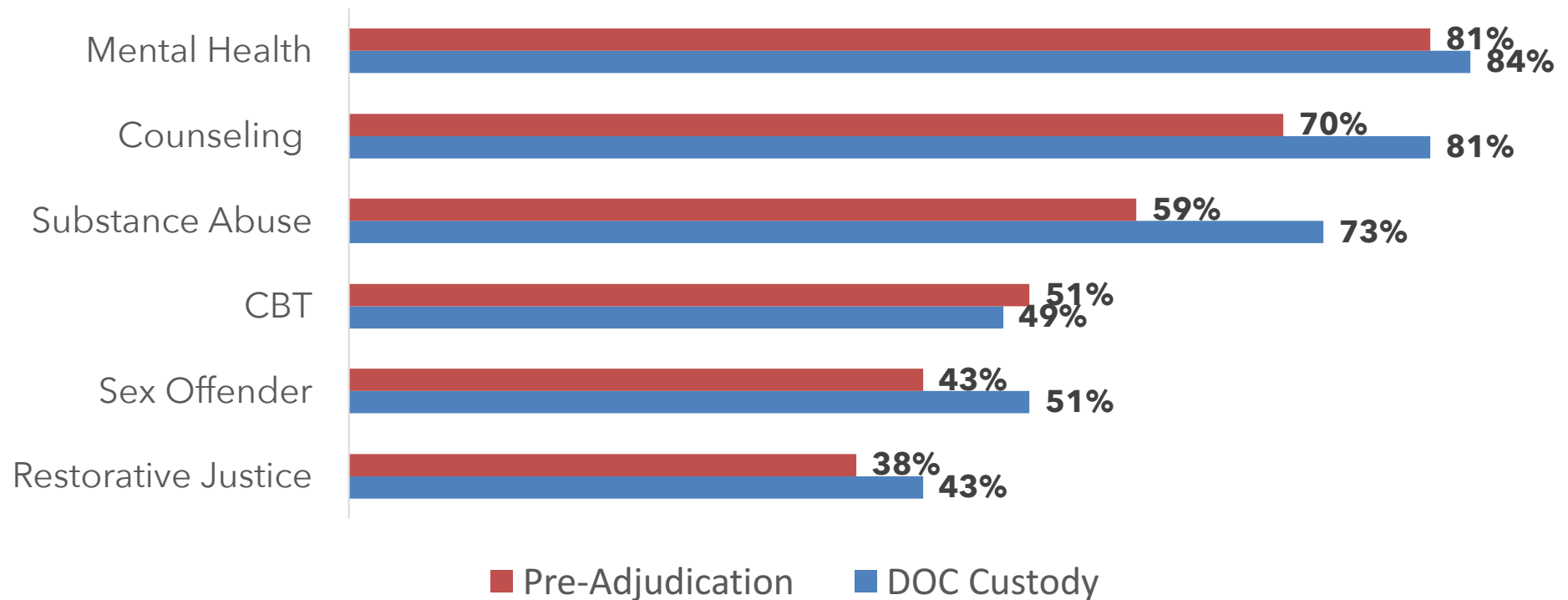


There is general agreement that DOC is not the most appropriate agency to serve young people under the age of 18.

- DOC leadership and staff **do not believe that their facilities are the most appropriate placements for youth**. Staff training is geared towards adult corrections and union issues make it more difficult to recruit staff that have a specialized training in working with young people.
- There is a need for additional counselors and psychiatric supervisors at Manson Youth Institution to **better serve needs with more intensive behavioral health issues**, and a need to provide more life skills development and substance use treatment. Additionally, youth are not always attending school due to security concerns or if there is a sp, and program completion can be low.
- **Transitional services for youth released from MYI are limited**, particularly for those youth that cannot return home. There are no step down facilities for youth returning from adult facilities.

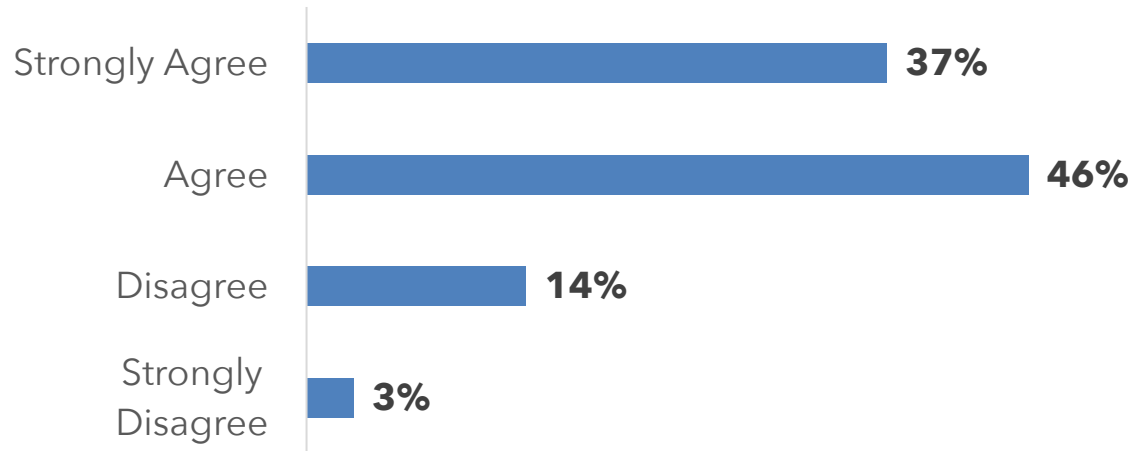
DOC staff responding to a CSG survey report that facilities are focused on rehabilitation and offer a range of services, but cognitive behavioral therapy, sex offender treatment, and restorative justice are limited.

**The Following Services are Available for Youth Placed Pre- Adjudication  
and in DOC Custody (n = 37)**

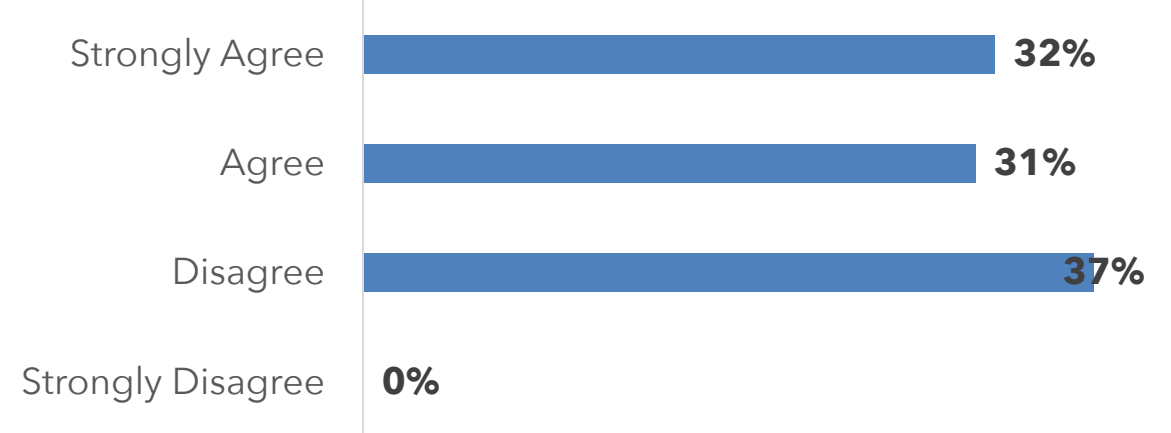


DOC staff responding to a CSG survey believe that increased partnerships with community-based providers while youth are incarcerated and for reentry could promote improved youth outcomes.

**Additional Partnerships with Community-Based Providers Would Help to Better Address the Needs of Youth in the Facility. (n=35)**



**Identifying and Connecting Youth with Services in the Community for Reentry is a Challenge. (n=32)**



**About ½ of staff responding to the CSG survey indicated that they receive specific training for serving youth under 18.**



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## Questions to be answered by CSG's data analysis on probation with residential placement?

What is the probation with placement rate?

What is the average daily population of youth in out of home placements by placement type and demographics?

What is the average cost per day for out of home placements?

What do outcomes look like for youth disposed to out of home placements?



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# Preliminary Data Recommendations

## The following are preliminary recommendations to improve data collection, sharing, and use in Connecticut.

- Develop/document standard procedures for identifying juvenile justice cohorts in state agency data. Establish processes for extracting starting, exiting, and total served populations (all juvenile justice youth starting, exiting, or served the entire length of a given period).
- Develop code books and system maps to assist in improving cross-system understanding of data and how it can be connected. Have documentation of state agency business practices with definitions of terms used.
- Develop de-identified research-ready datasets that can be easily shared.

## Next Steps

Continue data analysis and resolve remaining data questions



Convene task force on February 11, 2020 for first data findings presentation



Engage in focus groups to begin thinking through recommendations on front end of system



Convene task force in March/April for second data findings presentation



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