

# Institutional Programs

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## Juveniles at Intake

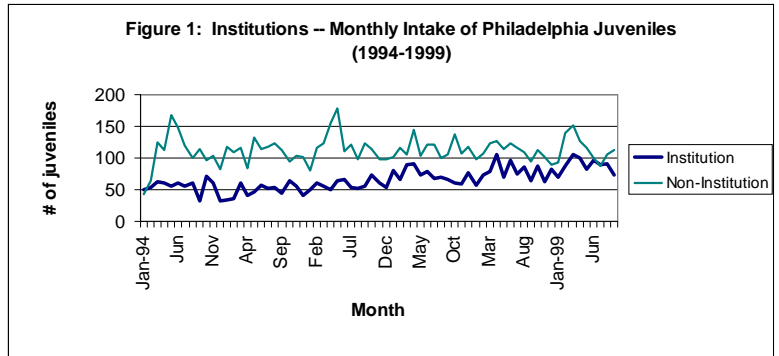
From 1994 to September 1999 Institutional programs admitted 4,543 delinquent youths from Philadelphia (see Figure 1). As the total number of juveniles entering the system has slowly grown, it is clear that the number of admits to Institutional programs has become an ever larger proportion of the whole. The number of institutional placements has grown from less than 600 in 1995 to a projected total of more than 1,000 in 1999. Institutional placements have increased from around 30% of all placements in 1995 to almost 44% in 1999.

The juveniles entering Institutional programs range in age from 10 to 20 though 65% are between 15 and 17, and the average age is just under 15½. Three quarters of juveniles entering institutions were African-American, 11% were White, and 11% Latino. The overwhelming majority (89%) are male.

About 54% of the youths had one or more prior arrests and almost one-third (30%) had a history of prior dependency referrals to DHS. Approximately 18% of juveniles have a reported history of family violence. Only 4% of mothers of juveniles had a criminal record, but for fathers, the figure is 15%.

About 39% of incoming juveniles were referred for personal offenses and 36% for property offenses (see Figure 2). About one-fifth of all intakes (19%) involved offenses where a victim was injured, and almost as many (16%) involved the use of a weapon. Using CJRI's risk assessment tool we find that 20% of the incoming clients were low risk, 44% moderate risk and 36% at high-risk of re-offending.

Only 9% of juveniles lived with both parents at the time of intake; 45% lived with their



mother alone, 16% lived with their natural mother and stepfather/ paramour, and 17% lived with other relatives.

More than 10% of the juveniles' mothers and fathers had histories of alcohol abuse. Maternal drug abuse was reported in 18% of cases; paternal drug abuse was reported in 12% of cases. The proportion of juveniles with a history of alcohol abuse was higher at 30% -- with some 6% of these said to have a chronic drinking problem. Juvenile drug abuse was reported in 54% of cases -- with 25% reported to have a chronic abuse problem. In addition, 'J-files' show about 19% of Institutional juveniles to have had a history of mental health problems.

About 14% of Institutional program clients were found to have low self-esteem -- about the average for the population as a whole. The same is true for values -- with almost 46% of juveniles having an antisocial (32%) or very antisocial (14%) values orientation.

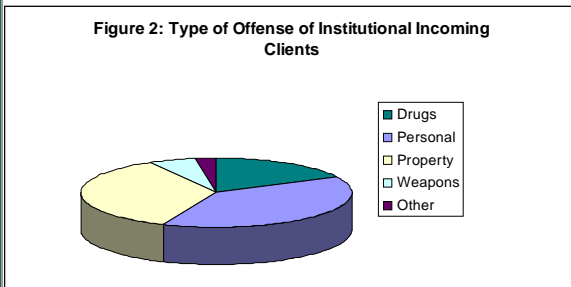
## Juveniles at Discharge

The average program stay in Institutional programs is 38 weeks -- among the longest average stay of any program type and above the overall average of 33 weeks (see Figure 3). Institutional programs report that, overall, about 20% of their clients were "inappropriate" placements.

More than two-thirds of the intake (69%) are reported as having completed the program. About 11% are reported being discharged because they went AWOL, 8% because they were inappropriate for the program and 5% because the juvenile was not responding to the program. Only 1% are discharged for an arrest.

If we examine the changing behavior and attitudes of the youth from intake to discharge we find some mixed results.

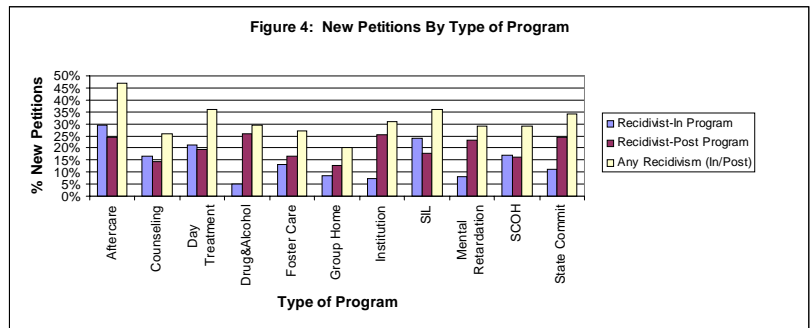
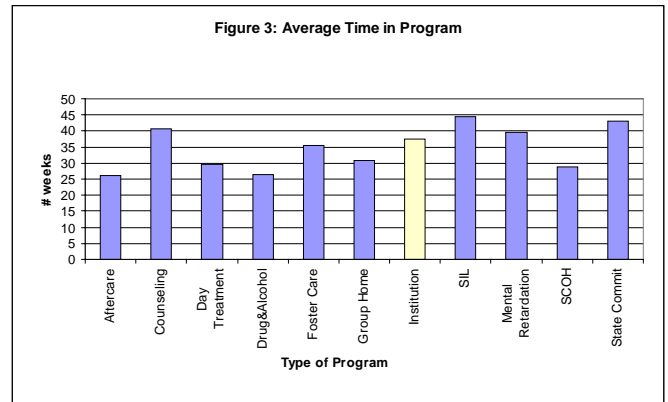
Overall, it is common for between half and three-quarters of the youth to remain fairly stable from intake to discharge on most of the measures. However, there are some measures where the findings are quite different or offer notable results:



- Of the 33% of juveniles for whom self-esteem changed while in the Institutional program, all but 6% experienced an increase in self-esteem.
- Almost 34% of juveniles had more prosocial values at discharge than they did at intake; very few (6%) moved in the opposite direction.
- On most family bonding measures, the scores of about 35% to 40% of juveniles changed -- and on each scale the proportion improving was only marginally more than the proportion who got worse. For example, 38% of juveniles changed on **instrumental communication** -- 22% had improved communication with parents, while 16% had worsened communication by the time of discharge.
- There was a change in 15% of juveniles for the measure **school commitment**; in 10%, there was improvement rather than a decline.
- There were many juveniles who showed change in the dimensions of **school and community involvement** from intake to discharge -- with 27% and 23% respectively improving their level of involvement and almost no juveniles decreasing involvement at discharge.
- Staff reports show that there was a change in the level of **overall juvenile need** in 62% of cases -- with many more showing a decline in overall need (42%) than an increase (21%).

### Juveniles at Follow-up

When juveniles have been discharged for at least 6 months CJRI independently completes a follow-up court record check. Very few Institutional program juveniles (8%) received a new petition for an arrest while in the program. However, just over one-quarter (26%) received a petition for a new arrest during the 6 months following discharge. In total, about 31% of juveniles received at least one new petition for an arrest occurring some time between program intake and 6 months following discharge. Though the in-program new petition figures have declined considerably throughout the study period -- from about 13% among 1994 intakes to about 5% for 1998 intakes -- it is clear that the post-discharge figures have remained almost unchanged. As a result the overall new petition rate has dropped from around 35% for early 1994 intakes to just below 30% for late 1998 intakes.



The new petition data show that the overall (in- and post-program) new petition rate varies by the intake risk-classification of the juveniles -- 16% of low risk juveniles had new petitions compared with 38% of high risk juveniles.

We can compare overall rates of new petitions for Institutional and other program types -- see Figure 4. The data show that the in-program new petition rate for institutions is among the lowest of any program type. In contrast, we find the post-discharge rates to be almost the highest of any program type. This pattern of results is repeated even when one controls the analysis for the risk classification of juveniles at program intake -- though it appears that, compared to other program types, institutional programs have higher post-discharge rates for moderate risk juveniles than they do for either low or high risk juveniles.

Of the juveniles petitioned during the program the most common offenses were 'escapes' (30%), theft (20%) and aggravated assaults (8%). Of the post-discharge petitions 29% were drug offenses, 23% theft and 20% involved robbery or aggravated assault.

For more in-depth information on the information presented here, or to request additional analyses, please contact Jamie Fader at (215) 627-7812 or [jfader5253aol.com](mailto:jfader5253aol.com).