

**Evaluation of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America
TARGETED RE-ENTRY Initiative:**

FINAL REPORT¹
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Executive Summary

In 2003 and early 2004, with additional federal funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for an evaluation, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) introduced TARGETED RE-ENTRY (TR), a juvenile aftercare approach derived from the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994a; 1994b) into four sites, partnering with state juvenile correctional facilities:

- Mobile, Alabama, with Mt. Meigs Juvenile Correctional Facility in Montgomery, Alabama.
- Anchorage, Alaska, with the McLaughlin Youth Center, also in Anchorage.
- Benton, Little Rock, and North Little Rock, Arkansas, with the Alexander Youth Center, in Alexander, Arkansas.
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with the Ethan Allen School, in Wales, Wisconsin.

For the evaluation, BGCA issued a request for proposals and selected evaluators from Indiana University who, in turn, subcontracted with a colleague from the University of Alaska Anchorage to manage data collection in the Anchorage site.

The TARGETED RE-ENTRY approach has four components: 1) community mobilization; 2) recruitment; 3) mainstreaming/programming; and 4) case management. TR builds closely upon the IAP model, with local Boys & Girls Clubs providing community leadership, case management functions, and close linkages with the correctional system. A key element in all four sites is the introduction of a Boys & Girls Club, providing recreational and other programming, inside the juvenile correctional facility. By introducing the youths to the Boys & Girls Clubs' philosophy and activities while they are incarcerated, providing (or participating in) the overarching case management prescribed by the IAP model, and connecting the youths to Boys & Girls Clubs back in the community as part of the reentry plan, TR staff hope to provide continuity and a positive youth development framework for more successful reentry.

Methodology

The study included both process and outcome evaluation components. The **study's goals** were to document the development of these programs in these sites, monitor the fidelity of TR model implementation, and assess the effectiveness of the programs in terms of recidivism reduction, pro-social youth outcomes, and benefits for the local juvenile justice systems.

The **process evaluation** included both qualitative and quantitative methods and relied upon three main sources of data: 1) semi-structured interviews with program staff, correctional

facility personnel and members of partnering organizations in each site to assess their perceptions of the program and factors that may be facilitating or hindering its implementation; 2) program case records, focusing on youth characteristics, services delivered, and adherence to the TR model, using a records review checklist derived from the IAP program monitoring elements (Altschuler & Armstrong, 2004, section 4); and 3) program archival material, such as meeting minutes, memoranda of understanding, and media reports.

The goals of the **outcome evaluation** were to assess the impact of the programs on: 1) recidivism outcomes, in terms of arrests, convictions, time to new offenses, and types of charges involved; and 2) other post-release outcomes, including the youths' conduct during and after probation status, progress in specific education and/or employment activities and goals, reasons for termination from the program, and adjustment in several social arenas.

The **design** of the outcome evaluation was quasi-experimental, using comparison groups in each site matched to the TR youths in terms of demographic characteristics and offense history. In Wisconsin, Arkansas, and Alabama, the TR and planned comparison groups were contemporary. In Alaska, because of the small number of youths from the Anchorage area and in the overall system, and the absence of other communities that match Anchorage, a retrospective comparison group of youths was to be identified, drawn from years prior to the introduction of systematic transition programming at the site. In Wisconsin, both the TR and comparison youths were from Milwaukee; in Alabama, TR youths were from Mobile; comparison youths were originally planned to be from Montgomery; in Arkansas, both the TR and comparison youths were from the Little Rock area. As discussed below, Alabama failed to identify a comparison group.

Most **measures** related to the youths were drawn from records maintained by Boys & Girls Club staff: Intake Forms for all TR and comparison group youths, Monthly Tracking Forms on each TR youth, and criminal justice records checks on both TR and comparison group youths at 6-month and 12-month follow up points. In addition, TR staff were to administer the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT, Gruenewald & Klitzner, 1991) to the youths at four points in time: intake, release, 6 months post-release and 12-months post-release. The POSIT is a brief self-report instrument designed to identify problems and the potential need for service in 10 functional areas, such as substance use/abuse, mental and physical health, family and peer relations, vocation, and special education.

Implementation

The TR programs faced major implementation issues in the early months. These included establishing Boys & Girls Clubs inside the state juvenile correctional facilities, hiring Boys & Girls Club staff to run these programs and to provide TR case management services, cultivating networks of community service providers, establishing procedures for identifying and tracking TR cases, and negotiating role relationships among personnel from the juvenile correctional programs, Boys & Girls Clubs, local juvenile justice agencies (e.g., probation or parole), and community service providers. Between February and April of 2004, BGCA provided trainings in each of the sites to introduce TR principles to representatives from the key agencies.

The sites began implementation at different times. A club had already been established inside the Alexander Youth Center in Arkansas; comparable clubs opened in Alaska in February, Alabama in May, and Wisconsin in June of 2004. Enrollment challenges persisted throughout the evaluation period. Moreover, Alabama, Arkansas, and especially Wisconsin had some difficulty identifying comparison group cases (Alaska's retrospective comparison group was to be identified towards the end of the evaluation so that it could be matched to the youths who received TR services). As will be discussed in the Alabama section of the narrative below, a usable comparison group was never obtained for that site.

Alabama

The Mobile community had instituted a "Network Aftercare System" (NAS) over the five years prior to the beginning of TR, and had already developed an extensive collaborative network of provider agencies at the county level. Moreover, the Boys & Girls Club of South Alabama (BGCSA) was a major provider of services for adjudicated youths in Mobile, operating a boot camp for boys, a residential program for girls, and providing case management for Going Home. With the introduction of TR, BGCSA opened a new club, "Pathway to Adulthood," adjacent to POINTE Academy alternative school, in October of 2004.

The Mt. Meigs juvenile correctional facility, operated by the Alabama Department of Youth Services, is located just outside of Montgomery, about a three-hour drive from Mobile. Department administrators were initially supportive of introducing the TR program at Mt. Meigs, but its representatives rarely attended subsequent TR-related meetings during the life of the project, and facility leadership often blocked efforts by Club staff to establish effective rapport with youth to ensure 90 days of service prior to release as it went against their behavioral management level system.

The Boys & Girls Club that opened inside the Mt. Meigs facility consisted of a small portable unit with a recreation room, classroom, and rest room. Initially, the Club had four part-time staff and was only open from 5-7 pm on weekdays. It served all Mt. Meigs youths (who attained levels 3 or 4 in the facility's behavioral management level system, the eligibility criterion) for one or two brief periods a week. None of the staff had had prior Boys & Girls Club experience or training. They did not appear to pay any special attention to the few TR youths from Mobile, other than to file incomplete paperwork. There was little contact between the Mt. Meigs Club staff and the Mobile TR staff except occasionally for procedural issues. There was no communication regarding case planning.

Although the Mt. Meigs TR staff initially identified a few youths from Montgomery for the comparison group, they were unable to record even the minimal intake data for them. In addition, negotiations began in 2005 to introduce a TR program in Montgomery (that would not be a part of the evaluation). Therefore, youths returning to Montgomery would no longer be appropriate for the comparison group as they, too, would be receiving TR services. A decision was made to identify a comparison group consisting of youths returning from Mt. Meigs to Birmingham, but the Mt. Meigs TR staff never followed through with this. As a result, the evaluation was left with no comparison group in Alabama.

The Mobile site benefited from a head start in reentry programming due to prior experience with the federally funded Network Aftercare System (NAS) and Going Home. The original staff had a good understanding of the IAP model so that the introduction of the community component of TR was accomplished seamlessly. In addition to the quality of case management, major strengths in Mobile included the opening of a dedicated Boys & Girls Club adjacent to an alternative school (POINTE Academy); the original co-location of TR, probation and other service providers at POINTE; the consistent attention paid to the jobs arena for the youths; and the relatively high staff-to-youth ratio. In these respects, Mobile provided an excellent example of collaborative community reentry, at least in the beginning. The commitment to TR on the part of the administrative leadership of BGCSA seemed to decline over time, resulting in a weakening of the community network, and culminating in the decision to terminate the program in 2006.

The facility component of TR in Alabama (Mt. Meigs, in Montgomery) proved problematic. The state DYS was not a consistent partner. Although facility staff came to accept and even appreciate the presence of a Club inside Mt. Meigs, they were not supportive of Club staff or reentry programming. The distance between Montgomery and Mobile created challenges to effective coordination that were never adequately resolved. Data collection and case documentation for TR at Mt. Meigs were minimal.

Alaska

The McLaughlin Youth Center, in Anchorage, is a secure juvenile correctional facility operated by the State of Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice. Shortly before the introduction of TR, one of the treatment units had been closed and transformed into the home of the facility's transition services. Transition services at McLaughlin had been developed over the course of several years following the IAP model, championed by a senior administrator. The new Transition Services Unit housed not only the McLaughlin aftercare workers but also a Functional Family Therapist and staff from probation and community service providers. The Boys & Girls Club TR staff, consisting of a program coordinator and three transition specialists, were also co-located in this unit in early 2004. By the summer of 2004, there were ten community staff members working full-time within the Transition Services Unit, including four staff from BGCA, one from Alaska Children's Services, one from Big Brothers Big Sisters, two functional family therapists, and two case workers from the Alaska Native Justice Center. It was somewhat unclear in the beginning how the roles of the BGC transition specialists, McLaughlin aftercare workers, and all of the other partners would be differentiated.

The site experienced considerable TR staff turnover in the beginning, but soon acquired a strong coordinator and a good group of case managers who worked well with the other transition partners. An important example of this improvement was the creation of the Youth Employment Services (YES) program. YES was a true collaboration between residents and their parents, cottage treatment teams, aftercare case managers, aftercare case workers, Boys and Girls Club staff, the McLaughlin school, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Alaska Native Justice Center, and community service brokers. A comprehensive plan was formalized to enhance youth employment training and opportunities. The Boys and Girls Club was responsible for job preparation, an essential component of this initiative. This initiative served to formalize the

relationships between the Boys and Girls Club and their many partners, including the facility and its school.

In the summer of 2007, McLaughlin's Transition Director retired, after more than 30 years of service. He was a strong advocate of IAP-based reentry services both at the McLaughlin Youth Center and in other youth facilities. Despite some additional turnover among the transition specialists, the TR program continued to flourish, and was improving its ability to maintain contact with youths. Efforts were underway to ensure the sustainability of the BGCA program within the Transitional Services Unit (TSU) at the McLaughlin Youth Center (MYC). In sum, by the end of the evaluation period, transition programming at McLaughlin was powerfully entrenched and likely to be sustained.

Arkansas

The TR program in Arkansas was operated by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Saline County. This organization had an existing Club (since 1997) based at the Alexander Youth Center, a diagnostic facility for the Arkansas Division of Youth Services (DYS). The Boys and Girls Club at the facility was based in an existing recreation building, and ran physical education classes for all the youth in the facility. TR staff assumed case management responsibilities for youth returning to Little Rock (in neighboring Pulaski County) and the surrounding region. The TR staff were on-site at the facility Club and thus had frequent contact with their cases.

The provision of juvenile justice programming had been privatized in Arkansas, while DHS continued to provide oversight and control. TR staff needed to work with Cornell (the provider operating the Alexander facility) staff while the youth were incarcerated. They also depended on DHS staff to identify the participants in the program—a process that would prove complicated and frustrating. Finally, the youth were all assigned to aftercare providers upon their release from the facility. The aftercare providers operated outside the traditional juvenile court system, had rather limited enforcement capacities, and offered mixed results in terms of their attention to principles of effective reentry.

There were few community partners at the table when the TR initiative was launched. As the Boys and Girls Club started to build the program, they tended to look for ways to either do things within their own organization (for example, they used grant funds to create jobs within the community-based clubs for some of the youths) or to attract the resources to their organization rather than referring youths to other programs.

The early stages of TR in Arkansas involved several challenges to identifying TR cases. Youth initially identified as eligible (e.g., from Little Rock or North Little Rock) often ended up getting transferred unpredictably to another facility. Since the TR staff did not know until just before the youth were to be released whether they were returning to the community or going to another DHS facility, they often delayed building relationships with the youth until just prior to release—this may have led to deficiencies in the relationships that were able to develop between the TR staff and the youth. This also limited the amount of pre-release programming that could be provided by the TR staff, making it less likely for the youths to be engaged in the program by the time they were released.

In addition to this site's early struggles with implementing aspects of the TR model, case documentation for the evaluation was initially poor. TR staff eventually improved in this regard. They were conscientious about completing and submitting Monthly Tracking Forms. They also did well in completing intake forms on the comparison group.

Over time, through the leadership of the Director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Saline County, more effective relationships were developed with Cornell staff and DYS staff. The TR staff became regular participants in the case staffing meetings that were held at the facility. At one point, it was agreed that participation in TR would be written in as a specific condition of the treatment plans developed at the staffings. About halfway through the project, the TR staff were able to secure office space just outside of the fence at the facility. This location was quite advantageous for the further integration of the project with the staff at the facility. These changes led to some improvement in the numbers of youth being enrolled in the program.

A real strength of this site was that the TR team was highly motivated and focused on achieving good outcomes for the youths they served. Yet, over the three years of the evaluation, there were six different case managers and four different project coordinators. The staff tended to come from the ranks of the Boys and Girls Clubs staff with little or no training or experience in case management and clinical practice. The issues of insufficient training and the lack of clinical supervision for the staff were never completely resolved within the organization itself.

Wisconsin

The Wisconsin site was a late addition to the evaluation, coming on board after the New York site withdrew from the project. The TR program in Wisconsin consisted of a community component in Milwaukee and a facility component at Ethan Allen School, located in Wales, about an hour west of Milwaukee. Department of Corrections officials were initially very supportive of the TR project. One of the cottages at Ethan Allen was turned into a Boys Club. The Club originally operated daily from 5:30-8:30. Youth were brought to the Club in their cottage groups. On Mondays and Fridays the staff also provided the Job Ready and Passport to Manhood programs.

Once the club opened, support from the facility waned. There were staffing cutbacks at the facility at the same time the club was being introduced. The union believed (incorrectly) that the BGC staff were replacing facility staff, and this perceived threat led to some resistance. The BGC staff put a great deal of effort into developing relationships at the facility, and over time these improved.

The BGC had contracted with community providers for some important services for the TR participants, including job training and placement and mentoring. They also established a relationship with a local program that provided street outreach in the neighborhoods where the youths were living. For the most part, though, collaborative partnerships did not expand beyond what was either structurally present for reentry (i.e., parole) or that for which the BGC actually provided funding. The cost of these services ultimately meant that only a fraction of the TR youths received these services. By the middle of the second year, the TR staff had assembled an advisory group that included key decision makers. Initially, this group included administrators

from DOC, parole, and probation. This group did not meet regularly after the first meeting and did not provide guidance for the development of the TR model.

Throughout the project, coordination of the TR activities was inconsistent. There were two different coordinators for this project. The first coordinator, while quite dynamic and a positive influence on the youths, did not excel in his administrative capabilities. He also tended to want to be everything to the youths, rather than engaging the community partners to provide additional supports. The second coordinator was initially a case manager and took some time to adjust to the extra demands of the coordinator's role. It also took some time for the TR staff to figure out how to balance the demands of providing recreation for all youth at Ethan Allen and the needs of the youth in the community (an ever-growing number across the life of the project).

Staffing was an issue in this site, as it was across all the sites. The plan was originally to have five full-time staff based at the Club in the facility. The program started with 3.5 staff and never had more than four persons at any one time. For long periods during the course of the project there were as few as two case managers in place. During the first two years of the project, there was a great deal of turnover among the case management staff. By early 2006, the TR staff had stabilized and there was a sense of consistency for several months.

This site posed many challenges for the evaluation. While the TR case managers appeared engage the youths and work well with the collaborative partners, they were less successful in carefully documenting their efforts. They submitted data to the evaluators only sporadically, and often only when the evaluators were personally present in Milwaukee or together with site staff at a cluster meeting. When the forms were submitted, they were not always complete, although this issue became less of a problem over time.

Implementation Summary

The sites faced a variety of implementation challenges, some common to all, and others site-specific, in the areas of differential site readiness, leadership, identifying appropriate youths for TR, forming and sustaining collaborative relationships, performing the case management role, staff turnover, documentation, and incorporating the clubs into the correctional facilities. Top-level stakeholders as well as ground level case management staff were enthusiastic and open to suggestions for improvement.

Each site implemented some aspects of the TR model well: the McLaughlin transition unit, the Mobile case management and community network with the presence of POINTE Academy, and the Clubs inside the facilities at Alexander and Ethan Allen. The TR approach (and IAP in general) makes conceptual sense, and is well grounded in theory and evidence-based practice concepts. However, it is extremely challenging to implement reentry programming well. Not only does a vast array of stakeholders have to understand the approach and commit to their roles in it, but this knowledge and commitment must withstand changes at every level – from elections and state agency upheavals to frequent staff turnover at the ground level.

Outcomes

The TR sample for the evaluation included all youth who had been identified since the beginning of the programs who were released from the institutions to the community phase no later than December 31, 2006, allowing recidivism and other outcome data to be collected for a 12-month post-release follow-up period. Across all sites, the TR sample consisted of 293 youths. In three sites, the sample size approached the target level of 90 cases: Alaska (84 cases), Arkansas (83 cases) and Wisconsin (81 cases). As noted above, Alabama was unable to identify a comparison group. The comparison groups in Arkansas and Wisconsin were contemporary cases. In Alaska, to obtain sufficient numbers of comparison group youths, retrospective comparison groups included youth released from McLaughlin Youth Center (Anchorage) from 1/1/2000 to 12/31/2003 that would have met the TR inclusion criteria and a second group made up youth released from facilities in Fairbanks and Juneau between 1/1/2000 to 12/31/2003. A total of 203 comparison group cases was identified for those three sites (Alaska, 64; Arkansas, 89; Wisconsin, 50).

Demographic Characteristics

In both Arkansas and Wisconsin, the respective TR and comparison groups were highly similar in terms of age, race and gender. In Alaska, the TR group contained a significantly higher percentage of females than the comparison group. The TR sites differed somewhat among themselves in the demographic profiles of youths served. The Arkansas youths were relatively younger than those in the other sites. While the majority of TR youths in all sites were children of color, in Alaska, Alaska Natives comprised the largest non-white group, and in Wisconsin, nearly all (98.8%) of the youth were children of color. In terms of gender, the TR programs were tied to specific state juvenile correctional facilities. The Mt. Meigs (AL) and Ethan Allen (WI) facilities contained only male youths; whereas McLaughlin (AK) and Alexander (AR) contained both males and females. These differences across sites in the composition of the TR groups, along with programmatic differences as discussed above, make it difficult to combine TR youths for meaningful statistical analyses.

Commitment Offenses and Prior Offenses

Slightly more than half of the TR youths (53%) were committed for a felony level offense. Somewhat fewer of the comparison group youths were committed for a felony (44.4%). Most had prior felony offenses, and again the percentage is higher for the TR youth (72.2%) than for the comparison group (62.8%), suggesting that the comparison group consists of somewhat less serious offenders. These differences, however, are not statistically significant.

The Alaska TR youth showed higher percentages of youths with felony level commitment offenses (59%) and felony level prior offenses (87%) than did the other TR or comparison groups. Only in Arkansas, however, were the distributions of the TR groups and their respective comparison groups significantly different (the comparison group had significantly fewer felony offenders than the TR group, both in terms of commitment offenses and prior offenses).

Post-release Engagement in Counseling, Education, and Employment

In all of the sites, engaging returning youths in educational and/or employment activities was a primary goal. To fully meet individualized needs, involvement in counseling may also have been a goal for some youths. Relatively few (26.3%) were involved in counseling, although the sites varied considerably in this regard. About one in four had earned a high school diploma or a GED by the end of the follow-up period, with Alaska showing the highest percentage (35.7%) and Arkansas the lowest (14.6%). In terms of educational involvement, nearly three-fourths of the youths (73.7%) across the sites were involved in school, with Alaska reporting the highest (92.9%) and Wisconsin the lowest (58%) percentages. Overall, more than half of the youths (56%) were employed, part-time or full-time, at some point during the programs, ranging from a high of 73.3% in Alabama to a low of 33.3% in Wisconsin. Looking at educational and employment activities together, relatively few youths (15%) were involved in neither, with sites ranging from about 7% (Alaska and Arkansas) to 28% (Wisconsin).

Post-Release Problems

Alaska experienced major challenges in keeping connected with the youths, reporting some difficulties maintaining contact with 85.7% of the youth for at least some period of time. Alabama reported the least difficulty maintaining contact (with only 22.2% of the youth).

Drug and alcohol use remained problematic for nearly half of the youths overall (47.1%). Suspected drug and alcohol use was reported for nearly two-thirds of the Alaska youth (64.3%), more than half of the Arkansas youth (53%), and somewhat fewer of the Alabama and Wisconsin youth (37.8% and 28.4%, respectively).

Probation or parole violations were reported for about one-third of the youths (36.5%), with considerable variation across sites. Alaska reported the highest percentage (63.1%) and Alabama the lowest (11.1%), with the others in between (Arkansas, 36.1%; Wisconsin, 23.5%). Probation and parole violations, however, were much more likely to be reported during the first few months following release than later. In Alaska and Arkansas, these violations fell sharply after the first three months post-release.

On the Monthly Tracking Forms, program staff also noted if a youth had been arrested or incarcerated (including short-term detention, sometimes used as part of a probation violation sanction) during a given month. These data should not be confused with the “recidivism” data obtained from official records to be discussed later. Arrests were reported for about one-fourth of the youth (23.5%), while incarceration was reported for relatively more (34.5%). The higher incarceration percentage is due to the use of short-term incarceration for probation violations, particularly in Alabama, Alaska and Wisconsin.

Reasons for Program Termination

There were three distinct reasons for youths’ termination from the programs, the most favorable of which, of course, was successful completion of the 12-month post-release period. “Failure” is clearly indicated when a youth was terminated as a result of re-incarceration (termination does not occur as a result of short-term incarceration used as a sanction). More

ambiguous are terminations resulting from a prolonged lack of contact. Programs were permitted to terminate cases when there had been no contact for more than two months.

Overall, more than two-thirds of the youths (68.3%) successfully completed the 12-month, post-release program. The successful completion rates were highest in Arkansas (78.3%) and Wisconsin (72.8%), and well above 50% in each of the other sites (Alabama, 60%; Alaska, 58.3%). Between one-fifth and one-fourth of terminations resulted from a loss of contact, with the exception of Arkansas (only 8.4%). Terminations due to re-incarceration were relatively low (13.3%), especially in Wisconsin (7.4%).

POSIT Results

The POSIT is a brief screening tool designed to identify problems and the potential need for service in 10 functional areas. Both TR and comparison group youths received the first two administrations of the POSIT (intake and release) in Arkansas and Wisconsin; TR youths in all sites were to complete the POSIT at two additional follow up times (6-months and 12-months post-release). TR and comparison groups differed on few of the subscale means of the baseline POSIT (POSIT 1), indicating that the two groups were highly comparable on these dimensions. Little change was seen between intake and release for the TR youths, whereas the comparison groups showed lower means at release (indicating improvement) on several of the subscales. The TR youth's POSIT 2 means were significantly higher than the comparison group's on substance use/abuse, educational status and aggressive behavior. TR youths showed improvements on several subscales of the follow-up POSITs, including substance abuse, mental health status, peer relationships, educational status, and aggressive behavior. However, lower response rates on the follow-up POSITs suggest possible bias due to attrition.

Very little change over time was apparent in the POSIT scores for the Wisconsin and Alabama TR groups. The Alabama group showed small improvements in the areas of peer relationships and educational status. The Alaska TR group, however, showed decreases in means over time on most of the subscales, with pronounced decreases in problems related to substance use/abuse, mental health, peer relationships, educational status, and aggressive behavior. Although attrition is high, resulting in a small sample size by the 12-month follow-up time, most improvements were apparent at the 6-month follow-up as well. At baseline, the Arkansas TR group reported significantly more problems than its comparison group with substance use/abuse and aggressive behavior. The Arkansas TR group showed modest improvement at follow-up on some subscales, including substance use/abuse, mental health, peer relationships, and educational status, but these gains were not as large as those seen in Alaska.

Recidivism

As with the evaluation of any criminal or juvenile justice program, a primary goal is to prevent recidivism, that is, a recurrence of offending behavior following participation in the program. Recidivism is not a simple construct, but must be measured in a variety of ways to give a complete picture of a program's effectiveness. This study defines recidivism in multiple ways, all based on follow-up data covering a 12-month period after the release of a youth from a juvenile correctional institution.

Arrests and Convictions/Re-adjudications for New Offenses. Among the TARGETED RE-ENTRY (TR) sites with sufficient data (excluding Arkansas), the percent rearrested was lowest in Alaska (23%), highest in Alabama (40%), with Wisconsin in the middle (31%). For reasons discussed previously, no comparison group was identified for Alabama. In Wisconsin, the percent rearrested among the TR and comparison groups was about the same (32%); in Alaska, the comparison group percentage was lower (Alaska, 8%). In terms of post-release convictions/adjudications, the results are somewhat similar. Among the TR youth, the percent reconvicted/re-adjudicated was relatively low in both Alaska (13%) and Arkansas (14%), not significantly different from their respective comparison groups (Alaska, 6%; Arkansas, 17%). In Alabama, the percent of TR youth reconvicted/re-adjudicated was slightly higher (22%). In Wisconsin, both the TR and comparison groups showed the highest percentages (27% and 28%, respectively). Overall, the TR groups do not show more favorable percentages than their respective comparison groups.

Seriousness of new offenses. Offenses were ordered by seriousness level. From most to least serious, these were: violent felonies, weapons felonies, drug felonies, property felonies, other felonies, and misdemeanors. Technical violations, status offenses and traffic offenses were excluded. The most serious post-release offense that resulted in conviction or adjudication was identified for each youth. Overall, misdemeanor level offenses accounted for about half of the youth who were re-adjudicated or convicted for new offenses. Moreover, the most frequent felony level offenses are property offenses. There is very little difference between TR and comparison group youths in Arkansas and Wisconsin, while the seriousness level of the TR youths' offenses in Alaska is slightly higher than that of the comparison group. The Alabama TR youth (there is no comparison group for that site) show the highest seriousness levels, with the substantial majority of re-adjudications/convictions resulting from felony level offenses. On a weighted criminal offense seriousness index that combines frequency of new offenses with weights for their seriousness, the results suggest no difference between TR and comparison group youths in Arkansas and slightly higher recidivism among TR youths than comparison group youths in Alaska and Wisconsin. The scores for the Alabama TR youths are significantly higher than those of all the other groups. Although the new offenses of most youths who reoffended were less serious than their prior offenses, there were no significant differences between TR and comparison group youths on this measure.

Time to new offenses. Considering the mean number of post-release days to a new arrest, the results reveal no major differences between TR and comparison group youths in any of the sites, although the time to first arrest for any criminal offense was slightly shorter for the TR youths in Alaska and Wisconsin than for their respective comparison groups. Across sites these times were generally between 10 and 12 months, considerably longer than the comparable findings (between 5 and 6 months to arrest for any criminal offense; between 7.5 and 9 months to first felony arrest) reported in the previous IAP evaluation (Wiebush et al., 2005).

Recidivism and risk levels. As with IAP, TR is designed to be used with high-risk youth. The risk level of the youth in this study was calculated based on the Indiana Department of Correction Initial Risk Assessment for the Juvenile Division, developed and validated by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. The instrument provides a summary classification of the youth into low, medium, high, and very high risk categories. Only the Alaska TR program

served relatively high-risk youth. Nearly all (about 89%) were either High Risk or Very High Risk. On the other hand, in both Arkansas and Wisconsin, the large majority of cases (about 83%) were Low or Medium Risk. The comparison groups in these two sites also predominantly contained Low or Medium Risk youth (data on several risk components were unavailable for the Alabama TR group and the Alaska comparison group). In the Alaska TR group, the recidivism score was considerably higher for the Very High Risk youth than for the High Risk youth. In the other sites' TR groups, the relationship between risk and recidivism appears to be inverse, with the Low Risk youth showing the highest recidivism scores. Recidivism appears to increase somewhat with higher risk levels among the comparison group youth.

Recidivism and post-release adjustment. Youths involved in education or employment have significantly lower mean weighted recidivism scores than those who are not (2.67 vs. 6.88), and their mean number of total arrests are significantly lower (.58 vs. 1.26). TR youths who obtained their high school diploma or GED show a significantly longer time to first arrest than do those who did not (344 days vs. 303 days), as well as a significantly lower mean number of both felony convictions (.01 vs. .22) and total convictions (.22 vs. .38).

Discussion and Implications

This study is the second major attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of a juvenile reentry approach derived from the IAP model. In the first, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) evaluated three IAP pilot sites (Denver, Colorado; Las Vegas, Nevada, and Norfolk, Virginia) over a five year period, using an experimental design with random assignment to IAP and a control group in each site (Wiebush et al., 2005). Wiebush et al. (2005) concluded that the IAP model was reasonably well implemented in all sites yet IAP participants did not demonstrate lower rates of recidivism on a variety of indicators. They found that recidivism rates were high for both the IAP and control groups; between 50 and 60 percent were arrested for felony offenses and between 80 and 85 percent were arrested for some type of offense (Wiebush et al., 2005, p. v). These disappointing results were tempered somewhat by cautions related to small sample sizes and by the observation that many youths in the control groups may have received enhanced parole services as well (Wiebush et al., 2005). Finally, there was some evidence that, among the IAP participants, those who received higher levels of services both pre- and post-release showed lower rates of recidivism (Wiebush et al., 2005).

Like the NCCD study, there is limited evidence from the results of this study to support the hypothesis that the TARGETED RE-ENTRY approach reduces recidivism beyond what otherwise would be expected. However, recidivism rates across the board were much lower in this study than in the NCCD evaluation. Between 18 and 40 percent of the TR and comparison group youths were arrested for any new offense during the first 12 months following release, and the percentage of reconstructions/re-adjudications ranged from 13 to 28 percent.

However, based on a number of factors, no real conclusion as to the effectiveness of the model or Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Targeted Re-Entry program can be drawn. First, with the exception of Alaska, the TR programs did not clearly serve high-risk youths, and intensive interventions often backfire with lower-risk youths. Alaska's recidivism rates are somewhat better than those of the other sites, lending support to this interpretation, although they are no better than those of the Alaska comparison group.

Second, poorly matched comparison groups impede the ability of the evaluation to compare recidivism rates of program participants against youth who were not in the TR program. The lack of an identified comparison group for the Alabama site weakens the design of the study. From the results reported for the other sites, the comparison groups in Arkansas and Wisconsin appear to match the TR groups well in terms of demographic and risk factors. The retrospective Alaska comparison group, however, was less well-matched to the TR cases.

Third, this study shares some of the same methodological caveats as did the NCCD study – relatively low statistical power due to small sample sizes and the possibility that comparison group youths also received some transition and aftercare service enhancements as well. This latter caveat applies especially to Alaska, where the well-established Transition Services Unit at McLaughlin served all youths, with the only major difference for the TR youths being the involvement of the Boys & Girls Club's components. In addition, shortly after the beginning of the TR programs, both Wisconsin and Arkansas attempted statewide enhancements to reentry that may have been responsible for the relatively successful outcomes for the comparison group cases as well. It should also be noted that, in Arkansas and Wisconsin, comparison group youths received some of the same Club programming while in the facilities as did the TR youths since the Clubs served all youths in these facilities.

Fourth, the questionable quality of some of the follow-up recidivism data must be acknowledged. The Alaska and Alabama recidivism data are the most complete and reliable. Portions of the data from the other sites are missing or questionable. In particular, arrest data were not provided from Arkansas, complete coverage of juvenile court re-adjudications in Wisconsin is suspect.

While the results of this evaluation do not provide compelling evidence that the TR approach was effective in these sites, they do not warrant dismissal of the model. It does not appear that TR was as well implemented as was IAP in the NCCD study. With the exception of Alaska, each site exhibited implementation gaps or difficulties with data collection or reporting. Also, in order to implement the model effectively, correctional facility administrators and staff must commit to the project, support the program and be willing to make changes in the ways they operate. Again with the exception of Alaska, this was not the case in this study for the majority of the evaluation. It is also noteworthy that results showed that when youths in these programs could complete secondary education and be effectively engaged in educational or employment activities, recidivism was low.

One could claim that the Alaska TR program was effective. It was extremely well implemented, with excellent integration of reentry practices and partners into the culture of the McLaughlin facility. Serving the highest risk youths in this study, its recidivism results are the best among the sites. Although maintaining steady contact with the Alaska TR youths was a challenge for the reentry staff, nearly all were actively engaged in education or employment, and they showed the highest rate of attainment of a high school diploma or GED. Moreover, by the end of the evaluation period, transition programming at McLaughlin was powerfully entrenched and likely to be sustained after the end of the funded evaluation period.

The study concludes with several recommendations for stronger implementation of the TR model. These recommendations include greater attention to managing stakeholder

involvement; employing more experienced caseworkers who receive better training and supervision; more careful selection of the target population; and specific program enhancements.

Evaluation of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America TARGETED RE-ENTRY Initiative:

FINAL REPORT

Chapter 1. Introduction

For several years, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) has been engaged in several programs targeting young people at risk for or engaged in delinquency and gang activities. These include a Delinquency Prevention Initiative (DPI), Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach (GPTTO), Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach (GITTO), and, most recently, TARGETED RE-ENTRY (TR). BGCA began piloting TR in 1998 in two counties, adding more sites until by 2002 nine sites had been identified, all county-based. In 2003 and early 2004, with additional federal funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for an evaluation, BGCA introduced TR into four sites, partnering with state juvenile correctional facilities:

- Mobile, Alabama, with Mt. Meigs Juvenile Correctional Facility in Montgomery, Alabama.
- Anchorage, Alaska, with the McLaughlin Youth Center, also in Anchorage.
- Benton, Little Rock, and North Little Rock, Arkansas, with the Alexander Youth Center, in Alexander, Arkansas.
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with the Ethan Allen School, in Wales, Wisconsin. This site was recruited with little advance notice as a replacement for New York, an originally selected site that withdrew in January, 2004.

For the evaluation, BGCA issued a request for proposals and selected the evaluators from Indiana University (Barton and Jarjoura) who, in turn, subcontracted with a colleague from the University of Alaska Anchorage (Rosay) to manage data collection in the Anchorage site.

This report documents the development of TR in these four sites and presents results from a process and outcome evaluation of the programs. This introductory section continues with a brief review of the literature on juvenile reentry, followed by a summary of the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model of juvenile reentry developed by Altschuler and Armstrong (1994a; 1994b). The IAP model provides a foundation upon which BGCA developed its TR initiative. The section concludes with a description of the TR model. Chapter 2 discusses the methodology of the process and outcome evaluation. Chapter 3 presents the results of the process evaluation, describing the implementation of the TR programs in the four sites. Chapter 4 contains the results of the outcome evaluation, and finally, Chapter 5 discusses the practice, policy and research implications of the study's findings for juvenile reentry.

Challenges of Juvenile Reentry

After decades of relative neglect, offender reentry for both juveniles and adults has become a salient topic for researchers and policymakers, as evidenced by two major federal funding initiatives in recent years, "Going Home" and the "Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative" (U. S. Department of Justice, 2004). The impetus for these and related initiatives has been the volume of individuals returning from incarceration per year, estimated at nearly 700,000 adults (Sabol, Minton, & Harrison, 2007) and 100,000 (Snyder, 2004) juveniles. Evidence suggests that the majority of these do not succeed in the community, with as many as two-thirds of the adults (Hughes & Wilson, 2003) and over half of the juveniles (Krisberg, Austin, & Steele, 1991; Krisberg & Howell, 1998) being rearrested within three years or less.

Few communities are prepared to facilitate effective transitions from prisoner to productive member of society for either children or adults, and the number of obstacles to successful reentry is high. Most of the obstacles to effective reentry are factors that contributed to involvement in crime in the first place, and for which the offenders may not be receiving treatment while incarcerated. In the case of juveniles, the obstacles are multiplied by the developmental challenges of adolescence itself.

While their relative salience may change from early adolescence through early adulthood, the major domains of life for any adolescent include physical and mental health, family relationships, peer relationships, education, occupational readiness, and leisure/recreation. Risk and protective factors that influence the trajectory of developmental outcomes may be found in any and all of these domains (for recent reviews summarizing the research regarding risk and protective factors for delinquency and violence in particular, see Fraser, Kirby and Smokowski (2004); Hawkins, Herrenkohl, Farrington, Brewer, Catalano, Harachi and Cothorn (2000); Howell (2003); Lipsey and Derzon (1998); and the Office of the Surgeon General (2001)). For youths returning from correctional confinement, their involvement in the juvenile justice system is evidence that the balance of these risk and protective factors has already been tilted in the unfavorable direction. One way to view the tasks of reentry is to think of them as attempting to strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors, at least those that are malleable.

For juvenile offenders, difficulty in accessing educational programming is a major obstacle to effective reentry. A number of hurdles confront youths attempting to reintegrate into regular schools. First, school officials may be reluctant to accept them back at all. Even if they are allowed back in a regular school, the school may have been one of the precipitating factors for or location of their prior delinquency, and the prospects of success are slim. Finally, youths

may return to the community in the middle of an academic term, making the transition to regular schools especially difficult for them, their teachers, and classmates.

Physical and mental health concerns may also interfere with reentry (Travis et al., 2001). The prevalence of serious infectious diseases and major mental illnesses is higher among prisoners than in the general population. These health issues can often shape the reentry experiences of ex-offenders. Recent studies document the high level of psychiatric disorders among youths in juvenile correctional facilities, finding that two-thirds or more of the youths had one or more diagnosable mental illness and/or an indication of substance abuse (Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002; Wasserman, Ko, & McReynolds, 2004). Other studies suggest that large proportions of youths with mental illness in juvenile correctional settings do not receive mental health services (Policy Design Team, 1994; Pumariega, Atkins, Rogers, Montgomery, Nybro, Caesar, & Millus, 1999).

A significant obstacle to effective reentry is substance abuse. Studies have placed the prevalence rate for substance abuse among incarcerated juveniles at about 50 percent (Teplin et al., 2002; Wasserman et al., 2004). The use of drugs and alcohol may be a significant factor in the criminal activity of many offenders, as a recent study found that 46% of female and 60% of male juvenile arrestees tested positive for illegal substances, mostly marijuana (National Institute of Justice, 2004). Despite this prevalence, many offenders do not receive treatment for substance abuse while incarcerated. A 1997 survey of juvenile correctional facilities revealed that only about one-third offered substance abuse treatment (SAMHSA, 2000). Yet, even if youths have had substance abuse treatment while incarcerated, the dramatic decrease in the level of structure in place after their release increases the likelihood that offenders will struggle with substance abuse during the reentry phase (Gaes, Flanagan, Motiuk, & Stewart, 1999). Research on drug

courts has also shown that juvenile offenders will often wait long periods before they are able to begin community-based treatment programs (Cooper, 2001).

Another critical issue facing juvenile offenders during the reentry phase relates to employment. For a variety of reasons, there are serious obstacles to engaging these youths in meaningful jobs (Brown, DeJesus, & Schiraldi, 2002; Task Force on Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth, 2000). These obstacles include inadequate education, little or no job training, and a record of incarceration that puts juvenile offenders at a further disadvantage. In addition, juvenile offenders tend to lack role models for strong labor market participation among the adults and peers in their lives. The goal of programming in this area would be three-fold: job preparation, securing employment, and then maintaining work over a period of time. The best programs would incorporate mentoring, employment and training services, work-based learning, and would involve employers (Task Force on Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth, 2000).

While education and employment are key areas of focus for juvenile aftercare programs, a primary risk factor for juvenile offenders after their release from incarceration will be how they structure their leisure time (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994a). The research shows that when youths have free time that is unstructured and unsupervised, there is a higher likelihood they will commit crimes and get involved with gang activities (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). These youths are also more likely to drop out of high school and use drugs (Zill, Nord, & Loomis, 1995). Since the youths in a reentry program are likely to have already established a pattern of risky behaviors in their leisure time, it is important that sufficient attention be paid to changing these habits.

All youths returning from incarceration potentially face challenges in the areas discussed above, and reentry programs should be poised to address them as needed (Altschuler & Brash,

2004). However, ethnographic studies reveal considerable variation in the experience of reentry among youths (Sullivan, 2004; Todis, Bullis, Waintrup, Schultz, & Ambrosio, 2001; Ungar, 2001). The nature and norms of the communities and families to which youths return play a major role, either in fostering continued delinquency or in enhancing reintegration by buffering the risks. There is a sense that informal community supports are at least as important, if not more so, than formal service providers (Sullivan, 2004).

The Juvenile Intensive Aftercare Model (IAP)

In the juvenile justice arena, David Altschuler and Troy Armstrong (1991; 1994a; 1994b; 2001) have developed the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model over the last two decades. The IAP model requires a close collaboration among several partners: juvenile correctional facilities, local juvenile court systems, and a network of community service providers. Aftercare planning begins from the moment a youth enters a correctional facility, and efforts are directed at both the youth and the community in preparation for the youth's return. The IAP model has the following key components:

1. Case management services are used to develop and monitor case plans and coordinate services in the community.
2. A network of community services is developed to support youths released from institutions.
3. Services are "backed in" to the residential facility. That is, the case manager meets with the youth, conducts assessments, develops release plans, and arranges for relevant community-based service providers to visit the youth in the facility prior to release.
4. A step-down process is used, in which youths move first into a transition phase, gradually experiencing more community interaction during the last weeks of incarceration, then to closely supervised release, and finally the intensity of supervision is decreased.
5. A system of graduated sanctions is developed to help control the youth's behavior during aftercare. (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994a; 1994b).

The continuous case management component spans three distinct phases: incarceration, structured transition (with both a pre-release and post-release sub-phase), and community reintegration. The case management component is responsible for ensuring that assessment of the youth takes place at the beginning of the incarceration phase. A master plan is then developed, reassessment of the plan takes place at regular intervals, information is effectively shared by all the service providers, and the involvement of all the significant parties (i.e., the juvenile offender, the family, service providers, school administrators, and so on) is monitored.

The case management component is team driven and involves iterative cycles of assessment, planning, program implementation, and adjustment as needed. The case management team, at a minimum, includes a case manager, the youth, one or more family members, representatives of the facility treatment staff (during incarceration), relevant community service providers (in the transition and community phases), and the youth's parole or probation officer. The assessment process must be structured to identify the youth's individual criminogenic risks and needs, that is, those factors that evidence has shown predict recidivism. These risks and needs exist in the various life domains mentioned above. The transition plan, then, is individualized and flows directly from the assessment.

Throughout, the plan and its implementation are intended to strike a balance between community restraint (e.g., surveillance) and needs-based services (Gies, 2003). In addition to identifying and brokering community services as indicated, the implementation plan must include graduated incentives and sanctions to encourage prosocial behavior and to respond to rule violations. As the youth moves through the three phases, the role of the juvenile justice system professionals gradually diminishes, replaced by an increasing involvement of formal and informal community supports.

Evaluation research on the IAP model has been largely equivocal. The IAP model was implemented in demonstration sites in Colorado, Nevada, and Virginia. In evaluations of the implementation of these programs, there is clear evidence that the programs made the proposed changes in the structure of aftercare programming (Altschuler & Armstrong, 2001; Weisbush, McNulty, & Le, 2000). An outcome evaluation of these programs, however, showed little consistent evidence that IAP makes a long-term difference in the reduction of re-incarceration (Wiebush et al., 2005). Nevertheless, aspects of the IAP model have permeated most recent approaches to reentry (e.g., see Parent & Barnett, 2002), both of juvenile and adult offenders, particularly its emphasis on case management beginning during at least some portion of the incarceration period.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America TARGETED RE-ENTRY Approach

Common to all the targeted outreach programs, including TR, are four components: 1) community mobilization; 2) recruitment; 3) mainstreaming/programming; and 4) case management. The TR approach builds closely upon the IAP model, with local Boys & Girls Clubs providing community leadership, case management functions, and close linkages with the correctional system. A key element in all four sites is the introduction of a Boys & Girls Club, providing recreational and other programming, inside the juvenile correctional facility. By introducing the youths to the Boys & Girls Clubs' philosophy and activities while they are incarcerated, providing (or participating in) the overarching case management prescribed by the IAP model, and connecting the youths to Boys & Girls Clubs back in the community as part of the reentry plan, TR staff hope to provide continuity and a positive youth development framework for more successful reentry. A more detailed description of the four components of the TR approach follows.

Community Mobilization

For the community mobilization component, Boys & Girls Club leaders convened other key community and correctional leaders as reentry stakeholders to develop a community-wide strategy. These stakeholders represented both local and state juvenile justice authorities, as well as community and faith-based service providers. National experts, including Troy Armstrong, were brought in to help these stakeholders develop a common vision for reentry and to provide training in both the IAP and TR principles. During the planning phase, stakeholders identified community resources and gaps, discussed role configurations, and developed an action plan to provide integrated programming that spanned the three phases of reentry: incarceration, transition and aftercare.

Recruitment

For these four TR sites, eligible youths were defined as those between the ages of 10 and 19 who would be incarcerated and available to participate in Boys & Girls Club activities in the facility for at least 90 days, who were returning to an area that could be serviced by a Boys & Girls Club, and were not adjudicated for a sex offense. For evaluation purposes, the sites were to recruit 45 youths per year for each of two years, with a comparison group of comparable youths who would not receive TR services (as described later in this paper).

Mainstreaming/Programming

A core tenet of the BGCA is to develop programming based upon youths' interests and needs, concentrating on five core areas:

- Character and leadership development
- Health and life skills
- Arts
- Sports, fitness and recreation
- Education and career development.

This programming philosophy presented an opportunity to extend IAP's emphasis on addressing criminogenic needs to encompass more strengths-based aspects of positive youth development. Transition plans were to be developed based upon comprehensive, ecologically-based, assessments of youths' risks, needs and strengths/interests. Assessment instruments such as the Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) (Hoge & Andrews, 1996) direct attention to the core life domains of adolescents, including family relationships, education, employment, health, substance abuse, and social/recreational skills. While coordination of the plan is the responsibility of the reentry case manager, implementation is the responsibility of the various community partners, the youth and family, as indicated in the individualized plan.

Case Management

Reentry case management is at the heart of the TR service delivery model. Case management should be consistently provided from the onset of incarceration through the transition and aftercare phases, ideally by the same person. In the TR approach, reentry case management is to be provided by Boys & Girls Club staff, working in collaboration with juvenile correctional facility treatment staff as well as probation or parole officers in the community. The case manager is responsible for developing a supportive relationship with the youth and family, identifying and convening an individualized transition team for each youth to develop and implement a transition plan, performing risk/needs/strengths assessments to guide the planning process, brokering and monitoring any services needed, and completing the necessary paperwork to document the work.

Chapter 2. Methodology²

The study included both process and outcome evaluation components. The study's goals were to document the development of these programs in these sites, monitor the fidelity of TR model implementation, and assess the effectiveness of the programs in terms of recidivism reduction, pro-social youth outcomes, and benefits for the local juvenile justice systems.

Process Evaluation

As all programs experience growing pains during initial implementation, a process evaluation can provide an opportunity for program and evaluation personnel to assess obstacles and unintended consequences and suggest modifications rather than simply holding a program accountable for outcomes. As noted by Byrne, Taxman and Young (2003), "The essential characteristics of a successful reentry program are: 1) leadership, 2) partnership, and 3) ownership" (p.5). A process evaluation can illuminate the challenges and accomplishments of such initiatives in these three areas, yielding valuable "lessons learned" both for local program stakeholders and others who might wish to develop similar programs elsewhere.

In addition, detailed description and documentation of program activities serves to define the primary "independent variable" for the outcome evaluation. That is, to attribute outcomes to a program model (in this case, the TR approach incorporating IAP principles), one must be able to document that implementation carefully follows the program model. Monitoring implementation can also help program personnel make adjustments to improve the program along the way. If fidelity is found to be lacking, one can ask why certain aspects of the model are

² This study's protocol was reviewed and approved by Institutional Review Board of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (study #0311-03B) and by the University of Alaska Anchorage IRB (study #108-04).

not being followed and either change procedures to conform to the model or suggest that the model be adjusted to adapt to local realities.

The goals of the process evaluation were to:

1. examine the relationships/partnerships developed between the Boys & Girls Clubs and other agencies in each site's community to ensure that the needs of the youth can be met;
2. document the increase in or maintenance of the number of pro-social activities available to the youth in each site;
3. track the number of referrals to other agencies of participating youth for pro-social instruction, education, employment or intervention;
4. document the timeliness and adequacy of staff reports and reporting mechanisms;
5. examine the relationship between correctional facility staff and Boys & Girls Club staff in each site; and
6. document the fidelity of the program to the TR model.

The process evaluation included both qualitative and quantitative methods and relied upon three main sources of data (see Table 2.1):

1. Semi-structured interviews with program staff, correctional facility personnel and members of partnering organizations in each site to assess their perceptions of the program and factors that may be facilitating or hindering its implementation.
2. Program case records, focusing on youth characteristics, services delivered, and adherence to the TR model. Program staff provided the evaluators with monthly summary information about all cases in terms of services delivered, referrals made, and other information related to outcomes. In addition, the evaluators reviewed a random sample of case files from each site semi-annually, using a records review checklist derived from the IAP program monitoring elements (Altschuler & Armstrong, 2004, section 4).
3. Program archival material, e.g., meeting minutes, memoranda of understanding, media reports, etc.

Table 2.1. Process Evaluation Design Summary

<u>Process Evaluation Goal</u>	<u>Source(s) of Information</u>	<u>Timing of Data Collection</u>
1. Examine inter-organizational relationships/partnerships	Interviews with key stakeholders; archives	Annually
2. Document increase/ maintenance of pro-social opportunities	Interviews with key stakeholders; archives	Annually
3. Track the number of referrals of program youth to other agencies	Program case records summary reports	Quarterly
4. Document timeliness and adequacy of staff reports	Program case records summary reports	Quarterly
5. Examine relationship between correctional facility staff and Boys & Girls Club staff	Interviews with key stakeholders	Annually
6. Document fidelity to TR model	Review sample of case records	Semi-annually

Outcome Evaluation

The goals of the outcome evaluation were to assess the impact of the programs on:

1. Recidivism outcomes, in terms of:
 - a. arrests for new offenses;
 - b. convictions for new offenses;
 - c. time to new offenses; and
 - d. types of charges involved in new offenses;

2. Pro-social outcomes, including:
 - a. amount of time youth are engaged in pro-social activities (including, specifically, time involved with Boys & Girls Club staff and youth).
 - b. youths' conduct during and after probation status
 - c. progress in specific education and/or employment activities and goals
 - d. the quality of family interaction

Design

The design of the outcome evaluation was quasi-experimental, intending to use a matched comparison group. Each site planned to identify a treatment group of 45 youths along

with a matched comparison group of 45 youths per year during the first two years of the study. The comparison group youths were to match those in the TR group (in the aggregate) on the following characteristics: gender, race/ethnicity, age, offense characteristics for the specific offense that led to current incarceration, length of incarceration, and prior record. If possible, the comparison group was also to be matched on community-of-residence characteristics such as size, urban/rural, etc. In Wisconsin, Arkansas, and Alabama, the TR and planned comparison groups were contemporary. In Alaska, because of the small number of youths from the Anchorage area and in the overall system, and the absence of other communities that match Anchorage, a retrospective comparison group of youths was to be identified, drawn from years prior to the introduction of systematic transition programming at the McLaughlin Youth Center. In Wisconsin, both the TR and comparison youths were from Milwaukee; in Alabama, TR youths were from Mobile; comparison youths were originally planned to be from Montgomery; in Arkansas, both the TR and comparison youths were from the Little Rock area.

Measures and Data Sources:

Table 2.2 summarizes the sources and timing of data collection for the outcome evaluation. Most measures related to the youths were drawn from records maintained by Boys & Girls Club staff. These records included intake forms for all TR and comparison group youths, monthly tracking forms on each TR youth, and criminal justice records checks on both TR and comparison group youths at 6-month and 12-month follow up points. Measures contained in these records included:

- Demographic and other descriptive case information
- Services received – pre-release and post-release
- Intended outcomes:
 - Recidivism –arrests; types of charges; reconvictions; re-incarceration; time to re-offense
 - Technical compliance with terms of probation/parole

- Job status; Educational status; Family relationships status; Social activities; Health; Giving back to the community

In addition, TR staff were to administer the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT, Gruenewald & Klitzner, 1991) to the youths at four points in time: intake, release, 6 months post-release and 12-months post-release. The POSIT is a brief screening tool, using a yes/no response format, designed to identify problems and the potential need for service in 10 functional areas, including substance use/abuse, mental and physical health, family and peer relations, vocation, and special education. It is a self-report instrument that can be completed on the internet, a local computer, or paper.

Table 2.2. Outcome Evaluation Data Sources

<u>Data Collection Instrument</u>	<u>Data Collection Timing</u>	<u>TR Group</u>	<u>Comparison Group</u>
Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT)	Intake(1), release(2), 6-months post-release(3), 12 months post-release(4)	(1), (2), (3), (4)	(1) and (2) only
Targeted Re-Entry Intake Form	Release	Yes	Yes
Monthly Tracking Form	Monthly, until 12 months post-release	Yes	No
Criminal Justice Records Check	12 months post-release	Yes	Yes

Chapter 3. Implementation

This section describes the implementation of TR in each of the sites, summarizes each site's strengths and challenges, and concludes with a discussion of some general themes that emerged from the process evaluation. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America allocated \$1 million in federal earmark funds for TARGETED RE-ENTRY across the four sites in 2003-2004. The goal was to introduce the TR programs immediately and serve 45 youths per site in each of the first and second years, with an additional number identified for a comparison group. The evaluation was to proceed for three years, allowing for a 12-month follow-up period for cases enrolled during the first two years. The original four sites were in Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, and New York. Staff from the national office of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America met with state juvenile correctional administrators and local Boys & Girls Clubs personnel in each of the four sites to discuss developing TR programs. The New York site was unable to generate the necessary commitments to proceed, and was replaced by Wisconsin in early 2004. At the top levels, key stakeholders in these final four sites were enthusiastic.

The TR programs faced major implementation issues in the early months. These included establishing Boys & Girls Clubs inside the state juvenile correctional facilities, hiring Boys & Girls Club staff to run these programs and to provide TR case management services, cultivating networks of community service providers, establishing procedures for identifying and tracking TR cases, and negotiating role relationships among personnel from the juvenile correctional programs, Boys & Girls Clubs, local juvenile justice agencies (e.g., probation or parole), and community service providers. Between February and April of 2004, BGCA provided trainings in each of the sites to introduce TR principles to representatives from the key agencies.

The sites began implementation at somewhat different times. A club had already been established inside the Alexander Youth Center in Arkansas; comparable clubs opened in Alaska in February, Alabama in May, and Wisconsin in June of 2004. Partly as a result of the staggered start-up dates, during the first year the sites were only able to enroll between 21 and 29 youths, well short of the targeted number of 45 youths per year. Enrollment challenges would persist throughout the evaluation period. Moreover, Alabama, Arkansas, and especially Wisconsin had some difficulty identifying comparison group cases (Alaska's retrospective comparison group was to be identified towards the end of the evaluation so that it could be matched to the youths who received TR services). As will be discussed in the Alabama section of the narrative below, a usable comparison group was never obtained for that site.

In addition to the first round of training conducted by national BGCA staff and consultants, key stakeholders from the sites were invited to gather at semi-annual "cluster" meetings to share information about their progress and challenges as well as to receive additional trainings. Training topics included strength-based practice, preparing for sustainability, and, belatedly, case management practice. The evaluators also attended, providing interim feedback and discussing issues related to data collection. The location of these meetings rotated among the four sites and the national BGCA home in Atlanta. Although care was taken to invite representatives from the state juvenile correctional department administration, juvenile correctional staff, parole or probation as well as BGC site coordinators and TR staff, attendance at these meetings varied.

It became clear in the early months of the project that it would not be feasible to complete a meaningful evaluation within the original three-year period. The planning process is extremely important to the success of this type of initiative and, due to this funding cycle, there was no time

to do any type of adequate planning for any of the sites. The slow start-up and smaller than anticipated enrollments made it unlikely that a sufficient number of cases could cycle through the programs and follow-up period to permit statistical analyses of adequate power. The sites required considerable time to develop collaborations and operating procedures as indicated in the TR model, so one could not confidently say that early cases experienced the TR model. BGCA successfully identified resources to continue funding the programs for an additional six months and the evaluation for a fourth year (2007).

Alabama

The TR program in Alabama consisted of a community component in Mobile and a facility component at Mt. Meigs in Montgomery, nearly three hours away. As would become increasingly apparent, the distance between these components created major coordination challenges. Moreover, two separate Boys & Girls Clubs were involved: Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama operated the program in Mobile while Boys & Girls Clubs of South Central Alabama operated the Club inside the Mt. Meigs facility. Youths from Mobile who were committed to Mt. Meigs were potentially eligible for TR, provided that they were not sex offenders and that they would spend at least 90 days at Mt. Meigs to participate in the facility-based portion of TR programming. Mobile case managers usually met with these youths while they were held at Strickland (detention) prior to their transport to Mt. Meigs. The YLS/CMI and a career assessment were usually conducted at that time, and the results were sent to Mt. Meigs along with the youths. Case managers from Mobile visited the Mobile youths at Mt. Meigs monthly, but the communication between the two Boys & Girls Clubs organizations was otherwise sporadic. The evaluators subsequently learned that a packet containing assessment information was sent to Mt. Meigs from Mobile, but was never opened by correctional facility

staff or forwarded to the Mt. Meigs Club staff, and thus this assessment information was not incorporated in case planning.

Mobile. The Mobile community had instituted a “Network Aftercare System” (NAS) over the five years prior to the beginning of TR, and had already developed an extensive collaborative network of provider agencies at the county level. Moreover, the Boys & Girls Club of South Alabama (BGCSA) was a major provider of services for adjudicated youths in Mobile, operating a boot camp for boys, a residential program for girls, and providing case management for Going Home.

With the introduction of TR, BGCSA opened a new club, “Pathway to Adulthood,” adjacent to POINTE Academy alternative school. The Club held its dedication ceremony in October of 2004. The building, a former small rehabilitation hospital, vacant for 3 years, was leased to BGCSA by the Mobile School District for \$1.00. Half of the building housed the Club, the other half a POINTE Academy middle school career exploration center which contained 15 computerized workstations with modules for electrical wiring, graphic design, silk screening, etc. The Club area contained a large recreation room, separate boys’ and girls’ rest rooms, a director’s office, a meeting/classroom, a computer lab with four workstations, and several small offices. The recreation room contained a ping pong table, two pool tables, foosball, two pinball machines, four video game stations, a mini-basketball hoop, two sofas, and a stereo. With the help of the youth, the area had been renovated, brightly painted, and contained many BGCA posters, pictures of club members engaged in activities, lists of club rules, and motivational posters. The Club did not initially have air conditioning; this was added in the second year. “Pathway” served not only TR youths, but youths from other BGCSA programs for adjudicated youths.

The BGCSA Director of Adjudicated Programs, who had previously developed the NAS program, assumed the coordinating role for TR. Since Troy Armstrong had also provided technical assistance to the NAS program for several years, this Director was highly knowledgeable about the IAP model, and, in fact, often served as a trainer for IAP-related programs. Unfortunately, this person resigned in August of 2004, replaced by the former Assistant Director. By the end of the first year, other TR staff included a case manager who also assumed site director responsibilities, a Club Director, two Going Home aftercare coaches, two part-time trackers, and two part-time Club staff. A second case manager was added during the second year.

At the top of the TR collaborative structure in Mobile was a high-level Children's Policy Council, chaired by the juvenile court judge. It met quarterly, and focused on applying for federal grants as a partnership. Council members included representatives from law enforcement, service providers (including the BGCSA Executive Director), probation, prosecutor, and schools. Its Steering Committee was chaired by the BGCSA Executive Director, and included mental health, school student services, the DHR director, and probation.

There was also a large stakeholders group originally formed for NAS. The BGCSA Director of Adjudicated Programs facilitated this group, which met monthly, but with sparse attendance. There were formal memoranda with some, but not all, of the collaborative partners (e.g., substance abuse treatment providers, mental health providers).

POINTE Academy (Progressive Opportunities in Today's Education), an alternative school, opened in a former community college building in January, 2003. Its principal was previously an instructor at Strickland Youth Center's "Refocus" (short-term detention) program. All students were court referrals (N between 90 and 120). POINTE was co-located with the

Continuing Learning Center (CLC), used as an alternative to suspension by Mobile schools. It offered a regular school curriculum. Staff from Probation, the Bridge (substance abuse counseling agency), Functional Family Therapy, and Going Home all had offices in the POINTE Academy building during the first year of the TR program.

Mt. Meigs. The Mt. Meigs juvenile correctional facility, operated by the Alabama Department of Youth Services, housed 280 adjudicated males from all over the state between the ages of 15 and 21. Department administrators were initially supportive of introducing the TR program at Mt. Meigs, and attended early planning meetings. However, its representatives rarely attended subsequent TR-related meetings during the life of the project and facility leadership often blocked efforts by Club staff to establish effective rapport with youth to ensure 90 days of service prior to release as it went against their behavioral management level system. Efforts to modify the system so the programming at the Club could be seen as a part of the treatment plan, instead of a reward, were unsuccessful.

The Boys & Girls Club that opened inside the Mt. Meigs facility consisted of a small portable unit with a recreation room, classroom, and rest room. The recreation room contained a ping pong table, pool table, chess, foosball, air hockey, two video game stations (PS2 and X-Box), and a TV. In the meeting room were two computer workstations, five tables, a Casio electronic music keyboard, snare drum, four microphones and small PA system, a mini refrigerator and a microwave. No BGCA posters or club rules were displayed.

Initially, the Club had four part-time staff and was only open from 5-7 pm on weekdays. It served all Mt. Meigs youths (who attained levels 3 or 4 in the facility's behavioral management level system, the eligibility criterion) for one or two brief periods a week. One Club staff occasionally attended case staffings at the facility during the daytime hours, but the Club

director and other staff were not present when the facility case managers or other treatment staff were around. None of the staff had had prior Boys & Girls Club experience or training. They did not appear to pay any special attention to the few TR youths from Mobile, other than to file incomplete paperwork. There was little contact between the Mt. Meigs Club staff and the Mobile TR staff except occasionally for procedural issues. There was no communication regarding case planning.

Throughout the period of the evaluation, the Club at Mt. Meigs seemed to exist on the periphery of the institution. Facility staff eventually accepted and even appreciated it as providing positive activities for the youths. However, DYS staff did not seem to understand the TR program, and administrators did not provide Club staff with convenient access to information. The Club requested several times to have access to the gymnasium, but this was never granted. The Club was perceived by the Mt. Meigs facility staff as an incentive for the youths and a support to the facility's level system. From the standpoint of the TR program model, however, this level system was problematic because youths could only attend the Club when they made a certain level. They often did not make that level, and thus did not participate in all of the TR programming.

Changes in years 2 and 3. In the second year one of the community partners, Functional Family Therapy was no longer available. In May 2005, the TR program eventually entered into an agreement with Mobile Mental Health to make a therapist available specifically to work with the Going Home and TR programs. This therapist had a background in criminal justice and a degree in counseling. He was on site at the club Monday through Thursday afternoons, and spent Friday at the LeMoyne Center. While at the club, he engaged the youth informally, and provided therapy with specifically referred Going Home/TR youth. Both this therapist and substance

abuse counselor from the Bridge had good relationships with the TR case managers, but did not see themselves as full collaborative partners in the sense of sharing a common vision for reentry, working as teams on behalf of transitioning youth and families.

By early 2005, the primary case manager's office had been relocated from POINTE Academy to the Club. The TR program had MOUs with Mobile Public Schools, The Bridge (SA treatment) and Mobile Works (career assessment, GED, job training & placement for 19 year olds; TR was negotiating with them to extend these services to younger youth) in addition to Mobile Mental Health. They were also trying to develop relationships with Big Brothers/Big Sisters for mentoring and also seeking to include the BB/BS Apache program for children of incarcerated parents.

Mobile was hit by devastating hurricanes in the late summer of 2005. The Club emerged relatively unscathed, and added portable air conditioning in the fall. The focus of the TR programming became more settled, with employment being the primary focus. Many of the youths were employed by the Club on a part-time basis when they first returned from Mt. Meigs. This gave them an opportunity to earn some money and develop positive work habits. The program also had collaborative relationships with several employment service agencies and a few employers (e.g., Hart's Fried Chicken, Gone Fishin', Bay Furniture, WalMart, and MacDonald's).

Overall, however, the community network had weakened compared to the earlier years of the NAS program. There was no formal stakeholder group that focused on TR. The NAS group still existed but its agenda was limited to wrapping up the prior evaluation of NAS. The TR program attempted to involve the faith community and Volunteers of America with little success.

They were unable to develop a mentoring component; they were unable to locate mentoring partners who wanted to go into the neighborhoods where the youths lived.

A new juvenile court judge had been elected in late 2004 and relations between the court and BGCSA became strained. The new judge was quite hostile to BGCSA, perhaps resenting the extent to which the clubs ran the juvenile justice programs in Mobile. The judge strongly criticized the primary TR case manager's service plans as "cookie cutter" and relying too much on BGC services (e.g., POINTE, New Horizons, employing youths at the club).

A second case manager was hired in early 2005. This person was an experienced social worker who seemed to relate well to the youths. She left the program after less than a year. The position remained vacant until November 2005 when a replacement was hired. This person was an MSW with many years of experience who had retired from the state Department of Human Resources and then worked for the Police Department as an intervention specialist with juveniles for about six years. Self-described as "old school," she adopted a more authoritarian tone with the youths. While highly experienced, she did not seem to fit in well with the rest of the staff nor have a clear understanding of the TR model.

By the third year, from observations and interviews with staff, it became apparent that the reentry coaches and trackers were the front-line staff for the program. The reentry coaches described their role as extensive – accompanying the case managers on pre-release visits to the youths in the facilities, contacting the families pre-release, reviewing files, participating in the development of the re-entry plan, attending re-entry court hearings, setting up referral services, transporting youths and families to services, visiting youths at school, conducting home visits, making curfew calls (every day at first, then about 3 times a week), and taking youths to the mall for incentive outfits. They had caseloads of between 15 and 19 youths. The trackers described

their role as being like a mentor, helping the youths keep on point with their service plan, making home visits (weekly if possible) or phone calls (not curfew calls), helping them find a job and prepare for the GED, and monitoring school. They each carried a caseload of eight active cases. The coaches and trackers were each relatively experienced, energetic, and appeared to relate well instinctively with the youths. However, these staff had not received a great deal of specific TR training and they had almost no familiarity with strength-based work.

In 2006, the Mobile program's service provider network remained much the same, with good partnerships with Mobile Mental Health and the Bridge (substance abuse treatment), and continuing success with job placements. Although the TR program's relationship with the juvenile court judge improved, some deterioration in the relationship between TR and probation was evident, since a different set of probation officers (one supervisor and two POs) had been assigned to aftercare. Only one of the newly assigned POs was highly supportive of and responsive to TR staff. Staff also reported problems with the person then providing GED preparation and were critical of changes in POINTE Academy, which appeared to be suspending youths more frequently than in the past.

The Mt. Meigs component of TR continued to experience challenges with staff turnover, minimal documentation and poor communication with the Mobile component. The Club at Mt. Meigs sported the addition of two impressive murals presumably painted by the youths. The music equipment (drums, keyboard, microphones) was reportedly very popular. BGCA posters adorned the walls, and there were notebooks related to the Passport, Life Skills and Job Ready educational programs on the desks. The club still had only limited access to the gym at Mt. Meigs. The facility was still heavily focused on the level system, with access to the club limited to youth who were on level 3 or 4 only. The club staff at Mt. Meigs did appear to have more

detailed knowledge about the individual TR youths than they had previously, as they were able to discuss cases easily by name with the Mobile case manager.

Although the Mt. Meigs TR staff initially identified a few youths from Montgomery for the comparison group, they had been unable to record even the minimal intake data for them. In addition, negotiations began in 2005 to introduce a TR program in Montgomery (that would not be a part of the evaluation). Therefore, youths returning to Montgomery would no longer be appropriate for the comparison group as they, too, would be receiving TR services. A decision was made to identify a comparison group consisting of youths returning from Mt. Meigs to Birmingham, but the Mt. Meigs TR staff never followed through with this. As a result, the evaluation was left with no comparison group in Alabama.

In June 2006, the BGCSA administration in Mobile decided to discontinue TR programming when the funding from the national BGCA office was due to expire in December, 2006. Therefore, the program stopped providing post-release case management services to youths who were released from Mt. Meigs after June 30, 2006, but continued to serve those released prior to that date.

In summary, the Mobile site benefited from a head start in reentry programming due to its experience with the Network Aftercare System (NAS) and Going Home. The original staff had a good understanding of the IAP model so that the introduction of the community component of TR was accomplished seamlessly. In addition to the quality of case management, major strengths in Mobile included the presence of the alternative school (POINTE Academy) adjacent to the Club; the original co-location of TR, probation and other service providers at POINTE; the consistent attention paid to the jobs arena for the youths; and the relatively high staff-to-youth ratio. In these respects, Mobile provided an excellent example of collaborative community

reentry, at least in the beginning. The commitment to TR on the part of the administrative leadership of BGCSA seemed to decline over time, culminating in the decision to terminate the program.

The facility component of TR in Alabama (Mt. Meigs, in Montgomery) proved less exemplary, and the distance between Montgomery and Mobile created challenges to effective coordination that were never adequately resolved. The state DYS was not a consistently active partner. Although facility staff came to accept and even appreciate the presence of a Club inside Mt. Meigs, they were not fully engaged in supporting reentry programming. Data collection and case documentation for TR at Mt. Meigs were minimal.

Alaska

The McLaughlin Youth Center, in Anchorage, is a secure juvenile correctional facility operated by the State of Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The largest juvenile facility in the state, it has 66 detention beds and 100 treatment beds (85 boys, 15 girls), and is located literally across the street from the University of Alaska Anchorage. Most youths are over 16 years old. The average length of stay is 12 months overall, but 18-24 months for sex offenders. The Center has 30 long-term treatment beds (10 female; 20 male), but not all of these youths are from Anchorage.³ From the beginning, there were some concerns about Alaska being able to meet the targeted TR enrollments of 45 per year.

Shortly before the introduction of TR, one of the treatment units had been closed and transformed into the home of the facility's transition services. Transition services at McLaughlin had been developed over the course of several years following the IAP model, championed by a senior administrator. The new Transition Services Unit housed not only the McLaughlin

³ Although the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southcentral Alaska would serve youths from most of the treatment beds in the facility (about 200 youths per year), only the long-term youths were eligible for the full range of TARGETED RE-ENTRY services, and only those from the Anchorage area were actually included in the TR program.

aftercare workers but also a Functional Family Therapist and staff from probation and community service providers. Staff from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southcentral Alaska (BGCSA), including a program coordinator and three transition specialists, were also co-located in this unit in early 2004. By the summer of 2004, there were ten community staff members working full-time within the MYC clubhouse, including four staff from BGCSA, one from Alaska Children's Services, one from Big Brothers Big Sisters, two functional family therapists, and two case workers from the Alaska Native Justice Center. It was somewhat unclear in the beginning how the roles of the BGC transition specialists, McLaughlin aftercare workers, and all of the other partners would be differentiated.

In an early TR training in Anchorage attended by TR staff and representatives from McLaughlin and other transition partners, the potential richness of this site for successful reentry programming was apparent. Although some challenges were noted, including the sheer size of the state and the geographic isolation of some villages, participants identified an extensive array of services available within the facility and resources available in the community.

- Services available in the facility: substance abuse treatment, Anger Replacement Training, relapse prevention, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, community detention, sex offender program, transitional services unit, social skills training, recreational therapy, victim mediation, victim impact and empathy, structured testing and probing, overarching case management services, church and religious services, health services, GED/vocational training (provided by Nine Star, a community agency), applied life skills, BGC, TARGETED RE-ENTRY support services, job readiness, education, Functional Family Therapy, and community work services.
- Services/resources in the community: BGC, BBBS, AmeriCorps, independent living, community detention, Reclaiming Futures, YMCA, various recreation programs, Southcentral Counseling Services, National Guard Youth Corps, Faith-based youth programs, Alaska Children Services, Covenant House, Akeela House (residential drug treatment), Nine Star (adult education), King Career Center, CIRI/Native Corporations, Job Corps, Volunteers of America, Awake, foster placement, STAR (rape prevention), Youth Court, ASD Alternative Schools, 21st Century Learning Center, UAA/Talent Search, Education Opportunities Center, FFT, Public Health Dept., Parks & Recreation, ARCH, APD Community Resource Officers, Bridge

Builders, Planned Parenthood, Catholic Social Services, Campfire Girls, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, American Red Cross, Civic Clubs, Clinical aftercare for sex offenders, Charlie Elder House, and the Chamber of Commerce.

The TR program in Anchorage did not begin smoothly. The program coordinator experienced challenges in integrating TR within an already functioning transition program and in managing the TR staff. By early 2005, several of the transition specialists resigned, followed shortly by the program coordinator, leaving only two continuing case managers, with one who subsequently assumed the coordinator's position. Before resigning, the initial coordinator had hired two new transition specialists. By September of 2005, three new transition specialists had been hired; one position remained unfilled until near the end of the year.

In contrast to the other three sites, evaluation activities in Alaska were strengthened by having evaluation staff on site from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). The UAA team had frequent contact with TR staff to monitor data collection and conduct interviews and records checks. With the departure of the initial program coordinator, problems with data on the early cases were difficult to clarify. Moreover, even while there, the program coordinator had been reluctant to share data with the evaluators. The evaluators also noted that individual transition specialists were interpreting some data elements differently. As a result of these concerns, the UAA evaluators conducted a thorough training to make sure that everyone would interpret the necessary data elements using consistent definitions.

Interviews with key staff members and case reviews conducted by mid-2005 revealed little evidence that significant elements of the intensive aftercare model were being implemented by BGCSA staff. Instead, these were being implemented by the Transitional Services Unit (TSU) at the facility. Attending the case conferences on each youth confirmed the conclusion that all youths at the McLaughlin Youth Center received strength-based programming. However, it was unclear to what extent strength-based programming was provided by BGCSA rather than by

TSU staff. Although some youths may have received strength-based programming from BGCSA staff, this was not documented in BGCSA records.

The turnover in staff did successfully provide a timely and exciting opportunity for significant improvements and enhancements. From all accounts, the new program coordinator was perceived as an outstanding leader and promoter of re-entry efforts. The transition team was finally working as a team. The new coordinator and her team were very well received by facility staff and interactions between the facility and the Boys and Girls Club improved considerably. The Boys and Girls Club was now viewed as a significant asset to the facility.

At one of the TR multi-site cluster meetings in 2005, one of the transition specialists captured the improvements well:

It is really cool to watch relationships with the facility grow. We are definitely becoming a major part of the facility. The facility is now coming to us for information because they don't have it. Youths miss the clubhouse when they are not there. They also don't see it as something that they just deserve. I think facility staff do see a difference in their behaviors. More importantly, we're seen as part of the staff. We have developed new ways to work with youths, and we're developing relationships with another facility. I'm still in contact with some youths, even though their cases are officially closed. The new staff picked up quickly. I think our youths are in good hands.

An important example of this improvement was the creation of the Youth Employment Services (YES) program. This program was a true collaboration between residents and their parents, cottage treatment teams, aftercare case managers, aftercare case workers, Boys and Girls Club staff, the McLaughlin school, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Alaska Native Justice Center, and community service brokers. A comprehensive plan was formalized to enhance youth employment training and opportunities. The Boys and Girls Club was a critical component of this initiative, as it was responsible for job preparation (including the Job Ready program, revising the Career Decision Making Inventory first developed at the McLaughlin school, and completing a Personal Career Development Plan). This initiative served to formalize the

relationships between the Boys and Girls Club and their many partners, including the facility and its school.

By the end of 2005, the TR program was functioning well; however, most of the new staff members were unfamiliar with TARGETED RE-ENTRY principles and those of the Intensive Aftercare Model. A need for more training was apparent, including strengthening the implementation of strength-based programming. New staff members were finding it difficult to implement strength-based plans.

The Functional Family Therapy component of Transition Services was discontinued in late 2005. This provided two new office spaces in the unit. One was filled by an Anchorage School District employee who managed youths' transitions back to the School District. The second was filled by a DJJ employee who served as the mental health probation officer for all Anchorage youths. Both individuals had previous experience with the Transition Services Unit and their addition greatly strengthened re-entry services provided to youths.

In early 2006, the Director of the DJJ resigned. The Acting Director was very familiar with the Boys and Girls Clubs Targeted Re-Entry Initiative and continued to provide strong support. Overall, support for club activities continued to grow at McLaughlin. Efforts were made to strengthen the mentoring component of Transition Services. The DJJ partnered with BGCSA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BBBS), the University of Alaska-Anchorage (UAA), the Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (AJJAC), the Change Point Faith-Based Community program, Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), and the Alaska Native Justice Center (ANJC) to begin the development of a formal mentoring program. Two grant applications were submitted to financially support this initiative.

Several programming challenges emerged at this time. Once released, few youths were attending clubs in the community. Discussions began to improve teen programming in community clubs in an attempt to increase participation. Although the YES program (to more formally provide employment services to youths) was well designed, it had not yet been fully implemented. There was a lack of communication between reentry and facility staff to develop employment plans. Gang activity was gaining prevalence and attention in the community, and transition specialists were beginning to see a rise in gang involvement among TR youths. As a result, it was becoming more difficult for transition specialists to maintain contact with the youths. On a more positive note, the relationship between reentry and school staff had improved, enabling the evaluators to receive more school information for targeted youths.

In the second half of 2006, the program coordinator was recognized as the Employee of the Month by the McLaughlin Youth Center, the first time a community partner had ever received this recognition. The program continued to function well under her leadership. There were, however, several personnel changes during this time. One transition specialist left the TR program for employment by the facility, the Big Brothers Big Sisters coordinator left Alaska to pursue a Master's degree and was replaced, and the administrative leadership of both the Boys and Girls Club and Big Brothers Big Sisters had also changed. Despite these changes, the program maintained a strong position within the facility and with community partners.

The UAA evaluators made substantial progress gathering data on criminal history and recidivism for all targeted youths. They worked closely with a Research Analyst for the DJJ, and the Division leadership at McLaughlin was extremely helpful in communicating evaluation data needs to the DJJ central office. At the same time, substantial progress was made to gather data on a comparison group. A preliminary data set was developed containing information on 143 youth

who were released from the Transitional Services Unit at the McLaughlin Youth Center prior to the inception of Targeted Re-Entry services, and two additional data sets were developed containing information on youth released from the youth facilities in Fairbanks (N = 28) and Juneau (N = 26). Although these samples are smaller, they were deemed useful to examine the dual effect of the Transitional Services Unit and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America TARGETED RE-ENTRY approach. Because transition services had already been provided at the McLaughlin Youth Center for many years, it is likely that the introduction of TR services will show a smaller effect in Alaska than elsewhere. The addition of the Fairbanks and Juneau comparison groups may be useful to examine the true effect of transition services.

In the summer of 2007, McLaughlin's Transition Director retired, after more than 30 years of service. He was a strong advocate of IAP-based reentry services both at the McLaughlin Youth Center and in other youth facilities. Despite some additional turnover among the transition specialists, the TR program continued to flourish, and was improving its ability to maintain contact with youths. Efforts were underway to ensure the sustainability of the BGCSA program within the Transitional Services Unit (TSU) at the McLaughlin Youth Center (MYC). The TR coordinator invited representatives from TSU/MYC, the Alaska Native Justice Center, the Anchorage School District, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the University of Alaska Anchorage to begin the formation of partnerships that could enhance BGCA's capacity to seek and obtain funding. To further promote the presence of the Club, an open house was also held in June 2007. The MethSMART program was continuing, with guest speakers from the Anchorage Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Agency.

In sum, by the end of the evaluation period, transition programming at McLaughlin was powerfully entrenched and likely to be sustained. Moreover, due to the TARGETED RE-ENTRY

initiative, DJJ awarded Boys & Girls Club of Alaska two grants to implement identical programs in Juneau and Fairbanks. The Boys & Girls Clubs have also received Workforce Investment funds from DJJ to implement Employment Services with DJJ youth in Nome Alaska.

Arkansas

The TR program in Arkansas was in the hands of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Saline County. This organization had an existing Club based at the Alexander Youth Center, a diagnostic facility for the Arkansas Division of Youth Services. The Club had been operating at the Alexander facility since 1997, and the Saline County Clubs staff assumed case management responsibilities for youth returning to Little Rock (in neighboring Pulaski County) and the surrounding region. The Boys and Girls Club at the facility had seven staff members, enough staff to manage the club activities and focus on the TR programming needs.

The Club at the Alexander facility was based in an existing recreation building. The building had been renovated to house the BGC. It contained a basketball gym with a newly refinished floor. There was also a stage in that portion of the gym. In the back of the building were a number of rooms used for different activities. One room featured music equipment and video game equipment. Another was a classroom for programs (arts and crafts, Passport to Manhood, Job Ready, and so on). There was an office for the staff and a storage area known as “the cage,” as it was a locked area housing the most valuable props for their programming: hand tools; mechanical babies for parenting classes; simulations of diseased bodily organs for programs on alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; and so on.

The capacity of the Alexander facility was 140 and all of those youth participated in BGC activities while at the facility. BGC ran PE classes beginning at 8:30 a.m. each day. The BGC staff even provided PE classes in the specialized JUMP unit for the serious violent offenders.

Club time would begin at the end of school day. TR staff were on-site at the facility Club and thus had frequent contact with their cases.

Initially, this program was developed and implemented within an unusual juvenile justice culture. The provision of juvenile justice programming had been privatized in Arkansas, while DYS continued to provide oversight and control. TR staff needed to work with Cornell (the provider operating the Alexander facility) staff while the youth were incarcerated. They also depended on DYS staff to identify the participants in the program—a process that would prove complicated and frustrating. Finally, the youth were all assigned to aftercare providers upon their release from the facility. The aftercare providers operated outside the traditional juvenile court system, had rather limited enforcement capacities, and offered mixed results in terms of their attention to principles of effective reentry. There was a 4-6 month period of aftercare, with defined phases for “stepdown.” Caseloads for the aftercare providers were said to be about 30.

Since Alexander was primarily a diagnostic facility, many of the appropriate cases for TR were transferred to other regional facilities scattered throughout the state and too far away from Little Rock to facilitate effective interaction between the TR staff and the youths. Few appropriate referrals for TR were actually maintained at Alexander, complicating the enrollment process. To ensure that the youths all received the TR programming to be eligible to participate, efforts were made to deliver the Passport to Manhood and Job Ready in the first 60 days when the youths arrived at the facility. The facilitator of those programs reported having about 20 youth in group at a time. The delivery of the curricula was well planned and appeared to be successful. The groups required three months to complete, so there were still many youths leaving the facility before completing all of the groups. The facilitator would literally deliver the

same session to different groups back-to-back five or more times in a day so that all youths at Alexander could participate in the program.

Although there was a Going Home program in place in Arkansas at the onset of the TR program, the capacity for effective reentry had not actually developed in this site. The Going Home funds would be appropriated later in this evaluation period to enhance some of the reentry programming in place. At the beginning of 2004, though, there was little coordinated reentry programming in place in Arkansas. As a result, there were few partners at the table when the TR initiative was launched. As the Boys and Girls Club started to build the program, they tended to look for ways to either do things within their own organization (for example, they used grant funds to create jobs within the community-based clubs for some of the youths) or to attract the resources to their organization rather than referring youths to other programs. For instance, early in the program implementation process, they were able to raise money from the Gentlemen's Club and, through a partnership with Dillard's department stores, made it possible for youth to secure clothes for job interviews soon after their release from the facility.

Other problematic issues emerged at the beginning of the project about the context within which TR was going to operate in Arkansas. There had been little success in involving the faith community in reentry programming to this point. Many concerns were raised about the integration/collaboration of services for the youth in reentry programs. Transportation was identified as an issue with no good solutions. There had been little success previously in linking special services for special-needs populations. Although DYS maintained custody after release, the Division was not inclined to revoke a youth's probation. If a new offense took place, then the case would have to go to court, and that meant extra work. Thus, it was not clear that sufficient leverage was in place to ensure compliance with release conditions on the part of the youths.

When youths violated conditions of their aftercare release there were sanctions that could be applied—a system of graduated sanctions was available—but aftercare workers did not feel these provided an effective “hammer.” All sanctions had to be approved by DYS. When an aftercare provider requested sanctions, DYS was supposed to reply back within 3 hours. Electronic monitoring was required for all the youths (again provided by private service providers). There was little expectation that those aged 16 and older would be enrolled in public school upon release from the facility. It was more likely they would be steered to alternative schools or to GED programs.

A number of assessments were conducted on the youths that would ultimately participate in TR. Prior to arrival at Alexander, there was a court-order review and risk assessment. While at Alexander additional assessments were conducted, including a medical exam and a mental health screen (MAYSI) on the unit, and review of previous testing, educational, and psychological reports. There was also a client interview. A family and community assessment was to be provided by aftercare staff within 5 days of intake. Finally, there was also a family interview and a suicide screening. Near the end of the youths’ stay, there was the development of a discharge plan that was to go to aftercare workers to assist them in the planning of aftercare plans. It was unclear how the youths might have input into the discharge plan. Even more problematic, it was not clear initially how the TR staff would gain access to the information gathered from the different assessments.

The early stages of TR in Arkansas involved several challenges to identifying TR cases. Despite promises to the evaluation team, DYS staff did not appear to make it a priority to identify eligible youths that would then remain at Alexander for the duration of their incarceration. Youths initially identified as eligible (e.g., from Little Rock or North Little Rock)

often ended up getting transferred unpredictably to another facility. Since the TR staff did not know until just before the youth were to be released whether they were returning to the community or going to another DYS facility, they often delayed building relationships with the youths until just prior to release—this may have led to deficiencies in the relationships that were able to develop between the TR staff and the youths. This limited the amount of pre-release programming that could be provided by the TR staff, making it less likely for the youths to be engaged in the program by the time they were released. As a result, many youths may have missed an opportunity for effective reentry support. The larger the caseloads grew, the more this was likely to be an issue and youths potentially fell through the cracks.

A key staff person was the DYS Placement Manager. She participated only sporadically in the initial training and had only a limited understanding of the purpose and structure of TR. She was in charge of considering treatment recommendations from the Multi-disciplinary Staffing (MDS) and approved placements that were appropriate based on the master treatment plan. She was reluctant to approve large numbers of youths to remain at Alexander for the duration of their stay, since there was limited bed space and Alexander was primarily a diagnostic facility. She wanted the TR program to increase its numbers by expanding its catchment area to include youths from other parts of the state.

At Alexander, there were 60 new intakes each month. The staff at Alexander were expected to make recommendations for a master treatment plan within three weeks of arrival. Referrals to long-term facilities were made based on the treatment plan and happened within one week of the MDS. Most of the youths at Alexander went to a serious offender program about two hours away in Dermott (ironically, most of these youths were classified as low or medium risk; the high risk youths stayed at Alexander). Most of the youths remained at Alexander for between

45 and 60 days before their transfer to another facility. When Alexander was at capacity, which often happened, then DYS became responsible for paying for the detention beds at the local centers. This was ultimately more expensive than housing the youths at Alexander.

In addition to problems related to identifying youths for TR, there were early challenges in implementing the IAP model in this site, as evident in our early reviews of case records. There was not, for instance, good information in the files to determine appropriateness of the youths for TR. There were no individualized transition plans in the files. The TR staff were not putting such plans together and were not involved in the development or carrying out of the plans that were being used by the aftercare workers. There was no involvement of a transition team for any of the TR subjects initially, and there was no documentation in the file of collaborations with other agencies.

Fairly quickly, though, the TR staff got up to speed with the documentation requirements for the evaluation. They were conscientious about completing and submitting Monthly Tracking Forms. They also did well in completing intake forms on the comparison group. This site excelled in this regard. The initial coordinator of the project developed a good strategy that raised the value of the TR efforts in the eyes of the facility staff. A form was created, a Monthly Progress Report, that was completed by the TR staff and then shared with the aftercare workers and the Alexander staff who appeared to greatly appreciate receiving this information. The forms provided good detail on all contacts with the youths for that month and a summary of the progress for the youth that month. Unfortunately, with turnover among the TR staff, the use of those forms was discontinued over time.

At one point, there were plans to serve only boys in the Arkansas TR site. Due to challenges in identifying enough eligible cases, the decision was made to include girls. An effort

was made to keep at least one woman on the TR staff over the length of the project so that the girls could be assigned to a female staff member. During one period of time when the two case managers on the staff were both males, the number of girls enrolled in the program was at a minimum. Early in the development of TR at this site, the staff elected not to serve one particular youth because of perceived safety issues for the case manager, a decision that should have been made only in conjunction with BGCA administrative staff and been based on documented evidence. This prompted a recommendation that the site create very specific “rules” for when it would decline to serve a youth.

Over time, through the leadership of the Director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Saline County, more effective relationships were developed with Cornell staff and DYS staff. The TR staff became regular participants in the case staffing meetings that were held at the facility. At one point, it was agreed that participation in TR would be written in as a specific condition of the treatment plans developed at the staffings. About halfway through the project, the TR staff were able to secure office space just outside of the fence at the facility. This was a great space and the location at the facility was quite advantageous for the further integration of the project with the staff at the facility. These changes led to some improvement in the numbers of youth being enrolled in the program.

The TR staff ultimately came to accept that they needed to follow some of the youths to the regional facilities to be able to include enough youths in the program. Over time, they were able to work out the details for a successful working relationship between the BGC and the regional facilities. They participated in trainings together and transportation was worked out to ensure the case managers were frequently on site at the regional facilities.

On the one hand, a real strength of this site was that the TR team was highly motivated and focused on achieving good outcomes for the youths they served. Yet, the staffing for this site created some challenges for the ongoing implementation of TR. Over the three years of the evaluation, there were six different case managers and four different project coordinators. The staff tended to come from the ranks of the Boys and Girls Clubs staff with little or no training or experience in case management and clinical practice. The issues of insufficient training and the lack of clinical supervision for the staff would come up again and again over the course of the project and was never completely resolved within the organization itself. A typical finding after meeting with the TR case managers included such things as: having safety issues related to working with youths in their homes and neighborhoods, where some of the male case managers reported feeling unnerved by situations they encountered in the neighborhoods they visited; not being able to articulate “interest-based and needs-based” programming; not having received the TR/IAP training prior to starting to provide case management, for which there was also no direct training.

About midway through the evaluation, when DYS discovered a large sum of unspent federal money (from the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, or SVORI), Troy Armstrong was contracted to expand the Division’s juvenile reentry initiatives statewide. Over the next two years, he worked intensively to bring training and resources to Arkansas to supplement the reentry programming in place there. Among the new features were the addition of two case managers to the DYS staff, a reduction in the role of the current aftercare provider, ongoing training in case management (to include the TR staff), and the development of a mentoring program in partnership with a local university. One of the key benefits for the TR staff was the training that was being provided. In 2006 alone, the two case managers were able to

participate in two high-quality trainings: the AIM Juvenile Reentry Training Institute in Indiana, and a case management training conducted by a national consultant with extensive experience in IAP. Both case managers reported feeling much better prepared for their roles in TR after these trainings, and were able to pay more attention to the casework aspects of their positions.

One of the more positive aspects in the evolution of the program had to do with the creation of community partnerships. When new vocational programming was introduced at the facility, the BGC-Saline County director worked to develop partnerships in the community to provide meaningful transition roles for the youths. A local Planning and Development unit prepared a map of Little Rock for the program as well. The wall map stretched across an 8' x 4' area and was detailed down to the streets level, with information overlaid to show all the officially-recognized gang areas, schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries, bus routes, Faith-Based Organizations, social services, and demographic data from the census. The map was well-documented with color-coded legends. The staff took large push pins and marked the homes for each of the TR participants. It was quite an impressive map. Even more useful, they also had an electronic version of the map that included yet more detail and was interactive. This map became a planning tool for the program. Over time the staff developed connections with Youth Build programs and GED programs, and were able to assist the youths with public transportation passes.

There was talk of putting together a formal Steering Committee to help guide the implementation of reentry in Little Rock, but that never came to be a permanent body. It was more likely that the Boys and Girls Clubs director would meet individually with key decision-makers. As personnel changed in the other organizations involved in reentry, there were improvements in the relationship of TR to those systems. There were key personnel changes at

United Family Services (the main aftercare provider) and DYS. A new private provider was brought in to run the Alexander facility. When the BGC-Saline County director took over as the Executive Director of the Little Rock clubs, succeeded by one of the other staff who had been working with the TR program, it was anticipated that there would be better integration of TR with resources in Little Rock. That has not yet come to be.

There were some specific issues related to the evaluation in Arkansas that should be noted. This site was among the best at completing the Monthly Tracking Forms and submitting them on a timely basis. However, they were required to administer the POSIT in paper form because the Club was never allowed to have internet access to be able to complete the form online. At one point after several months the Club was allowed to bring a laptop on campus to help in the process of completing the POSIT but when the facility learned that the laptops had wireless internet capability, they were no longer allowed and record-keeping had to revert to a paper format. This raises a concern in that the TR staff could actually interact with the youth during the administration of the survey. One of the case managers even reported discussing with the youth their answers along the way and believing this to be a good tool to build a relationship with the youth. Yet, it was important that the youth believed what they reported on the POSIT would not be seen by the case managers. That is also why the evaluators secured an electronic version that reads the questions to the youths.

It also became evident that the Comparison Group subjects were aware that, had they gone home (or to Dermott) from Alexander, they would have been able to participate in TR. This was not ideal from the standpoint of the likely contamination between the two groups. The evaluators worked with the staff on this issue to minimize the amount of information that would be disclosed to youths prior to their assignment to TR or the comparison group.

Finally, there were serious delays in this site's provision of the follow-up criminal record data. This issue was brought to the attention of relevant stakeholders repeatedly. Yet, despite assurances from DYS that the issue was being resolved, it would be the second quarter of 2008 before the follow-up data were actually submitted, and these were not fully complete.

Wisconsin

The Wisconsin site was a late addition to the evaluation, coming on board after the New York site withdrew from the project. The TR program in Wisconsin consisted of a community component in Milwaukee and a facility component at Ethan Allen School, located in Wales, about an hour west of Milwaukee. This project grew out of a partnership with the Going Home project. In the previous year, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee had entered into an agreement to provide Passport to Manhood to the boys in the Going Home project.

Department of Corrections officials were initially very supportive of the TR project and were concerned about the high recidivism rate for the Ethan Allen facility. One of the cottages at Ethan Allen was turned into a Boys Club. The Club originally operated daily from 5:30-8:30. Youth were brought to the Club in their cottage groups. On Mondays and Fridays the staff also provided the Job Ready and Passport to Manhood programs. The Ethan Allen Club included a game room (with Foosball, Ping Pong, arcade basketball); a room with a TV, stereo, and video games; a computer lab with seven stations; a small library; a recording studio, and a T-shirt printing shop (although the printing shop has not been utilized since the Club was opened). There was a main staff station and the case managers had their own offices. The facility came to depend on the Club for providing recreation to all youths at Ethan Allen. At one point, they even asked the TR staff to consider expanding the hours in which the Club was available to the youths. Recently, because of the shortage of TR staff and the number of TR participants already

released to the community, the club at Ethan Allen reduced its hours, open only on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. This allowed the case managers to spend Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Milwaukee, working with their cases that had been released.

The initial TR training took place in February 2004 and by May, the Club was ready to open at the facility. Once the club opened (to much fanfare, with the governor in attendance at the ribbon-cutting ceremony), support from the facility waned. There were staffing cutbacks at the facility at the same time the club was being introduced. The union believed that the BGC staff were replacing facility staff, and this perceived threat led to some resistance from facility staff. One of the Ethan Allen unit team managers was very supportive of TR while he was at the facility, but he was soon promoted to a regional position and was no longer based at the facility. This same person would continue to be influential in securing the support from DOC parole agents to work with the TR staff. By the end of 2005, there were new aftercare procedures within DOC and this was expected to enhance the parole experiences of the youth and to complement the TR efforts nicely. In actuality, evaluation interviews and case record reviews revealed that little changed in this respect.

The BGC staff needed to put a great deal of effort into developing relationships at the facility. Communication with facility staff was very poor initially, to the extent that the TR staff were not even aware of when releases were scheduled, and youths were being released without the TR case managers being notified. There was a ropes course at the facility and the BGC staff put together a training for Ethan Allen and TR staff to understand how to use the ropes course. The plan was for there to be joint efforts between EA and TR staffs to provide programming at the facility. The union took a stand against joint programming and the ropes course was never

used. The TR staff also hosted cookouts and a basketball tournament at Ethan Allen to try and build relationships between TR staff and EA staff. This strategy met with some success.

After one year, we found that the TR staff were working more closely with the staff in the intake cottage and were identifying youths for TR the week they arrived at the facility, participating in staffings on the youths, and compiling a sufficient list of TR and comparison group cases. Once a youth had been identified at intake as appropriate for TR, the facility's case plan for the youth was then including specific requirements that the youth participate in TR while at Ethan Allen. While the facility was still opposed to providing furloughs for the youths, there were provisions for staff-escorted trips to Milwaukee to allow for visits to schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other relevant community-based programs. Parole agents were initiating the off-grounds trips for the youth. Facility administrators were pushing for the TR programming to be expanded to cover a majority (if not all) of the youths at the facility.

The TR project ended up falling under the supervision of the Vice President for Governmental Affairs in the central office of the Milwaukee organization. This was not the original plan, but it became challenging to attach the TR staff to any particular Club. Ultimately, they worked from the central office, while being based part of the week at Ethan Allen. The senior management of this project was less than ideal as the person who took ownership for the project was himself very busy with several other projects. The TR project did not always receive the kind of attention it needed.

The staffing at the facility would become an issue as well. The plan was originally to have five full-time staff based at the Club in the facility. The program started with 3.5 staff and never had more than four persons at any one time. For long periods during the course of the project there were as few as two case managers in place trying to juggle the responsibilities of

the recreational side of the club and the case management responsibilities at the facility and in the community as well.

Two parole agents were initially dedicated to project. During the early stages of the project, the strongest external relationships with the TR staff were with the parole officers. The case managers met weekly with the parole officers. As the project evolved and DOC became more interested in reentry, a larger number of parole agents got involved and the relationship with TR staff was not always as strong as it had been. In the second year of the project, one of the parole supervisors was interviewed by the evaluators. It was his responsibility to keep track of all the youths on parole, and to coordinate the trips for field staff for the TR activities. He was a real champion for the program. He felt there had been progress in the development and implementation of TR. He had seen the program do well (the youths were staying out of trouble, becoming engaged productively in the community) and felt the TR staff were working innovatively. He noted that TR was one of the collaborations with community agencies that was a bright development and should lead to more collaboration. He noted that TR was an important partner.

Yet, the working partnership with DOC continued to be inconsistent. At one point, it was determined that it was the responsibility of the parole officer to arrange the transition team meeting. The meetings were not happening and the TR staff felt that they could not initiate these. The DOC was also quick to recommit youths for parole violations, which contributed to a higher recommitment rate in Wisconsin relative to the other three sites in this evaluation. Once the youths were released from Ethan Allen, the length of time they were on parole tended to be 3-5 months—the TR staff felt that this was not long enough for the work they were trying to accomplish with the youths. On a more positive note, the TR Coordinator was able to help

coordinate a partnership with DOC to bring on a volunteer who spoke Spanish. This helped provide better support for Spanish-speaking parents.

Not all of the youths coming back to Milwaukee were on parole. Some were placed back on probation upon their release. This meant that the TR staff also needed to establish relationships with the probation staff. Their experiences were generally more positive working with the probation officers than it had been working with the parole officers.

Eighty percent of boys at the 350-bed facility were from Milwaukee when the project started. This seemed to indicate that it would not be difficult to enroll the targeted number of cases into the TR program and the comparison group. The TR staff were responsible for identifying youths for the TR and comparison groups. Although it was agreed that all the eligible intakes at the facility (from Milwaukee, not a sex offender, not a Going Home youth) would be assigned alternately to the TR group to the comparison group, it is not clear that there was ever a serious attempt to follow these procedures.

By the latter part of 2005, fewer youths from Milwaukee were going to Ethan Allen. This led to a concern among the TR staff that the number of youths available to participate in TR would be much smaller in the following year, a concern that was well founded. In 2006, when there was speculation that the funding for TR would not be available after that year, the decision was made to stop enrolling new cases into the program. There were fewer than 10 TR youths in the facility at one point and that number was expected to continue to decline, reducing the motivation of the staff to spend significant amounts of time at the Club at Ethan Allen. That situation turned itself around and the program appeared to be back on track. A subsequent complication involved the timing of the release of the boys from the facility. Some were being

released before they had enough time to complete the BGC programming (Job Ready, Passport to Manhood). This resulted in smaller numbers of youths being eligible for TR.

A great deal of time was spent initially setting up relationships back in the community. Many of the initial partnerships were in place from the Going Home Initiative. Grant funds were used to engage with the Running Rebels program—a mentoring program that successfully recruited young black men as mentors. There was an effort to secure housing vouchers for some of the offenders. There were also promises of partnerships to provide for GED and job training, and, potentially, apprenticeship opportunities. Another partner was the Weed-and-Seed program in Milwaukee. They planned to provide additional support and supervision directly in the neighborhoods where the youths were going to be living. The TR staff also looked, unsuccessfully, for a good partner to provide drug and alcohol services. The unavailability of family therapy for the TR youths was noted as a gap in services.

For the most part, though, collaborative partnerships did not expand beyond what was either structurally present for reentry (i.e., parole) or that for which the BGC actually provided funding. The cost of these services ultimately meant that only a fraction of the TR youths received these services. By the middle of the second year, the TR staff had assembled an advisory group that included key decision makers. Initially, this group included administrators from DOC, parole, and probation. This group did not meet regularly after the first meeting and did not provide guidance for the development of the TR model.

By the third year, some progress was observed in the area of community collaborations. The TR program developed two key partnerships; one with community service corps and one with job training. They were good partners but TR participants tended to lack the motivation to stay in these programs until completion. Community partners began coming into the institution

to meet with the youths prior to their release. They still rarely participated in the transition teams, however. Partnerships in the fourth year involved programs that provided construction jobs for youths, a job preparation program based at one of the Milwaukee Boys and Girls Clubs, GED classes, a local affiliate of the national Ready4Work program that provided mentoring for their participants, and parenting programs for the young men who were fathers. They were even working with a program that could wipe out old traffic tickets for the youths as part of job readiness program. Finally, they connected with a group of volunteers to offer a Lawyer Life Coach program. This program involved mentoring by lawyers and judges and was provided in conjunction with an essay contest in the facility.

In terms of the actual implementation of TR, there were a number of challenges in Wisconsin. It was clear that the stakeholders had little understanding of the big picture of IAP and TR in the early stages of this project. In addition, there were many indications in the first year that the program was not being implemented as per the model. At first, transition teams were not operating for any of the youths. It, thus, became important for the TR staff to initiate steps to coordinate meetings between the collaborating parties. Documentation was another area of early concern. In an initial file review, the files were basically empty, including only some information that had been captured from the facility database that would be helpful in completing the intake forms. There was no information relevant to case management in the files, and there were no forms being used that were generated by the TR staff.

To their credit, the TR staff took the feedback provided from the evaluator's file review and made some significant changes in their documentation. Although there were still gaps, they designed new forms to address the items on the Records Review Checklist. Files included a copy of a certificate of completion for each of the groups that youths needed to complete while in the

facility to be eligible for TR, forms documenting each contact with each individual youth, transition plans (often incomplete or missing, however), and a list of the transition team (but no indication that the teams had met either prior to or after release). There was no clear assessment in the files for risks, needs, or interests. In some of the files, the risk assessment instrument from the institutional file was present, but in most this was missing.

TR staff expressed concerns regarding how to more productively motivate the youths to take the job preparation programs seriously. Efforts were made to develop new partnerships to improve youths' ability to get to work on time and be interested in working, but the youths struggled to integrate themselves into the highly regimented program for job training. They were not used to working and it was hard to get them to buy into the job program. TR staff felt that although the youths appeared to want a job, when it came to actually doing the work, they pulled back. Staff were frustrated that the youths they served were often, as a group, unmotivated and lacked ambition. They would not hold onto jobs, were reluctant to work hard, and dropped out of training and educational assistance programs.

Throughout the project, coordination of the TR activities was inconsistent. There were two different coordinators for this project. The first coordinator, while quite dynamic and a positive influence on the youths, did not excel in his administrative capabilities. He also tended to want to be everything to the youths, rather than engaging the community partners to provide additional supports. The second coordinator was initially a case manager and took some time to adjust to the extra demands of the coordinator's role. He ultimately grew in this role and remains in that position to this day, the only TR staff member to remain with the program for the full four years of the evaluation. It also took some time for the TR staff to figure out how to balance the demands of providing recreation for all youths at Ethan Allen and the needs of the youths in the

community (an ever-growing number across the life of the project). Once they were able to establish comfortable routines, then they actually turned their attention to policy-related questions. For instance, the evaluators participated in a discussion in which stakeholders addressed issues related to more effective coordination of services with the parole department and the management of TR cases.

Staffing was an issue in this site, as it was across all the sites. During the first two years of the project, there was a great deal of turnover among the case management staff. By early 2006, the TR staff had stabilized and there was a sense of consistency for several months. This consistency was reflected in many of the practices of the staff and in their attention to the documentation requirements of the evaluation. Yet, there would be further turnover among the staff and an ultimate reduction in the staff as the funds from the national office began to decrease. While they initially recruited staff from Boys and Girls Clubs, they later made strategic choices about the “right staff” to have on board. The Director of Guidance and Prevention Services for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, a former social worker, was assigned to coordinate the project. She was to provide oversight of the project, supervision of the case managers, and was working on applying for grants to help sustain the project beyond the end of the BGCA funding. They also hired some case managers with a background in social work. In addition, they made deliberate decisions to enhance their team with interns.

One benefit of the staffing configurations in the final two years of the project was a more creative approach to engaging the TR participants in group activities in the community. In the summer of 2006, a basketball game was planned. In February 2006, the TR staff hosted a 3-day camp event with the youths already released to the community and their families. They hosted everyone at their camp, located not far from Ethan Allen—very rustic and a new experience for

many of the youths and their families. The event was a big success and the youths really enjoyed themselves. A second camp weekend was held in February 2007. In addition, in early 2007 they hosted a family night at a local club for the TR participants and their parents. Through the Boys and Girls Clubs, a number of sets of tickets to Milwaukee Brewers games were secured for the summer months as well.

This site posed many challenges for the evaluation. While the TR case managers appeared to do a good job engaging the youths and working with the collaborative partners, they were less successful in carefully documenting their efforts. An ongoing issue throughout the project was the submission of the Monthly Tracking Forms on a regular basis. While there is little doubt that the staff completed the forms monthly, the transfer of those forms to the Evaluation Team happened only sporadically, and often happened only when the evaluators were personally present in Milwaukee or together with site staff at a cluster meeting. When the forms were submitted, they were not always complete, although this issue became less of a problem over time. Intake forms were also submitted sporadically.

On a positive note, Wisconsin was the first site to collect and supply the evaluators with follow-up criminal record data. They even provided the data early enough to allow problems in the first set of data to be resolved. The organization had a full-time research director on staff and this person was helpful in making sure that the follow-up data were submitted.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee secured additional funding from two sources, the state and a local foundation, to sustain the TR initiative. The program officer from the foundation indicated that she was looking to find a way to fund an effort that would have an impact on Milwaukee and was interested in how this might be connected to reentry efforts. This

provided a potential opportunity for the TR program there. The staff continue to look for ways to fund this program as they move forward.

Implementation Themes

Site-specific and general implementation challenges observed in this study can be organized around the following dimensions along which the sites appeared to vary: site readiness, leadership and vision, the enrollment of participants in TR, the strength of collaborative relationships, the integration of the clubs into the facilities, and case management performance. These themes are related to Byrne, Taxman and Young's (2003), "essential characteristics of a successful reentry program . . . : 1) leadership, 2) partnership, and 3) ownership" (p.5).

Site Readiness

With the possible exception of Wisconsin, each of the sites had some pre-existing component that could support TR from the beginning. In Alaska, the McLaughlin Youth Center had long recognized the importance of transition and had dedicated staff and leadership to provide intensive transition programming. The introduction of a Boys & Girls Club and TR case management into McLaughlin was a natural extension to what they were already doing. In Alabama, the Mobile community had instituted a "Network Aftercare System" over the previous five years, and thus had already developed an extensive collaborative network of provider agencies at the county level. Moreover, the Boys & Girls Club of South Alabama was a major provider of services for adjudicated youths in Mobile, operating a boot camp for boys, a residential program for girls, and providing case management for Going Home. In Arkansas, as noted previously, a Boys & Girls Club had already been operating inside the juvenile correctional facility for seven years.

Nevertheless, only in Alaska had a full understanding of the notion of intensive transition services spanning the institutional, transition, and community aftercare phases existed prior to the implementation of TR. Serendipitously, as TR was being introduced in Alaska, one cottage at the McLaughlin Youth Center was vacated. This cottage was given to the transition services unit, and provided space to co-locate several collaborative partners, including the Boys & Girls Club, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, Functional Family Therapy, probation, and case workers from the Alaska Native Justice Center for Native youths. In Alabama, while Mobile had modeled its Network Aftercare System on the IAP model, it was county-based. The state juvenile correctional facility, located in Montgomery, three hours away from Mobile, had not been a partner previously. Little in the way of a community collaborative network had been developed in Arkansas, and aftercare had only recently become a focus of the existing club. Finally, in Wisconsin, the Boys and Girls Clubs had recently become involved in providing life-skills instruction to the youths in the “Going Home” initiative. When they were recruited at the last minute for TR, only the initial successful collaborations between the Ethan Allen facility and community-based service providers for the local “Going Home” initiative were in place to support TR.

Leadership and Vision

The nature of TR leadership varied considerably across the sites. In Alaska, the Aftercare Program Coordinator at McLaughlin had championed transition programming for more than a decade, was well-versed in IAP principles, and was widely respected both inside the juvenile correctional agency and among community partners. TR was a welcome extension of the existing transition programming and was strongly supported by top-level managers. In Mobile, a senior staff person in the Boys & Girls Club who had directed the Network Aftercare System for several years was also highly familiar with IAP principles and had developed a strong local

network of providers. However, his connection to the state's Division of Youth Services was less direct. After this person resigned late in the first year, no one appeared to exert effective leadership across all levels of the Alabama TR project. Much the same could be said regarding leadership in both Arkansas and Wisconsin.

Leaders in the sites varied in the extent to which they were committed to sustaining TR beyond the evaluation period during which they received support from BGCA. The transition programming in Alaska, championed by the State of Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, was already well established and was poised to continue indefinitely. In Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Boys & Girls Club took responsibility for identifying sources of continuing support, and as of this writing, the program continues. In Arkansas, with the surprise identification of unspent federal funds and consultation from Troy Armstrong and others, the state DYS attempted to develop an aftercare system modeled upon IAP principles that would have resulted in the continuation of transition and aftercare services in the Little Rock area and their extension to the rest of the state. Unfortunately, this initiative did not appear to survive beyond the pilot phase. The TR program, however, continues to operate and the Saline County Club has expressed a commitment to securing funding for its continuation. In Alabama, no sustainability plan was developed, and TR services ended in December of 2006.

Related to the issue of leadership, most of the people involved in TR, either as staff or as partners, did not seem to understand the "big picture" of reentry. Effective reentry requires collaborative efforts that begin from the point of intake into the correctional facility and continue beyond the termination of correctional supervision during the aftercare phase. TR staff tended to focus more heavily on one phase rather than another. In Wisconsin, the programming was much stronger prior to release. In Arkansas the case management was focused on the post-release

stage, with very little attention being paid to case management while the youths were incarcerated (because, due to the practices of the facility staff, TR case managers often did not know until just prior to release if youths would be part of the project). Not everyone involved understood the need to build relationships with the youths while incarcerated as a way of securing their serious participation during aftercare. There was also an inclination, particularly in Wisconsin and Arkansas, for the different service providers to operate independently in serving the youths, rather than seeing the reentry process as requiring a team approach.

Enrollment of Participants in TARGETED RE-ENTRY

In several of the sites, the enrollment process was somewhat spotty. Ideally, TR would seek to serve those youths in need of aftercare support returning to the community where the program operates. The treatment staff at the facility would appreciate the value of TR and refer the clients they believed were most in need of aftercare services. Instead, TR staff experienced frustration in trying to identify participants for their program. There were varying degrees to which the TR staff were connected to the proper channels of information to identify the appropriate youths. This was particularly problematic in the beginning for Wisconsin. In Arkansas, it took a year for the TR staff to learn how best to identify the appropriate participants for their program. Finally, the pre-release requirements of TR further complicated the selection process. As designed, participants in TR must complete two programs before they are released from the correctional facility: *Passport to Manhood*, and *Job Ready*. It is estimated to take 60-90 days to complete these programs under ideal circumstances. It requires the identification of the appropriate youths, enrolling them in TR, and having them at the facility long enough to complete these programs. In Wisconsin, the identification of the appropriate youths was a challenge. In Arkansas, having the youths at Alexander long enough to complete the curricula was a challenge. All eligible youth were selected in Alaska (except for two who were excluded

due to severe mental illness). However, reaching the desired enrollment targets in Alaska was a problem because the eligible population, small to begin with, declined further as BGCA became implemented.

Collaborative Relationships

As suggested above, Anchorage and Mobile evidenced extensive networks of community service providers. In Mobile, the Boys & Girls Clubs was well positioned to coordinate this network. In Anchorage, the coordinating role belonged to the McLaughlin Aftercare Program Director. Arkansas and Wisconsin continued to struggle to establish such partnerships. Only Alaska maintained a functioning advisory group of representatives of key stakeholder agencies, a structural component that can provide oversight, maintain a common vision for reentry, and troubleshoot specific challenges as they emerge. Alabama initially had such a group connected to its earlier Network Aftercare System program, but this group never really functioned in support of TR.

The sites faced some challenges in the development of collaborative relationships. First, as TR was rolled out in the four sites, there was an inclination to involve partner agencies with whom the Boys and Girls Clubs were already comfortable working and/or where there were preexisting relationships, rather than beginning by seeking partners based on the needs of the TR participants. Second, there were territorial issues that emerged where there were multiple agencies that were required to serve these youths. In some sites, the correctional treatment staff felt threatened by the involvement of the TR staff. In other sites, the aftercare/parole workers expressed concerns about the overlap or blurring of boundaries between the TR program and their own programs. Third, there was no funding available to pay for services from other agencies.

It is clear that not all of the partners engaged at the different sites shared the vision and principles of TARGETED RE-ENTRY. This is evident from the relative lack of involvement among key stakeholders and absence of crucial elements of the IAP/TR approach in most sites. In particular, none of the sites developed a consistent system of graduated sanctions that could be applied to technical violations of probation or parole conditions. Probation/parole involvement was either minimal (Arkansas) or reflected the traditional approach of frequently filing formal violations (especially in Alaska). While some sites did make use of transition teams (most notably in Alaska), most did not show continuity across the pre-release and post-release phases and membership did not include informal supports from the community.

Integration of Clubs into the Juvenile Correctional Facilities

In Arkansas, the Boys and Girls Club had operated within the Alexander facility for seven years. When TR began in 2004, the Club was already an integral part of the programming at the facility. In the other sites, Boys and Girls Clubs staff's access to the youths at the facility was an issue not easily solved with the opening of a Club on the grounds of the facility. Eventually, the other three Clubs became reasonably well integrated into the overall facility culture.

On the other hand, the integration of TR into the programming of the facility did not necessarily go hand-in-hand with the integration of the Club activities into the facility schedule. One particular challenge was in maintaining a focus on the work of TR while trying to manage the activities within the Club. Relationships with the juvenile correctional agencies varied, from the well integrated situation in Alaska and an emerging good working relationship between TR and some staff at Alexander in Arkansas, to more problematic relationships in Alabama and Wisconsin. In Alabama, as noted previously, the distance between Mobile and Montgomery was an obstacle. Although the TR case manager from Mobile visited the Mt. Meigs facility in

Montgomery at least once a month, there was little contact between this person and the Club staff at Mt. Meigs. Moreover, the Mt. Meigs club staff also appeared to have limited communication with the facility treatment staff. In Wisconsin, circumstances initially produced major strains. A declining population of youths placed at the Ethan Allen School led to staff layoffs. The introduction of the Boys & Girls Club and its staff into the facility was seen (incorrectly) by some Ethan Allen staff as replacing even more jobs. Furthermore, the quick introduction of TR in Wisconsin did not permit adequate preparation of the Ethan Allen staff. As a result, despite cooperation at top administrative levels, the relationship between the Boys & Girls Club staff and Ethan Allen line staff was not good at the beginning, but did improve over time.

Case Management Operations

In most of the TR sites, the individuals hired for the pivotal role of case manager, while enthusiastic, talented, and comfortable working with the youths, were relatively young and inexperienced. The exception here was Alabama, where the primary TR case manager had functioned in that role for Mobile's Going Home project for some time. The TR training provided was relatively brief, pitched at a relatively abstract level, and did not include systematic follow-up components. As a result, staff had a tendency to want to do everything themselves, rather than coordinating and facilitating a team effort among partners. Over time and with the addition of training that moved away from abstract to more concrete, BGC case managers began to show marked improvement in their understanding of their role which led to improvements in documentation. These issues were exacerbated by the frequent turnover of case managers, as discussed below.

Staff Turnover

All of the sites experienced considerable staff turnover. Case managers were added or replaced in every site. In three of the four sites, new TR coordinators assumed responsibility for the programs within the first three years. Wisconsin was the only site in which an original case manager was still on board by the end of the fourth year. As noted above, the TR direct service staff in most sites were young and most were recruited from within the BGC system without extensive experience working with delinquent youths. Combined with the lack of written operations manuals for TR and infrequent trainings provided, this staff turnover resulted frequently in new staff, including coordinators, not being deeply knowledgeable about IAP principles and details of the TR model.

Documentation

Periodic reviews of case records by the evaluators revealed considerable inconsistency and incompleteness in case documentation, although this improved somewhat in later years in most sites. Files often lacked a consistent format, case contacts were not always recorded, and, with the exception of Alabama and Alaska, there was little evidence of transition teams meeting periodically to review youths' progress. TR staff were expected to provide the evaluators with Monthly Tracking Forms for all active cases. At first, these were submitted sporadically at best. With considerable effort, most gaps in these were filled by the end of the evaluation, but the evaluators have limited confidence in the validity of some the data. In some sites it seems that the individuals assigned to complete these forms either had little understanding of what was important to track or were not in the best position to have sufficiently detailed knowledge of the youths' progress. In Alaska, the consistent training and review by the on-site evaluator that occurred did dramatically increase the validity of data from that site over time. It might have

been helpful if the evaluation could have had on-site evaluation staff in the other three sites as well.

Implementation Summary and Conclusions

The conceptualization of juvenile reentry programming has come along way since the early 1980s, when aftercare was a neglected component of juvenile corrections. The Intensive Aftercare Program model (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1991; 1994a; 1994b; 2001; 2004) provided a comprehensive blueprint to be enriched by more recent efforts, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's TARGETED RE-ENTRY Initiative. The TR approach adopted IAP's directive to provide ecologically informed, team-based aftercare planning and programming continuously from pre-release through structured transition and community aftercare phases. In the TR approach as implemented in these four sites in conjunction with state juvenile correctional facilities, local Boys & Girls Clubs provided (or supplemented) case management pre-release (a Boys & Girls club operated within each of the state facilities) and post-release (connected to Boys & Girls Clubs in the communities to which the TR youth returned). The Clubs were also responsible for identifying and mobilizing the community partners needed to address the multifaceted needs of the returning youths.

As suggested in the previous section, the sites faced a variety of implementation challenges, some common to all, and others site-specific, in the areas of differential site readiness, leadership, identifying appropriate youths for TR, forming and sustaining collaborative relationships, performing the case management role, staff turnover, documentation, and incorporating the clubs into the correctional facilities. As a result, none of the sites can be credited with fully implementing the components of the IAP/TR approach, although Alaska's implementation was clearly the strongest among the sites.

On the other hand, top-level stakeholders as well as ground level case management staff were enthusiastic and open to suggestions for improvement. We can conclude that each site implemented some aspects of the TR model well: the McLaughlin transition unit, the Mobile case management and community network with the presence of POINTE Academy, and the Clubs inside the facilities at Alexander and Ethan Allen. The TR approach (and IAP in general) makes obvious conceptual sense, and is extensively grounded in theory and evidence-based practice concepts. However, it is extremely challenging to implement reentry programming well. Not only does a vast array of stakeholders have to understand the approach and commit to their roles in it, but this knowledge and commitment must withstand changes at every level – from elections and state agency upheavals to frequent staff turnover at the ground level.

Chapter 4. Outcomes

As described in the previous chapter, the TARGETED RE-ENTRY programs became operational at slightly different dates, with most beginning to identify youth as early as January of 2004 and the last site (Wisconsin) in June of 2004. The TR sample for the evaluation included all youth who had been identified since the beginning of the programs who were released from the institutions to the community phase no later than December 31, 2006, allowing recidivism and other outcome data to be collected for a 12-month post-release follow-up period. A few cases that were initially identified were dropped from the programs and the study before receiving the community phase of the TR programs. The primary reason for this was that they were released prior to receiving the full 90 days of TR programming inside the facilities. A few were dropped because they relocated to other jurisdictions upon release. Across all sites, the TR sample consisted of 293 youths. In three sites, the sample size approached the target level of 90 cases: Alaska (84 cases), Arkansas (83 cases) and Wisconsin (81 cases). Alabama's sample was smaller (45), because fewer youths than anticipated were committed to Mt. Meigs from Mobile, and several remained at Mt. Meigs for too short a period to be included in the evaluation.

The sites attempted to identify comparison groups as discussed in Chapter 2. As noted in Chapter 3, however, Alabama was unable to identify a comparison group. The comparison groups in Arkansas and Wisconsin were contemporary cases whereas for Alaska, a retrospective comparison group was constructed, as described in more detail below. Across sites, 203 comparison group cases were identified (Alaska, 64; Arkansas, 89; Wisconsin, 50).

TR staff provided the evaluators with Monthly Tracking Forms documenting contacts and progress with the TR youths during both the pre-release and post-release phases of the

program. At the time of release, they also provided Intake Forms (for both TR and comparison group cases) that included demographic information, prior offense history data, and youth incidents and accomplishments while in the facility.

Follow-up arrest and conviction data were sought from both juvenile justice system records and adult criminal history records (for youths who aged out of juvenile court jurisdiction during the follow-up period) for both the TR and comparison group youths. Because the researchers could not access the names of the youths in this study, collecting of these data was the responsibility of the staff at each of the sites. The one exception was in Alaska, where the identification of the comparison group was handled by André Rosay from the evaluation team.

In Alaska, since all the youth in McLaughlin took part in a well-structured reentry program, it would have been impossible to compile a group of youth that did not receive reentry assistance. Instead, a retrospective comparison group was identified. Comparison groups were built by examining youth with B1 orders (institutionalization orders) from 1/1/2000 to 12/31/2003. The first B1 order after 1/1/2000 was selected as the point of commitment. Offenses before that first order were considered as prior offending, while offenses occurring after that first order were viewed as recidivism. One group includes youth released from McLaughlin Youth Center (Anchorage) from 1/1/2000 to 12/31/2003. Because the number of youth in this group was relatively small, a second group was added, including youth released from the Fairbanks and Juneau facilities from 1/1/2000 to 12/31/2003. All youths would have met the TR inclusion criteria (released to their home community and not a sex offender).

In Alabama, criminal record data were collected from the local court system for all the youth that had participated in TR. Local probation officers provided the data to the Boys and Girls Club staff, who coded and sent the (de-identified) data to the evaluators.

In Arkansas, there were two stages to the follow-up data collection process. After a lengthy process of deliberation, it was determined that the staff at the BGC of Saline County would not be able to gain access to the online database in which the criminal history information was stored. Finally, it was determined that DYS would be able to provide the information to the BGC staff, who could then, in turn, provide the information to us in de-identified form. That information included true findings for the youth in the sample (juvenile court information only). In an effort to secure adult criminal record information, the BGC staff purchased a subscription to an online service to check criminal records. This included a ChoicePoint national criminal file search on all youth in both the TR and the comparison groups. These data were then provided to the evaluation team who coded the data for inclusion in the follow-up analyses.

In Wisconsin, the BGC staff were able to gain access to an online system to check the criminal activity of youth in both the TR and the comparison groups. Data were collected directly from the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access for Milwaukee County. As with Arkansas, data from Wisconsin were sent directly to the evaluation team and who prepared the data for inclusion in the database. It appears that the data received contained no new arrests and true findings from juvenile court records. The evaluators encouraged the BGC staff to supplement what had been provided with data from juvenile court records. The staff assured us that the data included all the information for adult and juvenile offenses combined.

This chapter begins with a description of the TR and comparison group samples in terms of demographic characteristics. This is followed by an examination of what happened to the TR cases during the community phase of the programs in terms of post-release living arrangements; involvement in counseling, educational programs and employment activities; problems such as drug and alcohol use, violations of probation or parole, new arrests and incarcerations; and

successful or unsuccessful program completion. The chapter concludes with several analyses of recidivism results, including comparisons between TR and comparison group cases.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 4.1 shows the age, race, and gender distributions for the TR and comparison group cases in each site. In both Arkansas and Wisconsin, the respective TR and comparison groups are highly similar on these characteristics. In Alaska, the TR group contains a significantly higher percentage of females than does its comparison group.

Table 4.1. Youth Demographics by Site and Group (Percent Distribution)							
Characteristic	Alaska		Arkansas		Wisconsin		Alabama
	TR (n=84)	Comparison (n=64)	TR (n=83)	Comparison (n=89)	TR (n=81)	Comparison (n=50)	TR (n=45)
Age							
12	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
13	0.0	1.6	4.9	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
14	1.2	1.6	6.1	10.0	0.0	2.4	0.0
15	7.1	9.4	22.0	13.3	12.3	2.4	2.9
16	15.5	7.8	13.4	35.6	24.7	33.3	17.1
17	40.5	20.3	26.8	33.3	39.5	50.0	48.6
18	31.0	37.5	24.4	3.3	16.0	9.5	28.6
19	4.8	21.9	2.4	0.0	3.7	0.0	2.9
20	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	2.4	0.0
<i>Mean Age (yrs.)</i>	<i>17.1</i>	<i>17.4</i>	<i>16.3^a</i>	<i>16.0</i>	<i>16.9</i>	<i>16.5</i>	<i>17.1</i>
Race							
African-American	13.1	12.5	63.0	63.3	88.9	80.9	77.1
Caucasian	35.7	42.2	32.1	28.9	1.2	2.4	20.0
Alaskan Native	35.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	15.5	20.3	4.9	7.8	9.9	16.7	2.9
Gender							
Male	77.4	93.8 ^b	82.7	77.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
Female	22.6	6.2	17.3	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
^a The mean age of the Arkansas TR group is significantly lower than that of the other TR groups (One-Way ANOVA with post-hoc comparison of means, p<.05). ^b The Alaska TR and comparison groups differ significantly on gender (Chi-square, p<.05)							

As is apparent from Table 4.1, however, the TR sites differed somewhat in the demographic profiles of youths served. The Arkansas youths were significantly younger (mean

age 16.3) than those in the other sites (the mean for each was about 17), as can also be seen in Figure 4.1. While the majority of TR youths in all sites were children of color, in Alaska, Alaska Natives comprised the largest non-white group, and in Wisconsin, nearly all (98.8%) of the youth were children of color (see also Figure 4.2). In terms of gender, the TR programs were tied to specific state juvenile correctional facilities. The Mt. Meigs (AL) and Ethan Allen (WI) facilities contained only male youths; whereas McLaughlin (AK) and Alexander (AR) contained both males and females. These differences across sites in the composition of the TR groups, along with programmatic differences as discussed in Chapter 3, make it difficult to combine TR youths for meaningful statistical analyses. Therefore, most of the results to follow will be presented by site.

Figure 4.1. TARGETED RE-ENTRY Youths' Age by Site

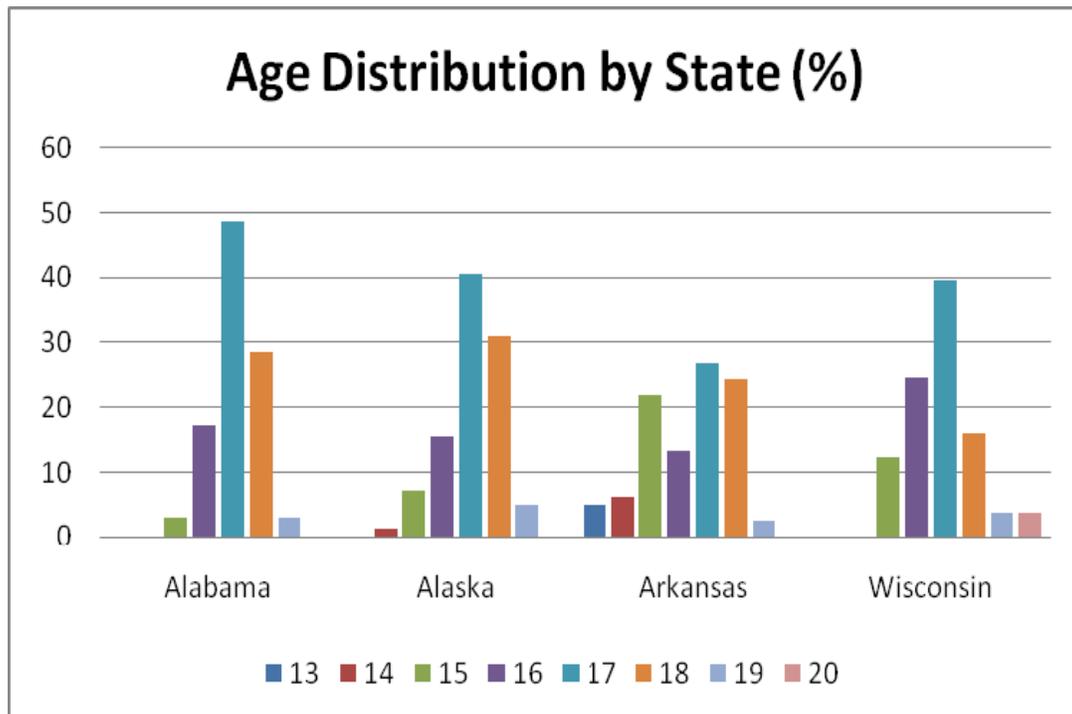
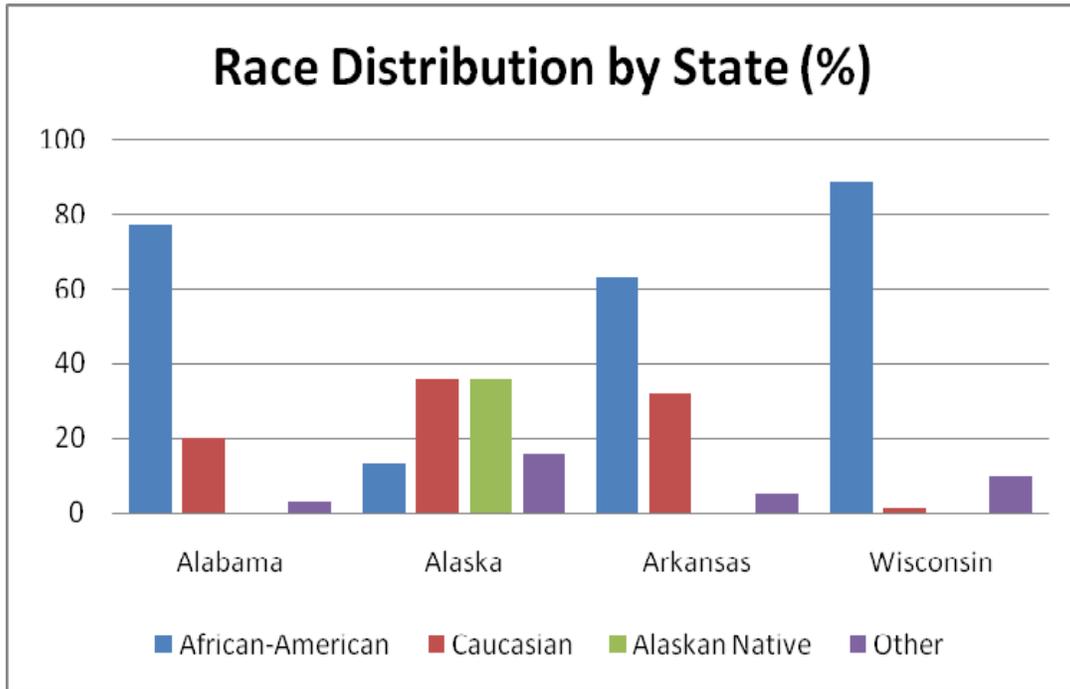


Figure 4.2. TARGETED RE-ENTRY Youths' Race by Site



Commitment Offense and Prior Offense Profiles

Table 4.2 shows the overall distribution of the seriousness levels of commitment offenses and the most serious prior offenses for the TARGETED RE-ENTRY youths and the comparison group youths. Slightly more than half of the TR youths (53%) were committed for a felony level offense. Somewhat fewer of the comparison group youths were committed for a felony (44.4%). Most had prior felony offenses, and again the percentage is higher for the TR youth (72.2%) than for the comparison group (62.8%), suggesting that the comparison group consists of somewhat less serious offenders. These differences, however, are not statistically significant.

Table 4.2. Severity of Commitment and Prior Offenses, TR vs. Comparison Group Overall (Percent Distribution)				
Dimension	TR (n=293)		Comparison (n=203)	
	N	%	N	%
Commitment Offense				
Felony Violent	45	19.6	29	14.9
Felony Weapon	5	2.2	5	2.6
Felony Drug	11	4.8	11	5.7
Felony Property	57	24.8	37	19.1
Felony Other	4	1.7	4	2.1
Misdemeanor Violent	35	15.2	21	10.8
Misdemeanor Weapon	6	2.6	10	5.2
Misdemeanor Drug	9	3.9	11	5.7
Misdemeanor Property	32	13.9	37	19.1
Misdemeanor Other	26	11.3	29	14.9
Missing	63		9	
Most Serious Prior Offense				
Felony Violent	74	32.2	45	23.2
Felony Weapon	7	3.0	6	3.1
Felony Drug	21	9.1	18	9.3
Felony Property	55	23.9	46	23.7
Felony Other	9	3.9	6	3.1
Misdemeanor Violent	32	13.9	21	10.8
Misdemeanor Weapon	5	2.2	9	4.6
Misdemeanor Drug	5	2.2	8	4.1
Misdemeanor Property	13	5.7	22	11.3
Misdemeanor Other	9	3.9	13	6.7
Missing	63		9	

Table 4.3 shows the same distributions of commitment and prior offenses by site and group. There were insufficient data from Alabama to permit the inclusion of that site in this table. From this table, it is apparent that the Alaska TR youths have higher percentages of youths with felony level commitment offenses (59%) and felony level prior offenses (87%) than do the other groups. Only in Arkansas, however, are the distributions of the TR groups and their respective comparison groups significantly different. In Arkansas, the comparison group has significantly smaller percentages of felony offenders than the TR group, both in terms of commitment offenses and prior offenses.

Dimension	Alaska				Arkansas*				Wisconsin			
	TR (n=84)		Comparison (n=64)		TR (n=83)		Comparison (n=89)		TR (n=81)		Comparison (n=50)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Commitment Offense												
Felony Violent	14	16.7	9	14.1	15	20.3	10	11.4	14	22.2	10	23.8
Felony Weapon	4	4.8	4	6.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6	1	2.4
Felony Drug	4	4.8	2	3.1	1	1.4	4	4.5	5	7.9	5	11.9
Felony Property	25	29.8	15	23.4	16	21.6	10	11.4	11	17.5	12	28.6
Felony Other	3	3.6	2	3.1	1	1.4	2	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Misdemeanor Violent	8	9.5	7	10.9	21	28.4	13	14.8	6	9.5	1	2.4
Misdemeanor Weapon	0	0.0	2	3.1	2	2.7	5	5.7	4	6.3	3	7.1
Misdemeanor Drug	5	6.0	1	1.6	2	2.7	8	9.1	2	3.2	2	4.8
Misdemeanor Property	15	17.9	11	17.2	10	13.5	21	23.9	7	11.1	5	11.9
Misdemeanor Other	6	7.1	11	17.2	6	8.1	15	17.0	13	20.6	3	7.1
Missing	0		0		9		1		18		8	
Most Serious Prior												
Felony Violent	32	38.1	18	28.1	18	24.3	13	14.8	19	30.2	14	33.3
Felony Weapon	6	7.1	5	7.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6	1	2.4
Felony Drug	9	10.7	6	9.4	1	1.4	4	4.5	11	17.5	8	19.0
Felony Property	24	28.6	25	39.1	16	21.6	11	12.5	12	19.0	10	23.8
Felony Other	2	2.4	0	0.0	1	1.4	3	3.4	6	9.5	3	7.1
Misdemeanor Violent	7	8.3	7	10.9	21	28.4	11	12.5	4	6.3	3	7.1
Misdemeanor Weapon	0	0.0	2	3.1	2	2.7	6	6.8	3	4.8	1	2.4
Misdemeanor Drug	1	1.2	1	1.6	2	2.7	7	8.0	1	1.6	0	0.0
Misdemeanor Property	3	3.6	0	0.0	9	12.2	21	23.9	1	1.6	1	2.4
Misdemeanor Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	5.4	12	13.6	5	7.9	1	2.4
Missing	0		0		9		1		18		8	

Note: Alabama is not included in this table because insufficient data on commitment and prior offenses were obtained from that site.
* Chi-square tests indicate the distributions of Commitment Offense and Most Serious Prior Offense are significantly different (p<.05) between the TR and Comparison groups for Arkansas.

Length of Incarceration

Youths in the four TR sites had vastly different average lengths of stay in their state juvenile correctional facilities. As can be seen in Table 4.4, mean length of stay for the TR youths ranged from less than 6 months in Alabama and about 7 months in Arkansas, to about 13 months in Alaska, and more than 14 months in Wisconsin. In Alaska, the length of stay for the comparison group was significantly longer (more than 14 months) than for the TR group. In Wisconsin, the mean length of stay of the comparison group was about 12 months, but this was

not significantly different from the Wisconsin TR group’s mean. Length of stay data were unavailable for the Arkansas comparison group cases.

Table 4.4. Mean Length of Stay in Days							
Outcome	Alaska		Arkansas		Wisconsin		Alabama
	TR (n=84)	Comparison (n=64)	TR (n=83)	Comparison (n=89)	TR (n=81)	Comparison (n=50)	TR (n=45)
Length of Stay	369.6	432.3	216.6	*	429.0	364.7	164.1
*Incomplete data for length of facility stay for Arkansas.							

Post-Release Living Arrangements

Table 4.5 shows with whom the TARGETED RE-ENTRY youths were living upon release from the facilities to the community, overall and in each site. In all sites except Alaska, the majority returned to live with one or both parents (living with mother was the most common arrangement). In Alaska, however, almost half (45.2%) were living in a group home or with non-family members. Among the four sites, Alabama had the largest percentage of youths who were living with their grandparents (20%).

Table 4.5. Who Youth Lives With After Release (Percent Distribution)					
	Total Sample (n=293)	Alabama (n=45)	Alaska (n=84)	Arkansas (n=83)	Wisconsin (n=81)
Both Mother and Father	10.3	2.9	19.0	8.6	6.2
Mother	45.6	57.1	23.8	50.6	58.0
Father	3.2	2.9	6.0	3.7	0.0
Grandparents	9.6	20.0	3.6	9.9	11.1
Other Relatives	5.0	5.7	2.4	9.9	2.5
Group/Foster Home	16.4	5.7	32.1	9.9	11.1
Other	10.0	5.7	13.1	7.4	11.1

Post-Release Involvement in Counseling, Education and Employment Activities

In all of the sites, engaging returning youths in educational and/or employment activities was a primary goal. To fully meet individualized needs, involvement in counseling may also

have been a goal for some youths. The sites provided monthly reports of youths' activities during the program (Monthly Tracking Forms). Table 4.6 shows the percentage of youths in each site who had earned a high school diploma or GED or were involved in post-release counseling, school and work at some time in the program. Relatively few (26.3%) were involved in counseling, although the sites varied considerably in this regard. Arkansas reported that more than half (53%) of the youth were involved in counseling, while, at the other extreme, Alabama reported that only one youth (2.2%) was involved. The validity of this latter result is questionable considering that, as discussed in Chapter 3, a mental health counselor was on site weekly in the Mobile program, and several youths were seen by a substance abuse counselor.

About one in four had earned a high school diploma or a GED by the end of the follow-up period, with Alaska showing the highest percentage (35.7%) and Arkansas the lowest (14.6%). Since some of the TR youths were still relatively young during the study period (i.e., under 17), it may be more meaningful to look at the percentage of youths 17 and older who earned a diploma or GED. When looking only at those who were 17 at the time of release, the percentage earning a diploma or GED increases to 36% overall (Alabama, 28.6%; Alaska, 43.8%; Arkansas, 27.9%; Wisconsin, 37.3%).

In terms of educational involvement, nearly three-fourths of the youths (73.7%) across the sites were involved in school, with Alaska reporting the highest (92.9%) and Wisconsin the lowest (58%) percentages. Overall, more than half of the youths (56%) were employed, part-time or full-time, at some point during the programs. Employment was especially emphasized in Alabama (73.3%), and several of the youths began by being employed at the Boys and Girls Club. Wisconsin reported relatively few youths as being employed (33.3%). In part this result may be due to the relatively younger ages of the Wisconsin TR youths.

When looking at employment stability, the percentage of youths maintaining the same job for at least three months is considerably less (34.1% overall), and very few (16.7%) held the same job for at least six months. The exception here is Alabama, where nearly half of the youths (48.9%) held a job for six months or more.

Table 4.6. Targeted Re-Entry Youth Involvement in Counseling, School and Work (Percent Distribution)					
Youth Characteristic	Total Sample (n=293)	Alabama (n=45)	Alaska (n=84)	Arkansas (n=83)	Wisconsin (n=81)
Counseling	26.3	2.2	10.7	53.0	28.4
GED/HS diploma	25.4	22.5	35.7	14.6	27.2
In School	73.7	66.7	92.9	73.5	58.0
Employment	56.0	73.3	61.9	62.7	33.3
Held same job for at least 3 months	34.1	62.2	31.0	41.0	14.8
Held same job for at least 6 months	16.7	48.9	8.3	18.1	6.2

Another way to examine engagement is to look at educational and employment involvement together. One would not expect all youths to be both employed and involved in educational programs. Some may be too young for employment; others may have graduated from secondary school or obtained a GED. It is difficult, however, to imagine a positive trajectory for youths who are neither in an educational program nor employed. Table 4.7 shows the percentages of TARGETED RE-ENTRY youths who were neither enrolled in an educational program nor employed, enrolled but not employed, employed but not enrolled, or engaged in both. Here, Alaska and Arkansas stand out by having very few (about 7%) who were not engaged in either school or work activities. Comparable percentages were higher in Alabama (20%) and, especially, Wisconsin (28.4%).

Table 4.7. Productive Engagement (Education and/or Employment) Outcomes (Percent Distribution)					
	Total Sample (n=293)	Alabama (n=45)	Alaska (n=84)	Arkansas (n=83)	Wisconsin (n=81)
Not Enrolled or Employed	15.0	20.0	7.1	7.2	28.4 ^a
Enrolled but not Employed	29.0	6.7	31.0	30.1	38.3
Employed but not Enrolled	11.3	13.3	0.0	19.3	13.6
Enrolled and Employed	44.7	60.0	61.9	43.4	19.8
^a Wisconsin has significantly more youths not enrolled or employed than the other sites (chi-square, p<.05)					

Post-Release Problems During the Program

While it would be unrealistic to expect all youths to remain problem-free while in aftercare programs after release from a juvenile correctional facility, one would like to see most TARGETED RE-ENTRY youths actively engaged in the programs, abstaining from drugs and alcohol, and remaining free of probation violations, new arrests or incarceration. Table 4.8 shows the extent of these problems overall and in each site, as reported on the Monthly Tracking Forms.

Table 4.8. Youth Problems While in Targeted Re-Entry Program					
	Total Sample (n=293)	Alabama (n=45)	Alaska (n=84)	Arkansas (n=83)	Wisconsin (n=81)
Problems Maintaining Contact	51.2	22.2	85.7	47.0	35.8
Drug/Alcohol Use	47.1	37.8	64.3	53.0	28.4
Probation Violations	36.5	11.1	63.1	36.1	23.5
New Arrests	23.5	17.8	26.2	24.1	23.5
Incarcerated	34.5	24.1	50.0	22.9	35.8

“Problems in maintaining contact” were recorded when the Monthly Tracking Forms indicated no contact with a youth for a month or more. Alaska experienced major challenges in keeping connected with the youths, partially because several of the youths were living some

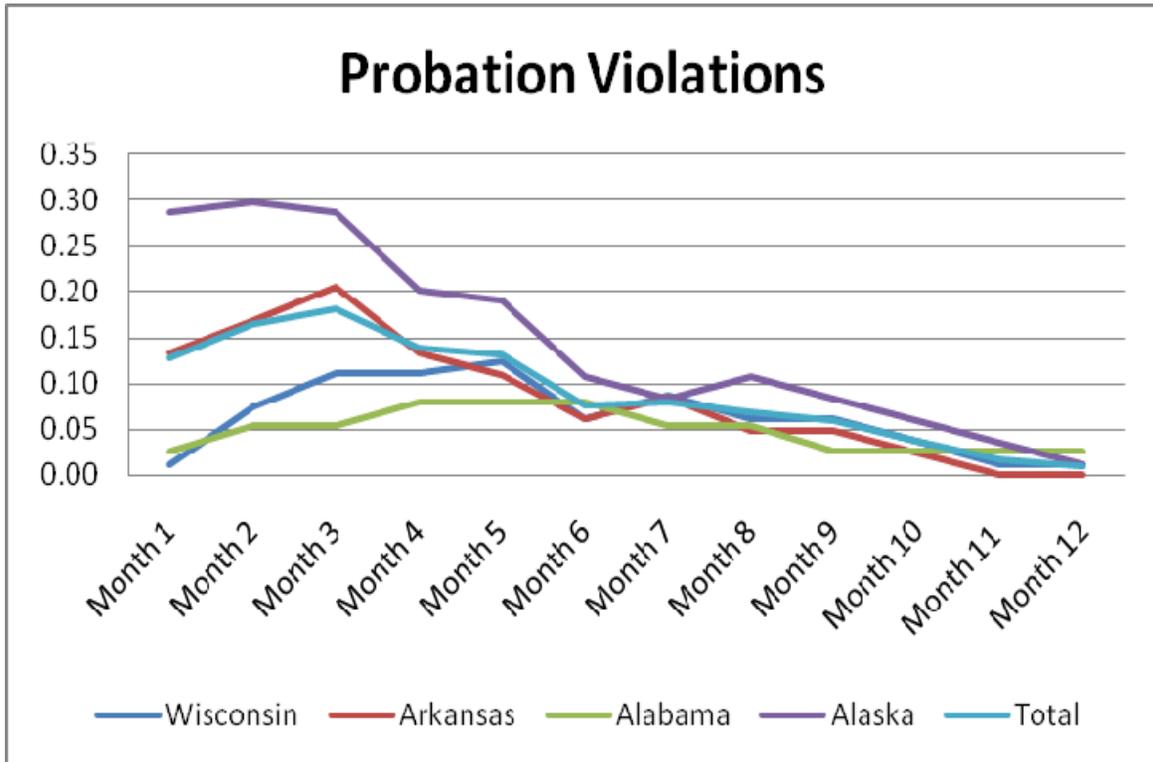
distance away from Anchorage. They reported having at least some difficulties maintaining contact with 85.7% of the youth for at least some period of time. Alabama reported the least difficulty maintaining contact (with only 22.2% of the youth), probably because of having the dedicated Club co-located with the alternative school. The other sites had to rely on outreach by the reentry case managers.

Drug and alcohol use remained problematic for nearly half of the youths overall (47.1%), as reported by staff in the Monthly Tracking Forms. Suspected drug and alcohol use was reported for nearly two-thirds of the Alaska youths (64.3%), more than half of the Arkansas youths (53%), and somewhat fewer of the Alabama and Wisconsin youths (37.8% and 28.4%, respectively).

It is expected that some youths will violate conditions of their probation or parole. That is why the IAP and TR models of intensive aftercare include a system of graduated sanctions and incentives to gradually shape behavior in a positive direction. From Table 4.8, one can see that probation or parole violations were reported for about one-third of the youths (36.5%), with considerable variation across sites. Alaska reported the highest percentage (63.1%) and Alabama the lowest (11.1%), with the others in between (Arkansas, 36.1%; Wisconsin, 23.5%).

Probation and parole violations, however, were much more likely to be reported during the first few months following release than later, as can be seen clearly in Figure 4.3. In Alaska and Arkansas, these violations fell sharply after the first three months post-release.

Figure 4.3. TARGETED RE-ENTRY Youths' Post-Release Probation Violations by Month



On the Monthly Tracking Forms, program staff also noted if a youth had been arrested or incarcerated (including short-term detention, sometimes used as part of a probation violation sanction) during a given month. These data should not be confused with the “recidivism” data obtained from official records to be discussed later in this chapter. Table 4.8 shows that arrests were reported for about one-fourth of the youths (23.5%), while incarceration was reported for relatively more (34.5%). The higher incarceration percentage is due to the use of short-term incarceration for probation violations, particularly in Alabama, Alaska and Wisconsin.

Reasons for Program Termination

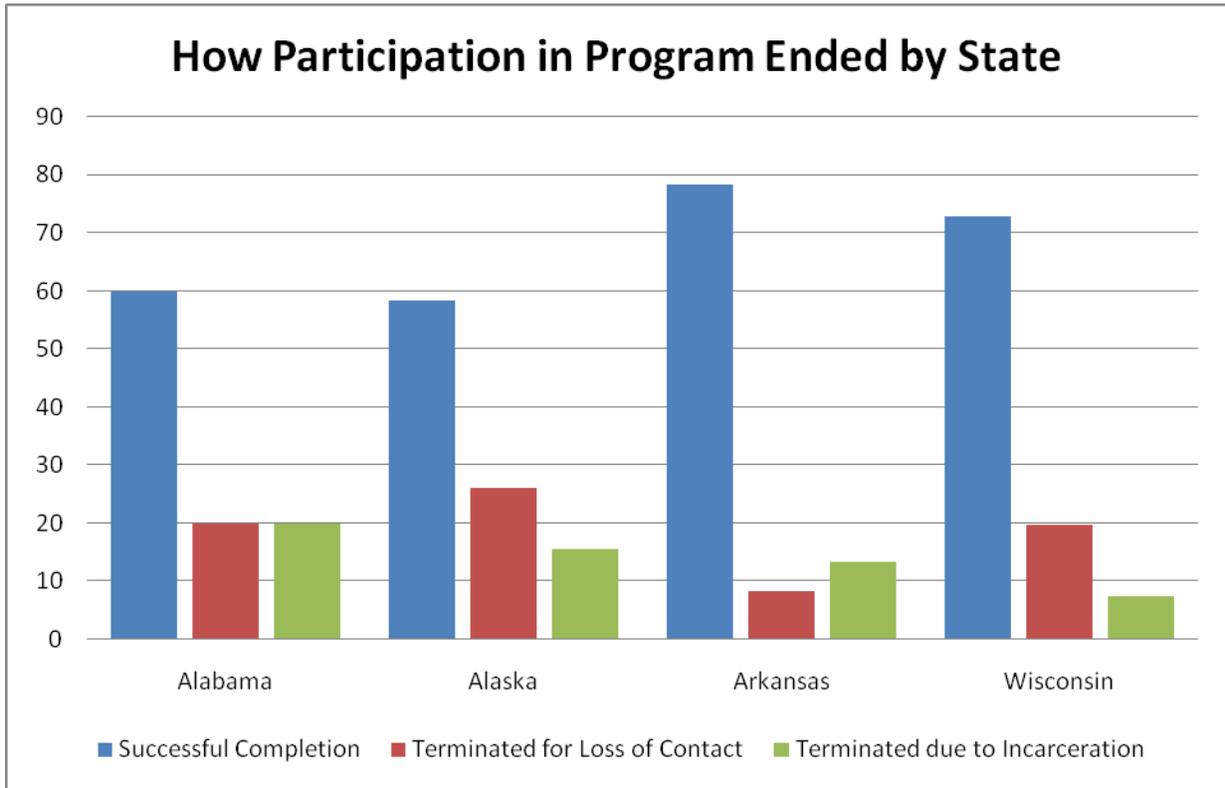
There are three distinct reasons for youths’ termination from the programs, the most favorable of which, of course, is successful completion of the 12-month post-release period. “Failure” is clearly indicated when a youth is terminated as a result of re-incarceration

(termination does not occur as a result of short-term incarceration used as a sanction). More ambiguous are terminations resulting from a prolonged lack of contact. Programs were permitted to terminate cases when there had been no contact for more than two months. It is difficult to fully interpret what this means. Lack of contact may indicate that a youth is returning to old patterns of problematic behavior, but it could also result from a youth’s perception that the support from the program is no longer needed. While these terminations cannot be considered as program “successes,” they also cannot necessarily be interpreted as “failures.” Table 4.9 and Figure 4.4 display the reasons for case termination.

Table 4.9. How Participation in Program Ended					
	Total Sample (n=293)	Alabama (n=45)	Alaska (n=84)	Arkansas (n=83)	Wisconsin (n=81)
Successful Completion	68.3	60.0	58.3	78.3	72.8
Terminated for Loss of Contact	18.4	20.0	26.2	8.4	19.8
Terminated due to Incarceration	13.3	20.0	15.5	13.3	7.4

Overall, more than two-thirds of the youths (68.3%) successfully completed the 12-month, post-release program. The successful completion rates were highest in Arkansas (78.3%) and Wisconsin (72.8%), and well above 50% in each of the other sites (Alabama, 60%; Alaska, 58.3%). Between one-fifth and one-fourth of terminations resulted from a loss of contact, with the exception of Arkansas (only 8.4%). Terminations due to re-incarceration were relatively low (13.3%), especially in Wisconsin (7.4%).

Figure 4.4. Reason for Termination, by Site



POSIT Scales – Baseline and Changes Over Time

As noted in Chapter 2, TR staff were to administer the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT, Gruenewald & Klitzner, 1991) to the youths at four points in time: intake (POSIT 1), release (POSIT 2), 6 months post-release (POSIT 3), and 12-months post-release (POSIT 4). Thus, changes between POSITs 1 and 2 reflect changes during incarceration, whereas POSITs 3 and 4 reflect changes during the post-release follow-up phase in the community. Both TR and comparison group youths received the first two administrations of the POSIT (intake and release) in Arkansas and Wisconsin; TR youths in all sites were to complete the POSIT at two additional follow up times (6-months and 12-months post-release). Because Alabama had no comparison group and the Alaska comparison group consisted of retrospective cases, only the TR youths in these sites received any administration of the POSIT.

The POSIT is a brief screening tool, using a yes/no response format, designed to identify problems and the potential need for service in 10 functional areas (the number of items in each subscale is shown in parentheses):

- Substance Use/Abuse (17)
- Physical Health Status (10)
- Mental Health Status (22)
- Family Relationships (11)
- Peer Relationships (10)
- Educational Status (16)
- Vocational Status (18)
- Social Skills (11)
- Leisure/Recreation (12)
- Aggressive Behavior (16)

POSIT subscales are scored such that higher scores represent a greater degree of problems present. Thus, relatively lower scores mean relatively more favorable results. Scores can range from zero to the maximum number of items per subscale.

Table 4.10 on the next page presents the POSIT results for the TR and comparison groups combined. The most important observation from this Table is that the TR and comparison groups differ on few of the subscale means of the baseline POSIT (POSIT 1), indicating that the two groups were highly comparable on these dimensions. The only significant difference is on the vocational problems subscale, with the comparison group's mean being higher, indicating more problems in this area. Table 4.10 also shows little change between intake and release for the TR youths, whereas the comparison groups show lower means at release (indicating improvement) on several of the subscales. The TR youth's POSIT 2 means are significantly higher than the comparison group's on substance use/abuse, educational status and aggressive behavior. Note, however, that relatively few of the comparison group youths completed the

Table 4.10. POSIT Means for Combined Sample				
	TR (n=293)		Comparison (n=139)	
POSIT Scale	n	Mean	n	Mean
Substance Use/Abuse Scale				
POSIT 1	204	4.9	111	4.5
POSIT 2	181	5.3	57	3.4
POSIT 3	97	3.3		
POSIT 4	91	3.0		
Physical Health Scale				
POSIT 1	204	3.1	111	3.1
POSIT 2	181	3.0	57	2.7
POSIT 3	97	2.8		
POSIT 4	91	2.9		
Mental Health Status Scale				
POSIT 1	204	9.1	111	9.2
POSIT 2	181	8.0	57	8.2
POSIT 3	97	6.3		
POSIT 4	91	5.9		
Family Relationships Scale				
POSIT 1	204	3.2	111	3.4
POSIT 2	181	3.0	57	2.6
POSIT 3	97	3.3		
POSIT 4	91	3.8		
Peer Relationships Scale				
POSIT 1	204	5.2	111	5.1
POSIT 2	181	5.0	57	4.5
POSIT 3	97	3.9		
POSIT 4	91	3.5		
Educational Status Scale				
POSIT 1	204	10.6	111	10.7
POSIT 2	146	9.7	30	9.4
POSIT 3	87	7.8		
POSIT 4	88	8.3		
Vocational Status Scale				
POSIT 1	204	5.8	111	6.6
POSIT 2	146	5.9	30	7.1
POSIT 3	87	5.4		
POSIT 4	88	6.0		
Social Skills Scale				
POSIT 1	204	4.5	111	4.4
POSIT 2	181	4.3	57	4.2
POSIT 3	97	3.6		
POSIT 4	91	3.9		
Leisure and Recreation Scale				
POSIT 1	204	5.2	111	5.0
POSIT 2	181	5.1	57	5.0
POSIT 3	97	5.3		
POSIT 4	91	5.3		
Aggressive Behavior Scale				
POSIT 1	204	7.8	111	7.4
POSIT 2	146	7.3	30	5.5
POSIT 3	87	6.9		
POSIT 4	88	6.4		

Note: Items in **bold** indicate significant differences at $p < .05$ based on t-tests between the TR and comparison groups

POSIT at the time of release, raising the possibility of considerable selection bias in these later scores. TR youths show improvements on several subscales of the follow-up POSITs, including substance abuse, mental health status, peer relationships, educational status, and aggressive behavior. Again, however, the lower response rates suggest possible bias due to attrition here.

Table 4.11, spanning the next two pages, examines the POSIT scores by site. Once again, the high rate of attrition over time mandates caution when interpreting the results of this table. Very little change over time is apparent in the Wisconsin and Alabama TR groups (note that the extremely small number of POSIT 4 respondents from Wisconsin makes these scores meaningless). The Alabama group does show small improvements in the areas of peer relationships and educational status.

The Alaska TR group, however, shows decreases in means over time on most of the subscales, with pronounced decreases in problems related to substance use/abuse, mental health, peer relationships, educational status, and aggressive behavior. Although attrition is high, resulting in a small sample size by the 12-month follow-up time, most of the improvements are apparent at the 6-month follow-up as well.

Because of difficulties in identifying TR cases in a timely manner, as discussed in Chapter 3, the Arkansas TR program was unable to administer the first POSIT to many of the TR youths. One must therefore consider the POSIT 2 as the more meaningful baseline. On the POSIT 2, the Arkansas TR group reported significantly more problems than its comparison group with substance use/abuse and aggressive behavior. The Arkansas TR group shows modest improvement at follow-up on some subscales, including substance use/abuse, mental health, peer relationships, and educational status, but these gains are not as large as those seen in Alaska.

Table 4.11. POSIT Scores by TR Site (Mean Scale Scores)

	Alaska		Arkansas				Wisconsin				Alabama	
	TR (n=84)		TR (n=83)		Comparison (n=89)		TR (n=81)		Comparison (n=50)		TR (n=45)	
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean
POSIT Scale												
Substance Use/Abuse Scale												
POSIT 1	75	6.9	33	4.6	59	4.7	70	3.3	52	4.2	26	3.9
POSIT 2	61	6.7	72	4.2	30	2.3	35	4.9	27	4.7	13	5.7
POSIT 3	31	4.6	34	2.5			10	2.9			22	3.0
POSIT 4	19	3.8	57	2.3			3	3.0			12	5.5
Physical Health Scale												
POSIT 1	75	3.3	33	3.1	59	3.0	70	3.1	52	3.1	26	2.7
POSIT 2	61	3.1	72	3.1	30	2.6	35	3.1	27	2.9	13	2.0
POSIT 3	31	2.7	34	2.2			10	3.7			22	3.4
POSIT 4	19	2.9	57	2.8			3	4.0			12	3.3
Mental Health Status Scale												
POSIT 1	75	9.1	33	9.8	59	9.4	70	9.5	52	9.1	26	7.5
POSIT 2	61	7.0	72	8.5	30	7.1	35	9.0	27	9.5	13	7.5
POSIT 3	31	5.6	34	5.9			10	7.9			22	6.9
POSIT 4	19	5.6	57	5.4			3	13.0			12	7.3
Family Relationships Scale												
POSIT 1	75	3.6	33	3.8	59	3.6	70	2.6	52	3.1	26	3.1
POSIT 2	61	3.0	72	3.0	30	2.7	35	3.2	27	2.6	13	2.4
POSIT 3	31	2.5	34	3.7			10	3.3			22	3.9
POSIT 4	19	2.5	57	4.4			3	1.7			12	3.5
Peer Relationships Scale												
POSIT 1	75	5.6	33	4.8	59	5.0	70	5.0	52	5.3	26	4.8
POSIT 2	61	5.2	72	4.6	30	4.0	35	5.8	27	5.1	13	4.7
POSIT 3	31	4.0	34	3.6			10	5.1			22	3.5
POSIT 4	19	3.6	57	3.2			3	6.3			12	3.8
Educational Status Scale												
POSIT 1	75	11.0	33	11.1	59	11.3	70	10.4	52	10.2	26	9.5
POSIT 2	61	9.2	72	10.2	30	9.4	*	*	*	*	13	9.6
POSIT 3	31	7.7	34	8.2			*	*			22	7.2
POSIT 4	19	7.5	57	8.5			*	*			12	9.0

(continued)

Table 4.11. (cont.). POSIT Scores by TR Site (Mean Scale Scores)

	Alaska		Arkansas				Wisconsin				Alabama	
	TR (n=84)		TR (n=83)		Comparison (n=89)		TR (n=81)		Comparison (n=50)		TR (n=45)	
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean
POSIT Scale												
Vocational Status Scale												
POSIT 1	75	5.6	33	6.5	59	6.8	70	5.6	52	6.3	26	6.2
POSIT 2	61	5.3	72	6.4	30	7.1	*	*	*	*	13	6.2
POSIT 3	31	5.0	34	5.9			*	*			22	5.3
POSIT 4	19	4.5	57	6.6			*	*			12	5.1
Social Skills Scale												
POSIT 1	75	4.8	33	4.6	59	4.5	70	4.2	52	4.2	26	4.2
POSIT 2	61	3.9	72	4.3	30	4.2	35	4.9	27	4.3	13	4.0
POSIT 3	31	3.3	34	3.3			10	5.2			22	3.7
POSIT 4	19	3.1	57	3.9			3	5.3			12	4.7
Leisure and Recreation Scale												
POSIT 1	75	5.5	33	4.8	59	5.1	70	4.9	52	4.8	26	5.5
POSIT 2	61	5.1	72	4.9	30	4.6	35	5.4	27	5.5	13	5.7
POSIT 3	31	5.3	34	5.6			10	5.5			22	4.9
POSIT 4	19	4.8	57	5.6			3	3.7			12	5.3
Aggressive Behavior Scale												
POSIT 1	75	8.2	33	8.3	59	7.1	70	7.5	52	7.7	26	7.1
POSIT 2	61	7.9	72	6.8	30	5.5	*	*	*	*	13	6.7
POSIT 3	31	7.2	34	6.3			*	*			22	7.6
POSIT 4	19	5.1	57	6.6			*	*			12	7.4

*Data not available for this analysis.

Items in **bold** indicate significant differences at $p < .05$ based on t-tests between a TR group and its comparison group

Recidivism Outcomes

As with the evaluation of any criminal or juvenile justice program, a primary goal is to prevent recidivism, that is, a recurrence of offending behavior following participation in the program. Recidivism is not a simple construct, but must be measured in a variety of ways to give a complete picture of a program's effectiveness. This study defines recidivism in multiple ways, all based on follow-up data covering a 12-month period after the release of a youth from a juvenile correctional institution:

1. Occurrence of at least one arrest for a new delinquent or criminal offense (excluding technical violations of probation/parole, status offenses, and traffic offenses) – the key number here is the percentage of youths arrested among various cohorts, that is, by site or by group (TR vs. Comparison Group). This measure is further subdivided by offense seriousness:
 - a. Percentage arrested for a felony-level offense; and
 - b. Percentage arrested for a misdemeanor-level offense.
2. The number of new arrests for delinquent or criminal offenses (with the same exclusions as above) – the key number here is the mean number of new offenses for a given group.
3. The occurrence of a post-release conviction or adjudication within the 12-month follow-up period, overall and by offense level (percent by cohort, as in 1 above).
4. The number of post-release convictions (means by cohort as in 2 above).
5. Seriousness of new offenses resulting in conviction or adjudication in comparison with the seriousness of prior offenses.
6. The mean length of time between release and the first post-release arrest by cohort.

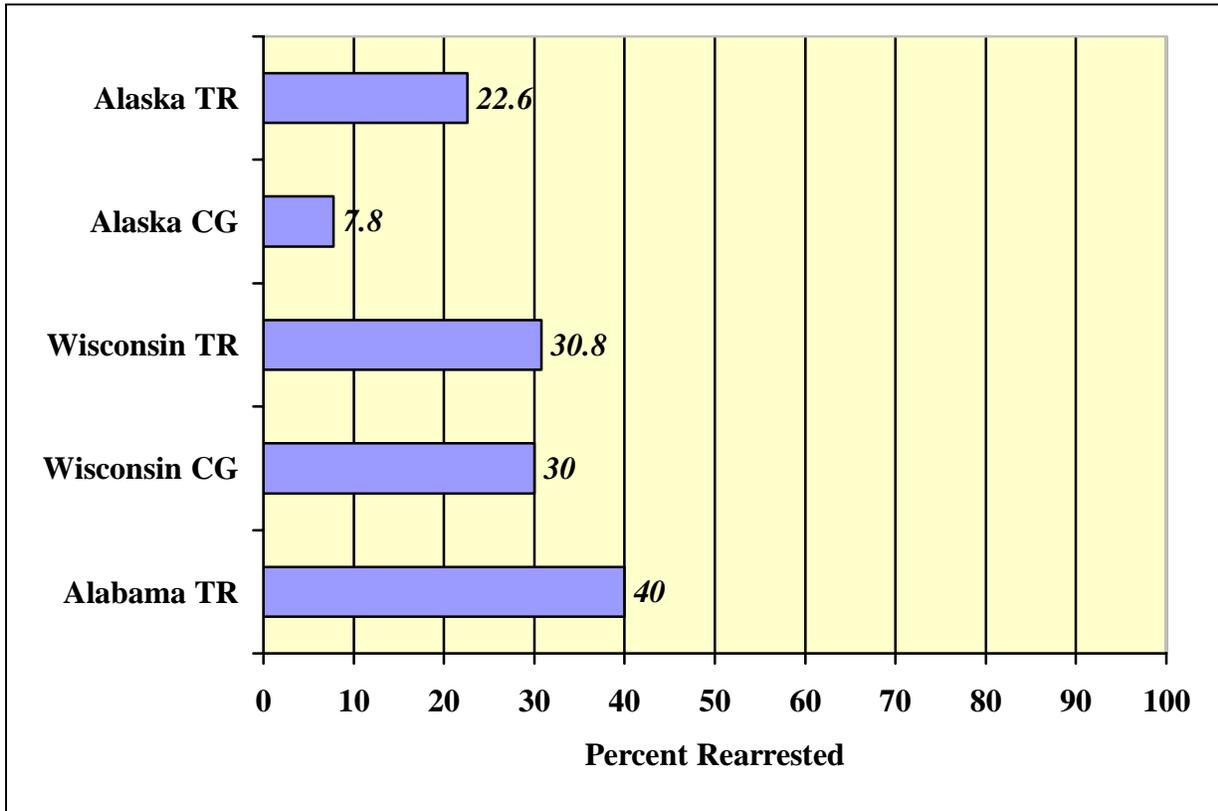
Arrests and Convictions/Re-adjudications for New Offenses

Table 4.12 shows the percentage of youths with post-release arrests and convictions within the 12-month follow-up period. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 give a more visual presentation of the results from Table 4.12. The bars in these figures represent the percentages of each group that were rearrested (Figure 4.5) or convicted/re-adjudicated (Figure 4.6).

Among the TARGETED RE-ENTRY (TR) sites with sufficient data, the percent rearrested was lowest in Alaska (23%), highest in Alabama (40%), with Wisconsin in the middle (31%). For reasons discussed previously, no comparison group was identified for Alabama. In Alaska, the percent rearrested among the comparison group (8%) was significantly lower than in the TR group; in Wisconsin, the comparison group percentage (32%) matched that of the TR group.

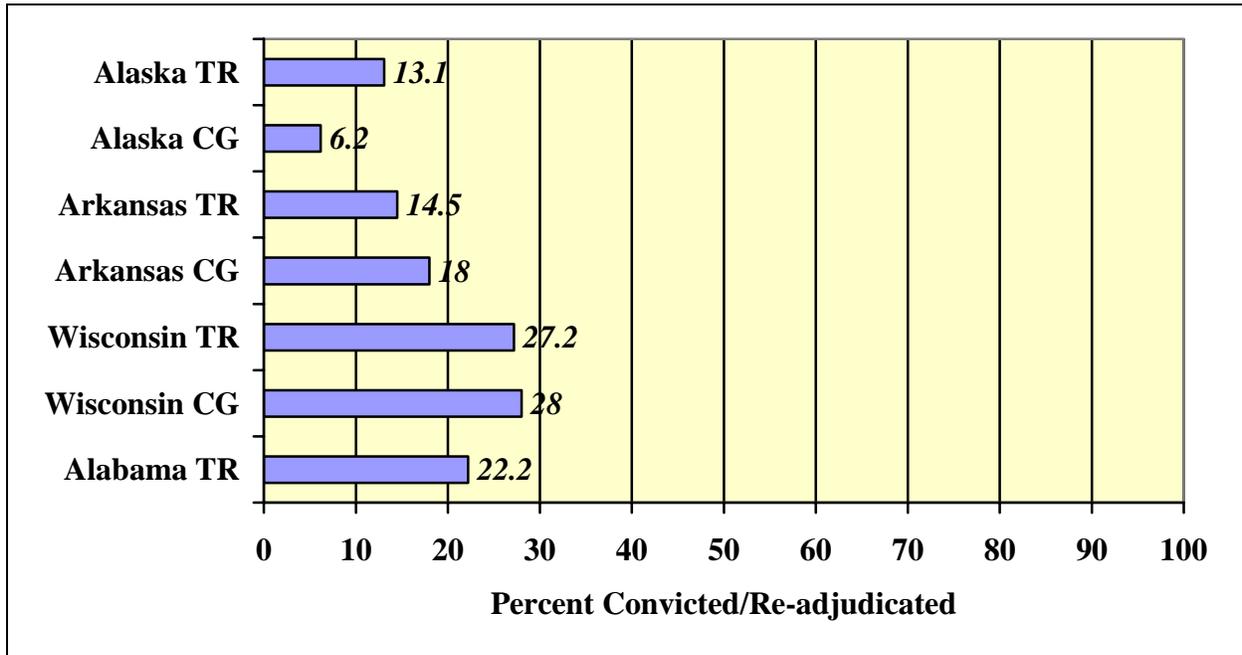
Table 4.12. Percentage of Youth with Subsequent Arrests and Convictions, by Site							
Outcome	Alaska^a		Arkansas		Wisconsin		Alabama
	TR (n=84)	Comparison (n=64)	TR (n=83)	Comparison (n=89)	TR (n=81)	Comparison (n=50)	TR (n=45)
Percent Rearrested, by most serious offense							
Felony	12	2	*	*	16	14	31
Misdemeanor	11	6	*	*	15	18	9
Total	23	8	*	*	31	32	40
Percent Convicted, by most serious offense							
Felony	8	3	6	9	11	12	18
Misdemeanor	5	3	8	8	16	16	4
Total	13	6	14	17	27	28	22
^a In Alaska, the percentage of comparison group cases rearrested is significantly lower than the TR group's percentage (Chi-square, p<.05). *Incomplete data for follow-up arrests for Arkansas.							

Figure 4.5. Percent Rearrested by Site and Group



In terms of post-release convictions/adjudications, the results are somewhat similar. Among the TR youth, the percent reconvicted/re-adjudicated was relatively low in both Alaska (13%) and Arkansas (14%); the respective comparison groups' percentages (Alaska, 6%; Arkansas, 17%) are not significantly different. In Alabama, the percent of TR youth reconvicted/re-adjudicated was slightly higher (22%). In Wisconsin, both the TR and comparison groups showed the highest percentages (27% and 28%, respectively). Overall, the TR groups do not show more favorable percentages than their respective comparison groups.

Figure 4.6. Percent Convicted/Re-adjudicated by Site and Group



Seriousness of New Offenses

Offenses were ordered by seriousness level. From most to least serious, these were: violent felonies, weapons felonies, drug felonies, property felonies, other felonies, and misdemeanors. Technical violations, status offenses and traffic offenses were excluded. The most serious post-release offense that resulted in conviction or adjudication was identified for each youth. Table 4.13 shows the percentage of youths in each site and group whose most serious new offense fell into the various seriousness levels. Overall, misdemeanor level offenses accounted for about half of the youths who were re-adjudicated or convicted for new offenses. Moreover, the most frequent felony level offenses are property offenses. There is very little difference between TR and comparison group youths in Arkansas and Wisconsin, while the seriousness level of the TR youths' offenses in Alaska is slightly higher than that of the comparison group. The Alabama TR youths (there is no comparison group for that site) show the

highest seriousness levels, with the substantial majority of re-adjudications/convictions resulting from felony level offenses.

Outcome	Alaska		Arkansas		Wisconsin		Alabama
	TR (n=84)	Comparison (n=64)	TR (n=83)	Comparison (n=89)	TR (n=81)	Comparison (n=50)	TR (n=45)
Violent felony	1	2	1	3	3	2	2
Weapons felony	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Drug felony	1	0	0	0	4	0	4
Property felony	6	2	5	4	3	6	9
Other felony	0	0	0	2	3	0	2
Misdemeanor	4	4	8	8	16	16	4
No new conviction	88	94	86	83	73	72	78

To capture the seriousness level of post-release offending of youths who had multiple offenses, we examine the mean number of arrests and convictions/re-adjudications by offense level for each group. These results appear in Table 4.14. It is clear that there are no striking differences between TR and comparison group youths in any of the sites. While the means are slightly higher for the TR youths than their respective comparison cohorts, these differences do not approach statistical significance.

Outcome	Alaska		Arkansas		Wisconsin		Alabama
	TR (n=84)	Comparison (n=64)	TR (n=83)	Comparison (n=89)	TR (n=81)	Comparison (n=50)	TR (n=45)
Arrests							
Felony	0.3	0.1	*	*	0.3	0.2	0.9 ^a
Misdemeanor	0.3	0.2	*	*	0.3	0.2	0.6
Total	0.6	0.3	*	*	0.5	0.4	1.4 ^a
Convictions							
Felony	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3
Misdemeanor	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
Total	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
*Incomplete data for follow-up arrests for Arkansas. ^a The Alabama mean is significantly higher on these measures than those of the other sites; TR groups (t-tests, post hoc comparison of means, p<.05).							

In their earlier evaluation of IAP programs in Colorado, Nevada and Virginia, Wiebush et al. (2005, p. 59) constructed two weighted recidivism scores as a composite of both the frequency and seriousness of re-offending. One of these included all offenses, including technical violations, status offenses and traffic offenses; the other, labeled “criminal offense recidivism score” included only felonies and misdemeanors. This latter index was replicated here, using the seriousness levels discussed above. Weights were assigned to each criminal offense level, based upon its relative seriousness, as follows:

- Violent felony: 12 points
- Drug or weapons felony: 8 points.
- Property or other felony: 6 points.
- Violent or weapons misdemeanor: 4 points.
- Other misdemeanor: 3 points.

(Wiebush et al., 2005, p. 59).

A value for each of a youth’s arrests (in Arkansas, convictions) was thus assigned, and these were combined across all arrests to yield the weighted criminal offense score. Youths with no arrests received a score of 0. The mean weighted criminal offense score for each group is shown in Table 4.15. Here the results suggest no difference between TR and comparison group youths in Arkansas and slightly higher recidivism among TR youths than comparison group youths in Alaska and Wisconsin. The scores for the Alabama TR youths are significantly higher than those of all the other groups, and approach the levels found in the Wiebush et al. (2005) study.

Outcome	Alaska		Arkansas		Wisconsin		Alabama
	TR (n=84)	Comparison (n=64)	TR (n=83)	Comparison (n=89)	TR (n=81)	Comparison (n=50)	TR (n=45)
Recidivism score	2.8	1.5	1.6	1.5	3.4	2.1	8.7 ^a

^a The Alabama mean is significantly higher than the other sites’ TR group means (t-test, post-hoc comparisons of means, p<.05).

In terms of the seriousness of subsequent offenses, it may also be of interest to see if these are more or less serious than prior offenses. Even if a program does not show a reduction in recidivism in terms of the percentage of youths who reoffend, it may lay some claim to effectiveness if the subsequent offending is less serious. Table 4.16 compares the overall TR and comparison group youths in terms of changes in offense seriousness. From this table it can be seen that the percentage of TR youths whose subsequent offenses were less serious is greater (13%) than the percentage of those whose subsequent offenses were more serious (4.8%). The same can be said for the comparison group, however (7.4% decreased in offense seriousness; 3.4% increased).

Table 4.16. Change in Offense Seriousness, TR vs. Comparison Group Overall (Percent Distribution)				
Change from Most Serious Prior to Most Serious Recidivism Offense	TR (n=293)		Comparison (n=203)	
	n	%	n	%
Missing data	23	7.8	6	3.0
Increase in severity	14	4.8	7	3.4
No change in severity	2	0.7	5	2.5
Reduction in severity	38	13.0	15	7.4
No new offense	216	73.7	170	83.7

Table 4.17 shows similar results for change in offense seriousness by site and group. Since data on prior offending were lacking from Alabama, that site is not included in this table. While all three TR sites in this table show higher percentages of youths with reductions in offense seriousness than increases, this is especially pronounced in Alaska, where 19 out of 21 youths who reoffended had new offenses that were less serious than their most serious prior offense. However, this was matched by their comparison group (4 out of 5 who reoffended had less serious new offenses).

Change from Most Serious Prior Offense to Most Serious Recidivism Offense	Alaska				Arkansas				Wisconsin			
	TR (n=84)		Comparison (n=64)		TR (n=83)		Comparison (n=89)		TR (n=81)		Comparison (n=50)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Missing data	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	6	7.4	6	12.0
Increase in severity	1	1.2	0	0.0	3	3.6	6	6.7	9	11.1	1	2.0
No change	1	1.2	1	1.6	1	1.2	4	4.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Reduction in severity	19	22.6	4	6.2	6	7.2	3	3.4	10	12.3	8	16.0
No new offense	63	75.0	59	92.2	72	86.7	76	85.4	56	69.1	35	70.0

Note: Alabama is not included in this table because insufficient data on commitment and prior offenses were obtained from that site.

Time to New Offenses

Another aspect of recidivism is the length of time between release and subsequent offenses. Even if it does not show impressive results in terms of the percentages of youths who reoffend or the rate of reoffending, a program may be considered effective if it delays the onset of reoffending beyond what would otherwise occur. Table 4.18 shows the average number of days to first re-arrest for each group in each site. The first row of the table shows the average number of days to the first arrest for a felony-level offense while the second shows the average number of days to the first arrest for any misdemeanor or felony-level offense. These times, generally between 10 and 12 months, are considerably longer than the comparable findings (between 5 and 6 months to arrest for any criminal offense; between 7.5 and 9 months to first felony arrest) reported in the previous IAP evaluation (Wiebush et al., 2005). The results show no difference in time to re-arrest between the TR and comparison groups in Arkansas. The time to first arrest for any criminal offense is about two months shorter for the TR youths in Alaska (310.1 days) than for their comparison group (353.8 days), and about one month shorter for the TR group in Wisconsin (311.8 days) than for their comparison group (343.1 days).

Table 4.18. Mean Days to First Rearrest, by Site and Offense Type							
Days to first:	Alaska^a		Arkansas^b		Wisconsin		Alabama
	TR (n=84)	Comparison (n=64)	TR (n=83)	Comparison (n=89)	TR (n=81)	Comparison (n=50)	TR (n=45)
Felony arrest	343.8	363.4	354.6	353.2	342.4	359.3	340.3
Criminal arrest	310.1	353.8	339.2	344.2	311.8	343.1	274.0
<p>^a For Alaska, the differences between TR and comparison cases are significant on both measures (t-tests, p<.05)</p> <p>^b For Arkansas, numbers are days to first arrest for offenses that led to conviction.</p>							

Recidivism and Risk Levels

Recall that the intensive level of aftercare programming in TARGETED RE-ENTRY, derived from the IAP model, are intended to serve high-risk youth. The literature suggests that intensive services delivered to low-risk youths may backfire, leading to higher rates of recidivism than would otherwise be observed. In the current study, there are two potential issues to examine concerning risk and recidivism. First, did the TR programs in fact serve relatively high-risk youths, and second, were the respective TR and comparison groups in each site comparable in terms of risk?

The risk level of the youth in this study was calculated based on the Indiana Department of Correction Initial Risk Assessment for the Juvenile Division. This instrument was developed and validated by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and has been in use for seven years. The instrument provides a summary classification of the youths in four risk categories: low, medium, high, and very high risk. There are nine components that sum together for the total risk score. The components are as follows:

- R1. Age at First True Finding: the age of the youth at the time of the first true finding in juvenile court. If the youth was 13 or younger, they receive 1 point. Otherwise they receive 0 points.

- R2. Total Number of True Findings: includes all delinquent and status offenses (does not include any probation or parole violations or dismissed charges). If the total number is four or more, then the youth receives 3 points. If the total number is 2 or 3, then the youth receives 1 point. If the youth has only one true finding, then there are 0 points assigned.
- R3. Total Number of True Findings for Specific Delinquent Acts: the focus here is on the history for specific delinquent acts such as drugs, auto theft, other theft, battery, and weapons. Youth were scored based on the number of different categories they fit into. If they had acts in three or more categories, they received 3 points. If they had true findings in one or two categories, then they received one point. If their true findings did not fall into any of the categories listed here, they received 0 points.
- R4. Total Number of True Findings for Probation and Parole Violations: Would not include violations of predisposition conditional release. If there are two or more, then the youth is assigned 1 point. Otherwise, there are 0 points assigned.
- R5. Age at time of most recent DOC commitment: this is the age at the time of the current commitment—2 points assigned if the youth is 14 or younger, 0 points otherwise.
- R6. Educational Functioning: the key question here is whether the youth is functioning at the age-appropriate grade level in school. If the youth has ever repeated a grade or tests below the expected grade level, or is diagnosed with exceptional educational needs, then the youth receives one point for this section. Otherwise, the youth is assigned 0 points.
- R7. Substance Abuse: this item seeks to determine if the youth has been diagnosed as being dependent on alcohol or drugs. If diagnosed as dependent, then 2 points are assigned. Otherwise, 0 points are assigned.
- R8. Behavioral Problems: this would identify the youth with specific behavior problems as documented in official records. Youth were assigned 1 point if there was any indication of being withdrawn, exhibiting oppositional behavior, or being verbally abusive; 0 otherwise.
- R9. Family Criminality: Youth assigned 1 point if parents or siblings are currently incarcerated or on probation or parole; 0 otherwise.

The points from the nine sections are totaled for a combined risk score. If the total is between 10 and 15, then the youth is classified as very high risk. If the total is between 7 and 9, they are classified as high risk. If the total is between 4 and 6, they are classified as medium risk. If the total is less than 4, then they are classified as low risk.

A series of tables beginning on page 96 presents the distribution of each group on several variables related to risk, then looks at how the groups are distributed on the composite index of risk level described above, and, finally, shows the relationship between level of risk and the weighted recidivism scores for each group. Unfortunately, risk data were unavailable for 35 of the 45 Alabama youth, so this group is not included in these tables. In addition, most risk variables were unavailable for the Alaska comparison group.

Table 4.19 suggests that there are differences across sites, and between TR and comparison cases within sites, in the distribution of cases on the various risk factors. Considering the TR cases across sites first, it is apparent that the Alaska group has more youths who entered the system at an early age, had more prior findings, probation violations, substance abuse problems, and other family members criminally involved than the Arkansas or Wisconsin groups. The latter groups appear highly similar on these risk factors.

Considering the TR vs. comparison groups in each site, there are few risk factors for which data are available for the Alaska comparison group. On the few factors where data are available, the TR group appears to be higher risk (younger age at first true finding, more variety in prior delinquent acts and more prior probation/parole violations) than the comparison group. In Arkansas, the two groups appear quite similar across the risk factors. In Wisconsin, relatively more of the TR youths show problems in educational functioning, substance abuse, behavioral problems, and family criminality than do the comparison group youths, suggesting that the TR group is higher risk. On the other hand, the comparison group contains a higher percentage of youth who entered the system at a younger age.

Table 4.20 shows the distribution of cases across these risk levels for the TR and comparison groups in each site, excluding the Alaska comparison group and the Alabama group

for which sufficient data were lacking. From this table it is clear that only the Alaska TR program was serving relatively high risk youth. Nearly all (about 89%) were either High Risk or Very High Risk. On the other hand, in both Arkansas and Wisconsin, the large majority of cases (about 83%) were Low or Medium Risk. The comparison groups in these two sites also predominantly contained Low or Medium Risk youth.

Finally, Table 4.21 shows the relationship between risk level and the weighted recidivism score for each group. In the Alaska TR group, the recidivism score is considerably higher for the Very High Risk youth than for the High Risk youth. In the other sites' TR groups, the relationship between risk and recidivism appears to be inverse, with the Low Risk youth showing the highest recidivism scores. Recidivism appears to increase somewhat with higher risk levels among the comparison group youth.

Table 4.19. Risk Factors by Site and Group (Percent Distribution)

	Alaska				Arkansas				Wisconsin			
	TR (n=84)		Comparison (n=64)		TR (n=83)		Comparison (n=89)		TR (n=81)		Comparison (n=50)	
Youth characteristic	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age at first true finding												
14 or older	51	60.7	50	78.1	72	87.8	84	94.4	46	73.0	24	57.1
13 or younger	33	39.3	14	21.9	10	12.2	5	5.6	17	27.0	18	42.9
Missing					1				18		8	
Number of True Findings												
One	2	2.4	3	4.5	33	40.2	35	39.3	23	36.5	14	33.3
Two or three	6	7.1	5	7.6	34	41.5	40	44.9	29	46.0	17	40.5
Four or more	76	90.5	58	87.9	15	18.3	14	15.7	11	17.5	11	26.2
Missing					1				18		8	
Specific Delinquent Acts												
No categories	1	1.2	29	43.9	24	29.3	28	31.5	23	36.5	8	19.0
One or two categories	50	59.5	35	53.0	57	69.5	59	66.3	39	61.9	32	76.2
Three or more categories	33	39.3	2	3.0	1	1.2	2	2.2	1	1.6	2	4.8
Missing					1				18		8	
Probation/Parole Violations												
None or one	17	20.2	43	65.2	81	98.8	88	98.9	63	100.0	42	100.0
Two or more	67	79.8	23	34.8	1	1.2	1	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Missing					1				18		8	
Age at commitment												
15 or older	74	88.1	56	87.5	65	78.3	79	88.8	52	80.0	40	95.2
14 or younger	10	11.9	8	12.5	17	21.7	10	11.2	13	20.0	2	4.8
Missing					1				16		8	
Educational Functioning												
No problem	37	44.0	*	*	28	34.1	37	41.6	24	35.3	24	55.8
Problem	47	56.0	*	*	54	65.9	52	58.4	44	64.7	19	44.2
Missing					1				13		7	
Substance Abuse												
Not dependent	15	17.9	*	*	49	59.0	43	48.3	40	60.6	34	81.0
Dependent	69	82.1	*	*	33	41.0	46	51.7	26	39.4	8	19.0
Missing					1				15		8	
Behavioral problems												
None	60	71.4	*	*	63	76.8	61	68.5	54	83.1	38	86.4
One or more problems	24	28.6	*	*	19	23.2	28	31.5	11	16.9	6	13.6
Missing					1				16		6	
Family Criminality												
Not currently involved	46	54.8	*	*	65	79.3	80	89.9	41	65.1	35	83.3
Currently involved	38	45.2	*	*	17	20.7	9	10.1	22	34.9	7	16.7
Missing									18		8	

*Data not available for this analysis.

Table 4.20. Distribution of Risk Categorization (with percent distribution), by Site												
Risk Level	Alaska				Arkansas				Wisconsin			
	TR (n=84)		Comparison (n=64)		TR (n=83)		Comparison (n=89)		TR (n=81)		Comparison (n=50)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low Risk	0	0.0	*	*	36	43.9	38	42.7	27	42.9	21	50.0
Medium Risk	12	14.3	*	*	32	39.0	40	44.9	25	39.7	18	42.9
High Risk	36	42.9	*	*	14	17.1	11	12.4	9	14.3	3	7.1
Very High Risk	36	42.9	*	*	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.2	0	0.0

*Data not available for this analysis.

Table 4.21. Distribution of Weighted Recidivism Scores by Risk Category, by Site												
Risk Level	Alaska				Arkansas				Wisconsin			
	TR (n=84)		Comparison (n=64)		TR (n=83)		Comparison (n=89)		TR (n=81)		Comparison (n=50)	
	n	Score	n	Score	n	Score	n	Score	n	Score	n	Score
Low Risk	0	*	*	*	36	2.0	38	1.5	27	5.7	21	1.0
Medium Risk	12	3.8	*	*	32	1.3	40	1.6	25	2.9	18	1.5
High Risk	36	1.4	*	*	14	1.1	11	0.9	9	0.9	3	3.7
Very High Risk	36	3.9	*	*	0	*	0	*	2	0.0	0	*

*Data not available for this analysis.

TR Group Recidivism by Post-Release Adjustment

One might expect that post-release recidivism would be related to how engaged the youths were with the programs and with positive activities such as education and employment. Recall that sites reported a substantial proportion of youths with whom they had problems maintaining contact. Although most TR youths were involved in either educational or employment activities, or both, there was a small percentage who were not. Of those whose age (17 and older post-release) indicated its relevance, some had earned a high school diploma or GED but many had not. Table 4.22 examines the relationship between these indicators of post-release adjustment and several measures of recidivism.

Table 4.22. Recidivism Indicators by Post-Release Adjustment						
Recidivism Measure (Means)	Problems maintaining contact w/ program		Involvement in Education or Employment		Obtained GED or HS diploma (age 17+)	
	Yes (n=147)	No (n=140)	Yes (n=248)	No (n=39)	Yes (n=67)	No (n=119)
Weighted Recidivism Score	2.93	3.58	2.67	6.88	2.28	3.24
Days from release to first arrest	310	319	317	295	344	303
Number of felony arrests	0.35	0.33	0.27	0.71	0.24	0.39
Number of total arrests	0.68	0.71	0.58	1.26	0.40	0.67
Number of felony convictions	0.18	0.13	0.14	0.26	0.01	0.22
Number of total convictions	0.37	0.34	0.33	0.51	0.28	0.38
Note: <i>Bold italics</i> represent significant differences in means (t-tests; p<.05)						

Although there appears to be no relationship between contact problems and any measure of recidivism, the other two adjustment indicators show a consistent pattern. Youths involved in education or employment and those who have obtained a high school degree or diploma show lower levels of recidivism than their counterparts on all measures. Several of these comparisons are significant. Youths involved in education or employment have significantly lower mean weighted recidivism scores than those who are not (2.67 vs. 6.88), and their mean number of total arrests are significantly lower (.58 vs. 1.26). TR youths who obtained their high school

diploma or GED show a significantly longer time to first arrest than do those who did not (344 days vs. 303 days), as well as a significantly lower mean number of both felony convictions (.01 vs. .22) and total convictions (.22 vs. .38).

Chapter 5. Discussion and Implications

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America's TARGETED RE-ENTRY Initiative (TR), building upon the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model of Altschuler and Armstrong (1994a; 1994b; 2004) as a foundation, used Boys & Girls Club staff as the reentry case managers assisting youths with the transition from state juvenile correctional facilities and their home communities in four states (Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas and Wisconsin). This process and outcome evaluation occurred during the first four years of these programs (2004-2007). The study's goals were to document the development of these programs in these sites, monitor the fidelity of TR model implementation, and assess the effectiveness of the programs in terms of recidivism reduction, pro-social youth outcomes, and benefits for the local juvenile justice systems.

This study is the second major attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of a juvenile reentry approach derived from the IAP model. In the first, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) evaluated three IAP pilot sites (Denver, Colorado; Las Vegas, Nevada, and Norfolk, Virginia) over a five-year period, using an experimental design with random assignment to IAP and a control group in each site (Wiebush et al., 2005). Wiebush et al. (2005) concluded that the IAP model was reasonably well implemented in all sites yet IAP participants did not demonstrate lower rates of recidivism in terms of the proportion arrested, number of arrests, offense seriousness, or re-incarceration within a 12-month follow-up period. They found that recidivism rates were high for both the IAP and control groups; between 50 and 60 percent were arrested for felony offenses and between 80 and 85 percent were arrested for some type of offense (Wiebush et al., 2005, p. v). These disappointing results were tempered somewhat by cautions related to small sample sizes and by the observation that many youths in the control

groups may have received enhanced parole services as well (Wiebush et al., 2005). Finally, there was some evidence that, among the IAP participants, those who received higher levels of services both pre- and post-release showed lower rates of recidivism (Wiebush et al., 2005).

Like the NCCD study, there is limited evidence from the results of this study to support the hypothesis that the TARGETED RE-ENTRY approach reduces recidivism beyond what otherwise would be expected. Recidivism rates across the board were much lower in this study than in the NCCD evaluation. Between 18 and 40 percent of the TR and comparison group youths were arrested for any new offense during the first 12 months following release, and the percentage of reconvictions/re-adjudications ranged from 13 to 28 percent. In addition, most of the offenses for which youths were re-arrested were less serious than their prior offenses had been. However, on most of the recidivism measures, the comparison groups showed similar or more favorable outcomes than did the TTR groups.

Based on a number of factors, no real conclusion as to the effectiveness of the model or Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Targeted Re-Entry program can be drawn. Before concluding that this reentry model is ineffective, one must consider other possible explanations for the lack of supportive evidence. First, like the Intensive Aftercare Program model from which it was derived, the TR approach was intended for use with high-risk youth. There is consistent evidence from a number of other studies that applying intensive interventions with relatively low-risk youths produces increases in recidivism (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990; Dowden & Andrews, 1999; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004). Only Alaska clearly served relatively high-risk youths (89% high or very high risk). The vast majority of youths in Arkansas and Wisconsin were either low or moderate risk. While insufficient data were provided from Alabama to construct the risk index, available data suggests that the risk level of most of their cases would have fallen

somewhere in the moderate to high risk range. Alaska's recidivism rates are somewhat better than those of the other sites, lending support to this interpretation. However, they are no better than those of the Alaska comparison group.

Second, perhaps the lack of support for the recidivism reduction hypothesis could be the result of poorly matched comparison groups or overlap in services between some TR and comparison youths. The lack of an identified comparison group for the Alabama site weakens the design of the study. From the results reported for the other sites, the comparison groups in Arkansas and Wisconsin appear to match the TR groups well in terms of demographic and risk factors. In these two sites, however, there were instances where members of the comparison group would approach a TR staff person after they were released from confinement and ask for some type of assistance due to the relationship that had been established while the youth was incarcerated. Because of their training as Boys & Girls Club staff, the TR staff were reluctant to turn the youth away and would provide the assistance. This means that some comparison group members received some of the same services as TR participants, contaminating them as true comparison subjects. The retrospective Alaska comparison group was less well-matched to the TR cases. Sufficient data regarding the risk profiles of the Alaska comparison youths were not available. Yet it appears likely that the Alaska comparison group contained youths who were lower risk than the TR youths and from different community contexts. Perhaps the Alaska TR recidivism results would have been more impressive with a better-matched comparison group.

Third, this study shares some of the same methodological caveats as did the NCCD study – relatively low statistical power due to small sample sizes and the possibility that comparison group youths also received some transition and aftercare service enhancements as well. This latter caveat applies especially to Alaska, where the well-established Transition Services Unit at

McLaughlin served all youths, with the only major difference for the TR youths being the involvement of the Boys & Girls Club's components. In addition, shortly after the beginning of the TR programs, both Wisconsin and Arkansas attempted statewide enhancements to reentry that may have been responsible for the relatively successful outcomes for the comparison group cases as well.

Fourth, the questionable quality of some of the follow-up recidivism data must be acknowledged. The Alaska and Alabama recidivism data are the most complete and reliable. Portions of the data from the other sites are missing or questionable. In particular, juvenile arrest data were not provided from Arkansas; complete coverage of juvenile court re-adjudications in Wisconsin is suspect.

While the results of this evaluation do not provide compelling evidence that the TR approach was effective in these sites, they do not warrant dismissal of the model. It does not appear that TR was as well implemented as was IAP in the NCCD study. With the exception of Alaska, each site exhibited implementation gaps, as discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this report. It is also noteworthy that results showed that when youths in these programs could complete secondary education and be effectively engaged in educational or employment activities, recidivism was low.

It should be noted that, considering all of the findings from both the process evaluation and the outcome evaluation in light of the interpretive cautions discussed above, one could claim that the Alaska TR program was effective. It was extremely well implemented in most respects, with excellent integration of reentry practices and partners into the culture of the McLaughlin facility. Serving the highest-risk youths in this study, its recidivism results are the best among the sites. Although maintaining steady contact with the Alaska TR youths was a challenge for the

reentry staff, nearly all were actively engaged in education or employment, and they showed the highest rate of attainment of a high school diploma or GED.

Implementing effective juvenile reentry programming is extremely difficult. A relatively large number of collaborative partners must gain a common, thorough understanding of relatively abstract principles and must create systems of working together to translate those principles into operational practices. Moreover, these principles and practices must be sustained across time and individuals. The principles embodied in IAP and TR are theoretically well-grounded, and the practices are intuitively congruent with practice wisdom. To implement this reentry model well, those on the front lines, the case managers, must be highly skilled, creative, and supported with adequate resources.

Recommendations

From the evaluation of TR in these four sites, some recommendations and best practices can be derived that may benefit others who would attempt to implement such programs:

1. **Extensive site preparation is required.** The collaborative nature of the best developed reentry models (IAP and TR) means that key stakeholders must be cultivated carefully, educated thoroughly in the overall principles of the model, and required to commit to supporting and sustaining implementation. At a minimum, these stakeholders include the case management provider, juvenile corrections top administrators and facility leadership, parole or probation (whichever has post-release supervision authority), and a network of community agencies relevant to the key life domains of the youths (e.g., education, jobs and job training, mental health and substance abuse providers, etc.). Before implementation begins, there should be an

- agreement on roles, and memoranda of understanding that document the nature of the collaborative relationships.
2. **A site needs to have a credible reentry “champion.”** There must be someone locally who is thoroughly trained in the reentry model being implemented and who has the time commitment and the authority/credibility to keep the program on track. This person must be able to get and maintain the attention of stakeholders to facilitate and guide troubleshooting as the inevitable implementation challenges emerge.
 3. **Buy-in from the juvenile correctional system is necessary.** Juvenile correction facility staff and leadership must be receptive to the inclusion of a reentry model in their facility and there must be genuine collaboration between facility and reentry staff. It is important that both partners realize the program is for the benefit and success of the young people, and not an effort to “take over” the facility or eliminate facility staff jobs.
 4. **Collaboration requires continuous management.** There are two levels at which collaboration must be maintained: direct service and administrative. At the direct service level, staff from those agencies who serve on youths’ transition teams need to have an opportunity to manage issues that arise from experience with several youths. At the administrative level, the leadership of the collaborating agencies must stay informed about implementation progress and challenges, and collectively brainstorm solutions to problems and conflicts that emerge. The direct service collaborative should meet monthly; the administrative collaborative could meet less frequently, perhaps quarterly. Both groups require someone to organize meetings, solicit agenda information, and record minutes documenting issues raised and decisions made.

5. Training should occur at regular intervals throughout the program period.

Reentry models are complex in their design, and even more complex to actually implement. It is easy for staff to lose the big picture of the model's principles as they grapple with day-to-day challenges of working with the youths and partners.

Moreover, some turnover is to be expected, not only among the program staff but also among the collaborating agencies. As new people come on board, they need to be brought quickly up to speed. Training need not be delivered only by national level consultants; a train-the-trainer approach could develop local training capacity.

6. A formal job analysis should be done. Reentry case management is difficult, requiring a range of knowledge and skills. Care should be taken to determine the required and desired qualifications of the case management staff, and salaries should be commensurate with these qualifications.

7. A detailed, written policies and procedures manual should be developed either before implementation or during the early phase of implementation. Developing such a manual is a major undertaking, and should involve the participation of the individuals who will play the key roles in implementation under the guidance of an experienced consultant.

8. Quality control procedures should be developed and used. At least two levels of quality control can be used in these programs. At the first level, direct supervision should provide opportunities for reinforcing details of the model and overseeing implementation fidelity. At a broader level, someone, either the local "champion" or an outside consultant, should periodically review case files and talk with staff to monitor implementation fidelity.

- 9. Eligibility for TR services should be limited to those youths who are clearly high-risk.** Risk levels should be based on an established risk assessment instrument administered at the time of commitment to a juvenile correctional institution.
- 10. Individualized transition plans must be tied to consistent assessment practices and these assessments should cover risks, needs, AND strengths.** Moreover, these transition plans must be collaboratively developed by transition teams including not only the relevant system professionals (e.g., case manger, facility staff, parole/probation), but also representatives of relevant community agencies, the youths and their families. These plans must be reviewed periodically and updated as needed.
- 11. The community phase of TR must be accompanied by congruent probation/parole policies, including a system of graduated sanctions and incentives.** Probation/parole violations should not be filed on every infraction (as seemed to be the case in Alaska), but there must be some continued supervision by probation or parole, at least for the first few months after release (as was not the case in Arkansas).
- 12. Engagement of youths in meaningful educational and/or employment activities is essential.** Although transition plans should be individualized, as noted above, the educational and employment arenas are universally important, as evident in the results of this study.
- 13. Decisions should be data driven.** Reentry program stakeholders should develop a consensus around what data elements will be used to track implementation and outcomes, and put in place systems to collect and report on these indicators. These

data should be periodically examined for trends that suggest programmatic areas that may need improvement.

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