

Most High Risk Youth Referred to Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. Remain Arrest Free and in their Communities During YAP Participation

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Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) provides community-based services for high-risk youth in order to reduce the juvenile justice system's over-reliance on expensive and ineffective out-of-home placements. In addition, by helping families learn to utilize the resources in their own communities, YAP seeks to contribute to clients' well-being long after they are discharged from YAP's program.

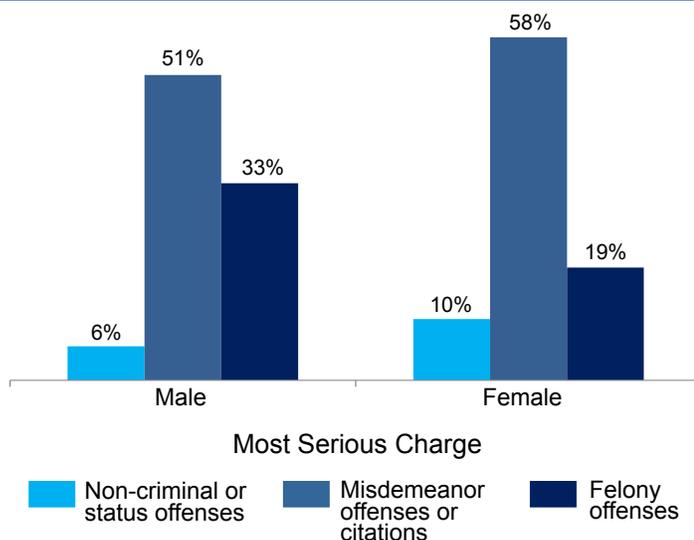
Young people face a number of challenges that lead to their enrollment in YAP. The Research & Evaluation Center at John Jay College examined a sample of 3,523 juvenile justice referred YAP cases between the ages of 11 and 18 years old. The data suggests that YAP stays true to its mission of serving the highest-risk youth in need of intensive community-based services. Indeed, while net-widening (the dominance of lower risk clients) often is apparent in community-based alternatives, many judicial authorities have demonstrated confidence in referring higher risk youth to YAP.

Approximately 90% of the young people in the sample analyzed by John Jay entered YAP with a prior legal disposition: 30% had a felony disposition, 53% had a misdemeanor disposition, and 7% had at least one status offense. In addition to prior adjudications, 21% of the clients referred to YAP in the John Jay sample had at least one prior out-of-home placement.

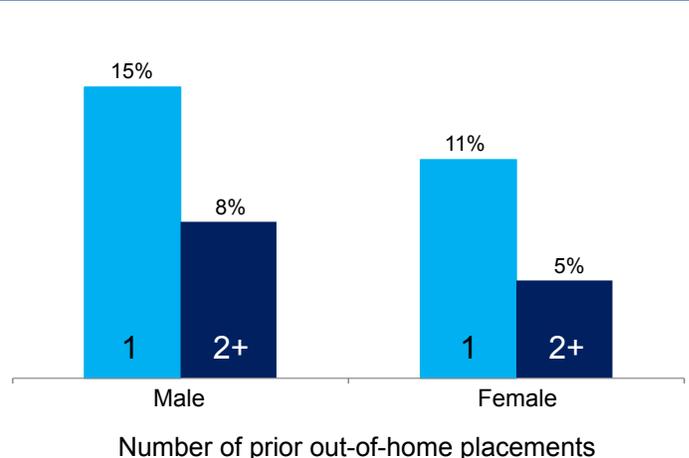
Not surprisingly, male youth were more likely to have had an out-of-home placement or felony disposition. Among male YAP participants, 23% had at least one out-of-home placement and one-third (33%) of male clients had a felony disposition; just over half (51%) received a disposition involving misdemeanor charges or citations. While only 17% of YAP's female clients had an out-of-home placement prior to entry, a large majority (87%) of female participants had some legal disposition upon entry into YAP. Females were less likely than males to have had felony dispositions (19%), but approximately as many (58%) had dispositions involving misdemeanor charges or citations.

John Jay's analysis indicates that YAP is successful at keeping referred youth in their communities, even those who experienced an arrest. Youth remained in the YAP program for a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of 20 months. The average length of service across the sample was four months. Because YAP is a community based program, youth referred to YAP remain exposed to the same negative influences and police scrutiny that led to their being identified as high risk in the first place.

Most YAP Clients Have Had Some Justice Contact



Some YAP Clients Had Been Placed Out-of-Home



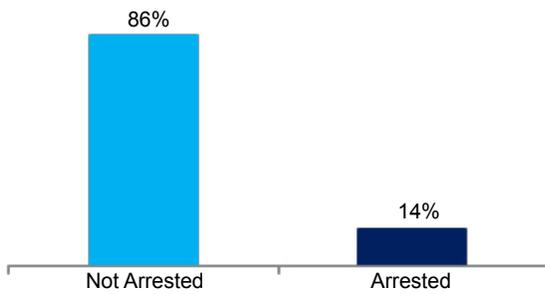
Nevertheless, when referred to YAP, most youth (86%) remained free of arrest. Moreover, the vast majority (93%) of all YAP clients remained in the community at the time of their discharge from YAP. Living in the community is defined as living in a residence with at least one parent, an adult relative or adult family friend, an adoptive family, or independently. The small percentage of clients (7%) who were placed out of their homes while enrolled in YAP went to a variety of settings, including secure detention, group homes, mental health facilities, foster care, and in-patient substance abuse programs.

It is noteworthy that more hours of YAP service appears to be associated with fewer arrests. In particular, 22% of the youth who received an average of less than five hours of service per week were arrested. Conversely, less than 14% of those youth who received more than five hours of service per week were arrested.

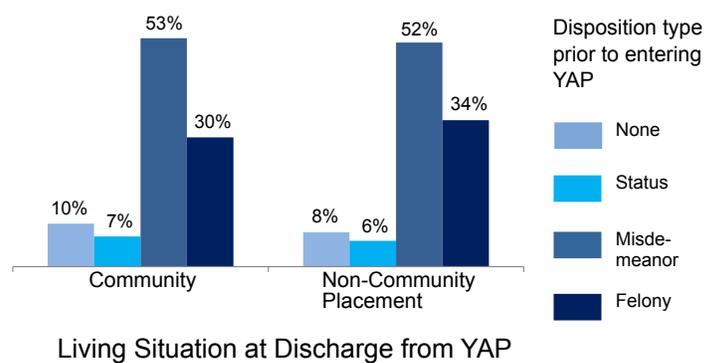
While prior felony dispositions increased the likelihood of arrest while clients were enrolled and participating in YAP, youth with a misdemeanor or status offense disposition were no more likely to be arrested than youth with no history of dispositions prior to entering YAP. Similarly, youth with one or two out-of-home placements were no more likely to be arrested than youth with no history of out-of-home-placements.

These results suggest that involvement in YAP keeps clients engaged in pro-social activities, which reduce the likelihood that they will be arrested. Moreover, by connecting clients with pro-social activities and influences in their own community, YAP increases the likelihood that these clients will remain positively engaged after YAP services terminate.

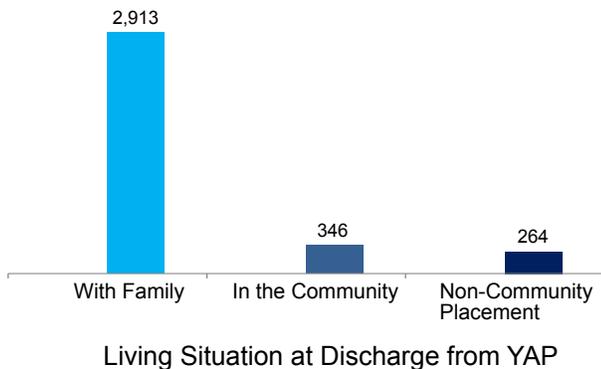
The vast majority of the sample was not arrested while in YAP



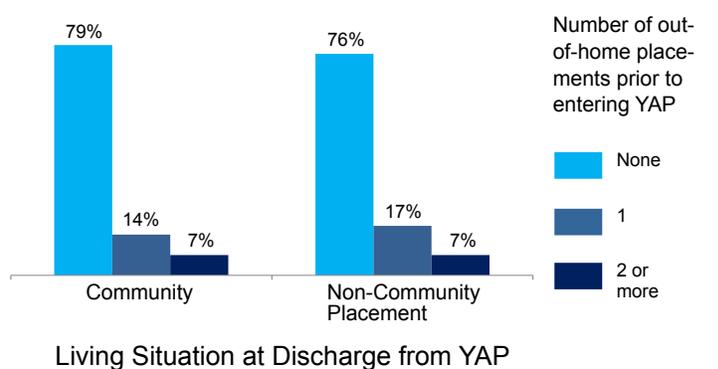
Prior disposition didn't affect client living situation while in YAP



Most youth lived in their community at discharge from YAP



Prior placement did not affect client living situation while in YAP



Data Sources:

This analysis relies on self-reported data from internal databases maintained by Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., including client outcome surveys and YAP's system for monitoring service delivery.