

**Department of Juvenile Justice**  
**Human Research**  
**FY 2019**

**Regulations**

On February 9, 2005, [6 VAC 35-170](#), *Minimum Standards for Research Involving Human Subjects or Records of the Department of Juvenile Justice*, adopted by the Board of Juvenile Justice, became effective. These regulations require the establishment of a Human Research Review Committee and set out the conditions required for approval of external research proposals. Select sections of the regulations are included below to provide an overview of the review process:

***6VAC35-170-130. Human Research Review Committee***

A. In accordance with § 32.1-162.19 of the Code of Virginia, the department shall establish a human research review committee composed of persons of various backgrounds to ensure the competent, complete and professional review of human research activities conducted or proposed to be conducted or authorized by the department. No member of the committee shall be directly involved in the proposed human research or have administrative approval authority over the proposed research except in connection with his role on the committee.

***6VAC35-170-150. Committee review of human research proposals.***

In reviewing the human research proposal, the committee will consider the potential benefits and risks to the human subjects, and shall recommend approval only when the benefits outweigh the risks. In addition, the committee shall recommend approval only when:

1. The methodology is adequate for the proposed research;
2. The research, if non-therapeutic, presents no more than a minimal risk to the human subjects;
3. The rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected;
4. Appropriate provisions have been made to get informed consent from the human subjects, as detailed in 6VAC35-170-160;
5. The researchers are appropriately qualified;
6. The criteria and means for selecting human subjects are valid and equitable; and
7. The research complies with the requirements set out in this regulation and in applicable department policies and procedures.

***6VAC35-170-50. Conditions for department approval of external research.***

A. The department may approve research projects only when it determines, in its sole discretion, that:

1. The department has sufficient financial resources and staff to support the research project, and that on balance the benefits of the research justify the department's involvement;
2. The proposed research will not interfere significantly with department programs or operations, particularly those of the operating units that would participate in the proposed research; and
3. The proposed research is compatible with the purposes and goals of the juvenile justice system and with the department's organization, operations, and resources.

**6 VAC 35-170-190. Committee reports required.**

A. In accordance with § 66-10.1 of the Code of Virginia, the Human Research Review Committee shall submit to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the director at least annually a report on human research projects approved by the committee and the status of such research, including any significant deviations from the proposals as approved.

B. The committee shall also annually submit to the Board of Juvenile Justice the same report as required by subsection A.

**Human Research Review Committee**

During FY 2019, the Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) Human Research Review Committee (HRRC) was comprised of members from various backgrounds.

- Jessica Schneider, Ph.D. (Chair) – Research Manager, DJJ
- Robin Binford-Weaver, Ph.D. – Director, Behavioral Services Unit, DJJ
- Vince Butaitis – Director, 15<sup>th</sup> Court Service Unit, DJJ
- Will Egan – Policy Analyst, Virginia Commission on Youth
- Michael Favale – Legislative & Policy Director, DJJ
- Alan Hullette – Superintendent, Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center
- Rebecca Smith – Graduate Student, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Lara Todd – Education Administrative Hearings Specialist, DJJ

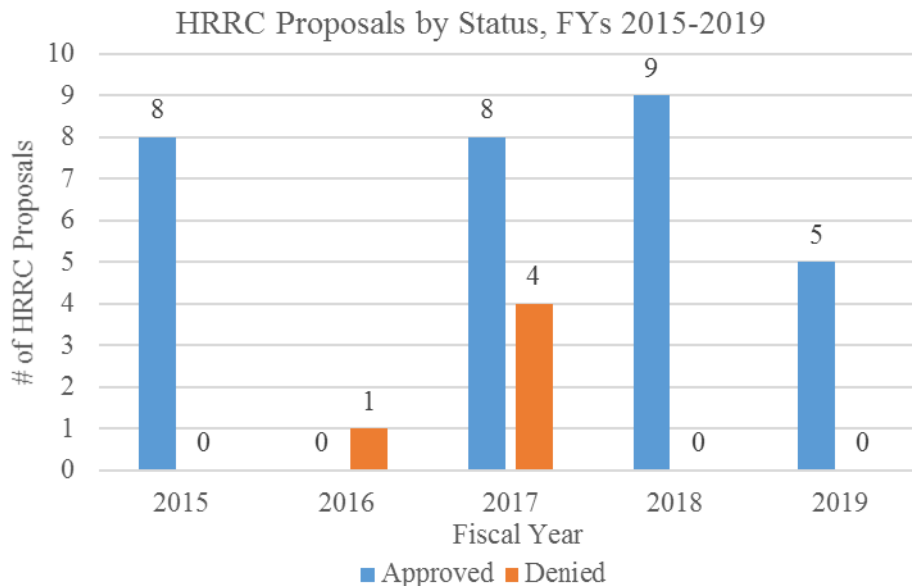
DJJ Research Analyst Dhara Amin, Ph.D., serves as the Coordinator of External Research.

In addition to reviewing the human subjects research studies as defined in the Regulations, a sub-committee of the HRRC reviews research proposals involving de-identified case-specific data. The following report includes research projects involving either human subjects or de-identified case-specific data.

In accordance with § 32.1-162.19, *Human research review committees*, an executive summary of completed projects can be found in Appendix A.

## I. Research Proposals

In fiscal year (FY) 2019, DJJ received eight research proposals. Of these, the HRRC and the Director approved five. At the time of this report, two proposals were pending a review decision, one proposal was closed administratively, and no proposals were denied.



\* The graph above represents the number of research proposals. Proposals were counted by the most recent submission date, including amendments.

\* The two research proposals pending and one research proposal administratively closed in FY 2019 are not included in the graph above.

## II. Active Studies

In addition to the studies approved in FY 2019, 19 research studies approved in previous years remained active. The 24 active studies are summarized below:

### ***Evaluation of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) FY 2010 Second Chance Act Juvenile Offender Reentry Demonstration Projects***

Researcher: Akiva Liberman

Institution: Urban Institute

Approval Date: July 21, 2014 (first); May 5, 2015 (most recent)

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of five OJJDP FY 2010 *Second Chance Act* juvenile demonstration programs, including the Tidewater, Virginia, Reentry Initiative. The researcher conducted implementation and cost analyses through process evaluations of program materials, evaluations on the use of evidence-based practices, interviews with staff and stakeholders, and focus groups with program participants and their parents. The researcher evaluated the impact of the program by interviewing youth within 45 days of release from a juvenile correctional center (JCC) and again within eight months of release. Outcome measures, including satisfaction levels, recidivism, and school data, were used to evaluate program impact and

performance. A draft of the final report was submitted to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in August 2019 and is pending approval. The results indicate that youth who participated in the Juvenile Second Chance Act projects had lower rearrest and reconviction rates.

***Development and Validation of an Actuarial Risk Assessment Tool for Juvenile Sex Offenders***

Researcher: KiDeuk Kim

Institution: Urban Institute

Approval Date: February 9, 2015

The purpose of the study was to develop and validate a risk assessment tool for juvenile sex offenders and to examine the effects of sex offender intervention services provided in the JCCs. The researcher requested demographic, criminal history, treatment services, and Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI) data from DJJ. Using this data, the researcher aimed to identify factors predictive of sexual offending among juvenile offenders and eventually develop a risk assessment. The researcher found that when one risk prediction model performed well in one setting, it often classified individuals in another setting differently (e.g., high risk individuals would be identified as low risk). The researcher recommended that DJJ avoid utilizing “off-the-shelf” assessment tools without extensive customization, including updating the weights of the various predictor variables. A risk assessment tool was not created nor provided by the researcher.

***Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Medium- and High-Risk Juvenile Offenders:  
Practitioner-Researcher Partnership Project***

Researcher: KiDeuk Kim

Institution: Urban Institute

Approval Date: April 17, 2015

The purpose of the study was to examine the implementation and impact of two treatment modalities, Aggression Replacement Therapy (ART) and modified Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), on committed juveniles’ attitudes, behaviors, and recidivism. Juveniles designated as having an aggression management treatment need were randomly assigned to participate in one of the two treatment modalities. Staff members who provided treatment participated in interviews regarding their experiences and perceptions of the treatment modalities. There were 429 surveys collected from youth who participated. The researcher found that DBT moderately reduced rearrest rates; however, the differences were not statistically significant.

***Examining Probation Outcomes and Changes in Risk***

Researchers: JoAnn Lee, Faye Taxman, and Mark Murphy

Institution: George Mason University and DJJ

Approval Date: March 7, 2016

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of juveniles’ risk-need profiles, changes in risk-need profiles, and services on juveniles’ probation outcomes. Juveniles’ risk-need profiles are the YASI risk and protective scores and legal, family, and substance use domain scores. The researchers will examine probation outcomes in the form of recidivism data for one full year. DJJ delivered data to the researchers on July 20, 2017, and an updated data set on June 29, 2018. As of June 2019, the researchers have begun to analyze the data.

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***Neural Correlates of Adolescent Preferences and Perceptions of Risk***

Researchers: Brooks King-Casas and Nina Lauharatanahirun (student)

Institution: Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute

Approval Date: December 1, 2016

The purpose of the study was to examine how adolescents perceive risk and make decisions about risky behavior. The researchers recruited youth involved in any capacity with CSUs 23 and 23A. The researcher wanted to compare this sample to a sample of non-justice-involved youth of the same ages. Youth completed a series of psychological/behavioral questionnaires while undergoing a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) by trained technicians. While receiving the fMRI, youth completed risk perception and risky decision-making tasks. The fMRI detects cerebral blood flow to different brain regions during these tasks. As of January 2018, five youth have participated and completed the study. Due to recruitment issues, and because the grant expired, the researchers decided not to continue this study.

***FY 2014 Evaluation of the Office of Victims of Crime Vision 21: Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth State Demonstration – Service Provider Survey***

Researchers: Sara Debus-Sherrill and Mary Spooner

Institution: ICF

Approval Date: January 19, 2017

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the implementation of Virginia's *Vision 21: Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth* project. In order to obtain baseline data regarding the nature of needs and services prior to the implementation of the Vision 21 project, the researchers surveyed child-serving frontline staff at CSUs 16 and 28. The researchers wanted to administer these surveys again after the project has been fully implemented. The researchers emailed the online survey to a contact person at each pilot site. This email asked the contact person to share the survey with staff who provide direct services to children, youth, and families. The Service Provider Survey asked questions about the types of services provided by the organization, the demographics of the clients the organization serves, screening tools, interagency collaborations, and areas for improvement. ICF has received three survey responses from CSU 16 and three responses from CSU 28. The researchers closed the survey in March 2017 and do not intend to recruit at other CSUs.

***Toward a Pedagogy of Possibility: Justice System Involved Youth Read and Write Alternative Texts***

Researcher: Judith Dunkerly-Bean

Institution: Old Dominion University

Approval Date: March 20, 2017

The purpose of the study is to qualitatively examine how justice-involved youth living at the Tidewater Youth Services Crisis Center read, respond to, and create alternative texts, while also improving youths' reading and writing skills and motivations. In the present study, the researcher administers informal reading inventories to assess juveniles' reading level and interests and then assigns selected readings intended to improve reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. The researcher also provides reading support and intervention to youth as needed. The researcher and juveniles then participate in group-based discussions about the reading. Finally, the juveniles respond to the text by creating their own alternative text, specifically a 'zine (magazine), or another self-selected representation of self-expression. The researcher focuses on helping juveniles improve

written literacy proficiencies as well as developing their identities as writers. The researcher also administers reading inventories to obtain post-intervention data for those juveniles that remained at the Crisis Center for a sufficient amount of time to collect post-data. As of March 2018, staff at the Tidewater Youth Services Crisis Center reported an increase in the amount of unprompted reading and writing by youth. The program is still active and was transformed into a collaborative venture with eligible youth.

***FY 2014 Evaluation of the Office of Victims of Crime Vision 21: Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth State Demonstration – Network Provider Survey***

Researchers: Sara Debus-Sherrill and Mary Spooner

Institution: ICF

Approval Date: March 27, 2017

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the implementation of *Virginia's Vision 21: Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth* project. In order to obtain baseline data regarding the nature of needs and services prior to the implementation of the Vision 21 project, the researchers sent the Network Provider Survey to a primary point of contact at both CSU 16 and CSU 28. The primary point of contact (or designee) was supposed to complete the survey, answer questions related to the agency's experience with the Vision 21 project (e.g., has your agency had regular meetings, do the benefits of participating in this project outweigh the drawbacks, does your agency provide/receive referrals from Vision 21 project partner agencies). The participating sites struggled with maintaining engagement with their stakeholders, collecting data, and completing tasks during the assigned timeframes. Consequently, the participating sites have not fully implemented the project. The researchers provided recommendations for how to continue to develop the current sites. The researchers do not intend to recruit at other CSUs.

***Social and Psychological Predictors of Delinquency in Youth in the DJJ System***

Researchers: Aradhana Bela Sood and Mark Murphy

Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University Health System and DJJ

Approval Date: May 18, 2017

The purpose of the study is to examine the demographic, social, and psychological characteristics that relate to juvenile delinquency and recidivism. The researchers are investigating the extent to which mentoring relationships mitigate and mental health issues exacerbate juvenile delinquency. The researchers are collecting data through case file reviews of committed juveniles and through data requests to DJJ. DJJ and the researchers are currently working to finalize and submit the data request. The researchers requested another year of recidivism data for their analyses.

***Vision 21: Linking Systems of Care for Children and Youth***

Researchers: Laurie Crawford

Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University

Approval Date: May 26, 2017; amended May 6, 2019

The purpose of the study is to pilot the Virginia Victimization Screen (VVS), a screening tool used to assess victimization, associated symptomatology, and protective factors, at CSUs 16 and 28. CSU directors selected DJJ staff to become VVS administrators. The VVS is utilized for all juveniles that are diverted or placed on probation with a moderate or high-risk YASI score. The VVS administrators also make referrals to appropriate partner agencies as needed. The researchers hope

to validate this screening tool by requesting case specific, de-identified data from other standard screening tools (i.e., YASI, Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Instrument, Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire). In addition, VVS administrators meet with researchers for regular meetings that include ongoing technical assistance. During these meetings, the researchers invite DJJ staff to participate in pre- and post-surveys. The staff survey focuses on perceptions of cross-system collaborations. The first and second waves of the pilot program are complete. The researcher submitted an amendment to include CSU 18 in the next wave; however, the CSU elected not to participate. The researcher also submitted an amendment to expand the study to include CSU 13.

***A Preliminary Analysis of Juvenile Length of Stay (LOS) and Recidivism***

Researcher: Patrick Lowery

Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University

Approval Date: June 12, 2017

The purpose of the study was to evaluate what characteristics influence juveniles' placements on probation, commitment to DJJ with an indeterminate sentence, or commitment to DJJ with a determinate/blended sentence, as well as their LOS. The study examined the relationship between LOS and placement type on recidivism. The study also examined differences in the outcome variables as they relate to changes in the LOS Guidelines, which went into effect on October 15, 2015. The researcher requested existing de-identified, case-specific data for demographic information, most serious offense(s), placement decision, commitment type, LOS, YASI risk and protective scores, a subset of specific YASI items, and recidivism data. The researcher constructed a regression model to create a predicted LOS based on characteristics of the case and the juvenile, as well as a model to predict recidivism based on placement type, commitment type, and LOS. The researcher did not find racial disparities in LOS. The researcher found that high-risk males experienced the longest LOS compared to low- and moderate-risk males. The researcher recommended collecting data on plea agreements to better understand juveniles' LOSs.

***Validation of Virginia's Juvenile Risk Assessment Instrument***

Researchers: Hayley Cleary and Jessica Schneider (student)

Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University

Approval Date: July 6, 2017

The purpose of the study was to validate Virginia's juvenile risk assessment instrument, YASI. The researchers requested de-identified, case-specific data for juveniles placed on probation or parole between FY 2014 and FY 2016 in order to assess the predictive validity, equity by sex and race, and usability of the instrument in case planning. The researchers examined the accuracy of the tool for Virginia's population and staff's utilization of the tool in selecting service priority areas. Jessica Schneider was recused from DJJ's processing, review, and approval of this study due to her roles of DJJ Research Manager and external student researcher. The research study was completed in November 2018. The study found that the predictive validity of the overall and dynamic risk scores and levels was statistically equivalent for males and females. The *Community/Peers* and *Family* domains had stronger predictive validity for males than females. In addition, YASI in Virginia performed as expected in comparison to existing research on youth risk assessment instruments.

***Juvenile Justice – Translational Research on Interventions for Adolescents in the Legal System (JJ-TRIALS) National Survey***

Researcher: Dr. Christy Scott

Institution: Chestnut Health Systems

Approval Date: November 1, 2017

The purpose of the study was to examine the needs and the availability of services for youth on community supervision. The researchers surveyed nine CSUs to gain insight into the current state of substance use, HIV and mental health screenings, assessment, prevention, and treatment for youth under community supervision. The survey consisted of several different parts that were completed by individuals with various roles within the system. For example, the survey had fact-based questions about available services, which could be completed by individuals in various roles. There were also opinion-based questions, which the CSU directors had to complete. The data collection was completed in January 2019. The nine CSUs had a response rate of 78%. The researcher found that only 28% of respondents collaborated with HIV/STI prevention providers. Of those who reported not collaborating with an HIV/STI prevention provider, the most common reasons included HIV/STI was not an issue (43%) or because a community provider did not exist (20%). The researcher identified a need for implementing improved data systems for youth information, their needs, and services across various disciplines.

***Multi-State Validation of Youth Risk and Needs Assessments***

Researchers: Zachary Hamilton

Institution: Washington State University

Approval Date: November 7, 2017

The purpose of the study is to first validate Virginia's juvenile risk assessment instrument, YASI, and then compare the tool's validity across multiple states that use the same or similar instruments. The researcher will weigh YASI fields and/or scores differentially based on locality in order to improve the tool's predictability. To do so, the researcher is requesting de-identified, case-specific data for all YASI items for juveniles placed on probation or released from direct care between FY 2013 and FY 2016, as well as demographic information, treatment information, and recidivism rates at multiple follow-up periods. The researcher is converting all variables in the data to be compatible with the scoring conventions of the multi-state project.

***Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Juvenile Drug Court Evaluation***

Researchers: Tara Kunkel

Institution: National Center for State Courts

Approval Date: November 28, 2017

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of drug court. To do so, the researcher compared the outcomes of juveniles who completed drug court in Chesterfield or Colonial Heights against juvenile offenders who were released from probation supervision between FY 2008 and FY 2011. The researcher requested demographic information, YASI items related to drug and alcohol use, and YASI items related to legal history in order to match juveniles on probation with juveniles from drug court. The researcher found that the drug court program performed well, as the overall recidivism rates were lower than the comparison group. Specifically, 41% of JDC participants were convicted of a new offense within 24 months of exiting the program. Approximately 36% of participants were convicted of at least one misdemeanor.



***Evaluation of a Comprehensive Community-Level Approach to Youth Violence***

Researchers: Derek Chapman and Diane Bishop  
Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University  
Approval Date: November 28, 2017

The purpose of the study is part of a larger project aimed at learning more about youth violence in low-income neighborhoods of Richmond, Virginia. In the proposed study, the researchers will examine retrospective, de-identified data for juveniles between the ages of 10 and 24 who were associated with an intake case at CSU 13 between 2012 and 2016. The researchers are requesting data on intake decisions, juvenile demographics, offense information, DAI ranking, select YASI items, length of stay (if applicable), and recidivism rates. Since the researchers are interested in low-income neighborhoods of Richmond, such as Mosby Court, Gilpin Court, and Creighton Court, they are requesting individual block-level geographical data. The researchers trained the DJJ Research Unit staff on how to clean and geocode the data manually. The researchers identified the variables they need from DJJ and have submitted an amendment, which is currently pending.

***Understanding Youth Engagement in the Plea Process***

Researcher: Allison Redlich  
Institution: George Mason University  
Approval Date: February 1, 2018

The purpose of the study was to learn more about juveniles' engagement in the plea process by interviewing juvenile and adult offenders who accept a plea bargain. Prince William County CSU assisted the researcher by notifying her when plea hearings occurred for eligible juveniles (i.e., over age 14 and charged with a felony) so that the researcher could attend and recruit participants immediately after the hearing. In February 2019, the researcher notified the agency that the project will not continue due to recruitment issues.

***Virginia Personal Responsibility Education Program Innovative Strategies (VPREIS)***

Researcher: Amanda Dainis  
Institution: James Madison University  
Approval Date: February 20, 2018; amended: September 18, 2018; March 29, 2019

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the *Vision to You* program, an evidence-based teen pregnancy program. The program's main outcomes include the following: (i) to reduce the frequency of sexual activity; (ii) to reduce the number of sexual partners; and (iii) to increase contraceptive use among participants. Another goal of this project is to increase knowledge related to healthy sexual practices. The program is collaborating with seven juvenile detention centers throughout the state. Eligible youth are asked if they would like to participate, and the research staff collects parental consent information. Once the youth complete the online program, they have the opportunity to participate in three post-program surveys. Notably, youth can simply participate in the program or participate in the program and the surveys. The researcher submitted two amendments in order to incorporate questions recommended by the grant monitor. There have been 70 participants across seven juvenile detention centers. The researcher is continuing enrollment at the detention centers.

***Youth Photography Focus Group***

Researcher: Allison Chappell

Institution: Old Dominion University

Approval Date: May 10, 2018

The purpose of the study was to evaluate a new photography class offered to court-involved youth in collaboration with the Norfolk CSU, Norfolk Public Library, and Old Dominion University. The researcher conducted a focus group for the participants enrolled in the photography course to evaluate the impact of a prosocial activity with engaged adults. In order to participate in the photography course, the youth must complete an application and a panel interview with the CSU and ODU staff. Using the Positive Youth Development model, the focus group questions gathered information regarding the participants' general attitude and outlook and their perceptions of the class, the library, their peers in the course, and the teacher. These questions assisted the research team in developing future pre- and post-course surveys that will be distributed in later offerings of the photograph course. This project also served as Mark Wood's (CSU #4 Parole Supervisor) JTI Capstone project. The researcher found the youth have a mainly positive perception of the photography course. Participants shared that they felt respected and some expressed feeling a family bond develop within the program.

***Third National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC-3)***

Researcher: David Cantor

Institution: Westat

Approval Date: June 14, 2018; amended: July 23, 2018

The purpose of the study is to collect data for the National Survey of Youth in Custody, as required to meet the mandates of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). The two primary objectives of the survey are to: (i) identify facilities with the highest and lowest rates of victimization, and (ii) provide data for the development of national standards for preventing sexual victimization in correctional facilities. This will be the third of four surveys. The researchers' sample frame includes either state-owned or operated facilities that hold at least 10 adjudicated youth (and the adjudicated youth comprise more than 25% of the total youth population in the facility) or contract facilities that house at least 10 adjudicated youth (including at least one state-placed adjudicated youth). DJJ and/or the selected detention centers will participate in the parental consent process in some form; however, in order to accommodate the selected facilities, the process and Westat's involvement may vary. Youth with parental consent who have been in the selected facility longer than four weeks will be invited to participate in the survey. The HRRC committee has voiced concern with the study's alternative questions as they are sensitive in nature and may make some youth uncomfortable. However, the committee also recognizes the inconvenience of requesting that Westat change their entire survey instrument for one state. Out of the 276 youth who were enrolled among the six facilities in Virginia, 164 youth participated in the survey. The Research Unit is currently in discussions with Westat about a possible protocol violation. Their progress reported that Spanish forms were utilized; however, Spanish forms were not submitted to HRRC to review nor approved for use in Virginia. The organization has stated that the Spanish would have been available upon request; however, the issue is that Spanish forms were never a part of the approved protocol.

***Connection, Safety, Fairness, and Purpose: A Follow-Up Study***

Researchers: Ryan Shanahan

Institution: Vera Institute

Approval Date: July 26, 2018

The purpose of the study was to provide a follow-up to the surveys the researcher administered to committed juveniles in 2015. The researcher administered surveys related to connection, safety, fairness, and purpose to juveniles and staff in the JCC. Residents were asked to provide the contact information for a family member whom the researcher could contact and potentially recruit to participate in a telephone interview. Once the surveys and interviews were completed, the researchers conducted collaborative research meetings with residents and staff at the JCC to discuss the findings and possible contributing factors for the findings. The researcher did not submit the required progress report. The Coordinator of External Research reached out to the researchers on multiple occasions but did not receive a response. DJJ was informed that the institution is undergoing a reorganization and is attempting to contact the appropriate research staff.

***Process Evaluation of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Regional Service Coordinator Model***

Researchers: Kelly Murphy

Institution: Child Trends

Approval Date: August 10, 2018; amended: June 18, 2019

The purpose of the study is to conduct an in-depth evaluation of DJJ's Regional Service Coordinator (RSC) model. The goal of this project is to provide feedback and recommendations to DJJ. The study has three primary objectives: (i) conduct a process evaluation of the RSC model to understand the extent to which it is being implemented as intended; (ii) provide an initial assessment of the extent to which implementation of RSC model is associated with youth outcomes; and (iii) translate and disseminate findings to target audiences, such as DJJ, other systems that are interested in similar models, and stakeholders. This evaluation would be conducted over a period of four years, including a pilot study in the first year. The researchers conducted focus groups with staff members at three CSUs and one virtual focus group with five RSCs. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed for data analysis. The researchers met to revise their coding scheme, identify preliminary themes, and summarize their initial themes from the focus groups. An amendment for the second year was submitted.

***Brief Alcohol and Dating Violence Prevention Program for Court-Involved Youth***

Researchers: Christianne Esposito-Smythers and Caitlin Williams

Institution: George Mason University

Approval Date: August 22, 2018

The purpose of the study is to provide a dating violence and alcohol prevention program for court-involved youth. The researcher delivered a four-hour group workshop utilizing didactic instruction, motivational interviewing, and cognitive-behavioral skill building to increase skills and knowledge in order to avoid high-risk alcohol and dating violence situations. This study aims to (i) integrate materials from two existing, evidence-based prevention programs and develop manuals for the interventions, training, and fidelity and (ii) conduct a pilot to evaluate the therapeutic potential of the proposed program. The researchers conducted the focus groups but due to recruitment issues are considering expanding the recruitment efforts to alternative locations.

***Resident and Staff Perceptions of Safety and Engagement with the Community Treatment Model (Part II)***

Researchers: Sarah Jane Brubaker and Hayley Cleary

Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University

Approval Date: April 10, 2019

The purpose of the study is to conduct a follow-up to the researchers' original study. The researchers will examine perceptions of safety and levels of engagement among staff and youth under the Community Treatment Model (CTM), which has been fully implemented in the JCC. The researchers expanded the original study by including feedback from various DJJ staff. Furthermore, the study is being conducted again because the original study may have been impacted by the closure of one of the JCCs. Now that staff and youth have had time to become acquainted with the Bon Air JCC, the researchers hope to gain a better understanding of their current perceptions.

**III. Proposed / Pending Studies**

***Juvenile Delinquency and Adult Gun Sales: Comparative Effect of Different Minimum Age Standards for Firearm Purchase***

Researchers: Jeff Swanson

Institution: Duke University

Approval Date: N/A

The purpose of the proposed study is to conduct a comparative analysis of three southern states with different laws regarding juvenile delinquency records and the minimum age standards for gun sales. The researchers selected three states that have differing thresholds for the minimum age of gun purchase for people with juvenile criminal records. By working with multiple state agencies, the researchers plan to conduct a longitudinal comparison of gun-related adverse outcomes in order to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the minimum-age standards in preventing gun violence and suicide. Due to the collaborative nature of this study, the researchers are attempting to confirm details with other agencies prior to DJJ being able to approve the study.

***Rigorous Evaluation of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice's Second Chance Act Reentry Reform***

Researchers: Kelly Murphy

Institution: Child Trends

Approval Date: N/A

The purpose of the proposed study is to conduct an evaluation of DJJ's reentry reform efforts. The researcher aims to examine (i) the extent to which DJJ is implementing the recommendations developed during the Second Chance Act Juvenile Reentry Reform Planning Grant, (ii) the extent to which the agency's services align with the youth's needs, (iii) what the youth's participation in reentry services look like, and (iv) how the implementation of the reforms have impacted youth outcomes. This study is being funded by the NIJ. The proposed evaluation would be conducted over a four-year period, including a pilot period. The evaluation would include focus groups with various stakeholders, such as DJJ's Reentry Advocates, parole officers, JCC counselors, and more.

#### **IV. Denied Proposals**

No human research proposals were denied during this fiscal year.

#### **V. Administratively Closed Proposals**

Administratively closed proposals include proposal packets the Coordinator of External Research or the HRRC reviewed, but the agency did not hear back from the researcher(s) after providing feedback and/or requests for revisions.

##### ***Examining Change in Criminal Thinking in a Juvenile Probation Population***

Researchers: Lee Cooper and Lauren Delk

Institution: Virginia Tech

Approval Date: N/A

The purpose of the proposed study is to examine the implementation of the EPICS model in probation programs and to determine whether EPICs changed youths' criminal thinking levels at CSU 27. Due to issues with the recruitment plan, the HRRC provided the researchers with feedback for consideration in December 2018. The researchers have not submitted a revised proposal; therefore, the proposal has been closed.

## **Appendix A: Executive Summaries of Completed Human Research Projects from the Researchers\***

\* Executive summaries are completed by the researchers, and the content is not revised by DJJ.

## **Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Juvenile Drug Court Evaluation's Executive Summary**

### ***Purpose***

The Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) contracted with the National Center for State Courts to complete an evaluation designed to answer the following questions:

- What were the recidivism rates of Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Juvenile Drug Court participants during the study period?
- What demographic and programmatic factors impact the recidivism rates?
- How does treatment dosage and participant risk level impact recidivism?
- How does the use of detention as a sanction impact participant outcomes?
- How do the recidivism rates of Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Juvenile Drug Court participants compare to those of a matched comparison group of participants supervised by the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Court Services Unit during the same time period?

To answer these questions, the NCSC evaluators examined participants who completed the JDC between 2008 and 2014 which allowed for a two-year, post-program follow-up period for all participants.

### ***Summary/Takeaways***

The findings from this report suggest that the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Juvenile Drug Court is performing well as measured by relatively high rates of program completion and low rates of recidivism. Overall recidivism rates were lower than a matched comparison group, although the number of JDC participants and matched probation comparisons who had a new arrest or conviction within two years of exit did not differ significantly and is considered a small sample.

**Description of Study Sample:** The JDC study sample, including participants who exited between 2008 and 2014, consisted mostly of white males, 16 or 17 years old at entry who were moderate- or high-risk. Participants spent, on average, 13 months in the JDC program during which time they had an average of 71 treatment contacts, 111 office contacts, and 26.2 home visits. Most JDC participants had at least one positive drug or alcohol screen with the average number of positive tests being three during participation.

**Successful Completion:** Slightly less than half of the study sample successfully exited the JDC program. A binary logistic regression including participant gender, age at entry, race, number of positive drug screens while in the program, previous treatment participation, number of days detained in the program, and risk score revealed an effect of number of detention days, such that the likelihood of successful completion decreased as the number of days increased. As such, the 2010-2011 completion group had both (1) a higher rate of successful completion (64%) compared to the 2008-2009 and 2012-2014 groups (27% and 35%, respectively) and (2) a lower average number of detention days (36.9 days) compared to both of the other exit groups (2008-2009 averaged 84.4 days and 2012-2014 averaged 69.5 days).

**In-Program Recidivism:** Slightly less than one-quarter (23.4%) of the JDC participants were convicted of a new offense during program participation; 20.3% were convicted of at least one new misdemeanor and 4.7% were convicted of at least one new felony. Participants who had at least one new in-program conviction had 1.9 convictions on average; the average number of misdemeanor convictions (for those who had at least one) was 1.8; and the average number of felony convictions

(for those who had at least one) was 1.0. Overall, there were 28 in-program convictions; graduates accounted for only two (7.1%) in-program convictions and non-graduates accounted for 26 (92.9%) in-program convictions. The pattern was consistent in all year groups. Finally, the majority of in-program convictions were for property offenses.

**Post-Program Recidivism:** Approximately forty percent (40.6%) of the JDC participants were convicted of a new offense within two years of program exit; 35.9% of participants were convicted of at least one misdemeanor and 6.3% were convicted of at least one felony. JDC participants who had at least one post-program conviction had 2.7 convictions on average; the average number of misdemeanor convictions (for those who had at least one) was 1.9 and the average number of felony convictions was 1.3 (for those who had at least one). Overall, there were 69 post-program convictions; graduates accounted for 15 (21.7%) post-program convictions and non-graduates accounted for 54 (78.3%) post-program convictions. The pattern was consistent in all exit year groups, with non-graduates accounting for the vast majority of post-program convictions. The majority of post-program convictions were for public order offenses. Finally, a binary logistic regression including participant gender, age at entry, race, number of positive drug screens while in the program, previous treatment participation, number of days detained in the program, and risk score revealed no significant predictors of post-program conviction. It is possible that the small sample size coupled with the small number of recidivists does not have enough power to detect differences that may exist; testing the model with a larger sample would lead to more robust results.

**Risk, Treatment Dosage, and Recidivism:** Over two-thirds of the JDC participant sample was high-risk at entry. Within two years of program exit, nearly two-thirds of the high-risk participants were arrested for a new offense an average of 4.3 times compared to approximately one-third of moderate-risk participants who were arrested an average of 2.9 times. Moreover, almost half of the high-risk participants were convicted of a new offense within two years of exit compared to one-quarter of the moderate-risk participants. In addition, there was no significant difference between JDC participants who received low treatment contacts (as determined by a median split) and participants who received high treatment contacts in the average number of post-program arrests or convictions.

**Impact of Detention on Outcomes:** JDC participants received more days in detention for a technical violation (27.4 days on average) compared to detention received as a result of either a positive drug/alcohol screen or both a technical and drug-related violation occurring in the same incident. Overall, JDC participants spent 63.4 days in detention for sanctions while in the JDC program; participants who went on to graduate from the program spent significantly fewer days on average in detention (20.7 days) compared to non-graduates (93.9 days).

**JDC Participant versus Matched Comparison – Recidivism:** Utilizing a matched sample of juvenile probationers, the NCSC team assessed the effect of JDC participation on post-program/post-probation recidivism within two years of exit. Overall, JDC participants had lower rates of post-program arrests and post-program convictions compared to the matched probation sample, although the differences were not statistically significant. Larger sample sizes would give the comparison more power to detect any differences that may exist.



***Recommendations/Next Steps***

No recommendations were made as a result of this particular report. NCSC continues to work with the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Juvenile Drug Court to improve compliance with best practices and grow their program census.

## **Development and Validation of an Actuarial Risk Assessment Tool for Juvenile Sex Offenders' Executive Summary**

### ***Purpose***

The primary purpose of this project was to develop an actuarial risk assessment instrument that would effectively predict the risk of sexual recidivism among youth. In partnership with leading experts and five jurisdictions across the country (Florida, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Virginia), the Urban Institute has developed a prototype assessment tool, state-specific risk assessment models, and practical guidance for conducting risk assessment for sexual recidivism in juvenile justice settings. During the course of tool development and validation, state-specific risk models were developed and presented to stakeholders in each state. The project team then combined all available case-level data from the participating jurisdictions and developed a multi-state risk model.

### ***Summary/Takeaways***

Below is a list of key lessons learned from the project:

- Due to the low frequency of occurrence, predicting sexual recidivism among youth yields results that are highly sensitive to the research settings in which the models are developed. Adopting an off-the-shelf assessment tool, either public or commercial, should be avoided without extensive customization to local settings, which entails updating the list of predictors as well as their weights.
- When predicting sexual recidivism among youth, prior criminal history had the greatest predictive power. However, several dynamic factors, such as the extent of delinquent or positive peer association, impulsivity, school attendance and performance, remorseful feelings, mental health issues, and substance use, were also predictive of sexual recidivism even after controlling for prior criminal history. Although how those dynamic factors predicted sexual recidivism varied across hundreds of models tested in the current project, there was a sufficient empirical basis to suggest that any future work to improve the performance of risk assessment tools should further consider those dynamic factors.
- The use of machine learning (ML) algorithms holds high promise for improving our capacity to make data-driven, risk-based decisions for youth with a history of sexual offending. Throughout the current project, prediction models based on ML algorithms notably outperformed traditional prediction models. However, ML algorithms generally require a large volume of data to be optimally effective. They are also subject to over-fitting, which requires more rigorous testing and updating.
- How to determine cut points for risk levels has important implications, especially for sex offense risk assessment for youth. Because sexual recidivism rates are typically low (5% in our multi-state sample), without extensive tool customization, strategic planning, and consensus building among key stakeholders, it is highly likely to have a risk classification system that identifies someone unlikely to recidivate as “high-risk.” For example, if individuals in our sample with predicted probabilities in the 75th percentile or above are classified as high risk, that would not be out of keeping with current practice. However, on average, only 6.5% of them were rearrested for a sex offense within two years. In other words, 93.5% of them did not

recidivate sexually. This begs the question of whether that 75th percentile should be used as a threshold to separate high-risk individuals from the rest. The definition of “high-risk” should not be derived solely on the basis of statistical properties. Criminal and juvenile justice stakeholders must have an open conversation about how much “risk” is tolerable given their system capacity to effectively manage youth with a history of sexual offending. This also gives rise to the need to evaluate prediction models for their absolute risk estimates because current practice in risk assessment focuses primarily on how to rank order individuals by risk (i.e., statistical discrimination) without necessarily estimating their chance of recidivism more precisely (i.e., calibration).

### ***Recommendations/Next Steps***

- The project team had previously delivered a data presentation to DJJ staff on our risk models based on the dataset received from DJJ. Our risk prediction models showed more than adequate performance in identifying individuals likely to recidivate sexually. Should DJJ wish to adopt such an assessment tool to inform decisions around how to develop supervision and treatment plans for youth with a history of sexual offending, the project team will be happy to provide guidance on how to think about finalizing and implementing one of those risk models the project team developed for DJJ.
- The final report of this project is largely based on our overall lessons from the multi-state dataset on youth with a history of sexual offending and qualitative assessments of current practice and policy across all our partner jurisdictions. Findings and implications discussed in the final report are generally applicable to all our partner agencies and their youth populations, including DJJ. However, the accuracy and reliability of prediction models can markedly improve when customized to a particular setting and population to which the models are to be applied. As such, we recommend that DJJ use its own data to develop/validate/implement an actuarial decision-making process for supervision and treatment planning for youth who have sexually offended if DJJ finds it necessary to adopt such a decision-making system.

## **A Preliminary Analysis of Juvenile Length of Stay (LOS) and Recidivism's Executive Summary**

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of the study was to provide a preliminary analysis was two-fold. The first purpose of the study is to explore the correlates of recidivism among a sample of adjudicated delinquent juveniles, and how legal factors, extralegal factors, and specifically YASI-based factors influenced re-arrest and re-conviction. Secondly, the purpose of the study was to explore how the actual length of stay varied in terms of risk and protective scores, legal factors, and extralegal factors among juveniles institutionalized in a direct care facility.

### ***Summary/Takeaways***

A number of important findings emerged among the two outcomes, which I will describe below:

Recidivism (measured as re-conviction):

- Person-based offenses, relative to any other offenses, having a YASI legal risk flag, being a non-white Hispanic juvenile, having the present offense being a felony, being a “chronic offender” (3+ previous intakes), and having a prior offense at an age earlier than 12, predicted the highest rates of re-conviction.
- Juveniles placed on probation, relative to those in direct care, and those with no prior offenses were significantly less likely to be reconvicted of a new offense.

Recidivism (measured as re-arrest):

- Black juveniles, males, juvenile with a present felony offense, a legal risk flag, a drug/alcohol risk flag, and an attitude risk flag were significantly more likely to be re-arrested.
- Juveniles sentenced to probation, with no prior offenses, with property offenses, and misdemeanors/status offenses were significantly less likely to be re-arrested.

Institutionalization and Length of Stay:

- No evidence of racial disparities in length of stay.
- Younger offenders appeared to experience longer stays in direct care relative to their older counterparts.
- Person-based offenses, among all other offenses, were associated with the longest length of stays in direct care.
- YASI Flags did not predict differing length of stays in any meaningful ways.
- Having high dynamic and overall risk scores predicted longer direct care stays. However, no level of a dynamic protective score influenced length of stay in a significant way.
- High risk males, relative to low/moderate risk males and females of any risk level experienced the longest lengths of stay.

### ***Recommendations/Next Steps***

Because a number of interesting findings arose, there are a number of future steps and recommendations. Relative to the present study, it may be important to explore race and community within the context of recidivism to see if there are community-based differences that enhance racial disparities. Moreover, to better understand length of stay, it is important to see how violations and other infractions within a direct care facility impact the length of stay. Regarding the counter-intuitive age finding – it is possible that infractions and violations, or committing more serious offenses may explain this. However, because we do not know that, this is a good next step going

forward. It may also be helpful to have data that is more longitudinal in nature – in other words, data from the initial arrest all the way until a juvenile is discharged from the juvenile justice system.

Moreover, there were certain things outside of the scope of the data that may help in explaining differences in recidivism, length of stay, and the juvenile justice process as a whole. I recommend the following for future data collection.

- Collecting data on plea, charge, and sentence bargaining among juvenile.
- Collecting data on the demographic characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, sex, age, legal background, law school) of the judges presiding over a juvenile's case(s), as well as other juvenile justice actors (e.g., whether the juvenile's attorney was appointed or privately retained).
- Merging neighborhood, county-level, or Court Service Unit (CSU) related data from data sources such as the American Community Survey to see how length of stay, recidivism, and various other outcomes within the juvenile justice system may vary between location and the characteristics of the neighborhood, county, region, or CSU.
- Collecting data on the use of judicial, statutory exclusion/discretionary, direct file, and reverse waivers of juveniles.

## **Juvenile Justice - Translational Research on Interventions for Adolescents in the Legal System (JJ-TRIALS) National Survey's Executive Summary**

### ***Purpose:***

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system have high rates of substance use, mental health, and HIV risk behaviors and could benefit from access to evidence-based screening, assessment, prevention and treatment interventions related to them. While surveys have been conducted within U.S. detention centers regarding the needs of youth and their service utilization, little is known about the needs of and the availability of services for youth on community supervision. The objectives of the JJ-TRIALS national survey were to gain insights into the current state of substance use, HIV and mental health screening, assessment, prevention, and treatment for youth under community supervision and to determine how this changes over time. This was accomplished via a series of three surveys in a nationally representative sample of counties involving Community Supervision Agencies in the sampled counties, their primary Substance Use and Mental Health Providers and the Juvenile Court Judges with the largest docket of youth on community supervision.

### ***Summary/Takeaways***

- A total of 563 unduplicated surveys were collected from 173 community supervision agencies (85% response rate), 161 juvenile court judges (82% response rate), and 229 substance use and/or mental health treatment providers (82% response rate). Specifically to Virginia, out of the 9 counties sampled, surveys were returned from 7 community supervision agencies for a response rate of 78%. All of the results below are based on the national average of community supervision agencies.
- 100% of community supervision agencies across the country reported collaborating with external mental health treatment providers and substance use treatment providers. Almost all (93%) reported collaborating with the judiciary. Only 28% reported collaborating with HIV/STI prevention providers. For those with no collaboration with HIV/STI providers, the most common reasons given were this has not been an issue (43%) and no partner/provider exists in the community (20%).
- 51% of community supervision agencies directly provide screening for substance use while 99% refer youth to external agencies for this screening. Numbers were similar for mental health (55% directly, 98% referred). 31% of agencies directly screen youth for suicide risk, while 72% make referrals to external agencies. For HIV/STI risk behaviors, only 6% directly provide screening and only 11% refer out for screening. Of the community supervision agencies that directly administer a screener, 63% used an evidence-based screener.
- It was much less common for community supervision agencies to directly provide clinical assessment. 10% of agencies reported directly providing assessments on substance use, 6% on mental health, 5% on suicide risk, and 1% on HIV/STI risk. Community supervision agencies were much more likely to make referrals to external agencies to conduct these assessments (98% for mental health, 95% for substance use, 68% for suicide risk, and 13% for HIV/STI risk behavior). Of those community supervision agencies directly providing clinical assessments, 63% used an evidence-based assessment, 84% used clinical staff with bachelor's degrees or RN education or above to administer the assessments, and 100% used the assessment results to inform treatment plans.
- 6% of community supervision agencies provided substance use prevention services directly, 74% reported that these services were provided by external agencies, 21% said these were not available in their county, and 2% did not know if the services were available. Of the community

supervision agencies directly providing substance use prevention, 70% used an evidence-based program.

- It was very rare for community supervision agencies to provide any type of HIV/STI prevention services (1% or less). These services were much more commonly provided by external agencies (76-78%). 9% of community supervision agencies reported that these services were not available in their county and 13-16% didn't know whether the services were available. When community supervision agencies did directly provide HIV/STI risk prevention programs, it was most commonly a locally developed program (91%).
- Substance use treatment services were not commonly provided directly by community supervision agencies (0-7%). It was more common for these services to be provided by external agencies ranging from 43% for detoxification to 93% for outpatient. 25% of agencies or greater reported that the following services were not available in their county: residential treatment (55%), detoxification (42%), medication assisted treatment (39%), intensive outpatient (34%), other recovery support (27%), and co-occurring substance use and mental health treatment (25%). Only 1% of agencies reported not knowing if outpatient treatment was available. Substantially more (19%) were unsure about the availability of medication assisted treatment with the other treatment services falling somewhere in the middle. In those community supervision agencies providing any sort of substance use treatment, 93% used an evidence-based approach, 59% were providing evidence-based treatment to 50% or more of their youth, and 87% offered services that were provided by clinical staff with a bachelor's degree or RN education or above. Motivational Interviewing was by far the most commonly used substance use treatment approach when treatment was provided by community supervision agencies (86%).
- It was uncommon for any type of mental health treatment to be provided directly by community supervision agencies (0-6%). External agencies provided the majority of these services ranging from 64% for residential treatment to 89% for individual counseling and family counseling. 10% or fewer agencies reported that various mental health treatment services were not available in the county with the exceptions of medication assisted treatment (16%), day programs (19%), and residential treatment (38%). 0-12% of agencies reported not knowing if each type of treatment was available. For the small percentage of community supervision agencies directly providing mental health treatment, 100% used an evidence-based approach, 47% provided evidence-based treatment to half or more of their youth, and 100% used clinical staff with bachelor's degree or RN education or higher to provide the treatment.

### ***Recommendations/Next Steps***

The preliminary survey results highlight the need for and/or strong interest in:

- Improving the use of evidence-based screening and clinical assessment into routine practice.
- Developing skills to integrate screening and assessment results with case planning and implementation.
- Learning more about the impact of trauma and other mental health disorders on adolescent behavior.
- Learning more about effective substance use prevention and treatment.
- Implementing improved data systems needed for tracking information about youth, their needs, and the services they receive across disciplines.
- Learning more about the availability of substance use, mental health, and HIV/STI services within communities and the sharing of information.

## **Linking Systems of Care Evaluation's Executive Summary**

### ***Purpose:***

This report presents findings and lessons learned from a formative evaluation of the first two Linking Systems of Care demonstration sites, Montana and Virginia, that explores the development and implementation of the sites' approaches to linking systems of care for children and youth in their states. This report describes the development and implementation of each site's approach, strategies used to coordinate systems and services for youth victims of crime, the roles of key stakeholders, and resources used throughout the project. This report presents an overview of the background of the demonstration project, including an introduction to each of the demonstration sites; an overview of the evaluation approach and methodology; a detailed discussion of the findings, including overarching themes and key differences between the sites; and a discussion of recommendations and lessons learned from the demonstration project that can enhance implementation at future sites.

### ***Summary/Takeaways:***

During the planning phase, both sites developed their network of key stakeholders and conducted needs assessment activities. As required in the solicitation, each site compiled a stakeholder group consisting of representatives from relevant child-serving systems, including State government, child welfare, health services, juvenile justice, education, and other relevant entities. Each site also developed and conducted several information-gathering activities as part of their needs assessments, including reviews of a literature search and policies, focus groups or listening sessions, and surveys. The sites completed these activities to learn about how organizations were serving child victims in their States, to identify gaps in services and to understand whether service providers and systems were collaborating. Both sites used data from these activities to inform the development of their approaches to linking systems of care.

In the implementation phase, both sites worked to maintain existing relationships with key State and local stakeholders and pilot tested their approaches to linking systems of care. The involvement of the stakeholder groups in both sites ebbed and flowed as the project moved to the implementation phase. Changes in stakeholder engagement and collaboration were the result of the sites' decision to shift toward a local, community-based approach as they began piloting their screening tools. The sites identified and began pilot testing their approaches during the implementation phase. As required by the project's solicitations, the sites' approaches included a systematic screening method, with accompanying training materials, and resource and referral materials for responding to screenings. In addition, the sites conducted policy analysis activities intended to inform their work.

Throughout the project, both sites leveraged various resources, including Federal funding and guidance from OVC, external funding from Federal and State agencies, and training and technical assistance (TTA) from NCJFCJ and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Both sites primarily relied on their grant funds under the LSC demonstration project to support their projects but also tapped into non-LSC financial resources to support their efforts. NCJFCJ provided TTA to both sites on several topics throughout the project. While both sites received TTA, NCJFCJ reported more, but shorter, contacts with the Virginia site during the planning phase and fewer, but longer, contacts with the Montana site. Despite differences in the frequency of engagement with the TTA partner, both sites provided positive feedback about their experiences receiving TTA during the planning phase. During the implementation phase, NCJFCJ provided more than 500 hours of



TTA on a wide range of topics that reflected the different needs of the two sites. Both sites received site-specific assistance in similar areas, such as refining and finalizing their screening tools and associated training manuals, support in policy activities, and support in developing resource guides and referral protocols. At the Montana site, the TTA focused on brokering relationships and providing topical information. At the Virginia site, the TTA focused on reviewing products and deliverables to support future project activities.

Both sites identified similar objectives based on the requirements of the RFP and conducted similar activities, including developing a network of stakeholders, conducting a gap analysis or needs assessment, developing a strategy, and implementing the strategy. Both sites also struggled with similar challenges, such as maintaining the engagement of their stakeholder group members, collecting data about the experiences of youth and their families, and completing activities within the original timeline. As a result, the sites have yet to fully implement their strategies for linking systems of care, and it is premature to comment on whether these strategies will improve the provision of services for this population. The challenges that the sites experienced are not surprising given their context and the nature of the demonstration projects.

### ***Recommendations/Next Steps***

The experiences of these sites provide important lessons for future demonstration projects. Future sites will face similar challenges and need to adapt in various ways. Thus, future sites may benefit from considering how to create individualized approaches for linking systems in their communities, purposefully engaging key stakeholders, ensuring that they have a complete understanding of how their systems function, and being practical in strategic planning and implementation efforts.

## Validation of Virginia's Juvenile Risk Assessment Instrument

**Purpose:** The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) utilizes the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI); however, risk assessment instruments do not always generalize across populations. This study focused on the accuracy in predicting recidivism, equity across racial groups, and usage of YASI as a case planning tool in the state of Virginia.

**Summary of Findings:** Of 11,888 youth on probation or parole, 34.4% were rearrested within 12 months. A higher percentage of males (36.9%) were rearrested than females (25.9%), and a higher percentage of Black youth (41.1%) were rearrested than White youth (34.4%). (See Attachment A.) Females (44.7%) were more likely to be low risk than males (23.2%), and Black youth (23.6%) were more likely to be high risk than White youth (18.9%). (See Attachment B.)

- YASI in Virginia performed as expected in comparison to existing research on youth risk assessment instruments. (See Attachment C for risk scores and levels by rearrest rates.)
- The predictive validity of the overall and dynamic risk scores and levels was statistically equivalent for males and females. The *Community/Peers* and *Family* domains had stronger predictive validity for males than females.
- The predictive validity was statistically equivalent for White and Black youth for overall risk levels and dynamic risk scores and levels; however, the predictive validity for the overall risk score was statistically significantly higher for White youth than Black youth. The *Alcohol/Drugs* domain had stronger predictive validity for White youth than Black youth.
- Each domain had a positive correlation between risk and priority area assignment, though some were stronger correlations than others. The strongest correlations were for the *Alcohol/Drugs* domain, followed by *Aggression*. The *Employment/Free Time* domain had the lowest prevalence of moderate to high risk, lowest occurrence of assigned priority area, and the lowest correlation between domain level and priority area assignment.

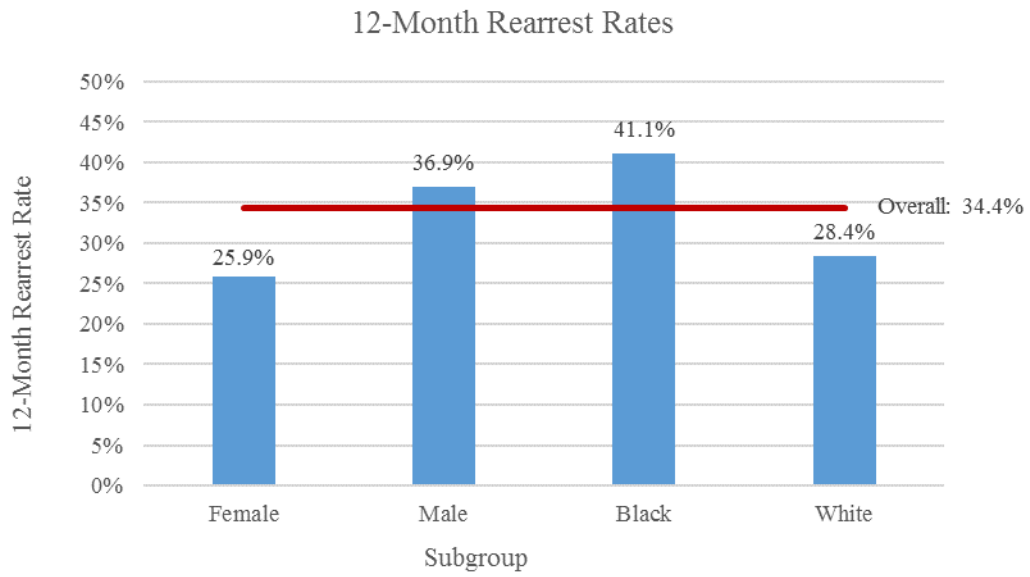
### Research Recommendations:

- Instrumental validity: Do individual items load onto their designated domains? Are the domains separate and distinct concepts?
- Inter-rater reliability: Have training efforts maintained consistency in assessments?
- Interactions between domains: Do patterns exist in how domains present?
- Different outcomes: What is the predictive ability for different reoffense severities?
- Additional groups: Are there other group or geographical differences?
- Weighting and scoring: Can modifications improve the predictive ability?
- Service matching: Is the tool used by practitioners to match services to the risk profile?
- Recidivism reduction: Does the use of risk assessment tools decrease reoffending?
- Program evaluations: Do services improve dynamic risk?

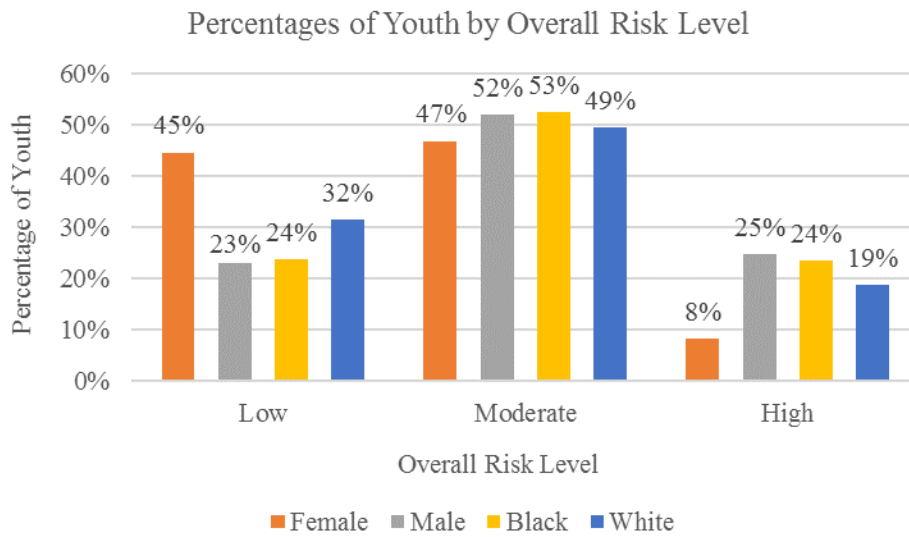
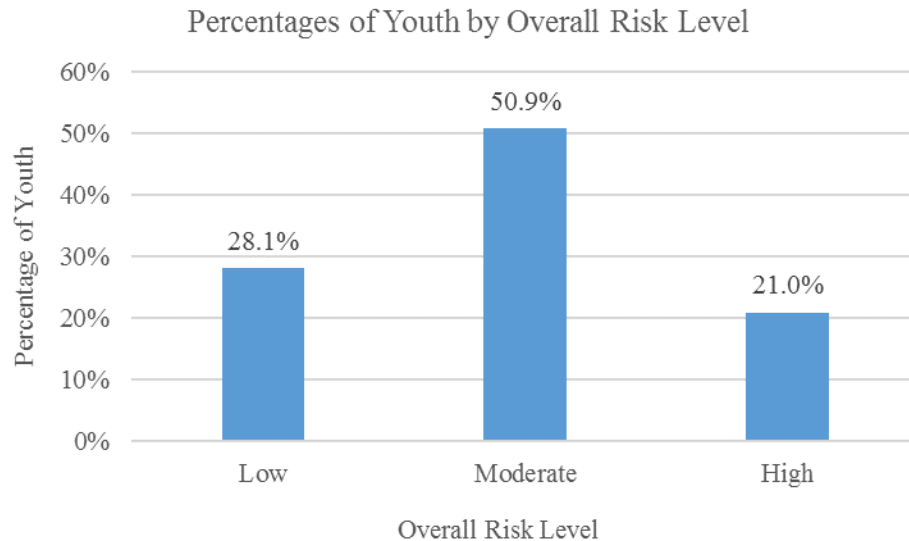
### Ongoing Policy Recommendations:

- Determine purpose and function of the assessment within the system
- Conduct staff and stakeholder training
- Test the tool's performance
- Calibrate and modify the instrument
- Repeat

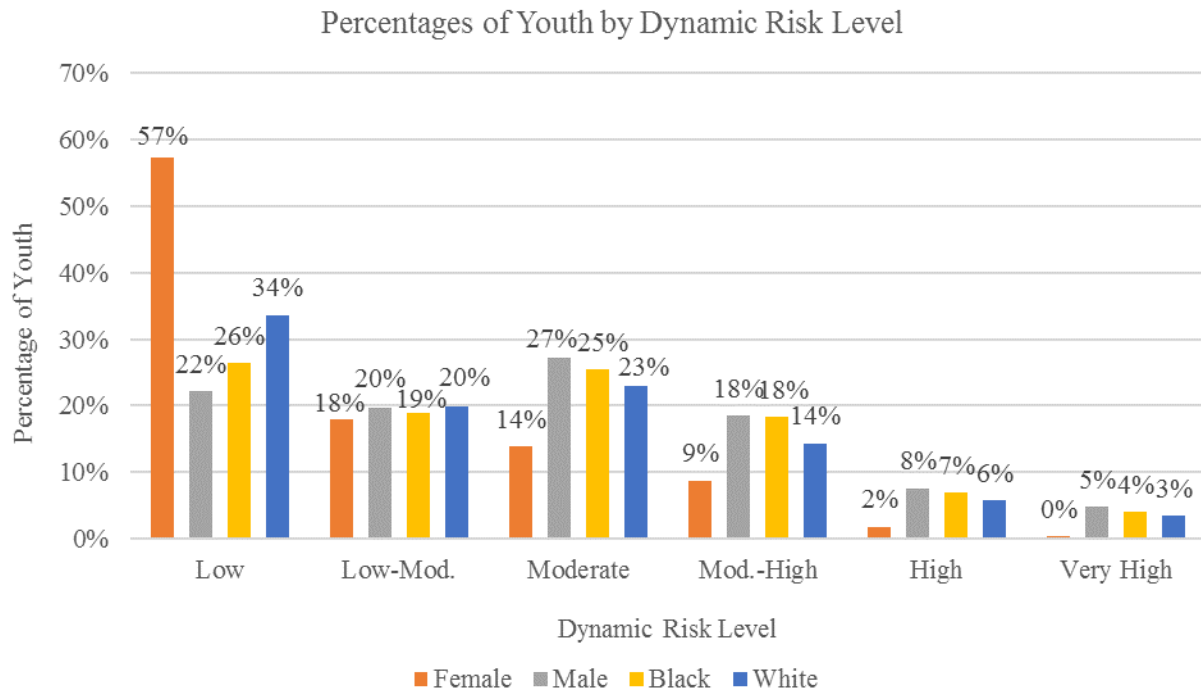
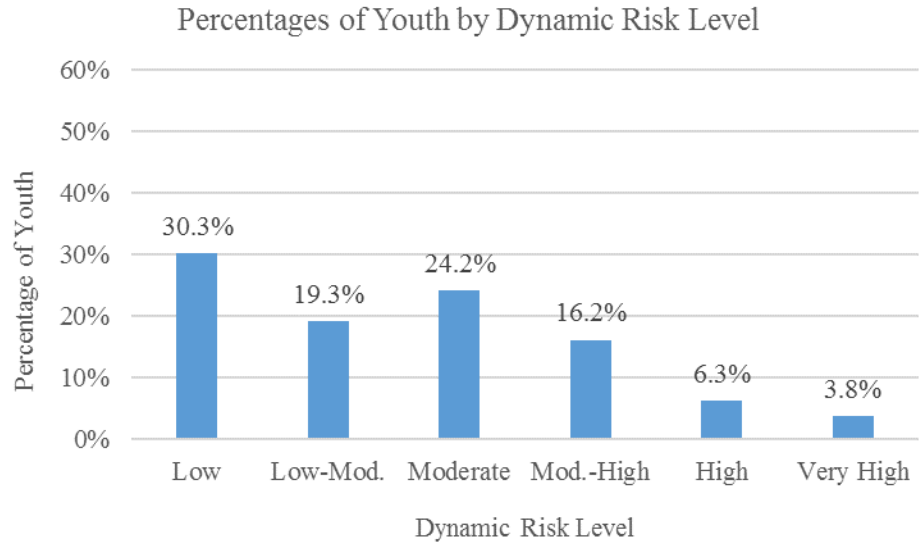
Attachment A: Recidivism



Attachment B: Risk Assessment Distributions



Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice  
Human Research, FY 2019



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Human Research, FY 2019

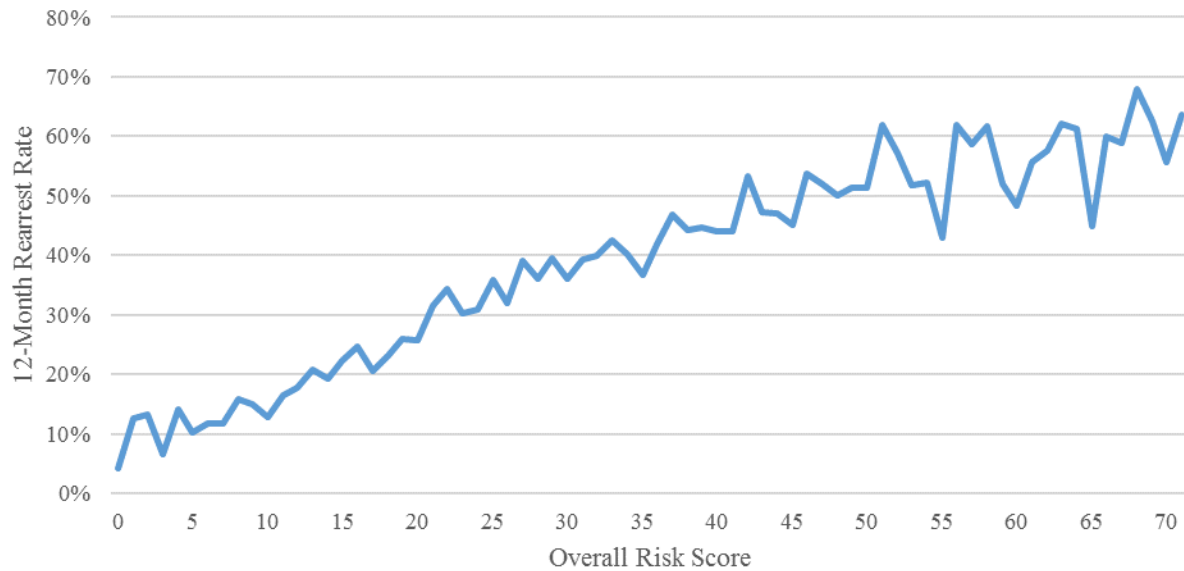
Summary of Statistically Significant Assessment Differences by Subgroup

	Sex		Race	
	Score	Level	Score	Level
Overall	--	Male	Black	Black
Dynamic	--	Male	Black	Black
<u>Domains</u>				
Legal History	Male	Male	Black	Black
Family	Female	Male	White	--
School	Female	Male	Black	Black
Community/Peers	Male	Male	Black	Black
Alcohol/Drugs	Male	Male	White	White
Aggression	Female	Male	Black	Black
Attitudes	--	Male	Black	Black
Skills	--	Male	Black	Black
Employment/Free Time	Female	--	Black	Black

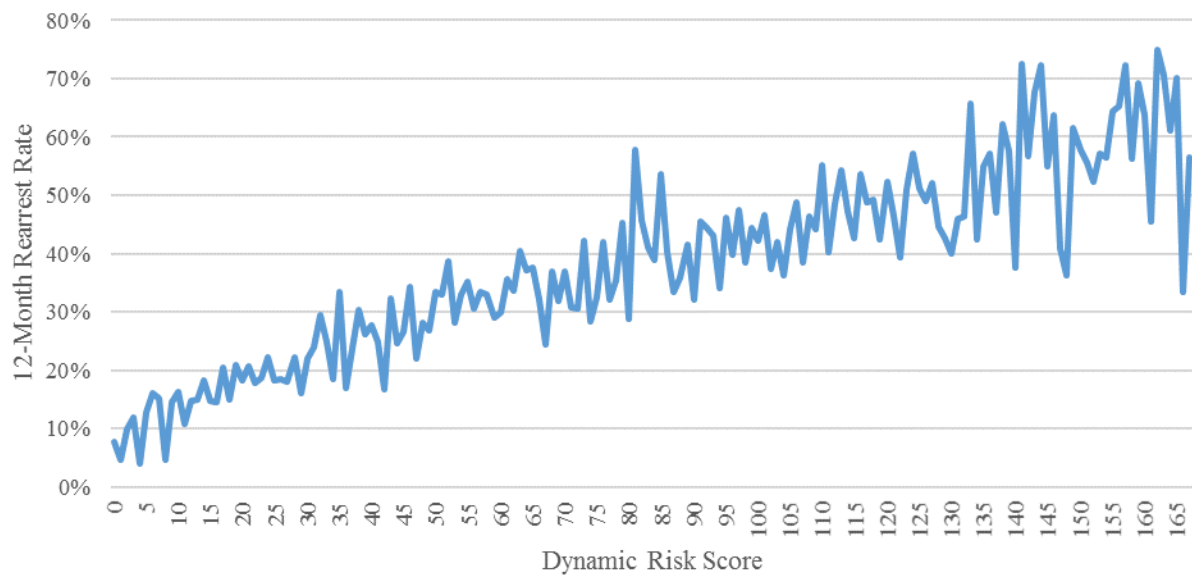
*Note:* The subgroup with the higher value is listed.

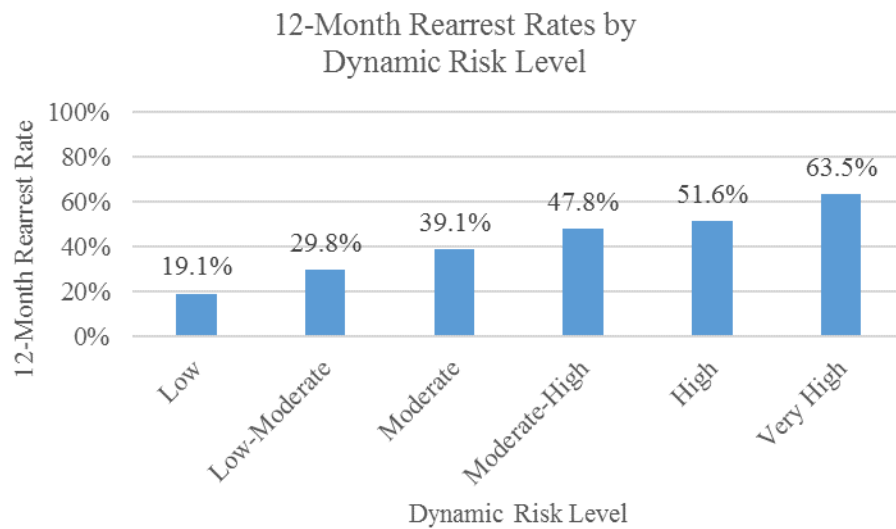
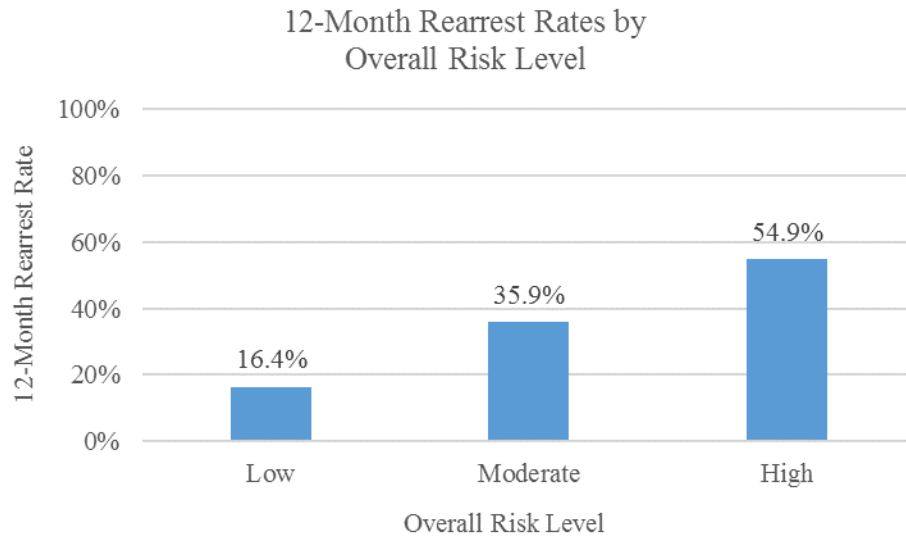
Attachment C: Risk Assessment and Recidivism

12-Month Rearrest Rate by Overall Risk Score



12-Month Rearrest Rate by Dynamic Risk Score

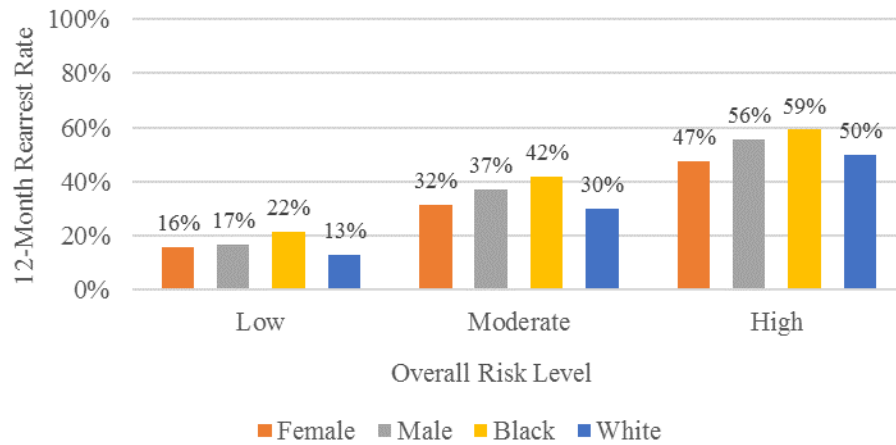




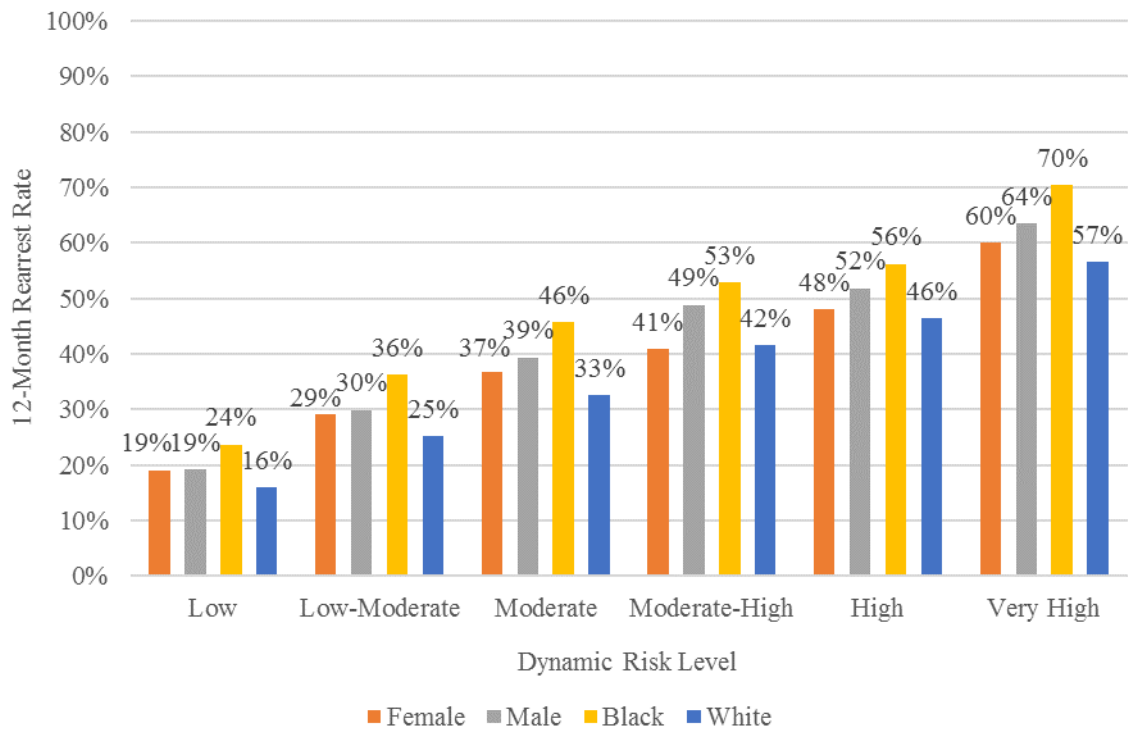


Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice  
Human Research, FY 2019

12-Month Rearrest Rates by  
Overall Risk Level



12-Month Rearrest Rates by  
Dynamic Risk Level



YASI Predictive Validity Results of Current Study Compared to Previous Studies

	Orbis, 2007	Jones, 2011	Jones et al., 2016	Baird et al., 2013	Current - Scores	Current - Levels
Pre-Screen	0.65	0.64	0.79	0.68	0.68	0.66
Female	0.61	0.60	0.68	0.67	0.67	0.63
Male	0.68	0.64	0.82	0.71	0.68	0.65
Black				0.66	0.65	0.64
White				0.68	0.69	0.67
Dynamic Risk	0.62	0.63			0.65	0.66
Female	0.59	0.62			0.64	0.62
Male	0.64	0.63			0.66	0.65
Domain Dynamic Risk	0.55-0.63		0.54-0.73		0.56-0.64	0.56-0.64
Female		0.50-0.60			0.55-0.63	0.55-0.61
Male		0.50-0.62			0.57-0.65	0.57-0.64

*Note:* Values represent the Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC), a measure of predictive validity. Studies varied in population, follow-up timeframes, and recidivism measures and may have reported additional AUCs not displayed in the summary table above. Orbis (2007) and Jones (2011) both studied New York populations, resulting in similar AUCs. In the Orbis (2007) study, “negative outcome” was defined as a new referral/arrest, violation of probation, or adjudication/conviction; AUCs for the pre-screen after item weight and cut-off point revisions are displayed.

Summary of Statistically Significant AUC Differences by Subgroup

	Sex		Race	
	Score	Level	Score	Level
Overall	--	--	White	--
Dynamic	--	--	--	--
<u>Domains</u>				
Legal History	--	--	--	--
Family	--	Male	--	--
School	--	--	--	--
Community/Peers	Male	Male	--	--
Alcohol/Drugs	--	--	White	White
Aggression	--	--	--	--
Attitudes	--	--	--	--
Skills	--	--	--	--
Employment/Free Time	--	--	--	--

*Note:* The subgroup with the higher AUC value is listed.

## **Youth Photography Focus Group's Executive Summary**

### ***Purpose***

The Youth Photography course was offered during May and June of 2018 through CSU 4 (Norfolk). The purpose was to expose system involved youth to a prosocial activities, build social skills, learn about photography, network, and have fun. By all accounts, it was a resounding success. I conducted a focus group with the youth after the class ended. Consent/assent were obtained from all youth. I spoke to the youth about their experiences with the class, how they felt about photography, how they experienced their interactions with each other and the adults they worked with, and what the experience taught them about themselves.

### ***Summary/Takeaways***

The class was fun to organize and the amateur photographer who taught the class enjoyed teaching the youth. The kids learned a lot and were proud of their work and appeared to enjoy the experience. The CSU staff did an amazing job anticipating any problems (e.g., providing transportation each day to and from the class almost eliminated any problems with attendance). The feedback from the focus group was mainly positive. For example, the youth talked about how they felt being involved in the class kept them out of trouble (because if they weren't "here", they would probably be engaged in something non-productive), they discussed their strong social bonds, feeling like a "family" by the end of the class, wanting to come back and do this class or something similar in the future (e.g., drawing, dance, poetry). They commented that they felt respected by "most" of the adults, and they hoped to continue to take pictures in the future because most of them felt that they were good at it (one participant commented that he felt this was "the only thing he was really good at"). The complaints were trivial (e.g., they didn't like the food and the travel time to the library).

### ***Recommendations/Next Steps***

During the focus group, I found it challenging to keep them focused and it was difficult to convince them to express their feelings and discuss the big picture. The class, as well as the focus group, was a pilot, and I learned a lot by doing it. In terms of the research component, I learned how to navigate full IRB approval from two state agencies, and I realized that I need to hone my qualitative skills (I am primarily a quantitative researcher). Next time, I will do some more research on conducting focus groups and spend some time practicing, which should make it more effective. I may also conduct a survey and expand the focus group to include the staff who worked together to coordinate the class. My assumption is that it helped to boost morale among the staff because it was a "feel good" activity and allowed PO's and system involved youth to interact in a fun, non punitive way. The entire experience was rewarding and beneficial for all. Next time, I will also look into pursuing funding. Those of us involved in the class funded the program out of pocket (snacks, clothes for the gala for each kid, jump drives, getting pictures matted/mounted, etc.). We learned some important lessons, and overall, it sets the stage for offering other similar opportunities in the future with a more complete evaluation component.