



Workforce Partnership Inc. Youthful Offender Evaluation

January 2011

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT: Approximately 200,000 juveniles and young adults reenter society from juvenile correctional facilities or state and federal prisons each year, many lacking the skills or resources to successfully transition back to the community. Recognizing the unique needs of youthful offenders, the San Diego Workforce Partnership (Workforce Partnership), at the guidance of the Youth Council directed federal Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Youth funds to serve youthful offenders re-entering local communities after incarceration. The Workforce Partnership, in turn contracted with three non-profits to implement the Youthful Offender program throughout the San Diego region. The Workforce Partnership also contracted with the Criminal Justice Research Division of SANDAG, to conduct a process and impact evaluation on all 402 youth who entered the Youthful Offender program between July 1, 2007, and December 31, 2009, and exited by June 30, 2010. Seventy percent of the 307 youth who exited as of June 30, 2010, successfully completed the program as measured by achieving at least one of their major goals (e.g., educational or employment). At six-month follow-up about one in five (22%) of the 206 youth who completed the entire follow-up period were arrested and only 13 percent had a new conviction. Multivariate analysis revealed that successful completion of the program or being employed at exit significantly reduced the likelihood of being arrested six months post-exit. Overall, both staff and youth were pleased with the effectiveness of the program. The information garnered from this report will inform both program staff and the Workforce Partnership as they continued to hone the implementation of the Youthful Offender program.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

While there has been much attention recently on prisoner reentry, most of the focus has been on adults as opposed to juveniles and younger adults. However, there are approximately 200,000 juveniles and young adults who reenter society from juvenile correctional facilities or state and federal prisons each year. Most have not graduated high school, do not have a work history, and/or have never lived independently (Mears & Travis, 2004). Furthermore, past work has shown that young people face unique reentry challenges compared to adults, particularly in cognitive and psychosocial functioning, as well as establishing a career.

Recognizing the unique needs of youthful offenders, the San Diego Workforce Partnership (Workforce Partnership), at the guidance of the Youth Council, directed federal Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Youth funds to address the needs of a special youth population – young offenders, gang members, and at-risk youth ages 14 to 21 years old. Starting in 2007, the Workforce Partnership deployed Youthful Offender funding to three local agencies - South Bay Community Services (SBCS), San Diego County Office of Education, Juvenile Court and Community Schools (SDCOE), and Second Chance to provide job development, placement, and educational opportunities to at-risk youth.

PROJECT BACKGROUND HIGHLIGHTS

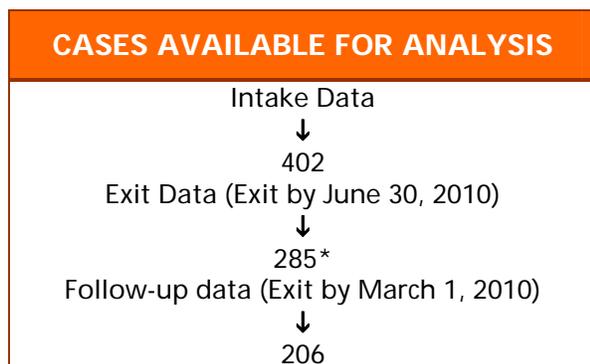
- ▶ The San Diego Workforce Partnership, at the guidance of the Youth Council directed federal Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Youth funds to support youthful offenders, gang members, and at-risk youth obtain educational and employment goals.
- ▶ Workforce Partnership oversees the local distribution of WIA Youthful Offender funds to three San Diego non-profits.
- ▶ The Youthful Offender program services focus on four core components: education, work readiness, work opportunities, and youth development.
- ▶ SANDAG conducted a process and impact evaluation of the three programs to measure success and impact on criminal behavior.
- ▶ The evaluation included all youth who received the Youthful Offender program services between July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010. Youth continued to receive services past this time but were not included in the evaluation process.

METHODOLOGY

Unique to how the Workforce Partnership traditionally monitors its contracted services, executives decided to conduct a more in-depth evaluation of how the Youthful Offender program was being implemented among the three agencies and document the

associated outcomes. To accomplish this goal, the Workforce Partnership approached the Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to conduct a process and impact evaluation. Employing several methodologies, SANDAG analyzed data from all 402 youth involved in the program over a 36-month period. Data were collected from a variety of sources, including treatment and outcome data from the Workforce Partnership's Customer Information Services Reporting System (CISRS) database, surveys with staff and participants, and arrest and conviction information from official justice databases. Data were collected and analyzed at three points in time, intake to program, exit, and six months post-program. Because the evaluation focused on participants who received services from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010, the data available for analysis varied at each time point. As Table ES.1 shows, while 402 participants were included in the baseline data, six-month follow-up data is only based on about half (e.g., 206) of all participants. Furthermore, youth continued to receive service even though the evaluation period ended.

Table ES.1
DATA AVAILABLE FOR ANALYSIS VARIED
BY TIME-PERIOD



**NOTE: Because CISRS data downloaded at the end of July, there are 307 cases included in the descriptive analysis of participants who exited.*

Measures of central tendency and variance, as well as bivariate and multivariate (i.e., logistic regression) were utilized to identify predictors of successful completion, describe program implementation across sites, and probability of criminal activity post-program participation.

Process Evaluation

To determine if the agencies implemented the Youthful Offender Program as designed, as well as to document staffs' perception of and participants' satisfaction with the program, the process evaluation focused on answering the research questions listed below.

1. What were the characteristics of the youth receiving services from the three program sites?
2. What was the level and type of services received? How did this differ among program sites?
3. What were participants' perceptions of the usefulness of the program? What was the level of satisfaction with the program?
4. What was staffs' perception of program implementation and effectiveness?

Impact Evaluation

To measure the impact participation had on a youth's ability to reach his/her educational goals, secure employment, and remain out of the justice system, an impact evaluation was conducted. To identify which factors could be influencing a youth's success, treatment and demographic data were analyzed. Additionally, criminal history data were collected and analyzed for the one year prior to participation, the period of participation, and six months post-participation. The impact evaluation was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What was participants' level of program success at exit?
2. What was the level of criminal activity during and six months post-program participation?
3. What factors were predictive of program success?
4. What factors were related to crime free behavior six months post-program participation?

PROCESS EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ 402 youth received WIA services from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010.
- ▶ Participants were 18.67 years of age on average at program intake, mostly male (69%), and predominately Hispanic (62%).
- ▶ At intake the majority of participants had completed the 10th (26%) or 11th (39%) grade, were still in school (61%), and 5 percent had dropped out of high school.
- ▶ Almost all of the participants (81%) were assessed as deficient in basic literacy skills.
- ▶ Nearly all (98%) of the participant's families qualified as low income.
- ▶ The majority (85%) of participants reported prior contact with the criminal justice system and over half (58%) had been arrested in the year prior to intake.
- ▶ Around two in five (42%) participants claimed to be involved with a gang.
- ▶ WIA service delivery varied by agency to meet the unique needs of each site's target population.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Workforce Partnership funded three different agencies using WIA funds, with the mandate that each agency would implement the

core Youthful Offender program service components. The purpose of the four core service components was to support youth in obtaining their educational goals, prepare them for employment, and/or help them obtain employment. These four core components provided a holistic approach to reaching the WIA goals and were as follows:

1. Educational Services;
2. Work Readiness Training;
3. Work Preparation and Work-Based Opportunities; and
4. Youth Development Services.

As part of the program model, assessments were utilized to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plan for each youth. This plan was then utilized by the case manager and youth to guide the youth's progress while in the program. Youth could remain in the program as long as necessary, with 38 weeks being the average length of participation among the programs, ranging from 22 weeks for Second Chance (only 8 participants had exited the program during the time of this evaluation) to 48 weeks for COE participants.

The three agencies implementing the Youthful Offender program model each served youth with different needs and backgrounds. Specifically, SBCS enrolled a greater proportion of youth from the dependency system and targeted youth in diversion and who were lower-end offenders. SDCOE on other hand, targeted higher risk youth, most of whom were completing institutional commitments at Camp Barrett, and it also served pregnant teenagers. Finally, Second Chance had greater focus on older youth reentering the community from adult detention facilities, as well as youth eligible for Department of Juvenile Justice Commitments (i.e., serious youthful offenders). These variations were reflected in the client-based service delivery which

tailored the core services to meet the unique needs of each participant.

YOUTHFUL OFFENDER PROGRAM PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION

Data from the process evaluation showed that participants in the three Youthful Offender programs were around 19 years of age on average and that most were male (69%) and Hispanic (62%) (not shown). Nearly two-thirds (65%) of participants had completed 10th or 11th grade, but were literacy deficient (i.e., literacy competency at or below 8th grade level) and were unemployed at intake (Table ES.2).

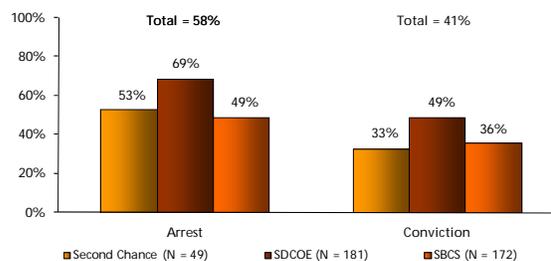
Table ES.2
PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS AT PROGRAM INTAKE

| PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS | |
|--|------------|
| Average age | 18.67 |
| Completed 10 th or 11 th grade | 65% |
| Basic literacy skill deficient | 81% |
| Not employed in the past 26 weeks | 94% |
| TOTAL | 402 |

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Almost all (91%) the youth were assessed at intake as requiring support with needs other than education and employment in order to meet their program goals (not shown). Additionally, 85 percent of the participants self-reported prior criminal justice contact, with over half (58%) arrested and two in five (41%) convicted in the year prior to intake (Figure ES.1).

Figure ES.1
OVER HALF OF PARTICIPANTS ARRESTED IN THE YEAR PRIOR TO ENROLLMENT



SOURCE: PCMS and ARJIS, 2010

Gang involvement or association was a reality for 42 percent of the participants, ranging from 22 percent of SBCS youth to 81 percent of Second Chance participants (not shown).

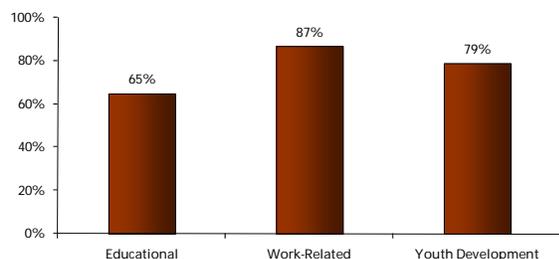
PARTICIPANTS' LEVEL OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

The Youthful Offender program intended to provide a continuum of services to support a youth's success in school achievement and/or employment. In regard to educational services, 65 percent of youth received at least one educational intervention (Figure ES.2). Educational services included tutoring, post-secondary preparation, post-secondary education, alternative secondary school, Basic Skills services, GED preparation, and computer literacy.

The majority of Youthful Offender program services focused on work-related activities. Within the two core work components (i.e., work readiness and work opportunities) were nine service activities. These included summer work experience, occupational skills or advanced training, work experience, work readiness, job placement services, preparation for occupational or vocational education, job shadowing, occupational skill attainment, and work readiness attainment. As Figure ES.2 shows, nearly nine out of ten (87%) received at least one work-related service. Receiving

these services proved beneficial, as those who received work-related services were more likely to be employed at exit and those employed were less likely to be arrested six months post-exit.

Figure ES.2
NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES



SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

“I am thankful for everything that they did. It really improved my family situation and life in general.”
SDCOE Youthful Offender Program Participant

Because this population is often dealing with multiple issues that have hindered their academic and/or employment achievements, the Youthful Offender program includes youth development services as a core component. Included in these activities are leadership development, peer mentoring, community service, adult mentorship, life skills development, substance abuse and/or psychological counseling, wrap-around services, financial literacy, and other youth development activities (e.g., arts, athletics, recreational activities). Analysis of youth development services showed that the majority of youth received at least one type of support service (79%) (Figure ES.2).

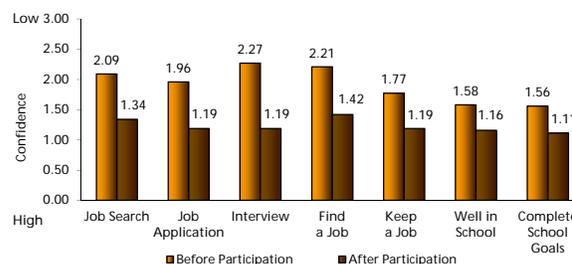
PARTICIPANTS’ AND STAFFS’ PERCEPTION OF THE PROGRAM

To learn about how participants and staff felt about how effective the program was, how helpful were staff, and identify areas of

improvement, both participants and staff were surveyed. A total of 48 participants and 20 staff completed the surveys.

Overall, most youth found the program to be helpful in accomplishing their goals. Of particular note were the work internships, work readiness, and job placement services. Coupled with these results were the respondents’ increase in their own confidence and skills. Using a four-point scale with 1 being “very confident” and 4 being “not confident at all,” respondents were asked to rate their level of confidence in their ability to perform specific work- and school-related tasks. As Figure ES.3 illustrates, respondents’ self-confidence increased significantly after participating in the program. A lower score reflects a higher level of confidence.

Figure ES.3
PARTICIPANTS GAINED SELF-CONFIDENCE IN WORK- AND SCHOOL-RELATED SKILLS AFTER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION*



*Significant at $p < .05$ level.

NOTE: Cases with missing information or not applicable are not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership. Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

Some additional feedback received by participants reflects an appreciation for the staff and services received and are noted below:

- ▶ “Thank you for believing in me and for waiting for me while I was incarcerated. Once I got out of jail I was invited back to the program and I appreciate the help I received from my probation officer.”

- ▶ “I think that it is a good program. As soon as I finished my internship I was hired by that company and received higher pay.”
- ▶ “This program has helped me a lot. It has given me the skills that I need to be successful in life and in the work field.”

abuse, and lack of work experience as issues most of the youth needed to address in order to succeed. However, eight out of nine staff felt that the Youthful Offender program did effectively help with these issues (Table ES.3).

Staff perceptions were similar to youth, with the majority giving the Youthful Offender program high ratings for implementation and effectiveness. Results also showed that staffs’ awareness of the presenting needs of youth were in alignment with assessment results. In particular, staff identified a history of delinquency, gang involvement, substance

“I have personally witnessed firsthand this program positively and effectively help most of our youth offenders.”
Youthful Offender program staff member

Table ES.3
STAFF REPORTED THEY FELT THE PROGRAM ADDRESSES
THE TOP BARRIERS THAT YOUTH FACE

| | Hinders a Youth’s Success | Program Helps Youth Deal with This Issue |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Gang involvement | 95% | 90% |
| Alcohol and drug abuse | 95% | 84% |
| Delinquent/criminal behavior | 84% | 94% |
| Lack of work experience/skills | 80% | 89% |
| Poor literacy | 80% | 79% |
| Young parenthood (i.e., client) | 79% | 66% |
| Domestic violence | 78% | 69% |
| Childhood abuse | 77% | 73% |
| Mental health problems | 72% | 56% |
| Lack of stable housing (e.g., homeless) | 65% | 78% |
| Language barriers (English second language) | 60% | 50% |
| Runaway | 50% | 72% |
| TOTAL | 17 - 20 | 16 -20 |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership, Key Staff Survey, SANDAG 2010

IMPACT EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ The majority (70%) of participants graduated with at least one successful outcome from the program.
- ▶ About one in five (22%) of the 206 participants in the follow-up period were arrested and 14 percent were convicted in the six months following program completion.
- ▶ Successful educational and employment attainment were positively associated with crime free behavior six months post-program completion.
- ▶ Program components found to increase the likelihood of program success included receipt of job placement services, attainment of an occupational skill, receipt of support services, and participation in post-secondary education activities.
- ▶ Being male, a single parent, Black, and/or having a history of homelessness, or being literacy deficient increased the odds of a participant not obtaining success at exit and/or being arrested six months post-program completion.

PARTICIPANTS' EXIT STATUS

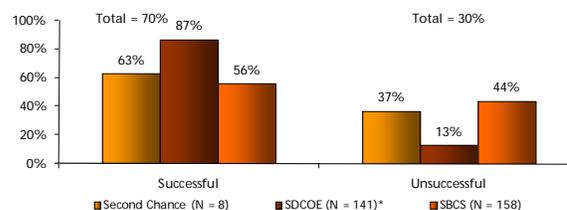
To exit the program successfully, a youth had to accomplish at least one of the following:

- ▶ enter employment;
- ▶ enter advanced training;
- ▶ enter post-secondary education; and/or
- ▶ attain a recognized certificate/diploma/degree.

Based on these definitions of success, 70 percent of the 307 Youthful Offender program participants that exited the program during the evaluation period achieved at least one successful goal (Figure ES.4). Among the programs, SDCOE (87%) had a greater proportion of youth exiting successfully than the SBCS program (56%)¹. Additionally, of those participants that were successful at exit, 35 percent achieved success in one area, 45 percent in two areas, and 20 percent had 3 identified successful goals.

¹ Because of the small sample size, Second Chance youth outcomes are only descriptive and not part of the statistical analysis.

Figure ES.4
SDCOE YOUTH MORE LIKELY
TO EXIT THE PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY



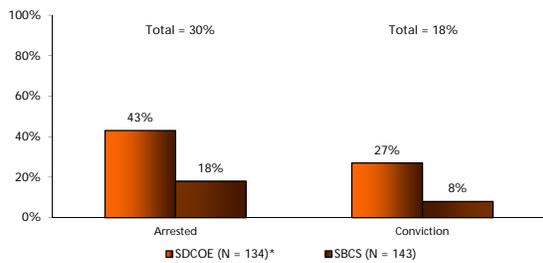
*Difference significant at $p < .05$.

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

CRIMINAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES

With the focus on youthful offenders, tracking contact with the justice system was a key outcome measure. To measure criminal activity, data were collected from official crime databases during program participation and six months post-program exit. For 285 cases that had exited the program by June 30, 2010, (and therefore completed the entire "during" period), nearly one-third (30%) were arrested and 18 percent were convicted of the offense. Additional analysis revealed that SDCOE youth were more likely to be arrested (42%) and convicted (27%) in this period than SBCS youth (18% and 8%, respectively).

Figure ES.5
MOST YOUTH REMAIN CRIME FREE
DURING PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

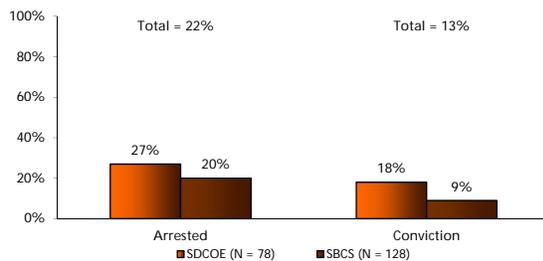


*Difference significant at $p < .05$.

SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

Of the 206 youth who had exited the program and had been out for at least six months, less than one-quarter (22%) were arrested and 13 percent were convicted. There were no significant differences between the two programs (Figure ES.6).

Figure ES.6
LESS THAN ONE-QUARTER OF
PARTICIPANTS REARRESTED SIX MONTHS
POST-PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

While a comparison group was not available for this project, placed within the context of recidivism of similar populations, Youthful Offender program participants had a lower arrest rate. For example, information from the San Diego County Probation Department on recidivism (i.e., new conviction or true finding for misdemeanor or felony offense) of 2009 probationers showed that 31 percent of

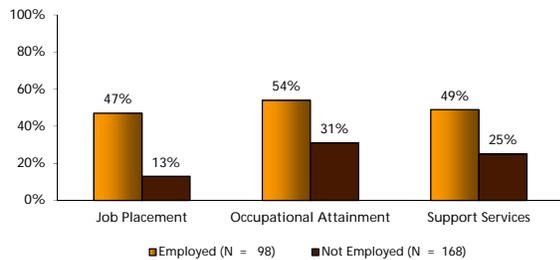
juveniles and 29 percent of adults recidivated during the period of their probation (not shown).

FACTORS PREDICTIVE OF SUCCESS AND REARREST

One of the primary reasons for this research project was to identify factors that might be contributing to the successful completion of programs by the Youthful Offender program participants. Because success was related to achievement of either or both employment and education outcomes, these two types of outcomes were examined separately to isolate factors influencing the odds of a youth achieving his/her goals.

Both bivariate and multivariate analyses were run to identify possible predictive factors. The analyses revealed three program factors that were related to employment success. Specifically, receiving job placement services, attaining an occupational skill, and receiving support services contributed to youth getting a job and were all found to increase the likelihood of a participant being employed at exit. Youth who received job placement services were four times as likely to enter employment ($\beta = 4.2$) than those that did not receive the services. As Figure ES.7 demonstrates, 46 percent of those who received job placement services gained employment versus 13 percent of those who did not receive the service. Achieving an occupational skill made youth more than two times more likely to get a job ($\beta = 2.2$), with 54 percent of youth having a job at exit. Similarly, receiving support services, such as assistance with transportation, child care, and/or housing, also contributed to success with about half (49%) of these youth obtaining employment at exit compared to only one-quarter (25%) of those youth who did not receive these additional services ($\beta = 2.0$) (Figure ES.7).

Figure ES.7
SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES
SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO JOB,
OCCUPATIONAL, AND SUPPORT SERVICES



*Difference significant at $p < .05$.

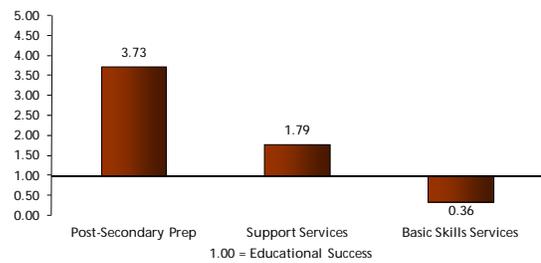
SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

FACTORS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

Analysis also showed that certain demographic groups were less likely to have a successful employment outcome. Males tended to be less likely to get a job than females ($\beta = 0.41$), even after receiving job placement, occupational skill, and support services. Black youth also were 74 percent less likely to find a job than their non-Black counterparts ($\beta = 0.26$), while older participants were more likely to obtain employment ($\beta = 2.5$) (not shown).

Analyses also reveal factors that increased the likelihood of a participant's attaining educational success (as defined by the Youthful Offender program). Youth who received post-secondary education preparation service were more than three and a half times more likely to be successful ($\beta = 3.73$). Additionally, those that had support services were almost two times more likely to succeed ($\beta = 1.79$) (Figure ES.8). Opposite of this was the finding that youth receiving basic skill remediation were less likely to obtain education success. This could be viewed as a proxy for poor literacy and highlights the seriousness of this deficiency.

Figure ES.8
ODDS OF EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS
RELATED TO SERVICES RECEIVED



SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

As with the employment analysis, the educational regression model identified groups that may need more assistance to achieve a successful education outcome. Youth who were involved with basic skill enhancement activities may need additional assistance since the model showed they are less likely to be successful ($\beta = 0.63$), even while being involved in these activities. Single parents ($\beta = 0.22$) and homeless youth ($\beta = 0.29$) were also less likely to enter advanced training, enter post-secondary education, and/or attain a recognized certificate, diploma, or degree compared to youth without these backgrounds (not shown).

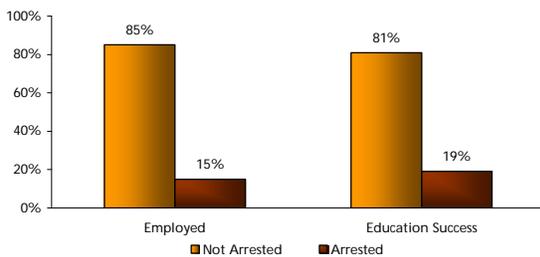
The next step in the analysis was to determine if being successful in an employment or educational outcome was related to whether youth committed a criminal offense after receiving services. Recidivism was measured as whether a youth was arrested in the six months after exiting the program².

This analysis showed that successful program completion did contribute to a youth being less likely to be arrested in the post period. Those participants who completed the program successfully, as measured by entering employment and/or achieving

² Arrest was utilized rather than conviction because the smaller sample size associated with convictions reduced the ability of the model to identify possible predictors.

educational success at exit, were significantly less likely to be arrested six months post-participation ($\beta = 0.45$). As Figure ES.9 shows, 85 percent of those who were employed and 81 percent of those with a successful educational outcome remained crime-free six months post-exit compared to those who were not employed or those who were not successful in an educational outcome (15% and 19%, respectively). These results support the primary purpose of Youthful Offender program funds, which is to help youthful offenders remain crime free by assisting youth in finding and maintaining employment.

Figure ES.9
PARTICIPANTS WHO EXITED PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY WERE MORE LIKELY TO REMAIN CRIME FREE SIX MONTHS AFTER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION*



*Difference significant at $p < .05$.

SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

Additionally, males were six and one-half times more likely than females to be arrested ($\beta = 6.56$), even when controlling for services received (not shown).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the process and impact evaluations, the following recommendations are put forth:

Address poor literacy skills: The Basic Literacy Skills assessment revealed that the majority (81%) of youth were literacy deficient. However, only 21 percent received basic skills treatment services and a similar percentage of staff thought the majority of youth struggled with this issue. Given the impact literacy can have on the chances of success, this is a program area that might benefit from enhancement.

Increase Internships and employment opportunities: Feedback from both participants and staff highlighted how valuable job placements and job preparation services were to finding and securing employment. The ability of The Youthful Offender Program to fund paid internships offers incentives for employers to take a risk with youthful offenders and an opportunity for the youth to prove themselves to be valuable employees. During these continued challenging economic times, this service component becomes even more crucial in transitioning youth back to the community.

Enhance the research to include a comparison group: Only 22 percent of participants were arrested six months following program completion. In the context of other studies conducted on recidivism of youth on probation in San Diego County, these results seem promising. However, without a comparison group, the causal relationship between WIA intervention and reduced recidivism cannot be drawn. Future research would gain from inclusion of such a comparison or control group, longer follow-up, and additional cases from Second Chance.

Expansion of basic literacy skill services:

Those receiving basic literacy skill services were at greater risk for arrest six months following program completion. This finding, coupled with the fact that not all individuals assessed as literacy deficient received these services, shines a light on a gap in service delivery. This result calls for a closer examination of the factors prohibiting all youth in need of such services from receiving them, as well as the type of basic literacy skills services being delivered.

CASE STUDY

Marcos entered the Youthful Program having a long history with the delinquency system and entered Second Chance while serving time in the Youthful Offender Unit at the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (EMJDF) (which houses the most serious juvenile offenders). While serving his time, Marcos participated in the Youthful Offender in-custody program for approximately one year. After his release from EMJD, Marcos started the four-week Youthful Offender work-readiness program. While participating in this portion of the program, he was provided housing and was living in a Second Chance Sober Living house. Marcos successfully graduated from this phase of the program and then transitioned back home with his parents in Oceanside.

Marcos was then placed in a Youthful Offender subsidized internship at a local grocery store in the North County. The store management was pleased with his work performance and he was offered a regular position at the end of his internship. Marcos started as a regular employee in August 2010, and was quickly promoted and received a pay raise.

Second Chance Program

NOTE: The name was changed to protect the identity of the client.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

Problem Statement

While there has been much attention recently on prisoner reentry, most of the focus has been on adults as opposed to juveniles and younger adults. However, there are approximately 200,000 juveniles and young adults who reenter society from juvenile correctional facilities or state and federal prisons each year. Most have not graduated high school, do not have a work history, and/or have never lived independently (Mears & Travis, 2004). Furthermore, past research has shown that young people face unique reentry challenges compared to adults, particularly in cognitive and psychosocial functioning, as well as establishing a career. Research has shown that these challenges do not disappear because a juvenile reaches a certain age at which the law considers them adults. These developmental differences call for interventions that are responsive to the needs of youthful offenders (Steinberg, Chung & Little, 2004).

Unlike adult offenders, school has a key role in a youth's life and unfortunately youthful offenders have a history of academic failure, which can have long-term effects on future success. Nearly one-quarter of all who are reentering the education system will drop out within the first 30 days. Some challenges include release dates that do not coincide with school start dates, which can place a youth behind and at a disadvantage compared to students enrolled since the beginning of the semester. This failure in school can lead to lack of success in finding and sustaining employment. The nexus between education and employment is a critical element for successful reentry into the community. As such, research has recommended that youthful reentry programs be based on a holistic service approach that involves cooperation among agencies in the criminal

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- ▶ The San Diego Workforce Partnership, at the guidance of the Youth Council directed federal Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Youth funds to support youthful offenders, gang members, and at-risk youth obtain educational and employment goals.
- ▶ San Diego Workforce Partnership oversees the local distribution of WIA Youthful Offender program funds to three San Diego non-profits.
- ▶ Youthful Offender program services focus on four core components: education, work readiness, work opportunities, and youth development.
- ▶ SANDAG conducted a process and impact evaluation of the three programs to measure success and impact on criminal behavior.
- ▶ The evaluation included all youth who received Youthful Offender program services between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2010. Youth continued to receive services past this time but were not included in the evaluation process.

justices system, the local community, education providers, career services centers, and family members.

Local Response

The San Diego Workforce Partnership, at the guidance of the Youth Council directed federal Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Youth funds to serve youthful offenders re-entering local communities after incarceration. The City and County's WIA Youthful Offender and Transition program funds are administered by the Workforce Partnership a non-profit agency that funds job training programs in the San Diego region. In 2007, the Workforce Partnership deployed the WIA funds under a "Youthful Offender Reentry Program" Request for Proposal (RFP). This solicitation resulted in the funding of three local non-profits to provide assessment, work-readiness training, and behavior modification training while a young person is incarcerated, and intensive case management, educational support, and job placement post-release. South Bay Community Services (SBCS), San Diego County Office of Education, Juvenile Court and Community Schools (SDCOE), and Second Chance were successful in the RFP process and were awarded the contracts to implement the Youthful Offender programs.

Unique to how the Workforce Partnership traditionally monitors its contracted services, executives decided to conduct a more in-depth evaluation of how the Youthful Offender program funds were being implemented and the associated outcomes. To accomplish this goal the Workforce Partnership approached the Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to conduct a process and impact evaluation. While the federal grant did not call for a local evaluation, Workforce Partnership Inc. wanted to learn more about specific program components and individual characteristics that might be influencing success. Employing several methodologies, SANDAG analyzed data of all youth involved in the program over a 36-month period. This report provides a summary description of the implementation of the program model by each of the three agencies, participant's satisfaction with the services received, staff's perception of the program and its implementation, as well as the type and level of services provided, and outcomes associated with program participation. This chapter outlines the Youthful Offender program core components and the different means of program implementation across the three funded agencies.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Core Components

Workforce Partnership funded three different agencies using the Youthful Offender program funds, with the mandate that each agency would implement the core service components. However, because the target population of each agency differed slightly, it was understood that how these core components were implemented would vary to accommodate the diverse needs of the population served by each agency. The purposes of the four core service components were to support youth in obtaining their educational goals, prepare them for employment, and/or help them obtain employment. These four core components provided a holistic approach to reaching the Youthful Offender program goals and were as follows:

1. Educational Services;

2. Work Readiness Training;
3. Work Preparation and Work-Based Opportunities; and
4. Youth Development Services.

Imbedded within each of these four core components was a diverse range of activities. Educational services included activities to support a youth completing school, obtaining an alternative degree/certificate, and/or entering post-secondary school. Examples of services included General Equivalency Degree (GED) preparation, tutoring, and/or basic literacy skills redemption. The two employment-related core components had similar goals, with work readiness activities involving the provision of more introductory level services (e.g., preparation for occupational training, job search techniques, resume writing, etc.) and work preparation, and work-based opportunities having a more advanced and hands-on focus (e.g., job shadowing, job internships or placement). Finally, the youth development services provided a range of activities intended to provide the foundation needed for a youth to achieve his/her overall goals. Because this at-risk population entered the program with a history of issues that have stalled its ability to achieve success in school and/or employment, it was imperative that the Youthful Offender program model also include interventions to assist youth in overcoming these barriers. The youth development services strove to address the unique needs of the individual youth. Examples of these types of services included mentoring (both peer and adult), substance abuse and psychological counseling, wrap-around support services (e.g., transportation, clothing allowance), leadership development, and pro-social activities (e.g., culture, sports, recreational).

Service Delivery

To inform the type and intensity of service delivery, each youth was assessed upon entering the program. The assessments varied by agency, as each served a different population; however, each youth was to receive an educational assessment (e.g., the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE)) and a standardized basic skills assessment to determine literacy and basic skills competency. The results of the assessments drove the development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plan. The ISS is a dynamic document that identifies the youth's education and employment goals and also guides the youth's progress in the program. Youth and staff were to discuss the plan throughout program participation and make adjustments as needed. Along with the completion of an ISS, each youth received intensive case management services to guide service delivery.

Individual Agency Descriptions

South Bay Community Services (SBCS)

Administered by South Bay Community Services, the SBCS program targeted juveniles on probation and youth in the dependency system (i.e., foster care youth), ages 16 to 21 years old. In addition to serving those youth in their Independent Living Situation (ILS) program³, SBCS received referrals from Probation and conducted outreach to the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (EMJDF). Services were provided at three different sites and the average staff-to-client ratio was 1:25.

The San Diego County Office of Education, Juvenile Court and Community Schools (SDCOE)

The SDCOE targeted youth on probation, parenting teenagers, and youth attending juvenile court schools. The age range of the target population was 17 to 21 years. In addition to reaching out to youth already involved in its educational system, SDCOE also engaged juveniles while they were incarcerated at Camp Barrett or EMJDF. In general, the SDCOE provides services within these facilities to all detained youth. However, those enrolled in this program while incarcerated could continue their program in the community upon release. Services in the community were provided at one of four regional youth one-stop centers. Length in the program ranged from 6 to 12 months and there was a 1:22 staff-to-youth ratio.

Second Chance

Second Chance differed from the two other programs in terms of the target population. While both SBCS and the SDCOE started their Youthful Offender program services in 2007, Second Chance did not receive funding until February 2009. In addition, Second Chance was more likely to target youth and young adults ages 17 to 21 who were at higher risk and who had more extensive involvement in the criminal justice system, including some involvement in the adult criminal justice system, as well as Department of Juvenile Justice eligible probation wards supervised in a special County Probation Unit. Participants were recruited while in custody at the Girls Rehabilitation Facility (GRF), EMJDF, Juvenile Hall, and San Diego Central Jail. Once released, services were provided out of Second Chance's main location. Since program inception, Second Chance has been able to leverage programming support offered through other funding, including a contract with Probation, which has allowed Second Chance to provide an array of important pre-release services for youth that support a smooth transition. Also since inception, Second Chance has added additional educational services on site in the community. Second Chance also had a staff-to-participant ratio of 1:22, and the program length was 9 to 12 months.

Table 1.1 summarizes the general differences among each of the three agencies and how they operationalized the Youthful Offender program. It is important to note that Youthful Offender program was only a part of the overall menu of service delivery at each agency, with a rich array of supports available within each agency to refer youth.

³ ILS is a county-funded program targeting youth aging out of the foster care system through the provision of transition housing and support services.

**Table 1.1
YOUTHFUL OFFENDER PROGRAMS DIFFER IN TARGET POPULATION SERVED**

| | SBCS | SDCOE | Second Chance |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Target population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Foster youth ▶ Juvenile probationers ▶ Youth ages 16-21 years old | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Juvenile probationers ▶ Parenting teens ▶ Juvenile court students ▶ Youth ages 17-21 years old | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adult probationers (Youthful Offender Unit) ▶ Juvenile probationers (Youthful Offender Unit) ▶ Youth ages 17-21 years old |
| Length of program | 12 months | 6 -12 months | 9 – 12 months |
| Staff-to-client ratio | 1:25 | 1:22 | 1 :22 |
| Service delivery location | Three program locations | 4 youth one-stop centers; juvenile detention facilities | One location |

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Program Interview, 2010

REPORT OVERVIEW

This project was the first time the Workforce Partnership conducted a formal evaluation of its WIA funded Youthful Offender program services. The intentions of this project and report are to provide a richer description of what types and what levels of services were delivered, how programs and participants differed, what were the success levels, and how program participation impacted criminal behavior. To address these and other research questions, SANDAG conducted both a process and impact evaluation. The process evaluation documented the services delivered, program staffs’ perception of the program, and participant satisfaction. The impact evaluation focused on what factors influenced program success, as well as any impact on criminal behavior, both during and after program participation.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

While the Youthful Offender program, which is funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program has been operational since 2007 and utilizes a sophisticated contract compliance system, this was the first time the San Diego Workforce Partnership (Workforce Partnership) solicited an outside evaluator to learn more about how the program was implemented across sites and document factors that might be contributing significantly to the success of participants. Ultimately, the outcomes from this evaluation will be used to inform the program and guide any adjustments. To accomplish this task, the Criminal Justice Research Division (CJRD) of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) was contracted to conduct both a process and impact evaluation. The following chapter describes the research design, research questions, data collection efforts, and the analysis plan.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Process Evaluation

In San Diego County, the WIA Youthful Offender and Transition funds are used to assist at-risk youth ages 14 to 21 years old in obtaining the skills necessary to secure and retain employment. This particular project focused on youth that had contact with the juvenile or criminal justice system or were at risk of becoming involved in either of these systems. As detailed in Chapter One, Workforce Partnership contracted with three local agencies to provide the Youthful Offender programming to at-risk youth throughout the San Diego County region. Service delivery comprised four core components: educational services, work readiness, work opportunities, and youth development. To determine if the agencies implemented the Youthful Offender programs as designed, as well as to document staffs' perception of and participants' satisfaction with the program, several methods were utilized to address the research questions noted below. Because the program was operational prior to the start of the evaluation, the research design was retrospective and covered a 36-month time period including all youth who entered the program during the period of July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2010.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- ▶ SANDAG conducted a process and impact evaluation of all youth who received services between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2010.
- ▶ Data were collected from multiple sources, including the Workforce Partnership designed CISRS database, official criminal history records, and surveys from staff and participants.
- ▶ A retrospective pre/post design was utilized to measure program success, factors influencing success and related to rearrest six months post-program exit.
- ▶ Program implementation was measured with differences among the three agencies implementing Youthful Offender programs described.

Research Questions

The process evaluation was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What were the characteristics of the youth receiving services from the three program sites?
2. What was the level and type of services received? How did this differ among program sites?
3. What were participants' perceptions of the usefulness of the program? What was the level of satisfaction with the program?
4. What was staffs' perception of program implementation and effectiveness?

Data Collection Procedures

CISRS Database: Part of the requirements for recipients of the Youthful Offender program is the entering of treatment and outcome data into a local Web-based system called the Customer Information Services Reporting System (CISRS). This system allows local and federal contract monitors to measure compliance with the core components. In order to determine how the project was implemented across sites, what were the characteristics of participants, and what were the type and level of treatment services received, data were extracted for all youth who entered the program during the period of July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2010. These activities addressed research questions 1 and 2.

Participant Satisfaction Survey: To gather input about the program from the youth who had received services, a satisfaction survey was created. The survey allowed the participants to share their opinions about staff, the usefulness of the services and their resulting accomplishments, and also provide suggestions for improvement. The instrument was entered into an Internet-based tool that was e-mailed to participants with a link to the survey. A hard copy was also available upon request. The survey was originally intended to be distributed to all youth who had participated in the program during the 36-month time period; however, the contact information located in CISRS was not as reliable as the program originally assumed and an alternative plan was utilized. Instead of research staff contacting the participants, program staff reached out to current participants and gave them the link to the survey to complete. A ten dollar incentive card to a local retail establishment was given to each participant who completed the survey. A total of 48 surveys were completed and available for analysis. Data from the surveys was downloaded and analyzed by evaluation staff. The results of the survey addressed research question 3.

Staff Survey: To measure staff members' perspective on the project's implementation and usefulness, as well as identify areas of success and improvement, in April 2010, a survey was distributed to all staff who participated in grant-funded activities. Staff were informed that the information was confidential and no names were included on the completed survey. This survey was entered into an Internet-based tool and an e-mail invitation with a link to the survey was sent to each of the staff as identified by the project managers at the three agencies. This process resulted in 20 surveys being completed and available for analysis. Data from the surveys were downloaded and analyzed by evaluation staff. The survey was designed to answer research question 4.

Analysis Plan

The process evaluation is based on data collected from the CISRS database, as well as through surveys with program participants and staff. Analysis was primarily descriptive in nature and cross-tabulation and measures of central tendency were utilized to describe each program's differences and type of implementation⁴. The process evaluation provides valuable information on the implementation of the program and the level and type of treatment activities, compared to the actual execution of the program. Information gained from these data collection efforts is summarized in Chapter 3 to serve as a framework for the results from the impact evaluation and inform any program adjustments.

Impact Evaluation

To measure the impact participation had on a youth's ability to reach his/her educational goals, secure employment, and remain out of the justice system, an impact evaluation was conducted. To identify which factors could be influencing a youth's success, treatment, and individual characteristics, data were analyzed. Additionally, criminal history data were collected and analyzed for the one year prior to participation, the period of participation, and six months post-participation.

Research Questions

The impact evaluation was designed to answer the following questions.

1. What was participants' level of program success at exit?
2. What was the level of criminal activity during and six months post-program participation?
3. What factors were predictive of program success?
4. What factors were related to crime-free behavior six months post-program participation?

Data Collection Procedures

In addition to the outcome data gathered in the CISRS tracking database previously mentioned, archival data were collected to address the above research questions.

Justice Data: To measure the impact of program participation on criminal activity, data were gathered from a variety of justice databases. Specifically, the San Diego County Probation Case Management System (PCMS), the District Attorney's Case Management System, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department records, and Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) were accessed manually. Data collectors accessed electronic records and compiled arrests, number of days in jail, convictions or true findings, and sentencing information. These data answered research questions 2 and 4.

⁴ Because the entire population was included in the analysis, inferential statistical analyses regarding whether differences across programs are real or due to chance were not appropriate.

CISRS Database: Outcome data were also extracted from the CISRS data base to determine possible factors predicting program success and program goals achieved. These data addressed research questions 1 and 3.

Analysis Plan

To measure what factors influenced a youth's success in the program and the probability of contact with the justice system, both bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted. The bivariate analysis included difference of means tests for ratio level data (e.g., number of arrests) and Chi-square statistics for nominal data (e.g., type of arrest) to determine if differences were significant using a .05 significance level. That is, if a result was significant, there was a 95 percent chance that the difference between the two groups was not due to chance. However, for the multivariate analysis, a lower significance level was used (.10) in an effort to be more inclusive of factors that could contribute to success and could identify those youth that need more assistance.

Results from the bivariate analysis were used to inform the next analytical step, which was the multivariate analysis (i.e., regression models). This phase of the analysis attempted to isolate factors related to program success and future criminal activity. There were two goals of the regression analysis: (1) determine which factors (e.g., specific program, treatment type) were predictive of successful program completion while controlling for other factors (e.g., gender, prior criminal history) that might account for the positive outcome, and (2) determine individual characteristics that may identify who may need extra assistance to be successful. Variables that were included in the model were individual characteristics, type and level of services received, and criminal activity. In order to create an efficient model, highly correlated components/services were analyzed to determine which component was most appropriate to keep in the model since regression modeling requires independent variables to be independent of one another. For example, if work readiness skills and work readiness attainment (two different treatment activity codes) were highly related (i.e., 90% of youth had both), then only work readiness attainment would be included in the model. Three logistic regression models were utilized to analyze different dichotomous (yes/no) dependent variables (i.e., employment success, education success, and rearrest six months following program completion). The first two models controlled for the variables previously mentioned to determine factors contributing to a youth's successful completion of the program (i.e., success in employment or educational outcomes) and the third model included program success status as independent variable to identify factors that lowered a youth's chances of arrest post-program completion. Success was defined by WIA as obtaining one to three educational or employment goals. These included securing employment, obtaining an educational degree or certificate, entering advanced training and/or entering post-secondary education.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

While the more rigorous design of a true experimental model (in which some participants would receive WIA Youthful Offender program services and some would not) is the highest methodological standard, it was not feasible for this project. Because the Workforce Partnership wanted to include past participants, the research design relied heavily on archival data and sought to provide a preliminary look at how evaluation might be able to inform future program implementation. As such, a retrospective and pre/post design was utilized. While this research

design met the needs of the project, there were some limitations, which are outlined below, along with steps taken by research staff to mitigate them.

- ▶ **Lack of a Comparison Group:** This evaluation project, because of its retrospective nature and emphasis on process outcomes, limited the availability of an equitable comparison group. Specifically, an experimental or quasi-experimental group with a matched comparison group would have been preferred and allowed for casual relationships to be identified. A more rigorous design would have strengthened the conclusions that could be drawn. For the purposes of this evaluation, data from other research reports on similar target populations was used to place the findings in context.
- ▶ **Archival Data:** The CISRS database provided the information for both the descriptive and predictive analysis. While training and a detailed codebook were available for staff, multiple users entered the data and no standardized quality control system was in place. As such, data cleaning was limited because changes to the information were not possible. When inconsistencies in the data were found across questions, research staff consulted with the Workforce Partnership staff to try to identify the best possible solution to ensure data were reliable and interpreted correctly.

SUMMARY

To document the process, as well as measure any impact of program participation, SANDAG conducted both a process and impact evaluation of three Youthful Offender programs. Because the timing of the evaluation came after program startup, an experimental design was not feasible for this project, and a retrospective, pre-post design was used to identify factors contributing to program success and reduced recidivism after program participation. Multiple data collection methods were employed, including surveying, as well as compilation of data from the CISRS treatment database and several law enforcement databases.

CHAPTER 3

PROCESS EVALUATION

CHAPTER 3

PROCESS EVALUATION

CASE STUDY

Mark, a 19-year old former participant of the Youthful Offender program, has enriched his life by achieving the goals he set for himself while in the program. Mark's enrollment started with involvement in the Work Readiness Training class at Camp Barrett (juvenile detention facility). The Work Readiness course offered Mark educational and employment opportunities that included building his resume, writing a cover letter, preparing for job interviews, and hands-on work experience with culinary arts. Mark's achievements commenced as he earned his Work Readiness Certificate and Food Handler's card.

When Mark entered the Youthful Offender program, his mathematical abilities were above the 11th grade level, while his reading skills were deficient, ranking at the 8th grade level. He worked on, and improved his basic skills in reading, as indicated in his post-Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) score, which increased to the 11th grade level. Mark's education accomplishments also included earning his General Equivalency Diploma (GED) while in the Youthful Offender program. With his GED in hand, Mark decided to enter into a local community college and initiated the enrollment process. However, because Mark was an expectant father, he shifted his priorities and decided to enter the workforce to support his family.

As an alternative to immediately attending community college, Mark enrolled in the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) Retail Sales, where he further prepared himself for job readiness. He was granted an internship at a large food service establishment in Chula Vista, California. Throughout his work experience, his manager described Mark as a hard worker and someone who took initiative in accomplishing work tasks. During this time Mark also was also successful in meeting all of his probation conditions resulting in a successful termination of probation. After completing 100 hours of his internship at the food services establishment, Mark was also offered an opportunity for employment at the store. As a testament to his job preparation success, Mark had more than one employment choice and selected an alternative job that offered him better benefits and greater potential for growth.

Mark is currently working as a legal process server where he is able to utilize his enterprising and social skills, as emphasized by his Choices career assessment results. The company also provides him with the flexibility to accommodate the demands associated with new parenthood. The growth and success that Mark achieved while in the Youthful Offender program can be measured by his continued employment and his commitment to taking care of his family.

SDCOE Youthful Offender 2010 Graduate

NOTE: Name was changed to protect the privacy of the participant.

INTRODUCTION

The current chapter provides information pertaining to the process evaluation, which addresses the research questions outlined in Chapter Two. Specifically, details on the characteristics and background of youth participants, the level and type of treatment received, participant satisfaction, and staffs' perspective on the implementation and usefulness of the program are presented.

METHODOLOGY

To learn more about how the Youthful Offender programs were implemented among the three agencies, as well as the level and type of services received, a process evaluation was conducted. Data were collected from a variety of sources, including intake and treatment data documented in the CISRS database, surveys administered to staff and participants, and criminal history for one year prior to program entry. Data were collected on all 402 youth who received services during a 36-month period (July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010). Of these, 307 actually completed the program by June 30, 2010. Additionally, 48 participants and 20 staff completed surveys.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- ▶ 402 youth received Youthful Offender program services from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010.
- ▶ Participants were 18.67 years of age on average, mostly male (69%), and predominately Hispanic (62%).
- ▶ At intake the majority of participants had completed the 10th (26%) or 11th (39%) grade, were still in school (61%), and 5 percent had dropped out of high school.
- ▶ Almost all of the participants (81%) were assessed as deficient in basic literacy skills.
- ▶ Nearly all (98%) of the participant's families qualified as low income.
- ▶ The majority (85%) of participants reported prior contact with the criminal justice system and over half (58%) had been arrested in the year prior to intake.
- ▶ Around two in five (42%) participants claimed to be involved with a gang.
- ▶ The Youthful Offender program service delivery varied by agency to meet the unique needs of each site's target population.

WIA PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION

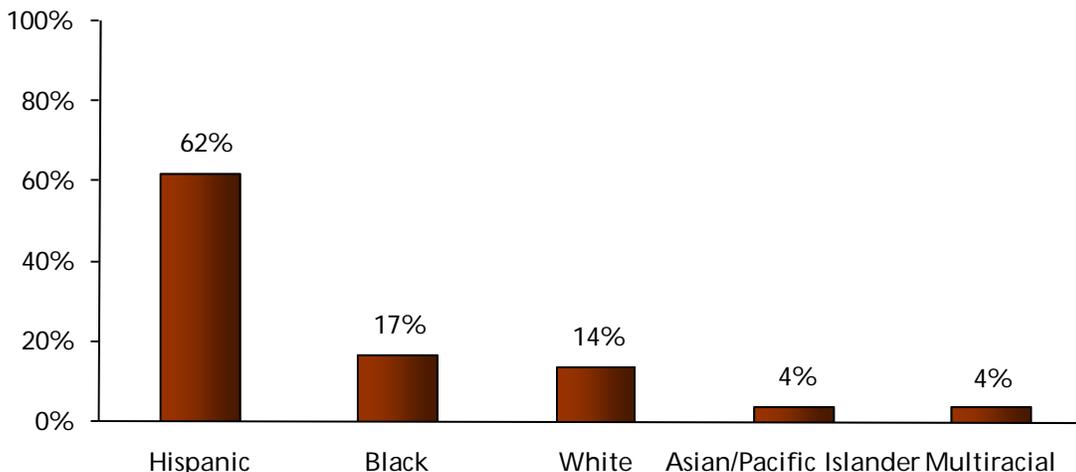
What were the characteristics of the youth receiving services from the three program sites?

Demographics

The target population of the Youthful Offender program was youth at risk of, or already involved in, the criminal justice system. Youth as defined by WIA include individuals ages 24 and younger. During the 36-month evaluation period, a total of 402 youth received services, with a similar number enrolled in the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) and South Bay Community Services (SBCS) programs (181 and 172, respectively), and 49 served by Second Chance. The average age of participants was 18.67 years of age (range 16 to 22) (not shown). The majority of participants were male (69%), with a larger proportion participating in the SDCOE (86%) program compared to SBCS (53%) and Second Chance (61%). This difference was expected, as the SDCOE recruits most of its participants from Camp Barrett (an all-male juvenile detention facility).

In regard to ethnicity, the youth were mostly Hispanic (62%), followed by Black (17%), White (14%), and 4 percent each of Asian/Pacific Islanders and multiracial (Figure 3.1). The only difference among the three programs was the proportion of Black participants, with SBCS having the smallest (12%) proportion and the SDCOE having the largest (22%) (not shown).

Figure 3.1
MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS WERE HISPANIC



TOTAL = 400

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

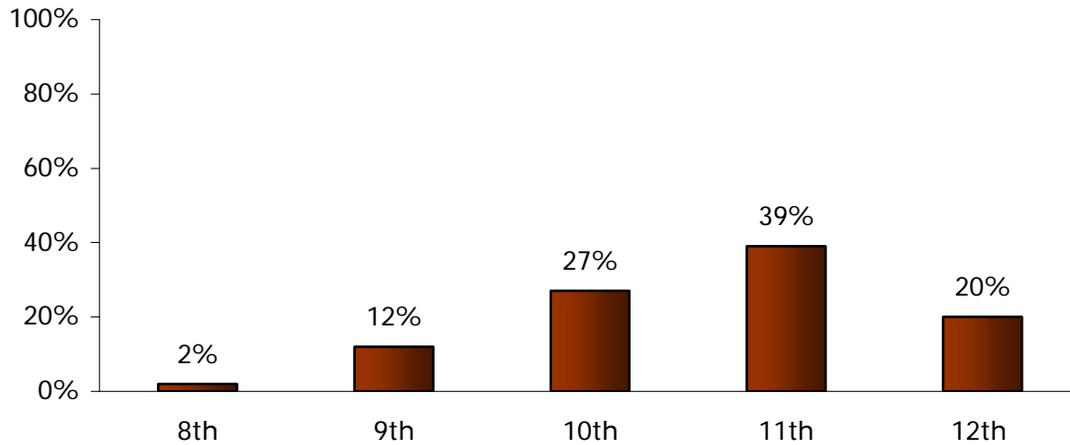
SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Academic/Employment Background

The majority of Youthful Offender program participants had completed 10th (26%) or 11th (39%) grade at time of intake into the program (Figure 3.2). Given that Second Chance targets older youth it is not surprising that it had a larger proportion of participants that had completed 11th (47%) or 12th (33%) grade, compared to SDCOE (40% and 16%, respectively) and SBCS (37% and 21%, respectively). Additionally, overall, less than one percent (or 2 individuals) reported that they had completed one-year of college (not shown).

Further analyses of participants' educational status and achievement revealed the overall poor academic histories of youth in the programs. While participants were close to 19 years old on average, most of the youth (61%) were not high school graduates and were still involved in some level of schooling, with a larger percentage of the SDCOE youth falling within this grouping (82%). Around one in five (22%) participants had a high school degree or equivalent certificate, with a similar proportion (20%) reporting being in the first generation of high school graduates in his/her family. However, despite a youth's educational attainment, approximately three-quarters or more (72% to 89%) of all youth met the definition of basic literacy deficiency, which equates to a literacy competency at or below grade level 8.09 or not being literate at a level necessary to function in a job, family, or society. This deficiency existed for an even greater proportion of SBCS participants, with almost nine out of 10 (89%) assessed at this low level. The differences among the programs are possibly a factor of more tailored service delivery to the specific needs of the target population rather than a one-size-fit all approach to providing Youthful Offender program services (Table 3.1).

Figure 3.2
THE MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANT HAD COMPLETED 10TH OR 11TH GRADE UPON PROGRAM



TOTAL = 402

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Similar to educational achievement, the target youth struggled in the area of employment. Specifically, over nine out of ten (94%) had not worked at all during the 26 weeks prior to program entry (not shown).

Table 3.1
THE MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS ENTER PROGRAM WITH POOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

| | Second Chance | SDCOE | SBCS | Overall |
|---|---------------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Not a H.S. graduate and still in school | 35% | 82% | 46% | 61% |
| H.S. Degree/Equivalent | 37% | 18% | 22% | 22% |
| First generation H.S. Graduate | 25% | 16% | 24% | 20% |
| H.S. Dropout | 14% | 2% | 6% | 5% |
| Basic literacy skill deficient | 72% | 75% | 89% | 81% |
| TOTAL | 43-49 | 181 | 161-172 | 385-402 |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Family Background

The youth in the programs varied by family backgrounds with one-quarter (25%) being raised by someone other than their biological parents and 16 percent being former foster care youth (not shown). In regard to living situation, two-thirds (66%) of the clients were living with another family

member that was not their child and one-quarter (25%) were living in kinship care⁵. Conversely, 14 percent were living alone and the same percentage (14%) were single parents (Table 3.2). Interestingly, a larger proportion of females were living alone (26%) and with a single parent (24%) than males (9% and 10%, respectively) and males were more likely to be living with their family (76%) compared to female participants (44%) (not shown). Additionally, 9 percent of the youth were homeless at the time of program entry. Furthermore the youth in each of the three programs had different family backgrounds. Specifically, SBCS participants were more likely to be living on their own (23%), parenting (27%), and/or homeless (17%) compared to the youth in the other programs.

Table 3.2
PARTICIPANTS HAD VARIED LIVING SITUATIONS
AT TIME OF INTAKE

| | Second Chance | SDCOE | SBCS | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Living with a family member | 74% | 89% | 40% | 66% |
| Living alone | 16% | 6% | 23% | 14% |
| Single parent | 6% | 4% | 27% | 14% |
| Living in kinship care | 18% | 23% | 29% | 25% |
| Homeless | 8% | <1% | 17% | 9% |
| TOTAL | 49 | 180-181 | 161-172 | 398-402 |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

In regard to income, 98 percent of the youths' families qualified as low-income, which was supported by the fact that the majority (85%) of the families and/or youth did not have any earned income in the six months prior to enrollment (not shown). Overall, more than one-quarter (27%) of youths' families had a history of chronic unemployment. Furthermore, approximately three-quarters (73%) of the youth lived in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, crime, and unemployment. This circumstance was true more so for youth in the SDCOE (85%) and Second Chance (82%) programs than those enrolled in SBCS (59%) (not shown). These data illustrate the generational history of poverty and low-level employment.

Level of Need

Research has shown that youth involved in the justice system face many challenges in their lives. These challenges also pose barriers to employment and educational success. As such, part of the Youthful Offender program goals was to identify barriers that youth may be grappling with and assist in overcoming them. To this end, youth were asked about their substance use history. As Table 3.4 illustrates, around half (54%) of youth self-reported a current or past problem with alcohol or other drug use to the extent that their use interfered with their educational and/or work

⁵ Kinship care is when a youth is being cared for by another member of his/her family other than his/her biological parents. This differed from living with a "family member," which included a parent.

performance. This issue was less prevalent for SBCS youth (28%) than SDCOE (76%) and Second Chance (65%) participants. Overall, 39 percent of the youth were identified as needing substance abuse treatment in order to obtain employment. While both Second Chance and SDCOE had a larger percentage of youth with substance abuse issues, Second Chance youth reported a higher proportion needing treatment (69%) (Table 3.3). Taking into account all background factors, nine out of ten (91%) participants were rated as needing some form of additional assistance to overcome barriers to completing education programs and/or securing employment⁶.

Table 3.3
SUBSTANCE ABUSE IS ONE BARRIER PARTICIPANTS
MUST OVERCOME TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

| | Second Chance | SDCOE | SBCS | Total |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Substance abuse history or problem | 65% | 76% | 28% | 54% |
| Need for substance abuse treatment | 69% | 35% | 34% | 39% |
| Need of additional assistance | 92% | 92% | 89% | 91% |
| TOTAL | 49 | 181 | 172 | 402 |

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Criminal History

Given that the target population was youth involved in or at risk of entering the justice system, it was expected that most would have a history of contact with law enforcement. According to self-report data, the majority (85%) of youth had some type of previous contact with the criminal justice system, with SBCS participants less likely (74%) to have a criminal or delinquent past compared to all (100%) of Second Chance youth and 91 percent of participants in the SDCOE program. There was also a difference among programs in the proportion of participants that were involved in or affected by gangs. In addition to all youth having a criminal background, Second Chance participants were more likely to be gang involved (82%) than either SDCOE and SBCS participants (50% and 22%, respectively) (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4
PARTICIPANTS DIFFERED IN THE LEVEL OF
PAST CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT

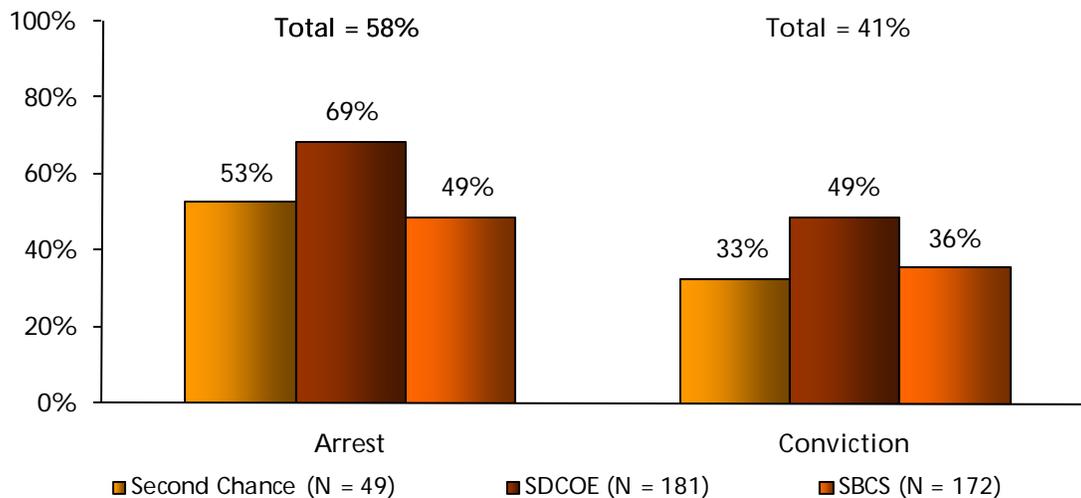
| | Second Chance | SDCOE | SBCS | Total |
|--|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Self-report prior criminal justice contact | 100% | 91% | 74% | 85% |
| Gang involved/affected | 82% | 50% | 22% | 42% |
| Parent/Sibling incarcerated | 6% | 6% | 12% | 9% |
| TOTAL | 49 | 181 | 172 | 402 |

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

⁶ Additional assistance is defined by WIA as a youth who has at least 1 of 12 possible barriers such as living with non-biological parents, gang affiliation, or formerly being in foster care.

In addition to self-report information, data were collected from local law enforcement records to measure recent criminal activity (within the 12 months prior to enrollment). Criminal history data were collected from both the juvenile and adult systems, depending on the age of the participant. Because the age range of participants was 16 to 22 years old, if an individual turned 18 during the data collection period, information was collected from both systems. Only one participant had an arrest as both a juvenile and adult. Altogether, over half of the participants (58%) had an arrest in the year prior to enrollment, with more of the SDCOE youth having been arrested (69%) than youth in the other two programs (Figure 3.3). Of those individuals arrested, the average number of arrests was 1.37 (range 1 to 7) and most were for a felony (74%), one-quarter (25%) were a misdemeanor, and 1 percent were for a status offense (i.e., an offense specific to being under 18 years old) (not shown).

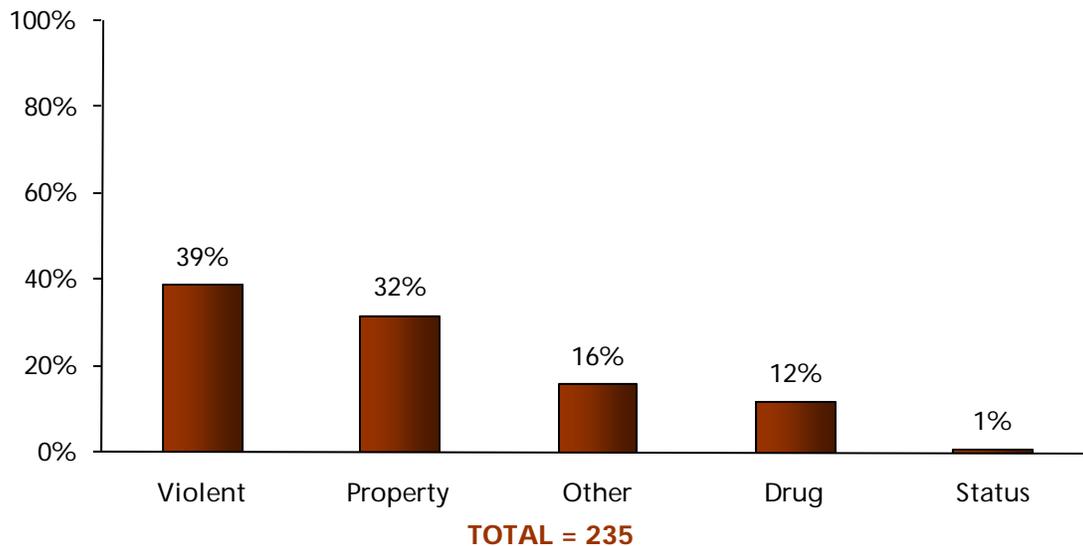
Figure 3.3
OVER HALF OF PARTICIPANTS ARRESTED
IN THE YEAR PRIOR TO ENROLLEMENT



SOURCE: PCMS and ARJIS, 2010

Additionally, two out of five youth (41% or 235 youth) with a prior arrest were convicted or had a true finding (the juvenile equivalency to a conviction in adult court) on charges related to the arrest. Approximately two out of five (39%) of these youth were found guilty or had a true finding on a high charge related to a violent offense, 32 percent for a property offense, 16 percent for some other felony or misdemeanor, 12 percent for a drug charge, and 1 percent for a status offense (Figure 3.4). There was no difference across the programs in level and type of conviction/true finding charge.

Figure 3.4
**VIOLENT OFFENSE WAS THE MOST FREQUENT CONVICTION/
 TRUE FINDING ONE YEAR PRIOR TO ENROLLMENT**



SOURCE: PCMS and ARJIS, 2010

The fact that over half of the participants had an arrest in the prior year, with most at the felony level, indicates that upon entering the program, participants have already had some serious involvement in the criminal justice system. Additionally, self-report data indicated that even more youth (85%) had a history of contact with law enforcement at some point in their life. These data indicate that WIA funds were being provided to the intended population.

PARTICIPANT'S LEVEL OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

What was the level and type of services received and how did this differ among programs?

WIA is intended to provide a continuum of services to support a youth's success in school achievement and/or employment. To this effect, the overall program model is based on four core service components:

- ▶ Educational Services;
- ▶ Work Readiness Training;
- ▶ Work Preparation and Work-Based Opportunities; and
- ▶ Youth Development Services.

To provide these four components, all WIA programs were required to deliver an array of services that can be categorized into the following ten areas:

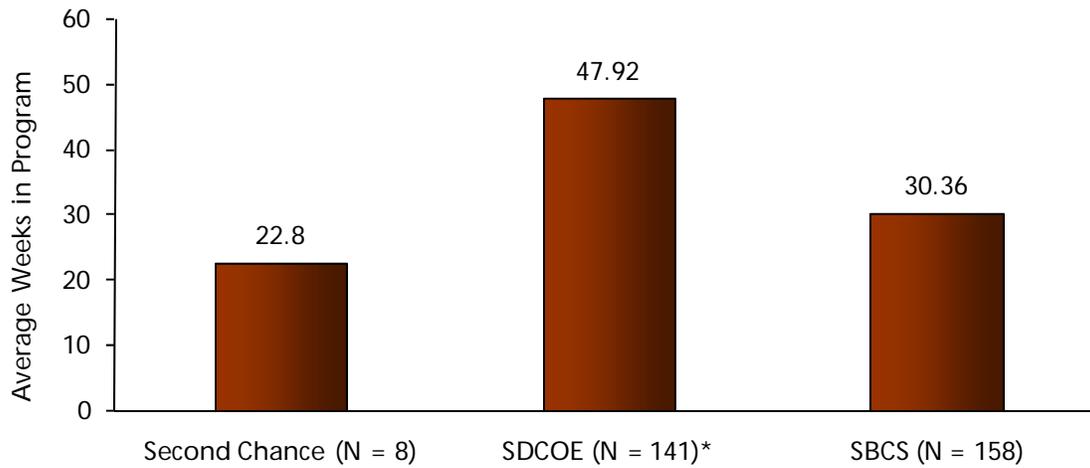
1. tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention;

2. alternative secondary school offerings;
3. summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
4. paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. occupational skills training;
6. leadership development opportunities;
7. supportive services;
8. 12-month adult mentorship;
9. follow-up services; and
10. comprehensive guidance and counseling.

To determine what level and type of services youth received, treatment data were uploaded from the CISRS database and analyzed.

On average, youth were in the program 38 weeks ranging from 0 to 144 (not shown)⁷. The programs did differ in the length of time youth were in the program, with SDCOE participants in the longest on average (47.92 weeks) compared to Second Chance and SBCS (22.8 and 30.36, respectively) (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5
SDCOE PARTICIPANTS HAD THE LONGEST
INVOLEMENT IN THE PROGRAM



TOTAL = 307

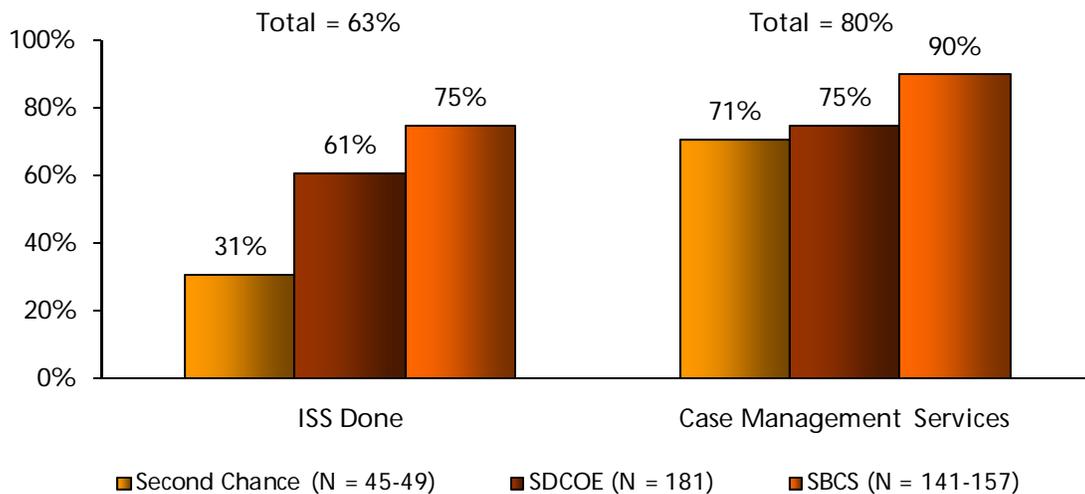
SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

⁷ Because there is no standard time limitation on length of enrollment, and a youth's case could be kept open even while the youth is incarcerated and therefore not active in program, time in the program is not considered an indicator of treatment dosage.

Two elements that are not necessarily core service components but essential to service delivery are the development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plan and provision of case management services. The ISS is a dynamic document that identifies the participants' goals and the activities needed to reach them. Case management services are how staff coordinates these activities and supports participants in achieving their goals. Given the importance of these two service areas, analyses were run to measure what proportion of youth received an ISS and case management services. Because some participants may have left the program prior to staff having time to complete an ISS or start case management services, those participants in the program less than 30 days were not included in the analysis (i.e., 5% of youth met this condition). As Figure 3.6 shows, around two-thirds (63%) of participants received an ISS, with only about one-third of Second Chance (31%) youth completing one. Overall, the majority (80%) of youth had case management services with more SBCS (90%) participants receiving these services compared to Second Chance (71%) and SDCOE (75%) participants. At first glance, these data suggest that not all participants are receiving these two core services; however the reason for this discrepancy is more likely a factor of inconsistent or incomplete documentation into CISRS rather than lack of receiving the services.

“These youth need strong case management and individuals they can trust.”
Youthful Offender program staff member

Figure 3.6
PROGRAMS DIFFERED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ISS AND THE DELIVERY OF CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

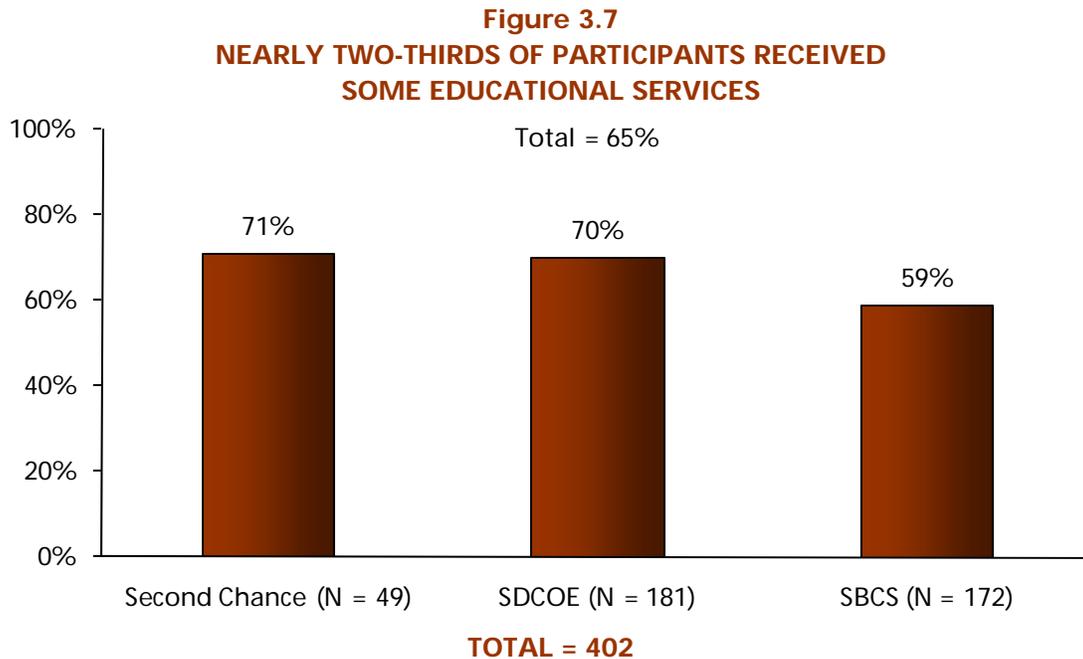


NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Of those who were case managed, the average number of contacts was 2.16 (range 1 to 18), with SBCS participants having more contacts at 2.90 (range 1 to 18) compared to SDCOE (range 1 to 6). Second Chance had an average of 1.78 (range 1 to 5) case management contacts (not shown).

What was the level of educational services received by participants?

For the purposes of analysis, treatment services were grouped within the four core components. Educational services included tutoring, post-secondary preparation, post-secondary education, alternative secondary school, Basic Skills services, GED preparation, and computer literacy. Overall, 65 percent of participants received at least one educational service (Figure 3.7), with 33 percent receiving two or more (not shown).



SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

A closer look at the specific type of educational services received showed that the largest proportion of participants were placed in an alternative secondary school (31%), followed by post-secondary preparation activities (25%), receiving Basic Skill remediation (21%), and participating in post-secondary education activities (19%). The type of intervention received varied by program, which could have been a reflection of the needs of youth that each program was serving. Second Chance and SDCOE participants were more likely to engage in activities geared toward non-traditional education. Specifically, just over half of each program placed participants in alternative school (51% and 53%, respectively), whereas SBCS participants more often received services preparing them for post-secondary education (e.g., basic skill remediation, post-secondary preparation, tutoring, computer literacy) (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5
ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY WAS THE MOST COMMON
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE RECEIVED

| Educational Service | Second Chance | SDCOE | SBCS | Total |
|------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Alternative secondary school | 51% | 53% | 1% | 31% |
| Post-secondary preparation | 27% | 11% | 40% | 25% |
| Basic skill remediation | 2% | 13% | 34% | 21% |
| Post-secondary education | 6% | 22% | 21% | 19% |
| Tutoring | 0% | 5% | 26% | 13% |
| GED preparation | 0% | 13% | 5% | 8% |
| Computer literacy | 0% | 1% | 21% | 9% |
| TOTAL | 49 | 181 | 172 | 402 |

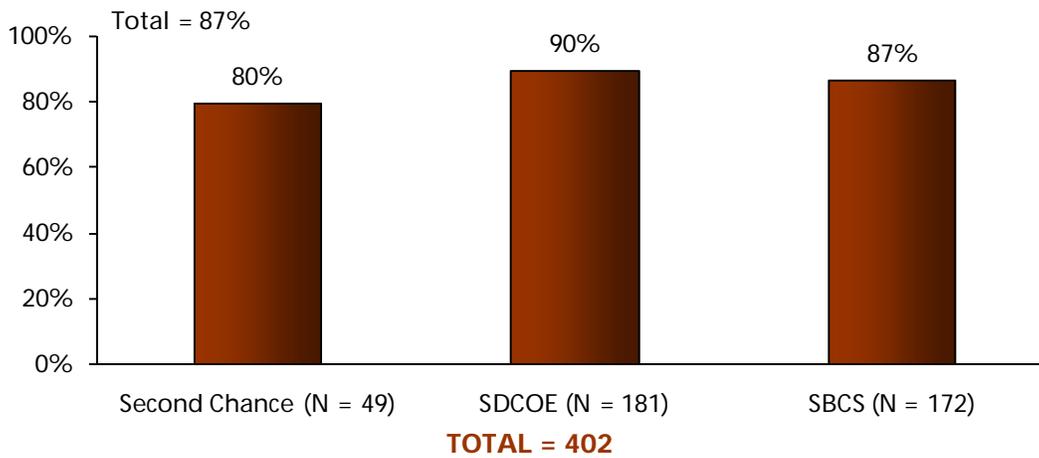
SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

While data on individual needs were not available for most characteristics, eight out of ten participants were assessed as literacy deficient upon program entry; however, only 21 percent received any basic skills remediation services. These data, in comparison with the educational needs of participants raise the question of how youth's needs assessment is being utilized in the development of the ISS. As far as intensity of service deliver, the number of contacts ranged from an average low of 1.03 ($SD = 1.64$) for computer literacy contacts to a high of 1.85 ($SD = 1.64$) for GED preparation service contacts.

What was the level of work-related services received by participants?

Because of the similarity in the type of services, all work-readiness related services are categorized as either (1) Work Training or (2) Work Preparation and Work-Based Opportunities. There were nine service activities that met these two core components. These included summer work experience, occupational skills or advanced training, work experience, work readiness, job placement services, preparation for occupational or vocational education, job shadowing, occupational skill attainment, and work readiness attainment. As is to be expected given the Youthful Offender program is a work experience program, the largest proportion of participants received services in these two core component areas (i.e., work preparation or work-based services). As Figure 3.8 shows, nearly nine out of ten (87%) received at least one work readiness-based service and over two-thirds (67%) participated in two or more of these types of activities (not shown).

Figure 3.8
MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED
WORK READINESS AND/OR WORK BASED SERVICES



SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

While there was no difference among the programs in the proportion of youth who participated in at least one work readiness/based service, there were differences in dosage level. Youth in the SDCOE and the SBCS programs participated in approximately three activities (3.46 ($SD = 1.85$) and 3.05 ($SD = 1.54$), respectively) on average, compared to youth in Second Chance, who attended about two activities on average (2.44 ($SD = 1.02$)) (not shown).

“I think it was a good program. As soon as I finished my internship I was hired by that company and received higher pay.”

SBCS Youthful Offender program participant

Of the nine work-related services overall, participation in work readiness activities was the most common (67%), followed by job placement services (60%), and work readiness attainment (55%). The data also show that the SDCOE youth were more likely to receive job placement services, work experience, and occupational skills/advanced training than the other two programs. This is consistent with the educational service provision that seemed to suggest a population that was striving to obtain immediate employment rather than furthering their education (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6
WORK READINESS AND JOB PLACEMENT TOP THE LIST
OF WORK-RELATED SERVICES RECEIVED

| Work Readiness/Based Service | Second Chance | SDCOE | SBCS | Total |
|--|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Work readiness | 60% | 62% | 73% | 67% |
| Job placement services | 35% | 71% | 56% | 60% |
| Work readiness attainment | 55% | 51% | 58% | 55% |
| Work experience | 20% | 47% | 32% | 37% |
| Occupational skills/advanced training | 6% | 43% | 8% | 23% |
| Occupational skill attainment | 0% | 25% | 22% | 21% |
| Preparation for occupational/vocational training | 12% | 10% | 16% | 13% |
| Job shadowing | 10% | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| Summer work experience | 0% | 2% | 0% | 1% |
| TOTAL | 49 | 181 | 172 | 402 |

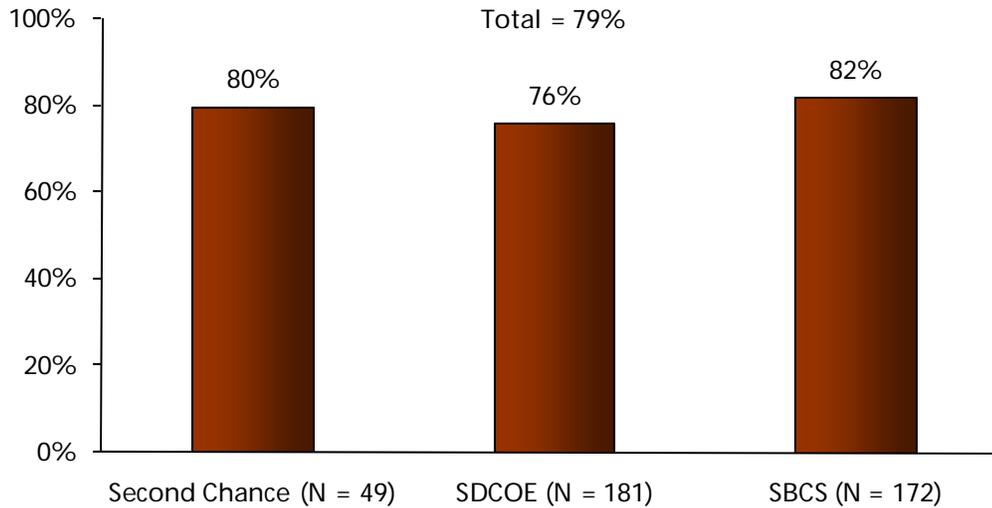
SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

What was the level of youth development services received by participants?

Because this population is often dealing with multiple issues that have hindered their academic and/or employment achievements, WIA includes youth development services as a core component. Included in these activities are leadership development, peer mentoring, community service, adult mentorship, life skills development, substance abuse and/or psychological counseling, wrap-around services, financial literacy, and other youth development activities (e.g., arts, athletics, recreational activities).

Analysis of youth development services showed that the majority of youth received at least one type of support service (79%) (Figure 3.9). Over half (56%) of the youth participated in two or more services, with SBCS youth participating in more activities (3.31 (SD = 1.78)) on average than either Second Chance or SDCOE youth (1.74 (SD = .79) and 2.12 (SD = 1.10), respectively) (not shown).

Figure 3.9
NEARLY EIGHT OUT OF TEN YOUTH PARTICIPATED
IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Examination of individual service types shows variation among the programs in all of the nine categories. Second Chance seemed to focus its youth development services in three areas: wrap-around support (57%), adult mentoring (33%), and leadership development (33%) (Table 3.8). Compared to the other programs, SDCOE had the largest proportion of participants engage in counseling (52%), while another 55 percent received wrap-around support services, and one out of five (20%) participated in some other youth development activity. The SBCS program had more consistent participation across all nine categories. Specifically, nearly one-quarter (24%) to about two out of five (38%) participated in seven out of the nine activities, which was the most even distribution among the three programs. Additionally, over half (51%) of the SBCS youth were teamed up with an adult mentor, which was more than Second Chance (33%) and SDCOE (9%) participants (Table 3.7).

“This program has helped me a lot. It has given me the skills that I need to be successful in life and in the work field.”
SDCOE Youthful Offender program participant

of five (38%) participated in seven out of the nine activities, which was the most even distribution among the three programs. Additionally, over half (51%) of the SBCS youth were teamed up with an adult mentor, which was more than Second Chance (33%) and SDCOE (9%) participants (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7
LEVEL OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIFFERED
ACROSS THE THREE PROGRAMS

| Youth Development Service | Second Chance | SDCOE | SBCS | Total |
|---|---------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Support services | 57% | 55% | 29% | 44% |
| Adult mentorship | 33% | 9% | 51% | 30% |
| Substance abuse and/or psychological counseling | 6% | 52% | 11% | 29% |
| Other youth development activities | 0% | 20% | 38% | 25% |
| Leadership development | 33% | 5% | 37% | 22% |
| Life skills development | 11% | 14% | 30% | 20% |
| Peer mentoring | 0% | 7% | 24% | 14% |
| Community service | 0% | 0% | 27% | 11% |
| Financial literacy | 0% | 0% | 24% | 10% |
| TOTAL | 45-49 | 180-181 | 172 | 397-402 |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

Comparing these services received with the stated needs of youth at program intake points to a difference between substance abuse needs and intervention received. Specifically, the need for immediate substance abuse treatment at intake ranged from 34 percent to 69 percent; however, appreciably fewer participants actually received this type of intervention. This is an area that could use some exploration to identify why this disconnect exists.

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF PROGRAM

What were the characteristics of those who completed the survey?

As part of the process evaluation, Workforce Partnership wanted to hear from those youth who had received Youthful Offender program services to learn about their experiences. While the original intent was to contact all youth who had received services during the period from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010, incomplete or incorrect contact information prohibited reaching the majority of the past participants. As such, efforts shifted to contacting recent participants, resulting in a total of 48 surveys completed and available for analysis (about 10% of all youth served). Fifty percent of the surveys were from the SDCOE participants, 46 percent SBCS, and 4 percent from the Second Chance Program. Except for Second Chance youth who comprised 12 percent of the Youthful Offender program evaluation population, this response rate was similar to the proportion of participants in the evaluation (45% SDCOE and 43% SBCS).

Although the sample was one of convenience, those that completed the survey were similar in age (average 18.79, SD = 1.50), gender (69% male), and ethnicity (65% Hispanic, 13% each Black and White, and 10% Other/Multiracial) to the overall program population previously described. Also similar to the overall population served, the majority of respondents were still enrolled in high school (73%) and/or unemployed (79%) at program entry (not shown).

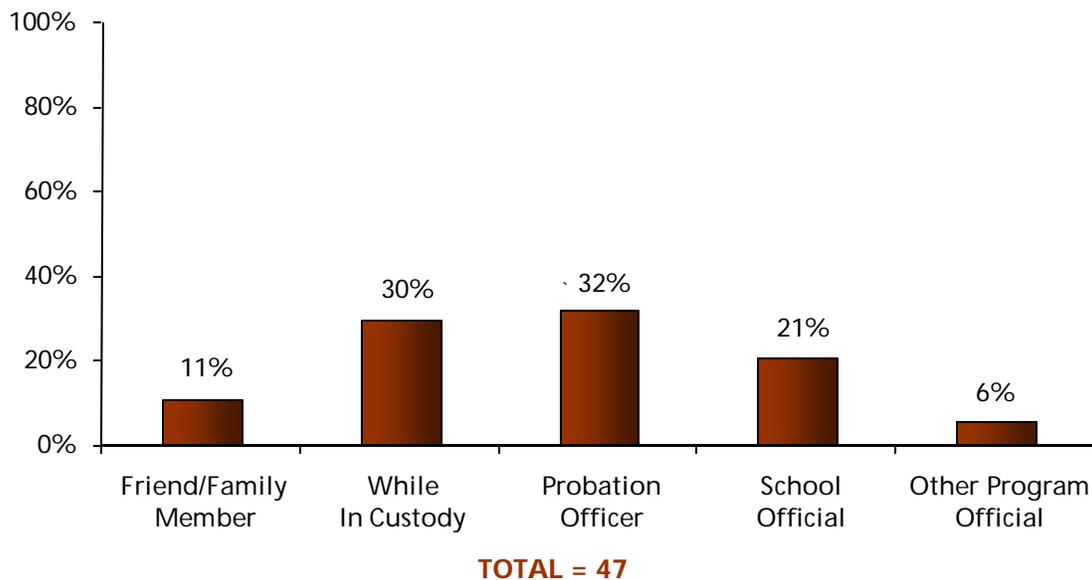
How did participants learn about the program?

To better understand how information about the programs was communicated to youth, participants were asked a number of questions regarding their decision to join the WIA Program. Not surprising given the different program models, how a participant heard about the program, varied by program. While 62 percent of all respondents first heard about the program through a criminal justice official, overall SDCOE youth more often heard about it while in-custody (52%) compared to SBCS participants who heard mostly through a Probation Officer (64%) (not shown).

“Thank you for believing in me and for waiting for me while I was incarcerated. Once I got out of jail I was invited back to the program and I appreciate the help I received from my probation officer.”

SBCS Youthful Offender Participant

Figure 3.10
MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS HEARD ABOUT PROGRAM
THROUGH A CRIMINAL JUSTICE OFFICIAL



NOTES: Cases with missing information not included. Other programs include Work Readiness and Teen Recovery Center.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

In order to gauge the effectiveness of program outreach, participants were asked about their initial feelings upon entering the program. Sixty-seven percent of the clients said they “knew right away” that they wanted to join the program. For the remaining 33 percent, differences existed between the programs in what convinced the potential participants to join. For the SDCOE program, 80 percent of participants who were unsure about the program decided to join after speaking with program staff members. Within the SBCS Program, 33 percent decided to participate after talking with a probation officer, and 44 percent after talking with a school staff member. The remaining participants stated that they did not have a choice in their enrollment (20% and 22%, respectively). While not conclusive, this information highlights the importance staff can have in helping engage resistant youth (not shown).

What was participants' level of satisfaction with in-custody services?

Because the programs varied by when they first engaged youth, those who received in-custody services were asked to rate them. Sixty-three percent of survey respondents had been in custody prior to entering the program, making up 92 percent of those who entered the SDCOE program, 27 percent of SBCS, and all (100%) of Second Chance youth (not shown). Participants were asked to rate the services received while in custody on a four-point scale, with one indicating "very helpful" and four "not helpful at all." With about nine out of ten (89% to 97%) participants ranking the services as helpful, the results indicate that these participants felt the in-custody services were useful (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8
RESPONDENTS FOUND IN-CUSTODY
SERVICES TO BE HELPFUL

| What percentage of participants felt the following services were helpful while in-custody | |
|---|--------------|
| Work Readiness | 97% |
| Resume Writing | 93% |
| Meeting with Outreach Counselor | 93% |
| Re-entry Planning | 93% |
| Job Search Techniques | 89% |
| Life Skills Techniques | 89% |
| TOTAL | 27-29 |

NOTES: Cases with missing information not included. Percent shown represents respondents who gave a rating of "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful" on a four-point scale.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

What was participants' level of satisfaction with services received in the community?

Participants were also asked a series of questions about the services they may have received while in the community. To measure the level of program helpfulness, a four-point scale, with one indicating "very helpful" and four "not helpful at all," was used to rate each service. Overall, the services provided by the programs were deemed "very helpful" by the majority of respondents (67% to 95%), with the most favorably rated being the internship (95%). While still given the highest rating by more than two-thirds (67%) of respondents, the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment had the largest proportion of respondents rating it as only "somewhat helpful" (31%) (Table 3.9). One possible explanation for this slight difference could be a lack of understanding by the participant of the purpose for the TABE, which might be easily corrected by providing a clear description to the participant prior to administering the tool.

Table 3.9
MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS FIND
PROGRAM SERVICES TO BE HELPFUL

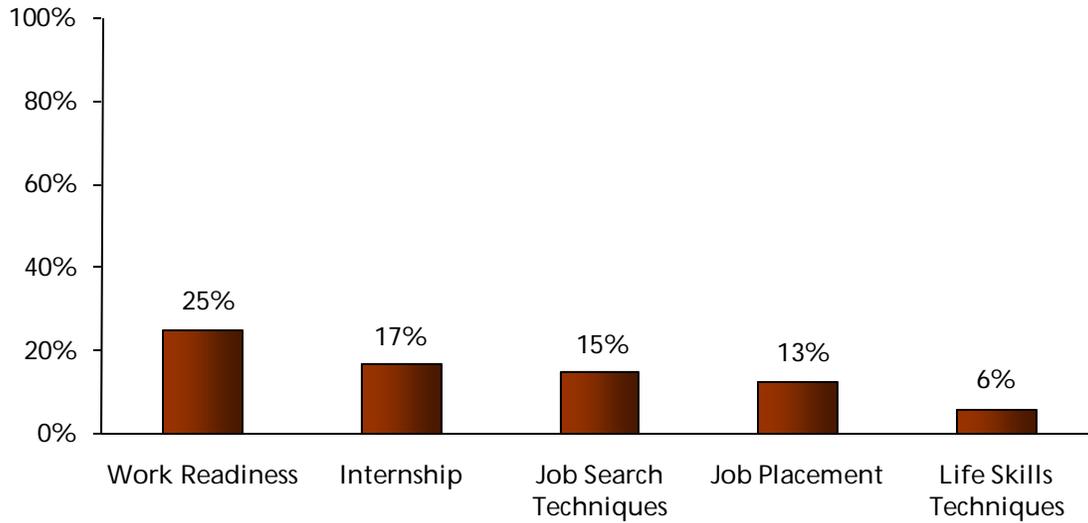
| While in the community, how helpful did you find each of the following services | Very Helpful | Somewhat Helpful | Combined |
|---|--------------|------------------|----------|
| Internship | 95% | 5% | 100% |
| Work Readiness | 89% | 11% | 100% |
| Job Placement | 89% | 11% | 100% |
| Advanced Training Program | 83% | 17% | 100% |
| Field Trips | 83% | 13% | 96% |
| Resume Writing | 82% | 18% | 100% |
| Help to Meet Probation Conditions | 80% | 13% | 93% |
| Budget/Financial Planning | 79% | 16% | 95% |
| Mentoring | 78% | 20% | 98% |
| Tutoring | 78% | 17% | 95% |
| Referrals to Other Programs | 77% | 21% | 98% |
| Help Attaining a GED or H.S. | 76% | 21% | 97% |
| Job Search Techniques | 71% | 24% | 95% |
| Life Skill Techniques | 71% | 21% | 92% |
| Educational Assessment (TABE) | 67% | 31% | 98% |
| TOTAL | | 34-46 | |

NOTES: Cases with missing information not included. A client could check "not applicable" if they did not receive the services and these answers were not included in the percentages shown.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

To highlight which of the program services best target participants' needs, respondents were asked to choose one of the program services they found to be "most helpful." Services highlighted by respondents as being the most beneficial were overwhelmingly related to job preparation and placement. One-quarter (25%) of respondents found work readiness classes/training to be the most helpful part of the program, while nearly a similar proportion found internships (17%), job search techniques (15%) and job placement (13%) most helpful. Six percent responded that life skills techniques and assistance obtaining a degree most helpful, while four percent found it to be resume writing (Figure 3.11). The remaining services were each selected by two percent of the respondents as the most helpful part of the program: reentry services, field trips, advanced skills training, budget/financial planning training, assistance meeting probation conditions, assistance enrolling in college, and staff support (not shown).

**Figure 3.11
WORK RELATED ACTIVITIES NOTED AS THE
TOP MOST HELPFUL SERVICES**



TOTAL = 48

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

Similarly, as important as determining which services were found to be the “most helpful,” it is also valuable to know which services the participants found “least helpful.” This information can assist with any future program modifications. As a testament to the program’s successes, 38 percent of survey respondents did not find any service to be unhelpful. Of the remaining 30 respondents, most felt the “least helpful” services were: field trips (27%), reentry services (17%), tutors (13%), and job placement (13%). Internships, budget/financial planning, training, and assistance meeting probation conditions were each found to be the least helpful service by 7 percent of respondents while job search techniques, life skills techniques, and mentoring were each found “least helpful” by 3 percent of respondents (not shown).

From these results, it is clear that many of the program participants found most of the services provided by the programs to be useful to their personal and professional growth. Many of those enrolled in the programs found services pertaining to employment (through internships, resume writing, job placement, job search techniques, etc.) to be the most helpful part of the program. For those who were able to choose a service that they felt could be improved upon, many of these services were not work-related (i.e., field trips, assistance meeting probation conditions, etc.).

How did participants feel about their skills after participating in the program?

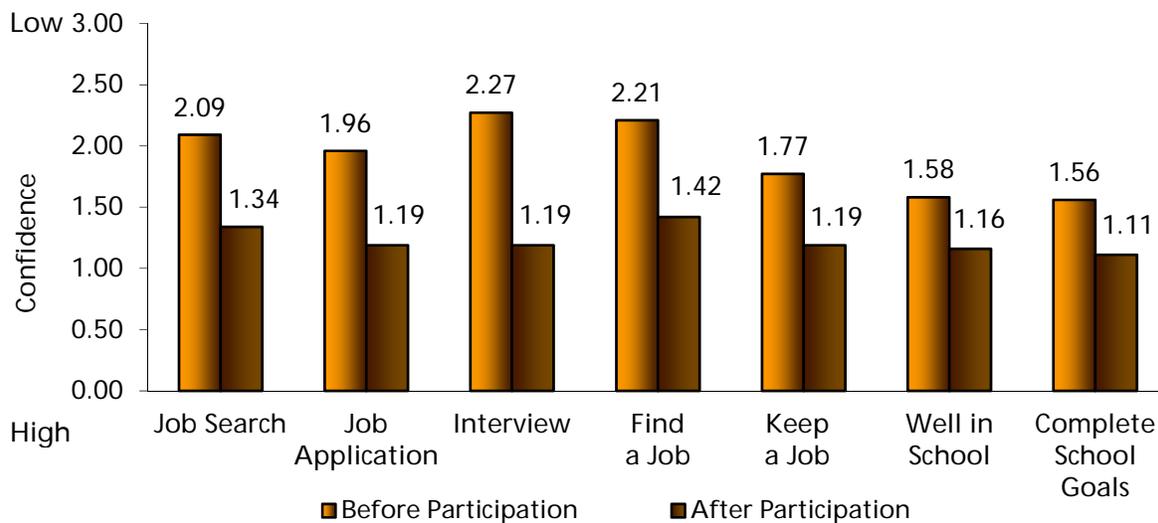
Although the evaluation includes an impact assessment that analyzes the quantitative data, it was valuable to learn directly from participants about how they perceived their skill level changed after participation in the program. One means to

“The program helps out a lot. When I was first incarcerated I felt like I had no future and I just wanted to give up. But after talking with people from the program I was given confidence and I knew I had hope for the future. I don’t think I would have done any of the things I have without the program.”

SDCOE Youthful Offender Participant

measure this impact was by asking respondents to rate self-efficacy on several work- and school-related abilities before and after program participation. Using a four-point scale, with one being “very confident” and four being “not confident at all,” respondents were asked to rate their level of confidence in their ability to perform specific work- and school-related tasks. As Figure 3.12 illustrates, respondents’ self-confidence increased significantly after participating in the program. A decreased score indicates a stronger level of confidence, and participants reported feeling more confident in their abilities to search, find, and keep a job, as well as fill out an application and complete an interview. Additionally, while starting out with a high level of confidence (average 1.58 and 1.56, respectively), respondents reported increased confidence in their ability to do well in school and complete their school goals (average 1.16 and 1.11, respectively).

Figure 3.12
PARTICIPANTS GAINED SELF-CONFIDENCE IN WORK- AND SCHOOL-RELATED SKILLS AFTER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION*



TOTAL = 45 – 48

**Significant at $p < .05$ level.*

NOTE: Cases with missing information or not applicable not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

Further, in order to assess whether participants’ goals were met by the program, a number of questions were presented about how helpful the program was in assisting them to achieve what they set out to at the beginning of the program. As Table 3.10 shows, for those who needed

assistance in six core areas, around nine out of ten (89% to 100%) found the program to be helpful in meeting those needs. There was some slight variation in the degree of helpfulness (e.g., between “very helpful” and “somewhat” helpful), with the educational support (84%) and job preparation (83%) receiving the highest ratings, and support with emotional needs rated by the smallest proportion (64%) as being “very” helpful.

Table 3.10
PARTICIPANTS FOUND THE SERVICES
HELPFUL IN MEETING THEIR NEEDS

| How helpful was the program in doing the following for you... | Very Helpful | Somewhat Helpful | Combined |
|---|--------------|------------------|----------|
| Supporting your educational needs | 84% | 16% | 100% |
| Preparing you to find a job | 83% | 15% | 98% |
| Acquiring job skills training | 73% | 25% | 98% |
| Helping you to not use substances | 74% | 21% | 95% |
| Helping find stable living situation | 69% | 27% | 96% |
| Helping improve family relationships | 68% | 24% | 92% |
| Helping you with your emotional needs | 64% | 25% | 89% |
| TOTAL | | 41 - 48 | |

NOTE: Cases with missing information or not applicable not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

These data show the many ways in which the Youthful Offender programs help participants grow and achieve their goals. While most of the services are focused on employment and educational development, those which help with other social needs of the youth are of equal value.

“I am thankful for everything that they did. It really improved my family situation and life in general.”

SDCOE Youthful Offender Participant

Because awareness of the value of program participation could influence one’s engagement in the program, respondents were asked to identify at what point they felt some change associated with being in the program. The majority of respondents (88%) reported noticing the benefits of the program right away, 10 percent started to notice them mid-way through their participation, and 2 percent by the end of the program (not shown). Further, when asked if they would recommend the program to a friend, all (100%) of the clients said that they would. Only 10 percent of respondents had suggestions for changes within the program. These recommendations included more field trips, help with obtaining a driver’s license, and receiving more than 100 hours of job placement services (not shown).

What was participants' level of satisfaction with the Youthful Offender Program staff?

Staff interaction with the program participants is paramount to the success of the program. Participants were asked to rate a number of statements about the staff on a five-point scale, with one indicating "strongly agree" and five "strongly disagree." The findings illustrate that participants were pleased with the staff. All respondents (100%) agreed that the staff listened to them, did their best to help them with their questions and concerns, could be trusted, showed them respect, and cared about their needs. A similar proportion of respondents (98%) thought the staff helped them form their goals and motivated them to complete them. Over four-fifths (83%) felt that the staff took them seriously, and over three-quarters (79%) of the respondents felt the staff believed in their abilities (Table 3.11).

"When I began the program I did not know anyone else in the program or the staff members. It was really nice that the staff members were young and could relate to me...having staff members close to my age, who were enrolled in college, encouraged me to enroll."

SBCS Youthful Offender Participant

Table 3.11
PARTICIPANTS VIEWED INTERACTIONS WITH
PROGRAM STAFF AS POSITIVE

| The staff... | Percent that Agreed |
|--|---------------------|
| listened to what I had to say | 100% |
| did their best to help me with my questions/concerns | 100% |
| were trustworthy | 100% |
| showed me respect | 100% |
| cared about my needs | 100% |
| worked with me to form goals that worked for me | 98% |
| helped motivate me to complete my goals | 98% |
| took me seriously | 83% |
| believed in my abilities | 79% |
| TOTAL | 48 |

NOTE: Percent shown represents respondents who gave a rating of "strongly agree" or "agree" on a five-point scale.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Participant Survey, SANDAG 2010

STAFFS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAM

What were the characteristics of the staff who completed the survey?

Another source to learn more about program implementation and possible changes was to obtain feedback from key staff members who have direct contact with participants in a service capacity either in or out of custody. As described in the Methodology Chapter, a survey was given to key staff members at each of the three WIA programs to obtain their views about the program in

general, as well as specific components. A total of 20 surveys were distributed and completed, about half (45%) by the SDCOE staff, 30 percent by Second Chance staff, and one-quarter (25%) by SBCS program staff. Of these 20 individuals, three-quarters (75%) had been with the program for less than two years, 10 percent for three to four years, and 15 percent for over 5 years. The majority of the staff surveyed were employed as case managers (40%), followed by project coordinators/managers (20%), peer mentors (15%), and group facilitators (5%). The remaining four staff members were counselors (10%), resource assistants (5%), and administrative assistants (5%) (not shown). Because of the small numbers, data are descriptive and significant tests were not utilized in the analysis.

In regard to education, nearly half (45%) of key staff reported having 16 years or more of education (25% a Master's Degree and 20% a Bachelor's Degree). Nearly all (95%) had education exceeding a high school degree. Furthermore, about 4 out of 5 (84%) felt they had received sufficient training to effectively work with this population, while the remaining 16 percent reported that additional training would be helpful (not shown).

How well did staff feel the program was implemented as planned?

Questions regarding implementation were asked to identify how well the program had been implemented according to the key staff members. The purpose of these questions was to determine whether staff felt that the program was implemented as designed. Of the 17 staff members who responded, 94 percent stated they had received a program manual describing the program components and guidelines for implementation, which is a mandatory component of WIA implementation.

To gauge the level of implementation of the specific service activities, respondents were asked to consider each of the major program components (reentry, educational services, vocational services, and case management) and rate how closely these components were implemented as originally planned using a four-point scale, with one being "implemented as planned" and four being "not implemented at all as planned." This scale was to include how often the services were provided, as well as the actual content of the services. As Table 3.12 shows, about nine out of ten staff felt that the program components had been "implemented as planned" or were "closely implemented as planned." Looking a little closer at the rating levels provided, 9 out of the 17 core services were given the highest rating by 70 percent or more of respondents. Areas that did not receive as of high ratings were educational referrals, follow-up placement, and budget/financial planning (44% to 24%).

**Table 3.12
MAJORITY OF STAFF FIND MOST PROGRAM COMPONENTS
IMPLEMENTED AS PLANNED**

| How closely have the following services been implemented as planned | Implemented as Planned | Closely Implemented as Planned | Combined |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| Work Readiness Training | 84% | 16% | 100% |
| Case Management | 83% | 17% | 100% |
| Job Search Techniques | 79% | 21% | 100% |
| Supportive Services | 78% | 22% | 100% |
| Tutoring | 75% | 25% | 100% |
| Paid work experience/internship | 74% | 16% | 100% |
| GED/H.S. support | 74% | 26% | 100% |
| Life skills techniques | 72% | 28% | 100% |
| TABE/CASAS assessment | 71% | 18% | 100% |
| Mentoring | 68% | 32% | 100% |
| Resume writing | 68% | 31% | 100% |
| Outreach while in-custody | 67% | 22% | 99% |
| Reentry program (in-custody) | 61% | 33% | 94% |
| Final Job Placement | 61% | 39% | 100% |
| Referrals to other educational agencies | 44% | 50% | 94% |
| Follow-up placement | 42% | 58% | 100% |
| Budget/financial planning | 24% | 59% | 83% |
| TOTAL | | 16 - 19 | |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Key Staff Survey, SANDAG 2010

Some additional feedback regarding reasons activities varied from the original implementation are listed below.

- ▶ The original plan did not include paid work experience. Instead, this service was incorporated later and, until recently, there had been no plan for implementation.
- ▶ The life skills training originally in the plan was been taken over by another funding source.
- ▶ The TABE Assessment pre-release was difficult to accomplish because of time limitations while in custody.
- ▶ The financial literacy classes were not consistently offered to all youth within the program because of the lack of funding for an instructor.

Overall, these data suggest that staff found that the core services that directly impact education and employment were implemented as designed. Interestingly, when compared to the actual treatment level, case management was not provided to all youth, as prescribed by the model.

What was staff's perspective on participants' needs?

Key staff members work directly with the participants and, therefore, have an understanding of the most common needs youth have when entering the program. It was valuable to hear from staff about the presenting issues for clients and how staff thought these issues could impede a participant's progress. As such, staff were asked to share what proportion of youth they believed were dealing with obstacles that they needed to overcome in order to succeed in the program. As Table 3.14 shows, around two-thirds of staff felt that the majority of participants (over 75%) struggled with delinquent/criminal behavior (65%) and lacked work experience and skills (63%). Related to delinquency was the gang involvement of youth, which two out of five (40%) staff felt most youth faced. These ratings were consistent with the self-report data gathered at intake from the youth. Other serious obstacles staff stated that over half or more of the participants dealt with included alcohol and other drug abuse (74%), childhood abuse (56%), poor literacy (53%), and lack of stable housing (53%) (Table 3.13). Not surprising, staff found alcohol and drug use to be an issue for more youth than self-reported at intake by participants. However, the opposite was true for poor literacy, which seemed to be underreported as a need by staff compared to the results of the basic skill literacy assessment in which four out of five youth were deemed literacy deficient.

Table 3.13
AROUND TWO-THIRDS OF STAFF FELT CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR
WAS AN OBSTACLE FOR MOST PARTICIPANTS

| What proportion of participants are dealing with... | Less than one half (0% to 50%) | Over half to three quarters (51% to 75%) | Over three quarters to all (76% to 100%) |
|---|--------------------------------|--|--|
| delinquent/criminal behavior | 15% | 20% | 65% |
| lack of work experience/skills | 11% | 26% | 63% |
| gang involved | 30% | 30% | 40% |
| alcohol and drug abuse | 26% | 37% | 37% |
| childhood abuse | 44% | 25% | 31% |
| poor literacy | 47% | 32% | 21% |
| mental health problems | 78% | 6% | 17% |
| lack of stable housing (e.g., homeless) | 48% | 37% | 16% |
| language barriers (English second language) | 79% | 11% | 11% |
| domestic violence | 65% | 25% | 10% |
| runaway | 95% | 0% | 6% |
| young parenthood (i.e., participant) | 72% | 22% | 6% |
| TOTAL | | 18 - 20 | |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Key Staff Survey, SANDAG 2010

In order to assess how the barriers affected participants' abilities to achieve their goals, staff were asked to rate the level of negative impact each of the aforementioned barriers had on participants' progress using a four-point scale, with 1 indicating "no impact at all" and 4 "a large negative impact." In addition, in order to determine if these identified obstacles were adequately addressed, staff were asked to rate the level of effectiveness they perceived the program had on helping participants overcome them using a four-point scale, with 4 indicating "very effective" and 1 "not effective at all." Delinquency, including gang involvement as well as substance abuse issues, lack of work skills, and poor literacy were rated as having the greatest impact on a youth's success (80% to 95%). As a testament to the program, staff also rated the program as most effective in helping youth with these issues (79% to 94%). Language barriers and mental health problems were rated the lowest in program effectiveness (50% and 56%, respectively) (Table 3.14); however these issues were not perceived as problems for the majority of participants (Table 3.13). Other obstacles not listed but noted by staff members include (not shown):

- ▶ dropping out of high school;
- ▶ lack of basic needs (e.g., food and clothing);
- ▶ lack of future goals;
- ▶ lack of parental support; and
- ▶ negative peer influence.

Table 3.14
STAFF REPORTED THEY FELT THE PROGRAM ADDRESSES
THE TOP BARRIERS THAT YOUTH FACE

| | Hinders a Youth's Success | Program Helps Youth Deal with This Issue |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Gang involvement | 95% | 90% |
| Alcohol and drug abuse | 95% | 84% |
| Delinquent/criminal behavior | 84% | 94% |
| Lack of work experience/skills | 80% | 89% |
| Poor literacy | 80% | 79% |
| Young parenthood (i.e., participant) | 79% | 66% |
| Domestic violence | 78% | 69% |
| Childhood abuse | 77% | 73% |
| Mental health problems | 72% | 56% |
| Lack of stable housing (e.g., homeless) | 65% | 78% |
| Language barriers (English second language) | 60% | 50% |
| Runaway | 50% | 72% |
| TOTAL | 17 - 20 | 16 -20 |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Key Staff Survey, SANDAG 2010

How effective were the in-custody, work, and educational services in helping participants?

A number of youth who enroll in the Youthful Offender program begin their services while in custody. In order to examine staff's perception of in-custody services, respondents were asked to rate these services on a four-point scale, with one indicating "very effective" and four "not effective at all." Of the 18 respondents who answered these questions, the overwhelming majority found in-custody services to be effective. Specifically, outreach (95%), reentry services (94%), and the intake process (89%) received the highest ratings from staff. (not shown).

"I applaud the efforts being made to assist young adults that are behind the walls. Intervention and prevention are essential in decreasing the number of adolescents that are being incarcerated."

Youthful Offender program staff member

Staff were also asked to rate the level of effectiveness of the program components that are provided to youth while in the community. These services include education, employment, and youth development activities. Using a four-point scale, with one indicating "very effective" and four "not effective at all," staff were asked to rate the educational services provided to clients once out of custody. As Table 3.15 highlights, while the majority (94% to 100%) of staff felt the educational services were effective in meeting the needs of the youth, there was some variance in the degree of effectiveness. Assistance with enrolling in college and training for vocational skills were given the highest rating by two-thirds or more of staff (74% and 68%, respectively), with tutoring and help with GED or H.S. diploma rated highest by over half (59% to 58%, respectively). Field trips received the highest rating by only one-third (33%) of staff.

Table 3.15
THE MAJORITY OF STAFF VIEWED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
AS EFFECTIVE IN ASSISTING YOUTH

| How effective were the following educational services in assisting the youth | Very Effective | Effective | Combined |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------|
| College enrollment assistance | 74% | 26% | 100% |
| Vocational skills training | 68% | 21% | 89% |
| Tutoring | 59% | 41% | 100% |
| GED/H.S. diploma assistance | 58% | 42% | 100% |
| TABE/CASAS assessment | 47% | 47% | 94% |
| Referrals to other educational agencies | 42% | 42% | 84% |
| Field trips | 33% | 53% | 86% |
| TOTAL | | 15 - 19 | |

NOTE: Cases with missing information or not applicable not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Key Staff Survey, SANDAG 2010

In regard to employment skill development and assistance, staff were asked to use the same four-point scale to rate the effectiveness of work-related services. These too received high marks from staff in the services' success in meeting participants' needs. The data show that staff members agree on the success of these services (Table 3.16). Of those who responded, all (100%) found work-related training to be effective. That is, work readiness, paid work experience, job search techniques, and resume writing were seen as effective by all of the staff. Nearly all (95%) found final job placement and follow-up services, as well as life skills techniques (90%), to be successful. Nearly four-fifths (79%) of key staff found budget and financial planning classes effectively assisted youth within the program to achieve their goals.

Table 3.16
WORK READINESS AND PAID WORK EXPERIENCE
SEEN AS VERY EFFECTIVE BY MOST STAFF

| How effective were the following employment services in assisting the youth... | Very Effective | Effective | Combined |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Work readiness classes | 74% | 26% | 100% |
| Paid work experience | 74% | 26% | 100% |
| Job search techniques | 58% | 42% | 100% |
| Resume writing classes | 58% | 42% | 100% |
| Final job placement | 56% | 39% | 95% |
| Follow-up services | 42% | 53% | 95% |
| Budget/financial planning | 21% | 58% | 79% |
| TOTAL | | 15 - 19 | |

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

SOURCE: Workforce Partnership Key Staff Survey, SANDAG 2010

All (100%) staff members found mentoring and supportive services (e.g., obtaining IDs, housing) to be effective. Nearly all (95%) felt the case management services provided were effective as well. Data show that all (100%) of respondents felt that the program effectively prepared participants for obtaining a job, assisted participants in getting a job, prepared participants for keeping a job, and provided support to participants after obtaining a job (not shown).

"I have personally witnessed firsthand this program positively and effectively help most of our youthful offenders."
Youthful Offender program staff member

Respondents were also asked if there were any areas that they felt could be changed in order to improve the effectiveness of the WIA Programs. This information can assist with any future program modifications. Forty percent, or eight respondents provided information on ways the program could be modified in the future to become more effective. These suggestions included:

- ▶ additional vocational programs/internships/participation in community businesses;
- ▶ more team planning while in custody;
- ▶ focus in-custody services on outreach and recruitment, as well as transition and community services;

- ▶ on-site representative to assist youth with their educational goals;
- ▶ more mental health services;
- ▶ more field trips;
- ▶ provide opportunity for more employers to be involved in youth training; and
- ▶ more administrative support.

Staff were offered the opportunity to provide additional feedback on the program and address any areas they felt needed further development, as well as particular program services that they felt were most efficient. Only four respondents provided additional feedback. Half of these comments were focused on applauding the efforts put forth by the program and its staff to assist young adults who are facing personal obstacles, and noting the positive impact they have witnessed the program having on the lives of the participants. Another respondent highlighted the importance of strong case management and providing mentors that the youth can trust. Lastly, it was suggested that, to better enhance the success of the participants, parents should be strongly encouraged to become involved in the youth's participation and an incentive program may be a way to help motivate them to become more active.

SUMMARY

As part of the process evaluation, data were collected from the CISRS database, criminal records, and surveys administered to participants and staff. Participant characteristics at program intake were analyzed and program comparisons were made. Results show that the programs are indeed serving the intended target of WIA funds. While programs varied in the specific target population, overall, youth did have prior involvement with the criminal justice system, had disrupted family backgrounds, were struggling academically, and were not employed at the time of intake. As for services provided, the data indicate that SDCOE and Second Chance supported intervention that resulted in completion of alternative school and employment placement and SBCS was more geared toward educational outcomes.

Data gathered from client surveys showed that, in general, participants were very pleased with staff and services received. Of note was the value placed on work readiness and preparation activities. Staff feedback on the program mirrored much of what was provided by participants. According to staff, the program was implemented as planned, and staff also were able to identify client needs and felt that the program effectively addressed them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information received, analysis of the CISRS data, and input from the participants and staff, the following recommendations are put forth:

Address poor literacy skills: The Basic Literacy Skills assessment revealed that the majority (81%) of youth were literacy deficient. However, only 21 percent received basic skills treatment services and a similar percentage of staff thought the majority of youth struggled with this issue. Given the impact literacy can have on the chances of success, this is a program area that might benefit from enhancement.

Increase internships and employment opportunities: Feedback from both participants and staff highlighted how valuable job placements and job preparation services were to finding and securing employment. The ability of WIA to fund paid internships offers incentives for employers to take a risk with youthful offenders and an opportunity for the youth to prove themselves to be valuable employees. During these continued challenging economic times, this service component becomes even more crucial in transitioning youth back to the community.

CHAPTER 4

OUTCOME EVALUATION

CHAPTER 4

OUTCOME EVALUATION

CASE STUDY

Marcos entered the Youthful Offender program having a long history with the delinquency system and entered Second Chance while serving time in the Youthful Offender Unit at the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (EMJDF) (which houses the most serious juvenile offenders). While serving his time, Marcos participated in the Youthful Offender in-custody program for approximately one year. After his release from EMJDF, Marcos started the four-week Youthful Offender work-readiness program. While participating in this portion of the program, he was provided housing in a Second Chance Sober Living house. Marcos successfully graduated from this phase of the program and then transitioned back home with his parents in Oceanside.

Marcos was then placed in a Youthful Offender subsidized internship at a local grocery store in the North County. The store management was pleased with his work performance and he was offered a regular position at the end of his internship. Marcos started as a regular employee in August 2010, and was quickly promoted and received a pay raise.

Second Chance Program

NOTE: Name was changed to protect the privacy of the participant.

INTRODUCTION

The measurement of Youthful Offender program success, like the population it serves, is multifaceted. That is, one sole outcome is not sufficient to capture the program success or impact on participants. As such, multiple factors were examined to measure success. These measures included contact with the criminal justice system during participation and six months post-program exit, attainment of an educational or training degree/certificate, entering employment, and entering into advanced training and/or post-secondary education. Because San Diego Workforce Partnership (Workforce Partnership) sought to learn more about what particular program activities contributed to program success, as well as factors that influenced arrest six months following program completion, an impact evaluation was designed to answer these questions. The current chapter describes the outcomes for participants who exited the program, as well as examines differences among the three programs and the individual participants.

METHODOLOGY

To document the level of program success and impact on participants' criminal activity after exit, data were gathered from CISRS, the Probation Case Management System (PCMS), Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), and the San Diego County Sheriff's Department database. Criminal history data were collected both during and six months post-program exit. Because it was important for consistency that each individual in the data collection period have an equal length of time to remain crime-free, only those that had completed the specific period were included in the data collection. Therefore, only participants who exited the program by June 30, 2010, (when criminal history data collection started) were included in the exit outcome analysis, resulting in a sample size of 285 youth. Similarly, only those clients who exited the program by March 1, 2010, and were out of the program at least six months were included in the post-data collection, which resulted in a follow-up sample size of 206 youth. Because Second Chance was the last program to join WIA and only had 45 youth who received services, only 8 of its youth finished the program by June 30, 2010.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- ▶ The majority (70%) of participants graduated with at least one successful outcome from the program.
- ▶ About one in five (22%) of the 206 youth in the follow-up sample were arrested and 14 percent were convicted in the six months following program completion.
- ▶ Successful educational and employment obtainment were positively associated with crime-free behavior six months post-program completion.
- ▶ Program components found to increase the likelihood of program success included receipt of job placement services, attainment of an occupational skill, receipt of support services, and participation in post-secondary education activities.
- ▶ Being male, a single parent, or Black, and having a history of homelessness, or being literacy deficient increased the odds of a participant not obtaining success at exit and/or being arrested six months post-program completion.

PARTICIPANTS' EXIT STATUS

What was WIA participants' level of success at exit?

Exit from a Youthful Offender program is need based, with youth being able to stay in the program for the period of time needed to complete his/her goals. As noted in Chapter Two, the average length of stay in the program was 38 weeks ranging from 0 to 144 weeks (not shown). At the end of the data-collection period, a total of 307 youth had exited the program according to CISRS⁸. Success in the program was

"I found it (program) very comforting. They taught me everything I need to know for a job, and they are still helping me. That is my favorite part of the program, that even though I am not in it anymore, they still help me."

SBCS Youthful Offender participant

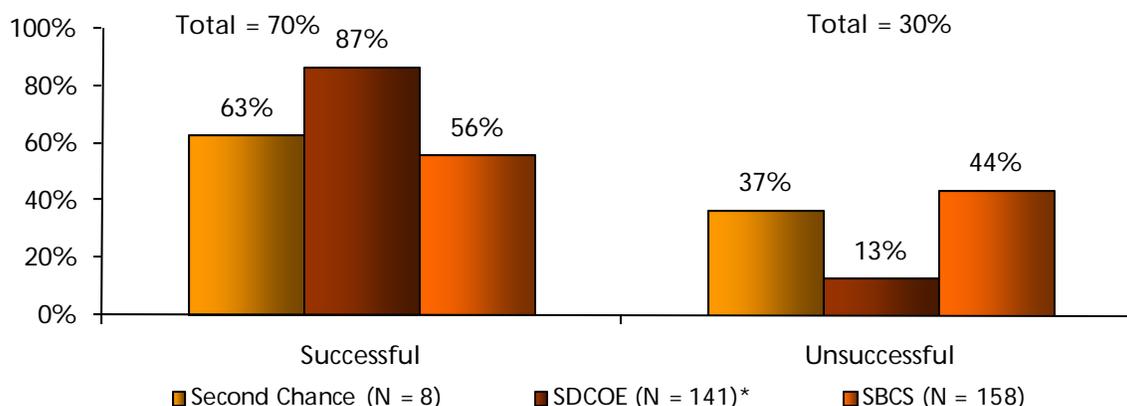
⁸ This number is larger than the 285 participants included in the criminal history as 22 clients had actual exit dates in July and therefore were not included in the original file that criminal history data collection was based on. These 22 cases are only included in the treatment and exit analysis and not in the criminal history portion.

based on several factors and a youth could be given a combination of three exit status ratings upon leaving the program. That is, a youth could receive a total of three successful codes in one of the four following areas. The following accomplishments were considered successful completion from the program:

- ▶ entering employment;
- ▶ entering advanced training;
- ▶ entering post-secondary education; and
- ▶ attaining a recognized certificate/diploma/degree.

Based on these definitions of success, 70 percent of the Youthful Offender program participants had at least one successful achievement at exit (Figure 4.1). Among the programs, SDCOE had a greater proportion of youth (87%) exiting successfully than SBCS (56%)⁹. Of those with a successful code at exit, 35 percent had only one, 45 percent had two, and 20 percent had three coded as successful. As with overall success, a larger percentage of SDCOE youth had all three of their exit codes marked as successful (31% compared to 6% of SBCS) (not shown).

Figure 4.1
SDCOE YOUTH MORE LIKELY
TO EXIT THE PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY



**Difference significant at $p < .05$.*
SOURCE: CISRS Database, 2010

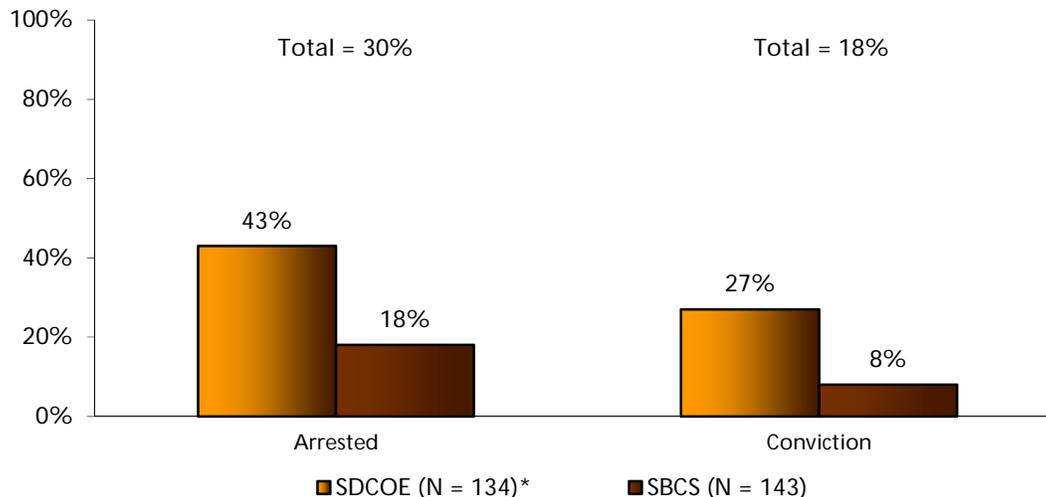
⁹ Because of the low sample size, Second Chance youth outcomes are only descriptive and not part of the statistical analysis.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES

What was the level of criminal activity during program participation?

Recognizing that the majority of the target population entered the program with an extensive justice system history combined with other challenges that put them at risk for continued involvement, youth were not considered a program “failure” and/or necessarily exited from the program if they were arrested and/or incarcerated. However, the intent of the program was to decrease involvement with the criminal justice system and, therefore, criminal history data were collected for the period of program participation. Data collected on participants showed that the majority were crime free during their participation, with less than one-third (30%) being arrested while in the program and 18 percent convicted as a result of that arrest (not shown). Because only 8 of the Second Chance youth were eligible for data collection this period, their percentages are deceiving as a slight change can cause a substantial change in the overall proportion. As such, Second Chance data are not included in the analysis or figures. Among the programs, SBCS had the smallest proportion of youth arrested (17%) and subsequently convicted (8%). These proportions were significantly smaller than SDCOE participants, which had about two out of five arrested (43%) and about one-quarter convicted (27%) (Figure 4.2). Half (50%) of the eight Second Chance youth were arrested, with 38 percent found guilty. Of those youth arrested, the average number of arrests was 1.66 (range 1 to 5) (not shown).

Figure 4.2
MOST YOUTH REMAIN CRIME FREE
DURING PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



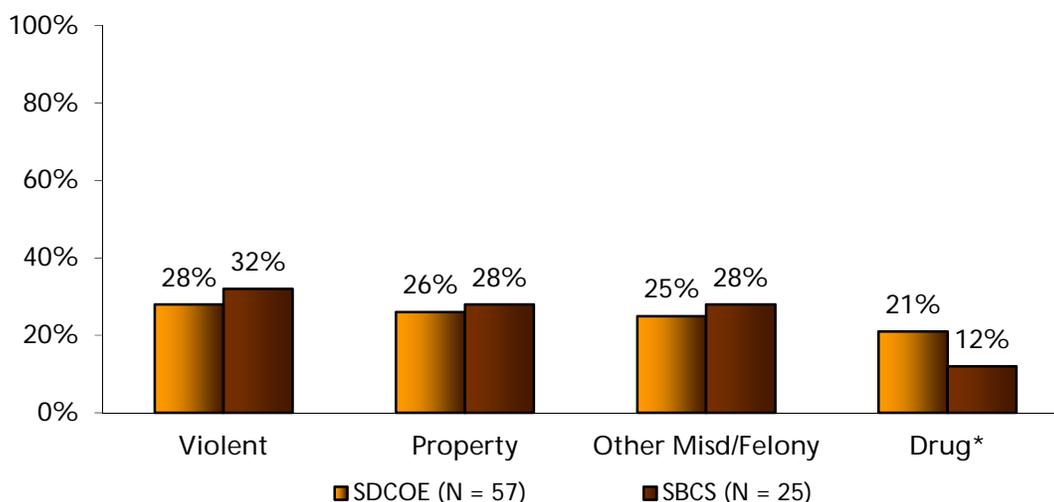
*Difference significant at $p < .05$.

SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

When looking at the level of offense for those arrested, 62 percent were charged with a felony and 38 percent with a misdemeanor. There were differences among the programs, with over three-quarters (77%) of SDCOE youth having a felony-level charge compared to just over one-third (36%) of SBCS (not shown)¹⁰.

In regard to type of offense, about one-quarter to one-third of charges were for a violent (30%), property (27%), or other misdemeanor or felony offense (24%), and the fewest for a drug charge (19%) (not shown). There was a similar proportion of violent, property, and other charges between SDCOE and SBCS youth; however, they differed in regard to drug charges, with SBCS having a significantly smaller portion compared to SDCOE (12% versus 21%, respectively) (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3
TYPE OF CHARGE WAS CLOSELY DISTRIBUTED
ACROSS THE FOUR CATEGORIES



*Difference significant at $p < .05$.

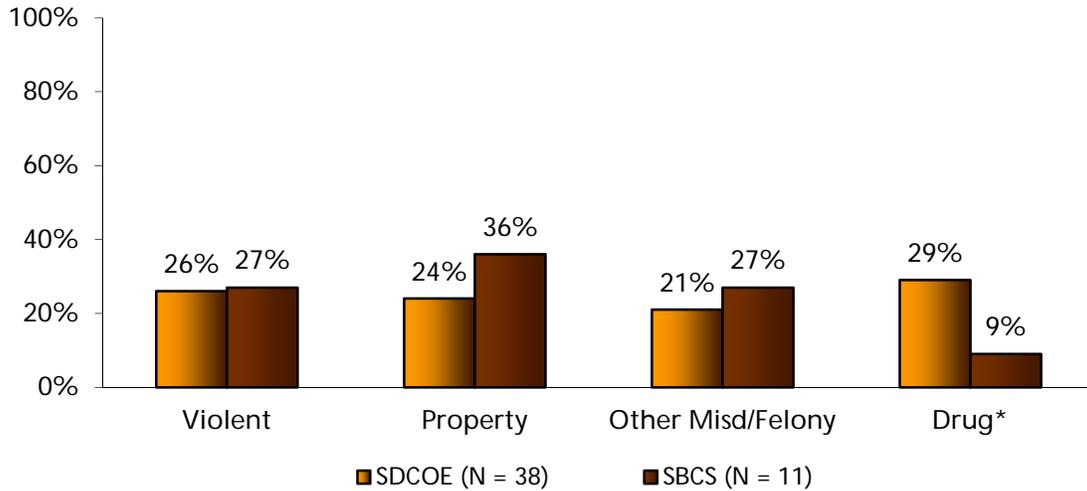
SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

Of the youth who were convicted or had a true finding (i.e., guilty in the juvenile system) while in the program, most had a felony-level offense (67%). As with the arrest, a significantly greater proportion of the SDCOE convictions were felonies (74%) compared to SBCS (64%). The four convictions of Second Chance participants were at the misdemeanor level (not shown).

The distribution of type of crime committed was similar across the four categories, ranging from property (29%) to other misdemeanor/felony (21%) convictions. Except for drug convictions, in which SDCOE had almost three times as many (29%) compared to SBCS (9%), the two programs were similar in the type of convictions during program participation (Figure 4.4).

¹⁰ The four arrests for Second Chance youth were at the misdemeanor level, three of which resulted in a misdemeanor level conviction.

Figure 4.4
THERE WAS LITTLE VARIANCE IN THE TYPE OF CONVICTION
DURING PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



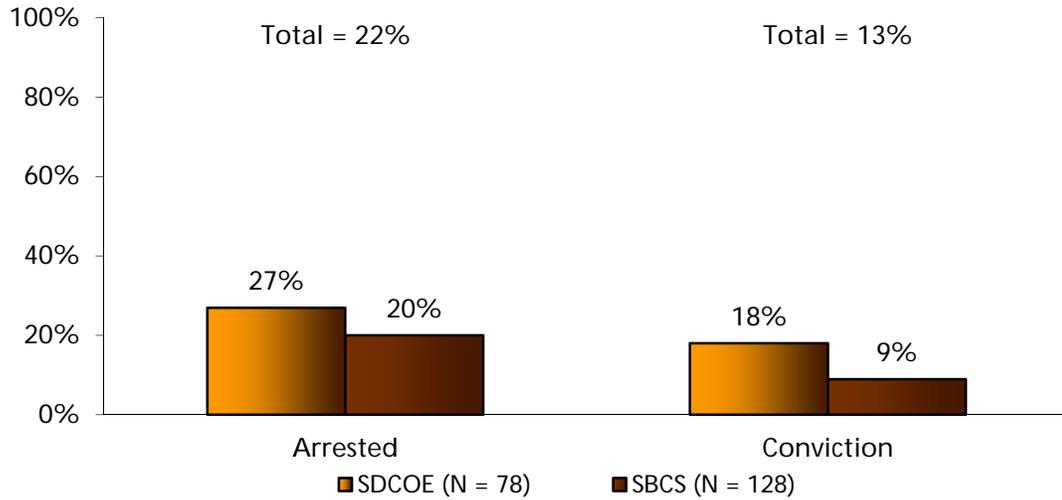
**Difference significant at $p < .05$.*

SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

What was the level of criminal activity six month after program participation?

To examine durability of treatment over time, criminal activity data were collected for the time period six months post-exit from the program for all participants who had been out at least six months and who were not incarcerated for the entire time period. Data were available for analysis on 206 participants, 62 percent (128) from SBCS and 38 percent (78) from SDCOE (not shown). Of these participants, less than one-quarter (22%) were arrested within the first six months following program completion and 13 percent were convicted of an offense (Figure 4.5). There was no statistical difference in arrests or convictions between SDCOE and SBCS.

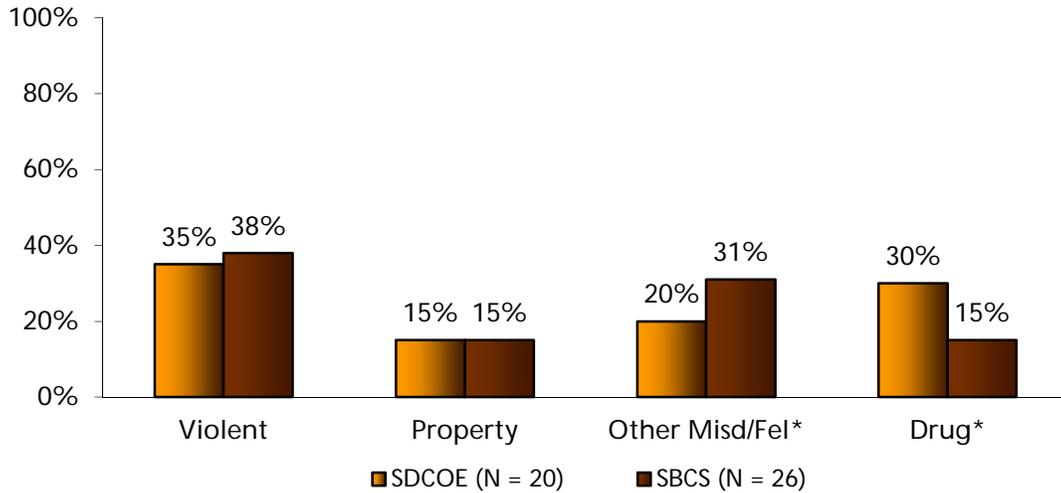
Figure 4.5
LESS THAN ONE-QUARTER OF PARTICIPANTS REARRESTED
SIX MONTHS POST-PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

Analysis of level of offense for those youth arrested showed just over half (57%) were arrested for a felony. As with arrest level during program participation, the SDCOE youth were more likely to be arrested for a felony (75%) than SBCS participants (42%) (not shown). Over one-third of the arrests were for a violent offense (37%), with other misdemeanor/felony and drug charges accounting for about one-quarter each (26% and 22%, respectively) of the arrests (not shown). However, a larger proportion of SDCOE participants (30%) had a drug charge and more SBCS youth (31%) were arrested for some other misdemeanor/felony charge (not shown). The least common was a property offense (15%) (Figure 4.6).

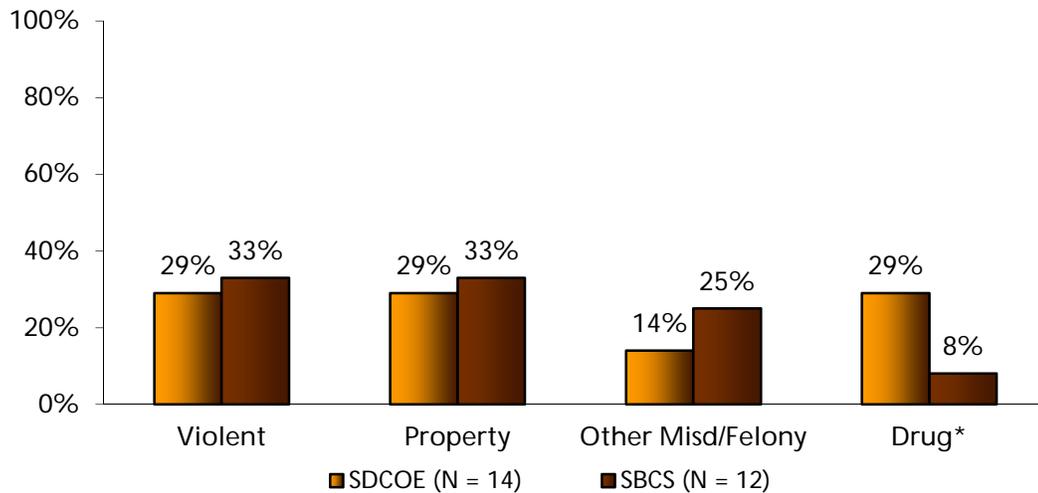
Figure 4.6
VIOLENT OFFENSE WAS THE MOST COMMON ARREST TYPE
SIX MONTHS POST-PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



*Difference significant at $p < .05$.
 SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

Of those arrested, 54 percent (or 25) were convicted, with just over two-thirds (68%) at the felony level. There were no statistical differences between the two programs (not shown). Examination of the type of conviction showed that an equal proportion was for a violent or a property offense (32% each), followed by a drug offense (20%), and other misdemeanor/felony convictions (16%) (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7
POST CONVICTIONS WERE MOSTLY FOR
A VIOLENT OR PROPERTY OFFENSE



*Difference significant at $p < .05$.
 SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

While a comparison group was not feasible for this evaluation project, to help put these findings in context, it is helpful to look at recidivism data gathered as part of other recent evaluations of San Diego County Probation youth, as well as overall recidivism rates for juvenile probationers. Comparisons with these study samples, while limited, show that Youthful Offender program participants appear to have a lower arrest rate compared to similar youth involved in the juvenile justice system. For example, data gathered for one year on youth leaving incarceration from either San Diego County Juvenile Ranch Facility or Camp Barrett showed that the majority of youth were rearrested (60% and 62%, respectively)¹¹. Data gathered in a 2009 report of juveniles who had prior involvement with the juvenile justice system, including 62 percent who had been a ward of the delinquency court and all of whom had substance abuse issues, showed that 27 percent had a new true finding (i.e., conviction) six months post-program exit¹². Additionally, information from the San Diego County Probation Department on recidivism (i.e., new conviction or true finding for misdemeanor or felony offense following a previous conviction or true finding) of 2009 probationers showed that 31 percent of juveniles and 29 percent of adults recidivated during the period of their probation.

What factors were related to successful completion of the WIA program?

One of the primary reasons for this research project was to identify factors that might be contributing to the successful completion of the program by Youthful Offender participants. This information could help inform possible program modifications or adjustments. As described at the beginning of the chapter, program success was related to achievement of either or both employment and education outcomes. As such, these two types of outcomes were examined separately to help isolate any possible contributing factors influencing the odds of a youth achieving his/her goals. Both bivariate and multivariate analyses were run to identify possible predictive factors. This included all individual characteristics available in CISRS, prior criminal activity, and services received. Only variables found to be significant are described.

What factors contributed significantly to successful employment outcomes?

Program participants were considered to be successful in terms of employment if they had a job at program exit. Regression modeling was used to determine which program components or services were related to gaining employment while accounting for personal demographic or risk factor differences among the youth. These differences needed to be controlled for since in addition to services they may have received, they could contribute to whether someone was successful. The following demographic characteristics/risk factors were included in the analysis:

- ▶ Demographic characteristics
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity

¹¹ Probation Evaluation, Assessment, and Cost-Effectiveness Study.

¹² ACCESS: Assertive Continuing Care Ensuring Sobriety and Success Final Evaluation Report

- ▶ Risk factors
 - Number of previous arrests
 - Substance abuse
 - Gang membership/affiliation
 - Homelessness
 - Live in high risk neighborhood (i.e., high rates of poverty, crime, and unemployment)
 - Previous unemployment
 - Literacy deficient
 - Former foster child
 - Family status (i.e., who they are living with)

It is important to note that, although all variables available from CISRS were initially examined, many program components or services were strongly related to one another and these were eliminated from the model. For example, attaining a work-readiness skill was highly correlated with receiving work-readiness training, so work-readiness training was dropped from the regression model to ensure that the independent variables were truly independent of each other. Also, because agency (Second Chance, SDCOE, SBCS) was highly related to which components/services youth received and certain risk factors, the model did not include agency as a variable. However, the results for the process evaluation detail how programs differed in their provision of treatment activities that are shown to impact success and criminal activity.

The results from the model did identify certain program components that were related to employment success. Specifically, receiving job-placement services, attaining an occupational skill, and receiving support services were all found to increase the likelihood of a participant being employed at exit. Youth who received job placement services were four times as likely to enter employment ($\beta = 4.2$) than those that did not receive the services. As the figure below demonstrates, 46 percent of those who received job placement services gained employment versus 13 percent of those who did not receive the service. Achieving an occupational skill made youth more than two times more likely to get a job ($\beta = 2.2$), with 54 percent of youth having a job at exit. Similarly, receiving support services, such as assistance with transportation, child care, and/or housing, also contributed to success with about half (49%) of these youth obtaining employment at exit compared to only one-quarter (25%) of those youth who did not receive these additional services ($\beta = 2.0$) (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8
SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES SIGNIFICANTLY
RELATED TO JOB, OCCUPATIONAL, AND SUPPORT SERVICES



**Difference significant at $p < .05$.*

SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

In regard to difference between the programs, a greater proportion of SDCOE youth received job placement services (71%) compared to SBCS (56%). The two programs were similar in the proportion who received occupational and support services (Chapter 3).

The analysis also showed that certain demographic groups were less likely to have a successful employment outcome. Males tended to be less likely to get a job than females ($\beta = 0.41$), even after receiving job placement, occupational skills, and support services. Black youth also were 74 percent less likely to get a job than their non-Black counterparts ($\beta = 0.26$) and older participants also were more likely to find a job ($\beta = 2.5$). However, this may be a result of employers choosing those 18 years and older or 20 years and older rather than a program issue.

While this analysis could not identify the reason(s) for the differences, it does suggest the need for the programs to explore how they could possibly address any special needs posed by youth with these characteristics and backgrounds.

What factors contributed significantly to successful educational outcomes?

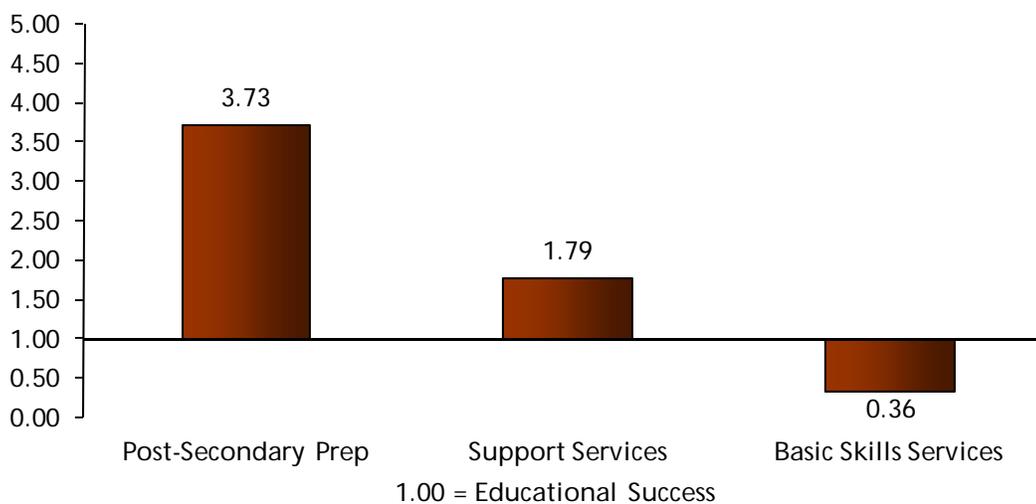
Program participants were deemed successful in regard to education if they entered advanced training, entered post-secondary education, and/or attained a recognized certificate, diploma, or degree. Again, regression modeling was used to determine which program components or services were related to successful education outcomes while accounting for personal demographic or risk factor differences among the youth. The education analysis used the same demographic and risk factors in the model that were used in the employment model.

Initial results showed that some of the education services or components were highly correlated with the outcome variable. In some cases, it appeared that the two variables were measuring the same item. For example, one of the program components was post-secondary education. Youth

who participated in post-secondary education activities were placed in this category. The education outcome variable also measured this. Almost all of the youth who had post-secondary education (93%) also had a successful education outcome. As a result, this and other similar variables needed to be removed from the model because they were too highly correlated and the model was not efficient.

The results of the analysis revealed that post-secondary education preparation activities did increase the odds of having a successful education outcome. Youth who received this service were more than three and one-half times more likely to be successful ($\beta = 3.73$). Additionally, those that had support services were almost two times more likely to succeed ($\beta = 1.79$) (Figure 4.9). Opposite of this was the finding that youth receiving basic skill remediation were less likely to obtain education success. This could be viewed as a proxy for poor literacy and highlights the seriousness of this deficiency.

Figure 4.9
ODDS OF EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS RELATED TO SERVICES RECEIVED



SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

As with the employment analysis, the educational regression model identified groups that may need more assistance to achieve a successful education outcome. Youth who were involved with basic skill enhancement activities may need additional assistance since the model showed they are less likely to be successful ($\beta = 0.63$), even while being involved in these activities. Single parents ($\beta = 0.22$), and homeless youth ($\beta = 0.29$) were also less likely to enter advanced training, enter post-secondary education, and/or attain a recognized certificate, diploma, or degree compared to youth without these backgrounds. Again, this is after receiving support services and accounting for other risk factors.

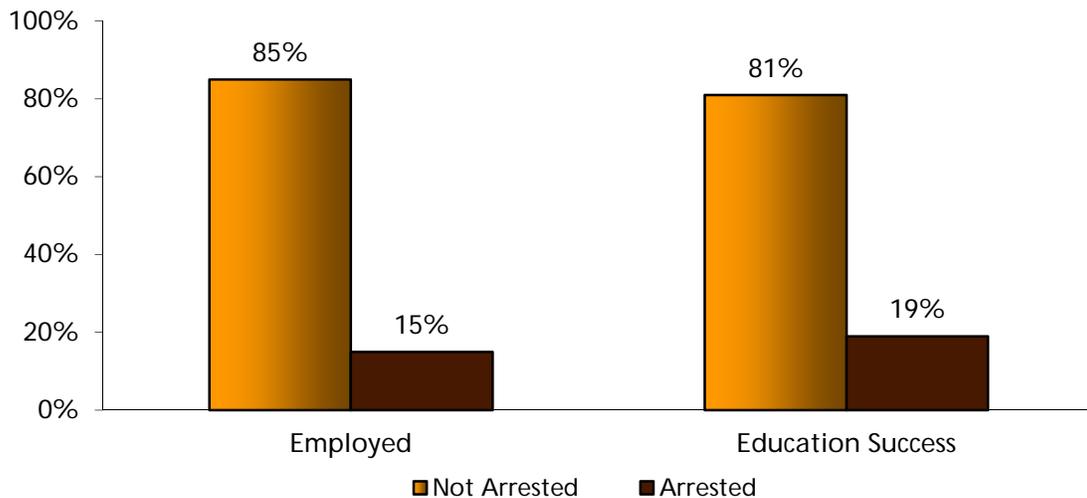
What factors were related to a participant remaining crime-free six months after program exit?

Because of the unique nature of these WIA funds that focused on youthful offenders, a third priority of this research was to examine individual and program factors that could protect or prevent a youth from reoffending. Using the same demographic characteristics and risk factors that were used in the other outcomes regression model, the next step was to determine if being

successful in an employment or educational outcome was related to whether youth committed a criminal offense after receiving services. Two separate regression models tested the effect of both outcomes when demographic and risk factors were controlled. Recidivism was measured as whether a youth was arrested in the six months after exiting the program. Arrest was utilized rather than conviction because the smaller sample size associated with convictions reduced the ability of the model to identify possible predictors. However, it is important to note that only about half of the arrests resulted in a conviction.

This analysis showed that successful program completion did contribute to a youth being less likely to be arrested in the post period. Those participants who completed the program successfully, as measured by entering employment and/or achieving educational success at exit, were significantly less likely to be arrested six months post-participation ($\beta = 0.45$). As Figure 4.10 shows, 85 percent of those who were employed and 81 percent of those with a successful educational outcome remained crime free six months post-exit compared to those who were not employed or those who were not successful in an educational outcome (15% and 19%, respectively). These results support the primary purpose of WIA funds, which is to help youthful offenders remain crime free by assisting youth in finding and maintaining employment.

Figure 4.10
PARTICIPANTS WHO EXITED PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY WERE MORE LIKELY TO REMAIN CRIME FREE SIX MONTHS AFTER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION*



TOTAL = 206

**Difference significant at $p < .05$.*

SOURCE: ARJIS and Probation Case Management System, 2010

Examination of the relationship between individual background characteristics and future criminal activity showed that males were six and one-half times more likely than females to be arrested ($\beta = 6.56$).

SUMMARY

To understand what individual characteristics and program treatment activities contributed to a participant's successful completion of the program and desistance from criminal activity six months following program exit, an impact evaluation was conducted. Of the 402 youth who received WIA services, data were available for the period of program completion for 285 youth and for a six-month follow up for 206.

The majority of participants graduated with at least one successful outcome and were crime free during program participation and for six months following program exit. Several program factors were found to be related to employment success, including receiving job-placement services, attaining an occupational skill, and receiving support services. As for individual characteristics, males, Black youth, and younger participants had decreased odds of obtaining employment upon exit. Fewer factors were found related to educational success, with reception of post-secondary educational activities and support service increasing the odds of a youth's educational success. As with employment, several participant background factors were shown to decrease the odds of a youth's educational success, including single parenting, and homelessness.

Six months following exit, about one in five (22%) participants had a new arrest and 14 percent had a new conviction. Youth who had a successful employment or educational outcome were less likely to be arrested six month post-exit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the impact evaluation and taking into account the information gathered from the process analyses, the following recommendations are put forth:

Enhance the research design: Only 22 percent of participants were arrested six months following program completion. In the context of other studies conducted on recidivism of youth on probation in San Diego County, these results seem promising. However, without a comparison group, the causal relationship between WIA intervention and reduced recidivism cannot be drawn. Future research would gain from inclusion of such a comparison or control group, longer follow-up, and additional cases from Second Chance.

Expansion of basic literacy skill services: Those receiving basic literacy skill services were at greater risk for arrest six months following program completion. This finding, coupled with the fact that not all individuals assessed as literacy deficient received this services, shines a light on a gap in service delivery. This result calls for a closer examination of the factors prohibiting all youth in need of such services from receiving them, as well as the type of basic literacy skills services being delivered.

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