

Who We are Serving and How We are Doing: An Analysis of Program Referrals and Performance in Balanced and Restorative Justice



**Submitted to the
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Introduction

This document is the third evaluation report and includes evaluation products deliverable in Phase III of the Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) Juvenile Justice Program Evaluation being conducted by Florida Atlantic University's Community Justice Institute. Because this is not a lengthy report, we do not provide an executive summary. However, for a quick review of the major findings of this report, see the concluding section, beginning on page 19.

The *Program Profile and Implementation Report* (June 2000), the first evaluation report, described and assessed the initial implementation of the array of SRS programs being funded in support of the department's Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) initiative. In addition to the qualitative program profile, the report examined initial implementation issues encountered as staff operationalized implementation of BARJ objectives through new programs and modifications and refinements of existing ones while connecting with other programs. The *Process Evaluation Interim Report: Program Intervention Theory and Case Study Analysis* (October 2000) included program intervention theory and case study analysis. That document provided a comprehensive qualitative assessment of process evaluation concerns including: the relationship of these program interventions to both program and system objectives, the relationship of programs to each other, and the consistency of programs with core BARJ principles and values. Future reports will include a qualitative report based on focus groups and case studies of the restorative panel program and a recidivism study of juvenile cases aimed at contrasting reoffending rates in different programs.

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this document is to present findings based on descriptive analysis of program process and performance data on juveniles referred to restorative programs (i.e., competency classes, checkers/trackers, restorative panels, and restitution programs) in the State of Vermont, Division of Social and Rehabilitation Services using program referral and program completion forms. Program staff filled out the referral and program completion forms and forwarded the forms to the evaluation team when juvenile cases were referred and closed, respectively.

This study provides a descriptive summary of the juveniles referred to programs statewide, by location (e.g., Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Hartford, Middlebury, Morrisville, Rutland, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, and Springfield), by program type (e.g., restorative panels, checker/tracker, competency classes, and restitution programs) and demographic information (e.g., gender, race, age, and custody). This report also includes an initial analysis of successful completion rates intended to offer initial assessment of program performance.

Data Collection

The evaluation team collected referral and completion forms for all terminated cases beginning March 2000 and ending May 2001. Despite repeated efforts to follow up on missing data, the team was unable to obtain all referrals known to the program. That is, in many cases, the team received a referral form, but not a completion form or vice versa. It is unclear if there are cases for which we received neither form. In total, we are aware of 444 cases, but we are able to report on a sample of 313 cases for which we had both forms. Table 1 provides information on reporting for each jurisdiction. The overall response rate is 70%, however, one jurisdiction (St. Albans) stands out among the rest with a particularly low response rate (27%). Therefore, all conclusions we draw about St. Albans must be viewed as tentative.

Table 1. Results of Data Collection Efforts

Location	Cases with Referral and Completion Forms	Cases with Missing Data	Total Cases	Percent of Cases Analyzed
Barre	22	2	24	92
Bennington	57	26	83	69
Brattleboro	36	4	40	92
Burlington	91	31	122	76
Hartford	28	6	34	82
Middlebury	15	3	18	83
Morrisville	22	11	33	67
Rutland	12	5	17	71
St. Albans	13	36	49	27
St. Johnsbury	3	0	3	100
Springfield	14	7	21	67
Total	313	130	444	70

Sample Demographics

Table 2 provides information about the youth in the sample at the time of referral. As can be seen, the youth range from 11-18 years olds, clustering in the 15-16 year old range. 60% of the youth were in 9th or 10th grade. Most of the sample is male (73%) and white (94%). 74% of the youth are in the custody of one or both parents, and 24% are in SRS custody.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Percent
Age	
11-13	9
14	14
15	28
16	31
17	17
18	1
Grade	
5-7	12
8	11
9	30
10	30
11	16
12	3
Gender	
Male	73
Female	27
Race	
White	94
Black	4
Other	2
Custody	
Mother only	41
Father only	7
Both parents	26
Grandparents	1
SRS	24
Other	1

Program Referrals

Juvenile justice programs in eleven jurisdictions received a total of 444 referrals from the juvenile court and the Division of Social and Rehabilitation Services during the period from March 2000 to May 2001.¹ Burlington received the largest number of juvenile referrals (27% of all referrals), followed by Bennington (19%). St. Johnsbury received only 3 referrals, the lowest referral rate in the state. Table 3 depicts the number and percent of referrals assigned to each jurisdiction in the state.

¹ These data are based on all known cases; hereafter, data are based on the slightly smaller sample of cases for which we obtained both intake and completion forms.

Table 3. Referrals to Each Jurisdiction

Location	Total Cases	Percent of Cases Per Jurisdiction
Barre	24	5
Bennington	83	19
Brattleboro	40	9
Burlington	122	27
Hartford	34	8
Middlebury	18	4
Morrisville	33	7
Rutland	17	4
St. Albans	49	11
St. Johnsbury	3	.1
Springfield	21	5
Total	444	100

The juvenile court or SRS may have referred youth to one or more BARJ programs. The youth may have been referred to as many as four programs, depending upon the referral and availability of the program in the youth’s jurisdiction. As Figure 1 indicates, 33% of the youth statewide were referred to the restorative panels. 49% were assigned to checker/tracker programs. 67% were referred to restitution and 12% were referred to competency classes. In this sample, 49% of youth were assigned to only one program. Since 51% were assigned to multiple programs, in this evaluation we estimate the effects of each program as well as programs in combination.

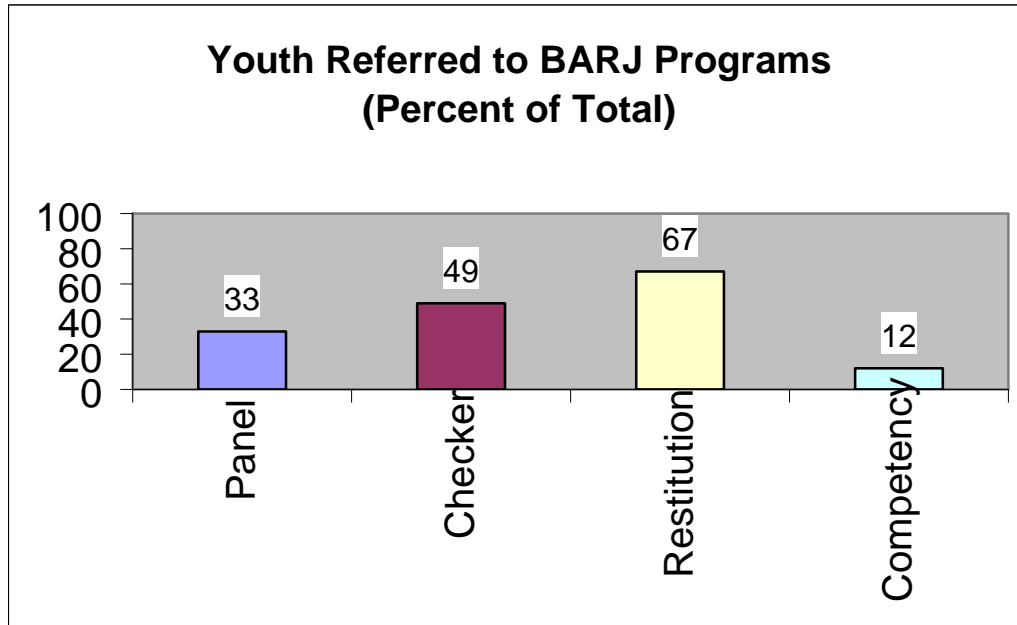


Figure 1. Referrals to BARJ Programs

Overall, 78% of the youth completed all of the programs to which they were referred. Many more completed individual programs, as we describe below. Figure 2 shows overall completion rates for jurisdictions with more than ten cases (we exclude St. Johnsbury because it only had three cases—to few to estimate success rates). Jurisdictions generally show consistent rates of success ranging from 61% (Hartford) to 95% (Morrisville).

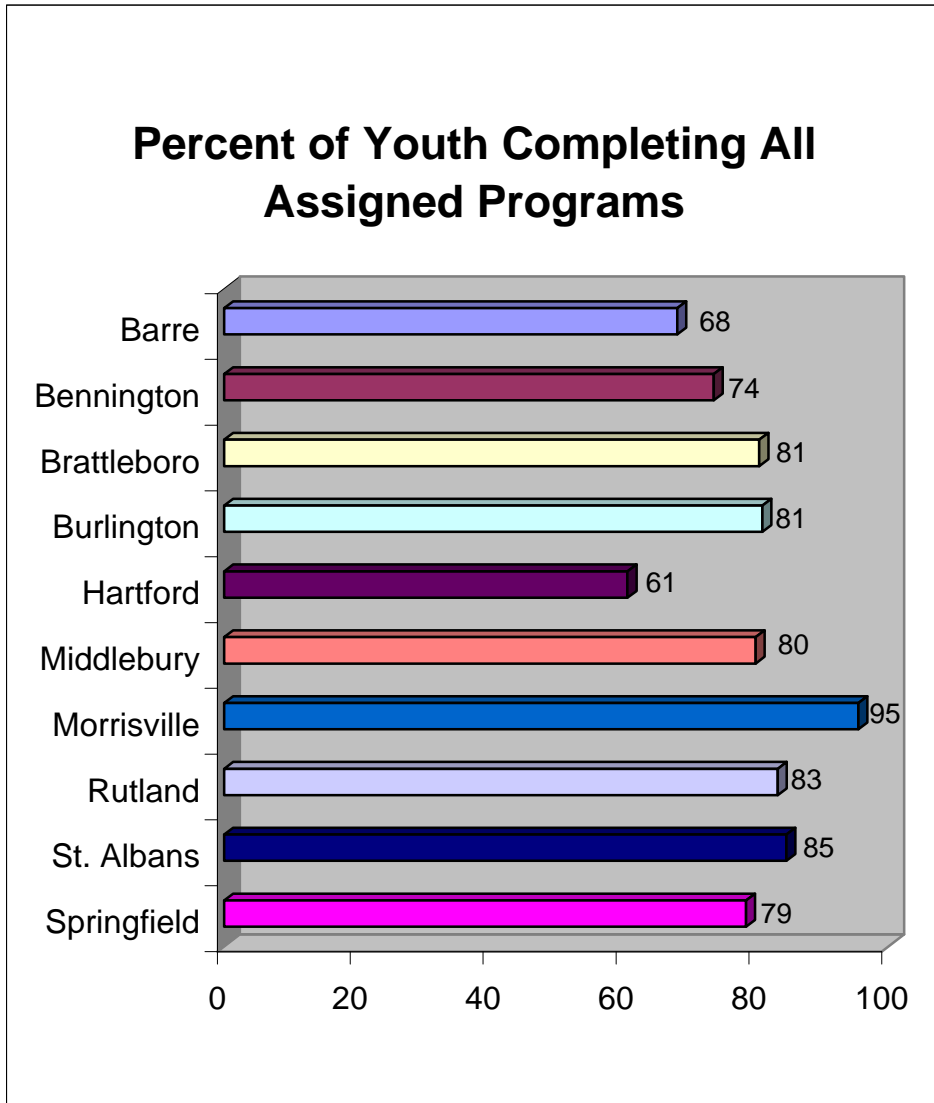


Figure 2. Completion Rates for All BARJ Programs by Jurisdiction

Because of the small number of youth who did not succeed overall, it is difficult to identify background factors that contribute to failure. Demographically, we find that neither age nor gender is a predictor of success. That is, both younger and older youth as well as males and females succeed at equivalent rates. There is too little variation in the data to examine racial or ethnic differences. Custody, however, is the only notable variable. As Figure 3 illustrates, youth who are in SRS custody are less likely to succeed than youth in family custody. This difference is statistically significant at the .05 level.

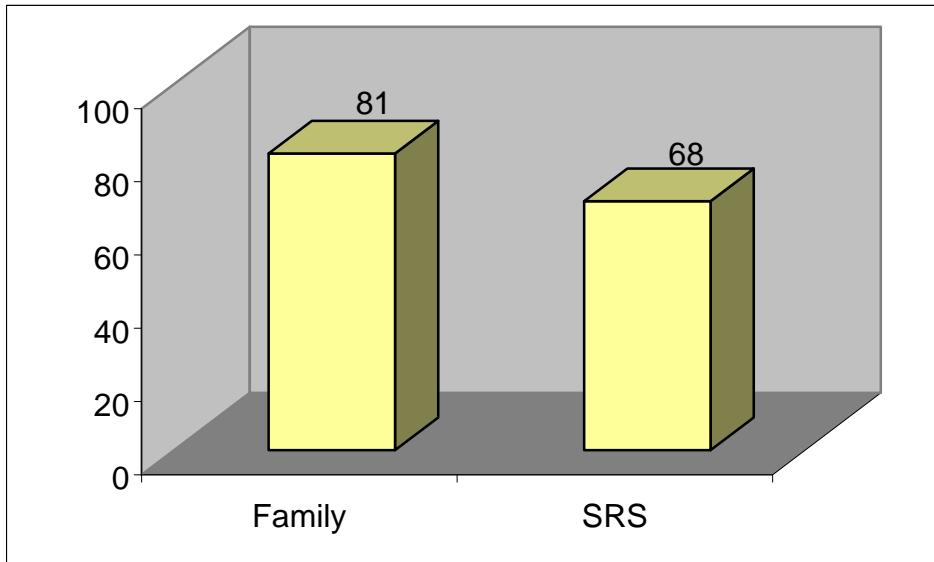


Figure 3. Success Rates for All BARJ Programs by Custody

Restorative Panels

In this section, we report on the restorative panels program. Table 4 shows the percentage of all referrals in each jurisdiction that were assigned to panels, answering the question: “For each jurisdiction, what percentage of the youth referred to BARJ programming were assigned to a restorative panel?” The table shows significant variation in referrals. Burlington had the highest number of referrals in absolute terms, but panels were assigned in only 23% of the total Burlington caseload. Middlebury had half as many referrals, but panels were assigned in 73% of its cases. St. Albans and St. Johnsbury had no panel cases.

Table 4. Referrals to Panels

Location	Total Panel Cases	Percent of Jurisdiction BARJ Caseload
Barre	9	41
Bennington	18	32
Brattleboro	19	53
Burlington	21	23
Hartford	7	25
Middlebury	11	73
Morrisville	13	59
Rutland	2	17
St. Albans	0	0
St. Johnsbury	0	0
Springfield	4	23
Total	104	33

Statewide, 85% of youth referred to panels successfully completed the program. Figure 4 reports on program completion rates for each jurisdiction with more than ten cases. Notably, each of these five jurisdictions that had larger volumes of cases had higher completion rates than the statewide average. Completion rates for these locations ranged from 89-95%.

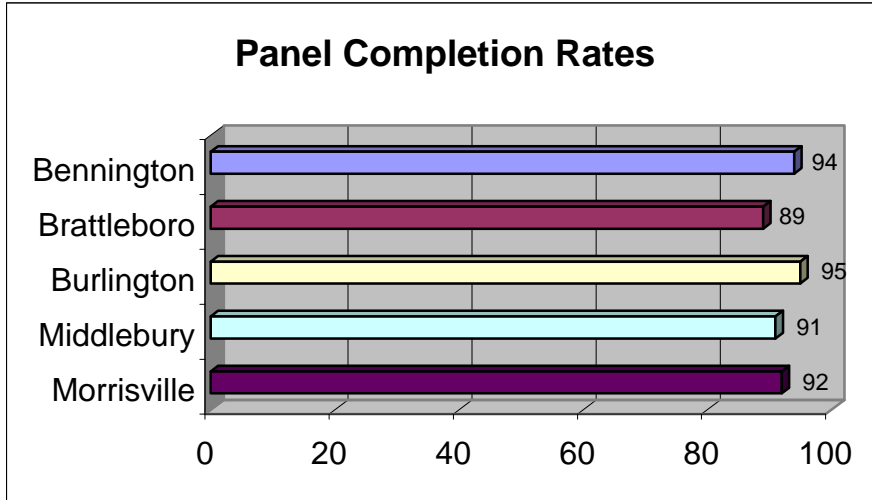


Figure 4. Percent of Youth Completing Panels by Jurisdiction

Because there were so few cases of panel program failure, it is again difficult to identify differences between youth who succeeded and those who failed. No demographic variable predicts failure in the panel program. Of those who did not complete, the most frequent explanation is violation of probation. Occasionally, youth failed to complete the program because they aged out, and because they moved to a residential facility.

Most of the youth who participated in the panel program also participated in other programs. Of the 104 panel youth, only 13 were referred to the panel alone. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain if additional programming adds value by improving panel completion rates. Figure 5 provides the completion rates for youth who only saw a panel (“panel only”) compared with youth who received additional services (“panel plus”). The data show that completion rates are higher for those who also participated in other programs. This difference is statistically significant at the .08-level. Again, the very few “panel only” youth makes this conclusion tentative.

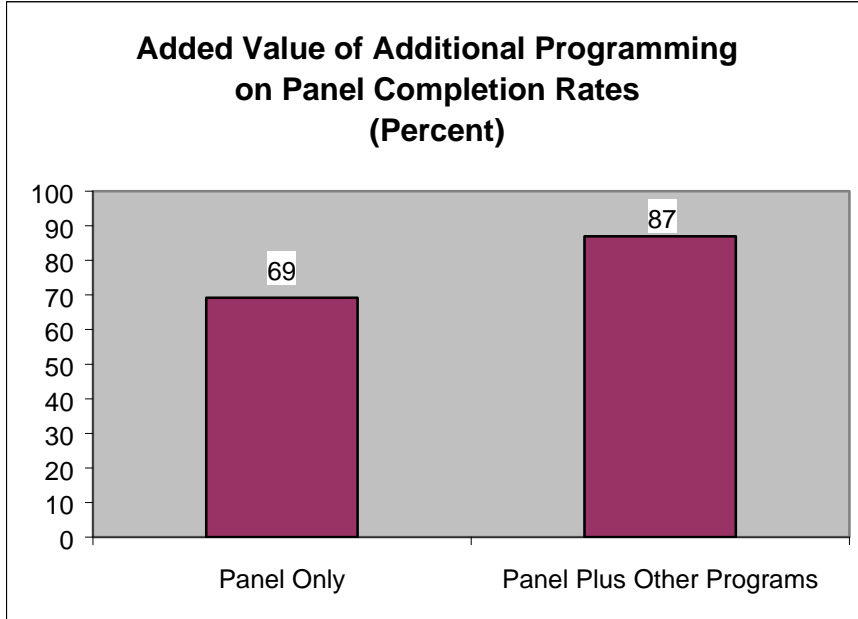


Figure 5. Comparison of Panel Completion Rates

Panel program youth were assigned a variety of reparative activities, primarily community service, apologies, and writing assignments. Figure 6 shows the percentage of youth that received each assignment.

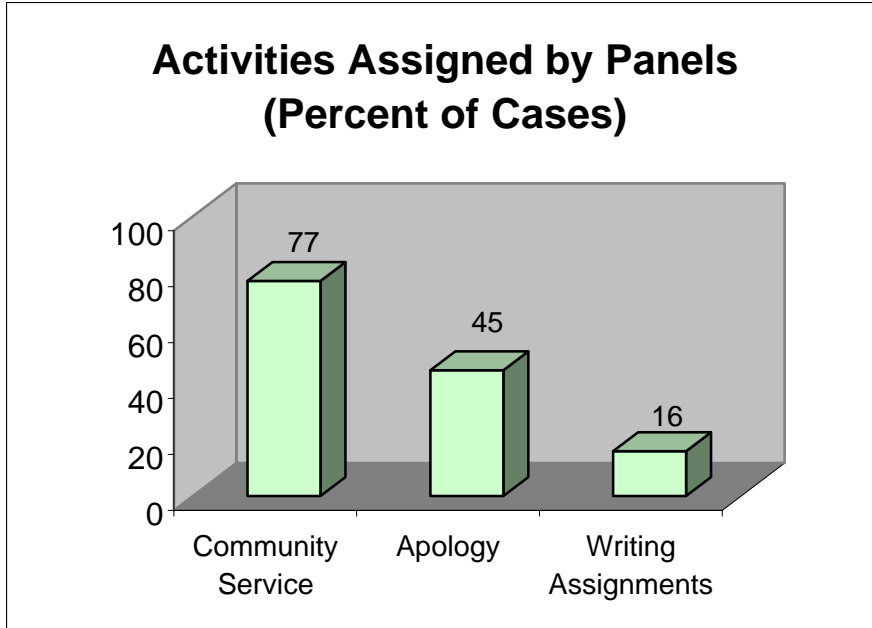


Figure 6. Percent of Youth Assigned Various Tasks by Panels

Community service was a common sanction negotiated by panels. Youth were assigned service in 77% of the panel cases. The mean number ordered was 29 hours, ranging from 2-200 hours. 98% of the youth completed some or all of their assigned hours. The mean number completed was 27 hours. In total, 2,975 hours of service were ordered and 2,775 hours were completed by youth in the panel program.

Youth were required to write *apologies* in 47 cases (45%). They were also required to complete *writing assignments*, such as explaining the harm they caused, in 17 cases (16%).

A wide variety of *other conditions* were occasionally stipulated, such as taking an anger management class, seeking counseling, regularly attending school, getting a drug/alcohol screen, or complying with a curfew. However, none of these assignments was given to more than 10% of the youth. In five cases, panels ordered restitution for youth that were not assigned to the restitution program. These orders ranged from \$8-\$122. In four of these five cases, the youth completely paid their restitution.

Restitution

In this section, we report on the restitution program. Table 5 shows the percentage of all referrals in each jurisdiction that were assigned to restitution. The table shows significant variation in referrals. Burlington had the highest number of referrals, and restitution was assigned in 73% of the total Burlington caseload. Middlebury had many fewer referrals, and restitution was assigned in a much smaller percentage (47%) of the cases.

Table 5. Referrals to Restitution

Location	Total Restitution Cases	Percent of Jurisdiction BARJ Caseload
Barre	17	77
Bennington	46	81
Brattleboro	20	56
Burlington	66	73
Hartford	21	75
Middlebury	7	47
Morrisville	17	77
St. Albans	4	31
Springfield	11	79
Total	209	67

Statewide, 87% of youth completed restitution program. Figure 7 reports on program completion rates for each jurisdiction with more than 10 cases. Barre has the lowest completion rate of 71%, and Morrisville has a 100% completion rate.

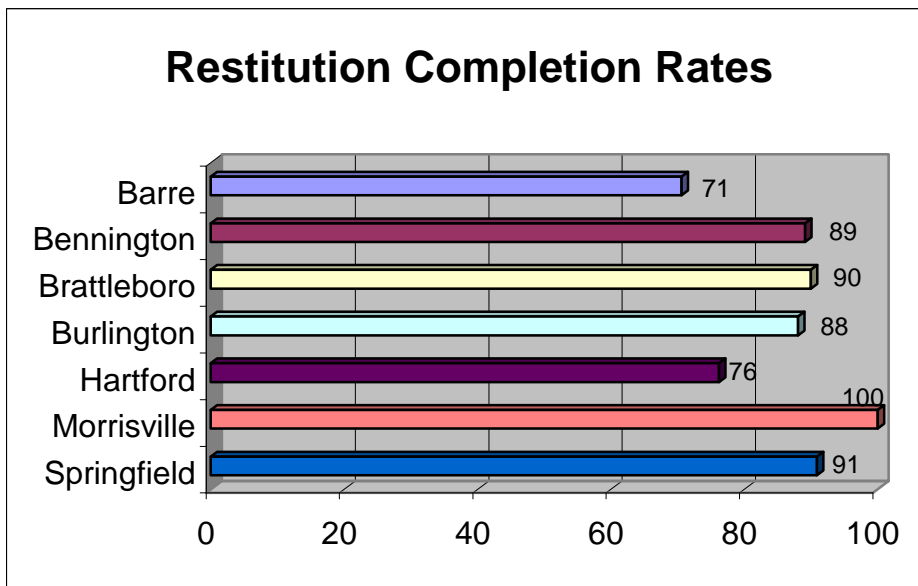


Figure 7. Percent of Youth Completing Restitution by Jurisdiction

Although data limitations do not allow us to draw strong conclusions about the reasons behind youth failure in the restitution program, we note the following. Older youth (16-17 years old) are less likely to complete the program than a younger cohort (11-15 years old). Figure 8 shows that 85% of older youth completed restitution, whereas 94% of the younger group completed the program. This difference is significant at the .09-level. Neither gender nor custody arrangement has a discernable effect on completion. Our data show that program failure primarily results from violations of probation, followed by placement in a residential program, and finally by youth aging out of the program.

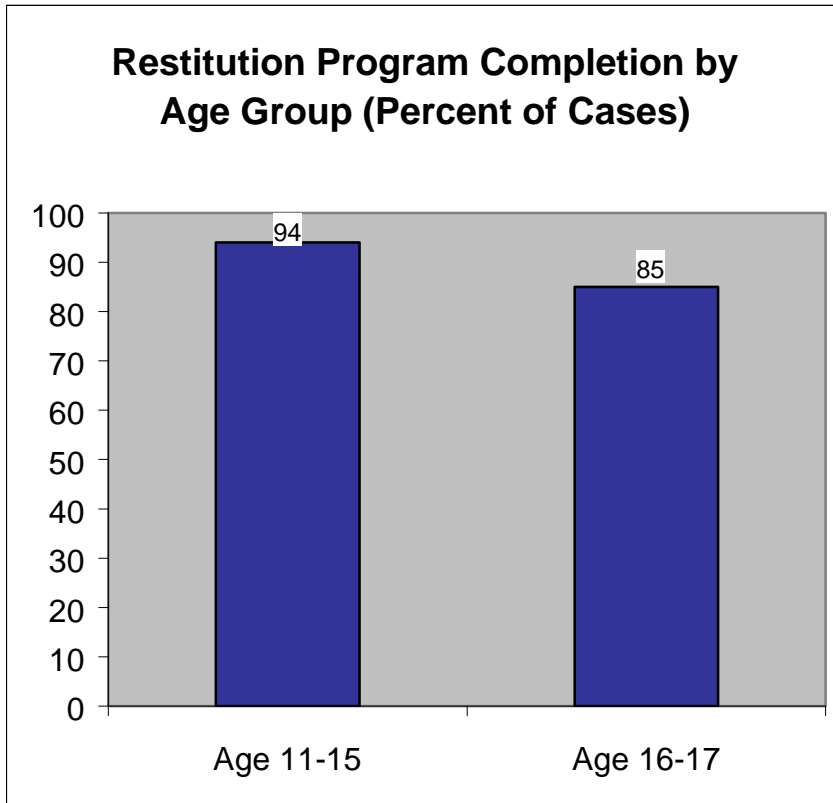


Figure 8. Comparison of Age Groups Completing Restitution

Of the 209 restitution youth, 73 were referred to the restitution program alone. Therefore, we have a better sample to estimate the effect of other programming on restitution completion rates. Figure 9 provides the completion rates for youth who were referred only to the restitution program (“restitution only”) compared with youth who received additional services (“restitution plus”). The data show that completion rates are roughly equivalent—the difference is not statistically significant.

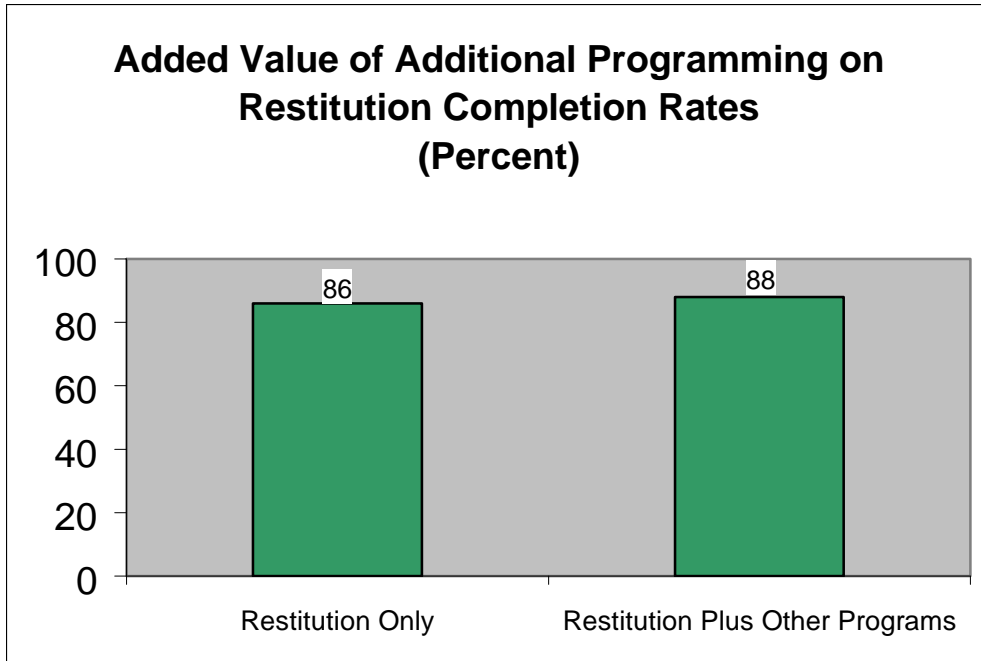


Figure 9. Comparison of Restitution Completion Rates

The restitution program, like panels, assigned to youth a variety of reparative activities, primarily restitution, community service and apologies. Overall, 24% of youth in the restitution program were assigned monetary restitution. For youth in both the panel and restitution programs, it is panels that typically assign service and apologies. Data on these assignments are presented above in the panel program analysis section. Figure 10 shows the percentage of youth in the restitution program that *did not* attend panels but were assigned community service and apologies as part of the restitution program. Ninety-five percent of these restitution youth were assigned community service, and 36% were assigned apologies.

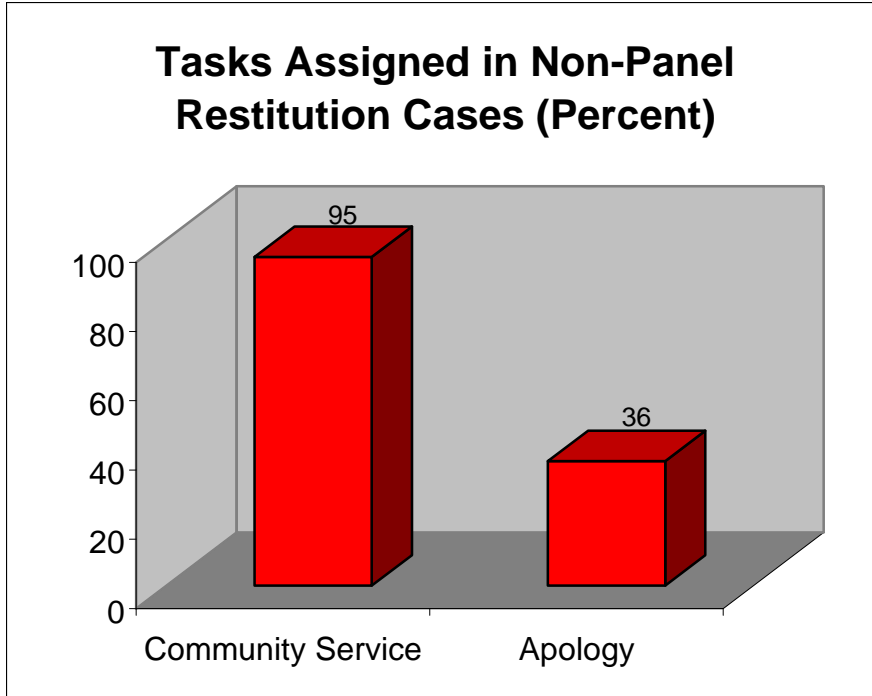


Figure 10. Percent of Youth Assigned Tasks in Non-Panel Restitution Cases

Restitution. Of the 209 youth assigned to the restitution program, 24% were assigned monetary restitution orders. The mean dollar amount ordered was \$58, ranging from \$1-\$1746. Of the youth assigned restitution, 94% completed some or all of the assigned payment. The mean amount paid was \$49, ranging from \$1-1,300. In total, \$12,090 was ordered to compensate for financial losses, and the program collected \$10,306 to be returned to victims. Combined with Panel Program restitution orders, a total of \$12,336 was ordered by the BARJ programs and \$10,521 was collected (see Figure 11).

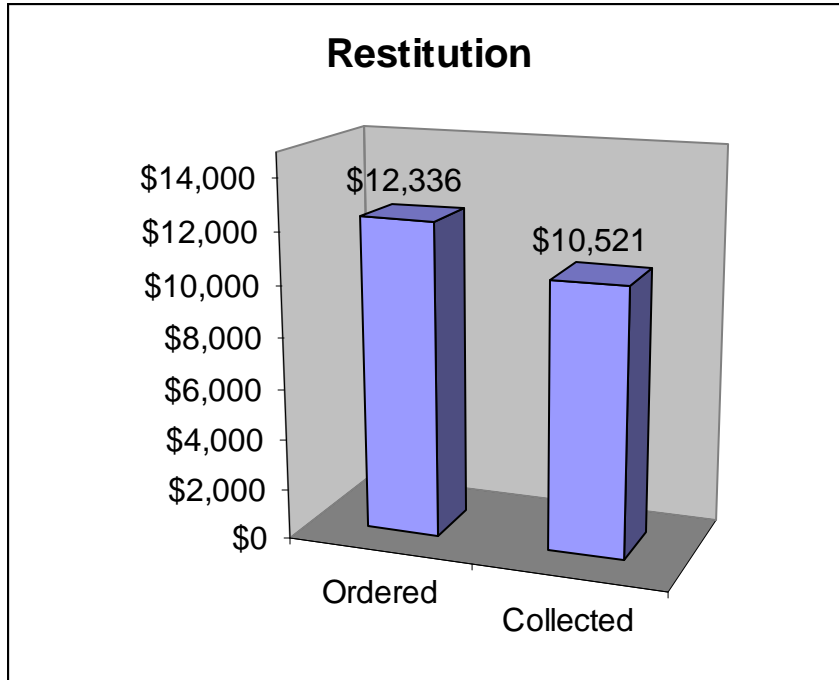


Figure 11. Total Restitution Ordered and Collected.

Community service. Community service was a common sanction assigned in the restitution program independent of the restorative panel program. Youth were assigned service in 95% of restitution cases where youth did not also appear before a panel. The mean number ordered was 43 hours, ranging from 10-500 hours. Ninety-seven percent of the youth completed some or all of their assigned hours. The mean number completed was 41 hours. In total, 5140 hours of service were ordered and 5005 hours were completed by youth in the restitution program. Combining the service contributed by youth to both the panel and restitution programs, this sample of youth contributed 7780 hours of service to the Vermont community.

Apology and other tasks. Apologies were assigned in 36% of restitution cases where the youth was not also referred to panel. A variety of other tasks were also assigned as part of the restitution program, such as writing a paper, attending school regularly, seeking counseling, and abiding by a curfew. However, no one of these tasks appeared very frequently—each appeared in less than ten cases.

Street Checker/Tracker

In this section, we report on the street checker/tracker program. Table 6 shows the percentage of all referrals in each jurisdiction that were assigned to checkers. The table shows significant variation in referrals. Burlington again had the highest number of referrals, but checkers were assigned in only 53% of the total Burlington caseload. St. Johnsbury only had three referrals, and checkers were assigned each time. Two-thirds of Brattleboro's cases made use of its tracker program.

Table 6. Referrals to Checker/Tracker Program

Location	Total Cases	Percent of Jurisdiction BARJ Caseload
Barre	14	64
Bennington	23	40
Brattleboro	24	67
Burlington	48	53
Hartford	14	50
Middlebury	2	13
Morrisville	15	68
Rutland	0	0
St. Albans	7	54
St. Johnsbury	3	100
Springfield	5	36
Total	155	49

By design, success in the checker program is best measured by the *retention* of youth in the community. However, without a comparison group, it is not possible to evaluate how many youth remained in the community that would otherwise have been removed if there were no street checkers. Here we simply report how many youth successfully completed the program, but it should be noted that many youth who do not close out of this program, remaining under checker supervision, may also be considered successes since they have not been placed in a residential facility. Statewide, 68% of youth completed the street checker/tracker program. Figure 12 reports on program completion rates for each jurisdiction with more than ten cases. Bennington has the lowest completion rate of 48%, while Morrisville has a 100% completion rate.

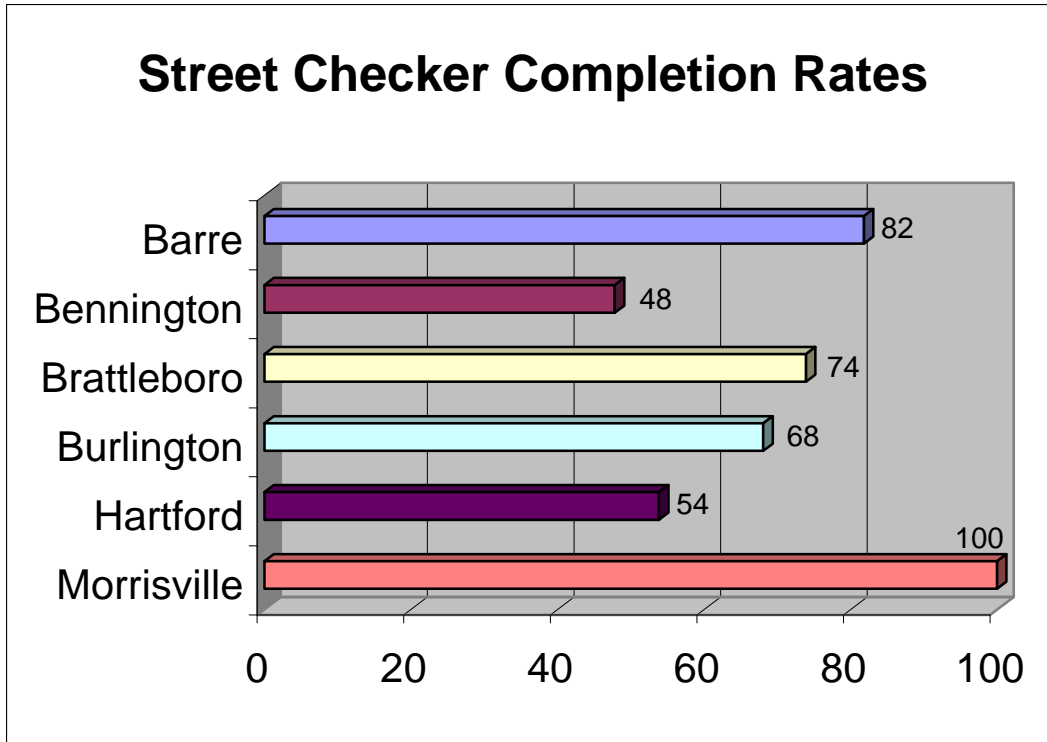


Figure 12. Percent of Youth Completing Checker/Tracker Program by Jurisdiction

Although males were slightly less likely to complete the checker program than females, and older youth were slightly less likely to complete than younger, neither difference was statistically significant. We do find, however, that custody arrangement does predict success in the checker program. As Figure 13 shows, youth in family custody are much more likely to complete the program than youth in SRS custody.

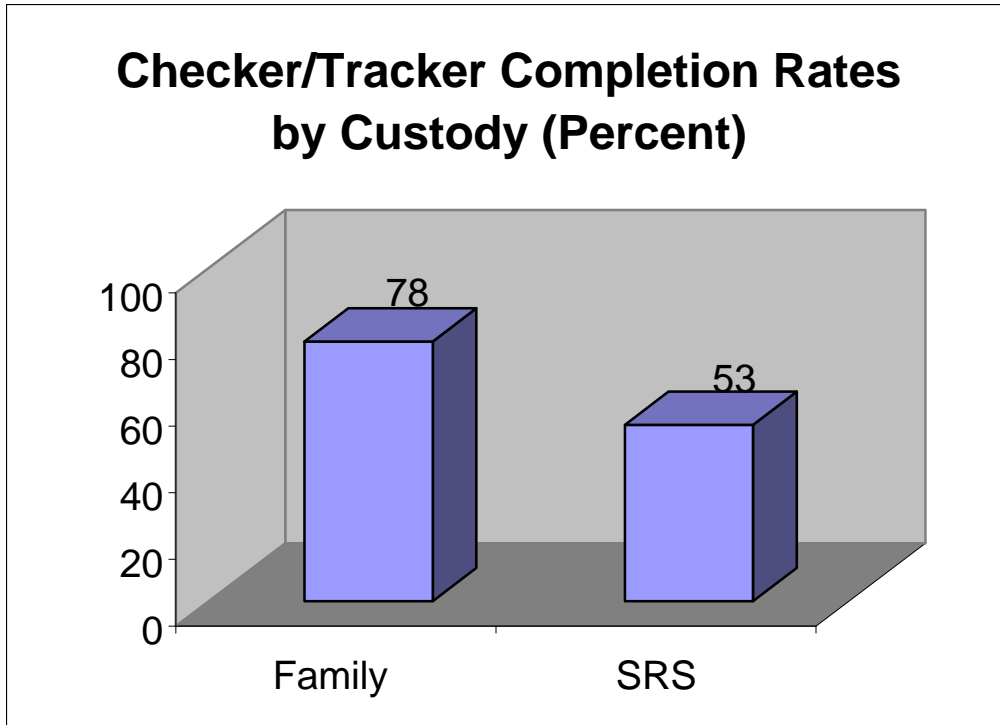


Figure 13. Checker/tracker Completion Rates by Custody Arrangement

Of the 155 checker youth, 56 were referred to the checker program alone. Therefore, we have a better sample to estimate the effect of other programming on checker completion rates. Figure 14 provides the completion rates for youth who were referred only to the checker program (“checker only”) compared with youth who received additional services (“checker plus”). The data show that completion rates are slightly higher for youth who received additional programming (71% vs. 64%), however, the difference is not statistically significant.

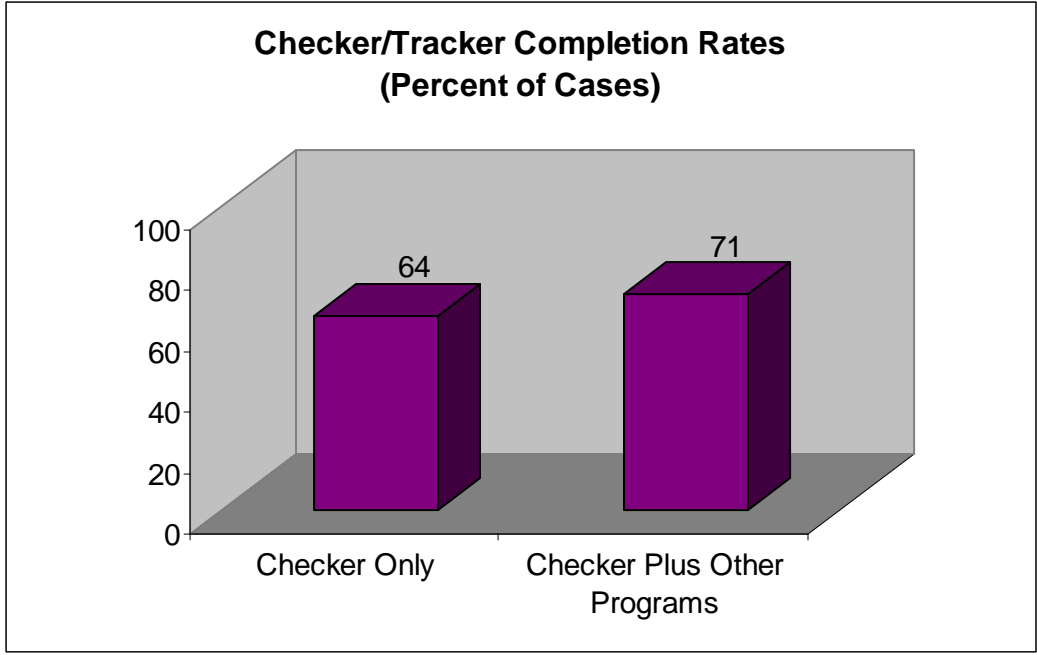


Figure 14. Comparison of Checker Completion Rates

Competency Classes

In this section, we report on the competency classes. This pilot program was implemented in four jurisdictions: Burlington, Rutland, St. Albans, and Bennington. Table 7 shows the percentage of all referrals in each jurisdiction that were assigned to these classes. The table shows significant variation in referrals although there were fewer referrals to this program than to the others across jurisdictions. Burlington again had the highest number of referrals, but competency classes were assigned in only 15% of the total Burlington caseload. St. Albans had slightly fewer referrals, but classes were assigned in 73% of the cases.

Table 7. Referrals to Competency Classes

Location	Total Cases	Percent of Jurisdiction BARJ Caseload
Bennington	1	2
Burlington	14	15
Rutland	12	100
St. Albans	11	85
Total	38	12

Statewide, 92% of the youth that enrolled in competency classes completed the program. Figure 15 reports the program completion rates for the three jurisdictions with more than ten cases—St. Albans, Rutland, and Burlington. Each had similarly high completion rates ranging from 91-93%. Since there were only 38 youth in our sample

who participated in the competency program, estimating the effect of additional programming or other predictors of competency completion is not possible. A larger sample is needed.

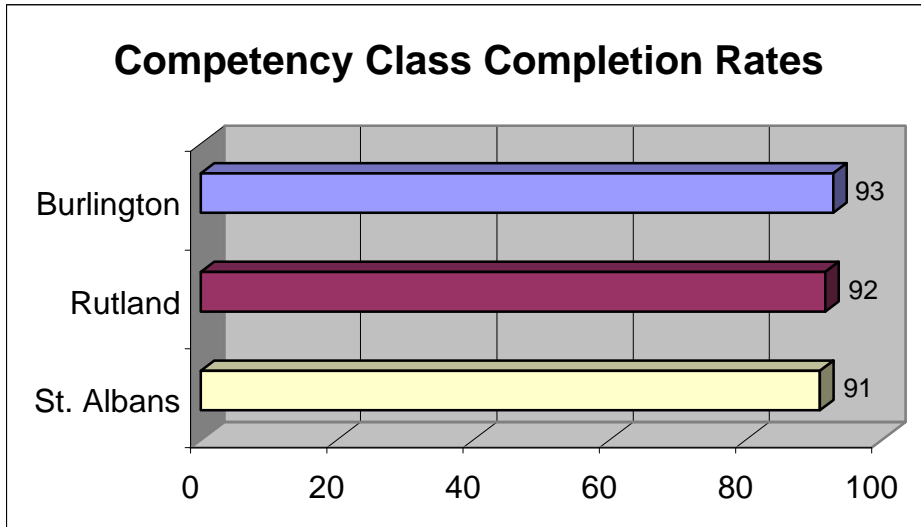


Figure 15. Percent of Youth Completing Competency Classes by Jurisdiction

Conclusion

In this section we provide a brief summary of the major findings in this report.

BARJ Programming Overall

- Programs serve a range of youth aged 11-18, with the largest number aged 15-16, and in grades 9-10.
- 73% of the youth are male, 94% are white, and 75% are in the custody of a family member.
- Burlington received the largest number of program referrals (27% of all cases), followed by Bennington (19%). St. Johnsbury had the fewest referrals (<1%).
- The restitution program received the largest number of referrals (67% of all cases), followed by the checker program (49%), restorative panels (33%), and competency classes (12%).
- 78% of youth completed all BARJ programs assigned.
- Morrisville youth had the highest BARJ program completion rate (95%). Hartford had the lowest (61%).
- Youth in SRS custody were less likely to complete all programs than youth in family custody.
- Youth assigned to multiple programs are slightly more likely to complete individual programs than youth assigned to only one program.
- BARJ program youth contributed 7780 hours of community service to the Vermont community.
- Restitution and restorative panel program youth paid \$10,521 in restitution to crime victims.

Restorative Panels

- Burlington, Bennington, and Brattleboro had the highest number of panel cases. However, as a percentage of overall caseload, Middlebury and Morrisville referred more of its youth to panels than other jurisdictions. St. Albans and St. Johnsbury referred no youth to panels.
- 85% of youth referred to panels successfully completed the program. In jurisdictions with the largest numbers of cases, completion rates are even higher, ranging from 89-95%. Burlington has the highest completion rate.
- Panels assigned community service in 77% of its cases.
- 98% of youth assigned community service completed some or all of their assigned service, which ranged from 2-200 hours.
- 45% of youth were required to write apologies to their victims.

Restitution Program

- Burlington and Bennington had the highest number of restitution cases. More than 70% of the caseloads in the following locations were referred to the restitution program: Barre, Bennington, Burlington, Hartford, Morrisville, and Springfield.

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- 87% of youth referred to restitution successfully completed the program. Morrisville had a 100% completion rate.
- Youth aged 11-15 were more likely to complete the restitution program than youth aged 16-17.
- 24% of youth in the restitution program were assigned monetary restitution. Orders averaged \$58, ranging from \$1-\$1,746.
- 94% of youth paid some or all of their restitution. In total, \$12,090 was ordered, and \$10,306 was collected.
- 95% of youth in the restitution program who were not also referred to the panel program were assigned community service, and 36% were required to write apologies. Thus, youth in the restitution program are slightly more likely to do community service, and slightly less likely to write apologies than in the panel program.

Street Checker/Tracker

- Burlington had the highest number of checker cases. More than 60% of the caseloads in the following locations were referred to the checker/tracker program: Barre, Brattleboro, Morrisville, and St. Johnsbury.
- 68% of checker youth completed the program successfully. Bennington had the lowest completion rate (48%), and Morrisville had the highest completion rate (100%).
- Youth in SRS custody were less likely to complete the checker program than youth in family custody.

Competency Classes

- Only 12% of BARJ program youth attended competency classes. The program was implemented in four areas: Burlington, Rutland, Bennington and St. Albans.
- 92% of youth in competency classes successfully completed the program. Success rates are similar across jurisdictions.