

## Santa Cruz County Evening Center

### Using data in program design and to monitor JDAI outcomes

Data can be used iteratively to identify needs, design programs, and monitor improvements consistent with quality juvenile detention alternative outcomes. An example of this iterative process is illustrated by Santa Cruz County's Evening Center. The evening center has become a vital component of the local justice system's alternatives to detention. A description of this process is provided below, following a brief description of the evening center.

#### Luna Park Evening Center Program Description

The Evening Center Program in Watsonville serves a maximum of 10 probation youth. Youth attend the program from 4-8 pm Monday through Friday and each Saturday from 9-2 pm. Services are available for referrals from the Juvenile Court, in response to probation violations for youth who are in need of additional supervision and structure for a brief period of time (between 12 and 30 days). Meals are served each weekday. Probation provides transportation to and from the program. The Evening Center program is staffed by personnel from the Probation Department, County Children's Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Program and occasional community based agency staff. Additionally a group of local "natural helpers" from the community are volunteering their time and talents to work with youth 1 night per week. The program targets youth who are struggling with drug and alcohol issues, failing to comply with conditions of probation and/or committing new offenses. The program offers an immediate response to relapse and other probation violations utilizing stabilization and transition services. Services at the Evening Center provide programming to address these and other issues, utilizing assessment as well as promising and evidenced-based practices.

#### Services:

- ❑ Assessment (G.A.I.N. and follow-up)
- ❑ Transportation (adult to adult hand off)
- ❑ Evening Supervision (between the hours of 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM)
- ❑ Individual and Group Counseling
- ❑ Tutoring and Homework Assistance
- ❑ Thinking for a Change (Cognitive/Behavioral Programming)
- ❑ 7 Challenges (Alcohol and Drug Treatment cognitively based curriculum)
- ❑ Computer Lab
- ❑ Physical Fitness and Recreational Programming (Sports, Cardio-Training, Yoga)
- ❑ Community Work Service Projects, Employment Readiness and Mentoring (Job Training and Mentorship through CRP)
- ❑ Fresh Life Lines For Youth (FLY)-Law Related Education Program
- ❑ Weekly presentations and special projects
- ❑ Friday Night Live Program-Life skills building program promoting healthy drug and alcohol free activities

#### Evening Center Development:

The development of an evening center as a community-based response to help youth struggling with substance use issues and/or other technical violations of probation and delinquency began as the STAR Residential Program neared its closure due to funding and staffing issues. STAR was a 3-6 month residential program run by the County Children's Mental Health Agency. STAR was designed to be a strength-based, short-term residential treatment program that focused on youth who could benefit from assessment and transitional planning in a residential setting, which focused on substance abuse problems.

The Probation Department was concerned that the loss of this residential treatment program might cause the juvenile court to incarcerate more youth. So, prior to its closure the department conducted a study of clients served in the STAR program in order to determine the impact of the closure. Analysis included case studies of clients served, juvenile hall booking trends, reasons for bookings, probation violation petitions filed, caseload sizes and their ethnic composition. Examination of the data revealed that many youth were sent to the STAR program due to substance abuse or use while in the community on probation. This information led to the development of a structured evening program that could be combined with Wraparound services that would provide evidence based treatment responses to probation violations – in particular, substance abuse. It was hypothesized that such a program would provide the juvenile court with a viable alternative to detention or out of home placement. Essentially, consistent with the Probation Department's values of System of Care and JDAI, the loss of a residential treatment program would be the birth of a new less restrictive community based program.

After consideration and examination of arrest and juvenile hall booking data, it was decided that Watsonville would be the site of the evening center. Watsonville is located in South County and 75% of the population is Latino. A significant number of Latino youth who are in secure detention, are from the South County, thereby demonstrating an even greater need for a detention alternatives to exist in South County. By starting an evening center in Watsonville, the potential for positively addressing DMC (disproportionate minority confinement) while creating a detention alternative was very real, especially when considering historical Juvenile hall intake data and local demographics.

### **Juvenile Hall Booking and Supplemental Petition Data Analysis**

Approximately 6 months prior to the opening of the evening center, two studies using separate data sources were conducted. One study examined a sample of 195 supplemental petitions that were filed by probation officers over a 5-month period. This study was used to analyze the type and frequency of probation violations that resulted in court hearings. By analyzing each petition and drawing conclusions about the behavioral issues that resulted in a probation violation, the planning team was able to develop interventions that would match the risky behaviors resulting in violations. Essentially, this study helped to predict the reason for referral to the evening center.

A second study was also conducted during the 6 months prior to the opening to the evening center. This study analyzed juvenile hall booking data over a 1-year period. The focus of this study was to review a particular data set of juvenile hall bookings that were the result of technical violations. By analyzing the profile of youth that were booked into custody for

technical violations, the program development team could make assumptions about how many youth could be served by a detention alternative program and what services were needed.

Both of these studies yielded a wealth of information that helped in the design of the evening center. Ultimately the data analysis validated the need for a detention alternative that would impact JDAI.

The following is a review of the two studies conducted prior to the opening of the evening center.

### **Juvenile Hall Booking Data:**

During the planning phase, efforts were made to get an accurate picture of how an evening center could serve youth and what impact it may have on JDAI. In the planning stage, several “snapshots” of the juvenile hall data were analyzed to validate what looked to be true of the juvenile hall bookings through casual observation. Since the evening center was to be implemented in Watsonville, any data that could track home address and ethnicity of those youth from Watsonville would be very useful.

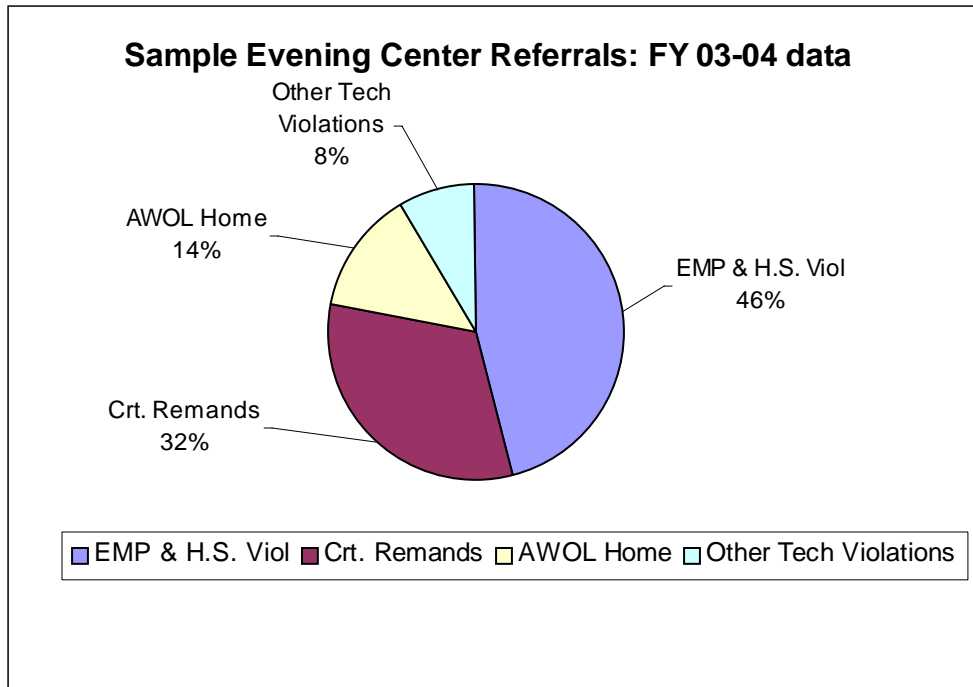
In an attempt to hypothesize what type of cases could be diverted to the evening center and where they reside, the program director analyzed several sets of booking data. One data set showed that during a 12-month period from August 2003 to July 2004, there were a total of 892 bookings in the juvenile hall. Further review of the 892 bookings revealed that approximately 144 or 16% were booked in for technical violations of probation. It is probable that these cases could have been diverted to an evening center had it existed at that time. Diverting these clients would have likely decreased juvenile bed days.

These 144 bookings are categorized as follows:

- Court Remands
- Electronic Monitoring and Home Supervision Violations
- Probation Violations for non compliance- (drug use, failure to comply with special programs, etc)
- Return on warrants for absconding from home

*The cases that were not included were those booked in for New Offenses, Placement AWOLS and Non-Compliance with Placement and Failures to Appear.*

The chart below shows the 144 bookings by booking category: The sample set of 144 bookings that were analyzed seemed appropriate for the evening center, as they could have possibly benefited from the increased structure and services provided by the program. For example, those cases that were booked into juvenile hall for absconding from home could have been diverted to the evening center where they would receive more support and structure and be monitored more closely decreasing the likelihood that they would abscond from home.



**Analysis of Booking Data Through an “Ethnic Lens”**

Closer review of the 144 cases illustrates that a disproportionate number of Latino youth from South County were represented in the data sample.

Of the 144 cases, 76 or 52% were from the South County area. Of the total youth from South County, 57 or 75% were Latino. This certainly demonstrated that the evening center in Watsonville could potentially serve a high number of Latinos, thereby diverting some of them from the Juvenile Hall.

Thirty-two% of the 144 youth booked in juvenile hall were remanded by the Juvenile Court. Of the total remands 33% were Latino Youth from Watsonville. These cases were before the Judge for technical violations of probation and/or reviews. Many of the violations included drug use. Had the judge had an alternative to detention, this number could have decreased.

A separate booking study conducted in 2003 during one 8-month period in 2003, showed failures to appear for court (FTA) accounted for 64 warrant bookings. Of the 64 youth who were booked in for failing to appear, 53% were from Watsonville. Further analysis, showed that 85% of the youth from Watsonville booked in for failing to appear for court (FTA) were Latino. Had an evening center existed it is possible that with the support and supervision, youth would have had greater success in attending court hearings. It is plausible that evening center services would also decrease violations, thereby decreasing court dates and exposure to the possibility of failing to appear.

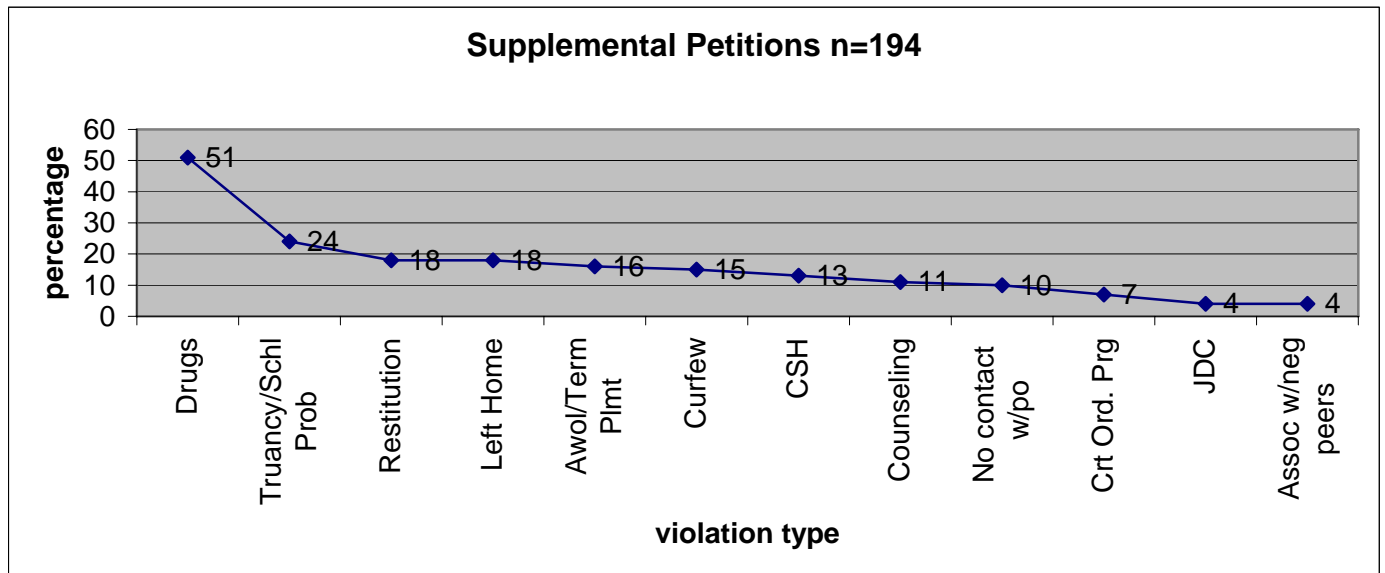
**Petition Study:**

In 2004, several months prior to the start of the evening center, the project director conducted a study of supplemental petitions over a 5-month period. There were a total of 194 supplemental petitions filed during this time. The purpose of the study was to see what types of violations were being taken to court and if any patterns or themes existed within the sample. Ultimately, the frequency of violations and the issues surrounding them would drive the process for selecting the interventions to be used.

Since the evening center was to be used as detention alternative, it made sense to examine supplemental petitions because those are the cases that eventually get remanded at a violation hearing.

As is practice, probation officers usually violate a youth's probation after other efforts have been made to assist in gaining the youth's compliance with his/her terms. When the youth's probation is violated, the officer takes the case to court with the hopes that new or different sanctions can be applied. The hope is that the new or modified intervention that the court orders will help to motivate the youth to comply.

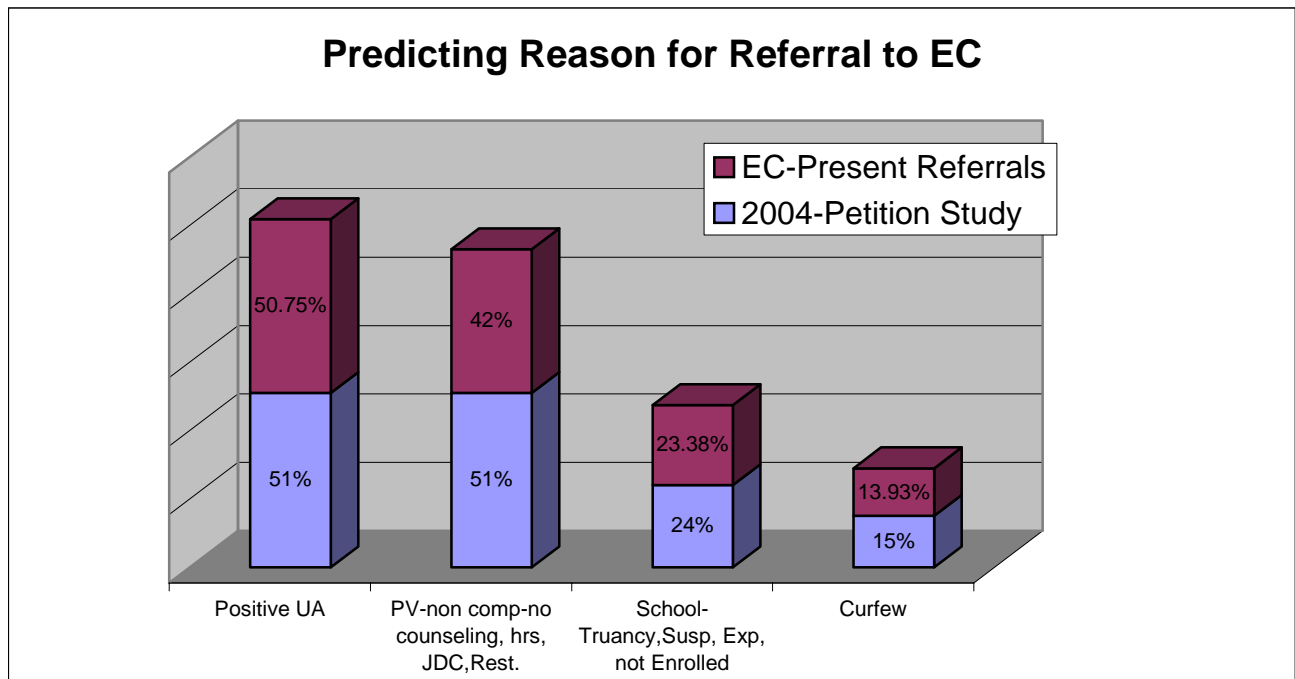
Findings of the petition study were also used to assist in developing a checklist for probation officers to use when considering cases for the evening center. The criteria are based on the findings of the petitions. The petition study involved a review of what the most common types of violations were for and then made them part of the criteria that would qualify youth for the evening center. This was done in efforts to ensure that the center's services would address the most prevalent behavioral issues and risky behaviors.



The findings of the petition study showed that 51% of the petitions included drug and/or alcohol use as one of the violations. Failing to follow curfew and/or leaving home were violations in for

34% of the petitions. On average, petitions included at least 2 of the above violations with drug use included in at least ½ of all violations.

This study proved to be an excellent predictor of what the behavioral issues we could expect for youth being referred to the evening center. Presently, the current rate of referrals as categorized by “reason for referrals” matches the frequency rate of violations by type that was reviewed over 2 years ago in the petition study.



**Conclusions:**

The lessons learned from the juvenile hall booking data and supplemental petition data was and continues to be valuable in the development and on-going refinement of the evening center program. The evening center tracks numerous data elements that are compared to juvenile hall population trends. Data comparisons are beginning to demonstrate that the evening center has positively impacted JDAI and efforts to address DMC. The evening center has become an immediate response to assist in the support, stabilization and supervision of youth who are struggling with substance use and other behavioral issues that are considered technical violations of probation. Additionally the evening center also provides services to youth who have committed misdemeanor offenses. More and more youth are being diverted from the juvenile hall and instead are served at the evening center. As more and more data becomes available with the passage of time we hope that trend lines will show reductions in Juvenile Hall Average Daily Population and decreasing rates of Latino youth bookings.