

Intensive Community Based Programs for Juvenile Offenders: A Report on the Implementation of Pilot Programs Established Under SB 103, FY 2008

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Legislation

Senate Bill 103, Section 8, of the 80th Legislative Session authorized funding of community based programs for chronic and serious juvenile offenders [who by statute are no longer eligible for commitment to the Texas Youth Commission] in counties with populations of at least 335,000. Funds were to be distributed by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC).

TJPC funded pilot programs in eight counties. The amount of funding and the number of grants available for the pilot programs established under SB 103 were determined in August of 2007. \$225,000 was set aside for each of the large urban departments for their pilot programs. A total of \$1,125,000 was awarded to Bexar, Cameron, Dallas, Denton, El Paso, Harris, Tarrant and Travis counties. \$150,000 was originally set aside to fund two additional pilot programs for departments with populations of at least 335,000. After a review of the submitted program proposals, TJPC determined that three departments had programs which merited funding. The total additional pilot program funding was increased to \$200,000.

Grants were awarded based on submission of a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP guidelines were developed by TJPC Executive Management who reviewed all submitted RFPs and determined those projects to be awarded funding. Grant requirements were developed and funds were disbursed at the time of grant approval.

Summary

In Fiscal Year 2008, intensive community based program pilots provided services to 676 juveniles. Expenditures for the year totaled \$1,185,017 (or approximately \$1,750 per juvenile). These programs targeted misdemeanor offenders who are no longer eligible for a TYC commitment. Using Fiscal Year 2006 data for average TYC length of stay and average cost per day, it would cost approximately \$67,715,000 (or approximately \$100,000 per juvenile) to commit the served juveniles to TYC.

Pilot Program Descriptions

Bexar County:

Bexar County developed the Intensive Community Based – Kids Averted from Placement Services (ICB-KAPS) program. ICB-KAPS is an in-home family services program for offenders at risk of serious, violent, or chronic delinquent behaviors. ICB-KAPS is provided by the Teen and Youth Services division of Baptist Child and Family Services.

KAPS employs a team approach to implement the In-Home Family Preservation model of service. A licensed therapist provides family and individual counseling, as well as process oriented groups on a weekly basis. A degreed Case Manager is the liaison between the juvenile probation department and KAPS. The Case Manager provides Anger Management and Parenting education to the family. The Case Manager also assists the family in organizing and maintaining the home.

The program consists of four phases which provide counseling, case management services, family assistance, substance abuse education in a group setting, anger management education in a group setting and in the home, parenting education and TYC tours. Weekly activities are also provided to juveniles active in the program during the summer.

The goal of KAPS is to enhance community-based programs that service habitual misdemeanants. The intended impact is to reduce delinquency, increase offender accountability, rehabilitate the offenders, and strengthen the families. Fifty juveniles were served. Thirty-eight juveniles completed the program during the year. Of those completing the program, 23 were considered to have completed successfully. Average spending per participant was \$4,500.

Cameron County:

Cameron County developed two programs. From December through May, the department operated a program called the One Stop Intervention Program. Due to construction restraints and the Courts' request for a more punitive approach, the County replaced the One Stop Intervention Program with the Saturday Academy which was operated from the beginning of July until the end of August.

The One Stop Intervention Program provided services to non-compliant probationers and their families. The objective of the program was to help non-compliant juvenile offenders to take responsibility for their actions and learn effective coping skills and to address their emotional and behavioral problems. The program consisted of parent management training, leadership development, problem solving, and family cohesiveness using the ROPES Challenge Course. One Stop served a total of 32 juveniles through May 2008. All 32 juveniles were reported as having completed the program.

The Saturday Academy, which began in July, also provides services to non-compliant probationers. The Saturday Academy activities were designed to promote accountability and focus on having drill instructors re-direct youth with physical fitness incentive training. The program also includes some remedial academic instruction in order to attempt to promote continued education in a regular school setting. The Saturday Academy served 23 juveniles. All 23 juveniles were reported as having completed the program.

A total of 55 juveniles were served in the two programs. Average spending per participant was \$1,136.

Dallas County:

Dallas County expanded their existing family preservation and home detention supervision programs to create the Dallas County Intensive Community Based Program.

The program provides intensive in-home therapy in the form of evidence-based, family preservation programming for up to six months. Juveniles, who would otherwise have been considered for residential placement outside of their home, remain in the community and are provided intensive supervision through collaboration among the assigned probation officer, home detention officer, and a family preservation therapist. The family preservation provider offers intensive, comprehensive treatment to youth and families. Therapists work closely with all individuals and agencies involved with the family, including weekly/monthly communication and collaboration with the supervising probation officer, the school, and others closely involved in the case. The therapists also work in a collaborative fashion coordinating care and intervention with the designated home detention officer to ensure the youth receives intensive supervision such that they remain in compliance with the conditions of their release from secure detention. Initial intervention is guided by the review of the available assessments provided, as well as family strengths based assessments. The assessments assist in the development of an initial case plan/treatment plan which identifies the individual strengths and areas needing improvement for the youth and family.

The goals of the program are to provide intensive community based services as an alternative to removal from the community while addressing the needs of the youth and family and providing the youth with the skills to make better decisions that have positive impact upon their lives. Eighty-five juveniles were served. Thirty-nine juveniles completed the program during the year. Of those completing the program, 30 were considered to have completed successfully. Average spending per participant was \$2,647.

Denton County:

Denton County developed a new program called the TARMAC Program (Take Action, Re-Integrate, Make A Change). The TARMAC Program is an afterschool program that helps at-risk juveniles and their families learn skills to achieve their academic goals, become more successful at school and prepare for life. Denton County contracts with Communities in Schools of North Texas to provide services.

The program provides individual and family counseling, tutoring, mentoring, substance abuse intervention, and educational and vocational programs designed to promote reintegration to the regular school campus for students enrolled at a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program or District Alternative Education Program.

The goal of the TARMAC Program is to provide services that will decrease the re-offense rate for the targeted student population enrolled in the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program or District Alternative Education Programs through the academic and family therapy components of the program. Forty-nine juveniles were served in the program. Forty-one juveniles completed successfully. Average spending per participant was \$1,531.

El Paso County:

El Paso County expanded their existing Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP). The SHOCAP team consists of four juvenile probation officers, two field compliance officers (certified detention officers), and three El Paso Police Officers.

The juvenile probation officer is responsible for conducting home visits, school visits, collateral contacts, case management, court preparation, and holding the juvenile accountable for his/her behavior. As service broker, the juvenile probation officer is responsible for making the referrals for services and ensuring that the juvenile and family have access to those services. The juvenile probation officer is also responsible for ensuring that services are modified as needed to meet the needs of the juvenile and family. The program consists of four phases: an assessment phase, a treatment and programming phase, a community outreach phase, and a reintegration phase. Juveniles remain in the program for approximately six months.

The goal of SHOCAP is to reduce delinquent behavior by helping the juvenile and family to understand and address the risk factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. Thirty juveniles were served. Twelve juveniles completed the program during the year. Of those completing the program, seven were considered to have completed successfully. Average spending per participant was \$2,083.

Harris County:

Harris County created the Harris County Advocate Program. The program relies on collaboration with child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, disability and education systems to develop and offer community-based alternatives for the highest risk juveniles and their families.

The Harris County Advocate program consists of life skills classes, anger management classes, substance abuse classes, mentoring, social development, employment and community support programs.

The goal of the program is to engage human service systems so that they rely less on institutional care and invest more in supporting families and neighborhoods, providing juveniles an opportunity to give back to the communities and provide juveniles the opportunity to be seen as part of the communities rather than as needy clients. Two hundred and six juveniles were served. Eighty-two juveniles completed the program during the year. Average spending per participant was \$1,092.

Tarrant County:

Tarrant County created Project ASPECT, a new intensive community-based program targeting juvenile offenders who would have been eligible for commitment to TYC under prior law.

Project ASPECT uses an evidence-based cognitive restructuring approach. Services were provided through a partnership between Tarrant County Juvenile Services and Santa Fe Adolescent Services (SFAS). The program consisted of weekly group activities and discussions, development and tracking of individual milestone goals, group therapy sessions for parents and juveniles and individual motivational enhancement therapy sessions. The program lasts for 12 weeks.

The goal of Project ASPECT is to increase law abiding behaviors among chronic misdemeanor juveniles through implementation of an evidence-based cognitive restructuring process which teaches thinking and problem-solving skills related to issues juveniles face on a daily basis. One hundred fifty-five juveniles were served. One hundred and three juveniles completed the program during the year. Of those completing the program, 65 were considered to have completed successfully. Average spending per participant was \$1,452.

Travis County:

Travis County expanded the capacity of the Travis County Juvenile Probation Day Treatment Program. This program provides evidence-based intensive substance abuse treatment and academic instruction for youth between the ages of 13 and 17 who might otherwise be placed in a secure care institution for issues of substance abuse and delinquent behavior.

The goals of the Travis County Juvenile Probation Day Treatment Program are to substantially reduce juvenile drug use through integrated, collaborative services and to increase the availability of cost effective substance abuse treatment and other treatment services, an increase in the number of youth successfully completing their terms of probation and to reduce recidivism, and lower rates of commitments to the Texas Youth Commission.

Travis County has been able to relocate the Day Treatment Program to a site that allows a capacity of 40 youth to be served daily. This has enabled the County to meet the need of serving more juveniles in the community and having an alternative to removing a juvenile from his/her home. Forty-six juveniles were served. Thirty-nine juveniles successfully completed the program. Average spending per participant was \$4,891.

Going Forward

The participant counties have been allocated the same level of funding in Fiscal Year 2009 as they were in Fiscal Year 2008. The participant counties anticipate providing programming to more juveniles in Fiscal Year 2009 than they did in Fiscal Year 2008. The large county community based grant program was announced just prior to the start of the fiscal year which resulted in the counties using part of the fiscal year to determine how the funds would be used. Now that the programs are in place the counties will be able to provide programming for the entire fiscal year.

In addition to the ability to provide programming to more juveniles, the counties will now be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs that they have implemented. At the end of FY09 there will be at least one full year post program for the FY08 program participants which will allow for evaluation of FY08 programs. Evaluation of the data will enable to counties to make appropriate decisions in regards to revising or continuing the pilot programs.