

THE THOMAS JEFFERSON PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY
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How Effective Are Virginia's Juvenile Diversion Programs?

A Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment for the
Virginia State Crime Commission

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Executive Summary

Virginia has a vested interest in promoting state and local policies that prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency. In particular, policies should be aimed at rehabilitating juvenile offenders with the goal of decreasing recidivism rates across the Commonwealth. One possible way to accomplish lower recidivism rates is through the use of diversion programs. Diversion programs offer alternatives to the traditional forms of secure detention, such as treatment programs, restorative justice services, and community service opportunities. These programs can be mandated by a judge, or they can be assigned in lieu of the juvenile undergoing court proceedings. This study will focus on the diversion programs assigned by Intake Officers before the juvenile enters the traditional criminal justice system.

The Virginia State Crime Commission has been directed by the General Assembly of Virginia to conduct a comprehensive, two-year study of Virginia's juvenile justice system. One element of this study calls for an examination of juvenile diversion programs across the state, their impact on rates of recidivism, and their cost-effectiveness. In accordance with this mandate, the Center for Public Policy Research at The College of William & Mary has conducted a survey of juvenile Intake Officers across the Commonwealth (including Parole and Probation Officers who complete intake duties), the purpose of which was to understand how diversion is implemented in each Court Services Unit (CSU), which diversion programs appear to be most effective at reducing recidivism, and why some programs seem to be more effective than others.

The scope of this project covers the entire Commonwealth of Virginia, which includes 35 CSUs. The CSUs perform intake, investigations, probation, and parole services for juveniles, and each CSU has anywhere between 3 and 24 Intake Officers and as many or more programs offering diversion services for juveniles. The largest component of this study consists of the formulation and distribution of a web-based survey of Intake Officers, which was anonymous to ensure the reception of candid responses. The survey was formulated to serve four key purposes. The first purpose of the survey was to identify the procedure followed by Intake Officers for deciding which juveniles to divert and to what program he or she should be diverted. The second purpose of the survey is to ascertain which programs or which types of programs Intake Officers feel are most effective. The third purpose is to determine if Intake Officers have any method for assessing the progress of the juvenile after he or she has begun participating in his or her assigned diversion program. Finally, the fourth purpose of the survey is to identify any impediments to the juvenile's successful completion of the diversion program.

The twenty-question survey was distributed in November 2007 to 177 Intake Officers across the Commonwealth in 30 of 35 CSUs. Responses were collected from 51 of those individuals (28%), representing 15 of the 30 CSUs included in the sample.¹ A mixture of rural and urban CSUs is represented across the disparate regions of the state. A significant limitation, however, is the lack of representation from two large urban areas of the state, Richmond and Norfolk.

More than half of Intake Officers surveyed believe that juveniles should be allowed to be diverted more than once, depending on the circumstances. However, 4 of the 14 CSUs (28.6%)

¹ Intake Officers from the other 5 CSUs did not receive the survey because those CSUs did not respond to our requests for names and contact information for Intake Officers.

represented have policies that prohibit this, and respondents from five other CSUs (35.7%) presented conflicting interpretations of their CSU's policy.

Only about one third of respondents utilize some type of standard assessment at intake for making decisions about diversion for a juvenile. Discretion of Intake Officers appears to be an important element in the diversion process with respect to the determination of whether diversion is appropriate for a juvenile, whether it is permissible for a second offense, and in consideration of the type of offense and any mitigating circumstances.

Most Intake Officers take a wide range of factors into consideration when deciding whether to divert a juvenile rather than send him or her through court proceedings. Eighty percent or more consider the number and type of prior offenses in the juvenile's record, the juvenile's current offense, the age of the juvenile, the recommendation of the arresting officer, the type of diversion programs available in the CSU, and the juvenile's family or home situation. Similarly, Intake Officers also consider a number of different factors when deciding which program to divert a juvenile to, citing everything from the juvenile's current offense, to the personality or demeanor of the juvenile, to the availability of transportation for the juvenile to and from the program site. It is clear from the responses received for these two questions that the discretion of the Intake Officers plays a major role in determining whether juveniles are diverted and to what program.

Intake Officers were also asked if their CSU implements a family-centered approach to diversion, and most (88%) indicated that they do. Many of the Intake Officers provided comments suggesting that parents are strongly encouraged to take part in at least some part of the diversion and that more ways in which parents could become involved in the diversion process would be welcome in their CSU.

Most Intake Officers (78%) indicated that their CSU does perform some kind of assessment of the juvenile's progress after he or she has begun participating in a diversion program. There is a wide spread of responses concerning how often CSUs perform this assessment, ranging from every other week to sporadically, with none doing so everyday. A majority of CSUs continue to assess the juvenile's progress until the juvenile has completed the diversion program requirements. Many CSUs perform their assessment of the juvenile's progress by contacting the juvenile's family, contacting the program director, or meeting the juvenile in-person. Very few do so by observing the juvenile's participation through in-person visits to the diversion program site.

Forty percent of Intake Officers reported that their CSU assesses the effectiveness of the diversion programs they utilize, while another 40% said their CSU did not assess diversion program effectiveness. However, these results are potentially misleading. Further analysis reveals that Intake Officers from the same CSU often differed in their answer to this question. Of the eleven CSUs represented, Intake Officers from six of them gave conflicting answers. It appears that Intake Officers may not be aware of their CSU's policy on assessing effectiveness, a situation which should be addressed.

The vast majority of Intake Officers' responses indicate that a lack of cooperation from the family (73.2%) and from the juvenile (65.9%) stands in the way of successful diversion outcomes. Furthermore, many of the responses cited too little funding provided by the state (48.8%), too few diversion programs offered in the CSU (46.3%), and an insufficient range of

diversion program types (41.5%). Finally, a small number (4.9%) said lack of transportation posed an obstacle to successful diversion.

Intake Officers expressed a desire for increased funding for diversion programs, particularly to increase diversion staff and expand the number and type of diversion programs offered in each CSU. They also expressed a desire for uniform criteria for diversion eligibility, as current policy differs from CSU to CSU. For example, a juvenile in one CSU may be eligible for a diversion opportunity, while a juvenile with a similar criminal history may be ineligible for a diversion opportunity in another CSU.

After completing this study and reviewing the results, several recommendations for reforming the methods of diversion in Virginia's juvenile justice system became apparent. First, we recommend that the state provide CSUs with resources to collect data on juveniles who have been diverted and the outcomes of the programs to which juveniles are diverted. Second, we recommend that CSUs improve the clarity and uniformity of their diversion policy. Third, we recommend the implementation of a standardized intake assessment with statewide criteria.

Results of the survey are valuable and instructive for understanding diversion implementation and its effectiveness in Virginia, but the conclusions do present some limitations. First, only *perceived* effectiveness was assessed through the perspectives of Intake Officers given that actual data on diverted juveniles was not available to us at the time of this study. Second, less than half of the 35 CSUs in the Commonwealth were represented; ideally we would have achieved representation from all. Third, the narrow definition of recidivism as "re-conviction" may lead to over-stating the effectiveness of diversion programs. Finally, the difficulty in obtaining figures for the costs of diversion program implementation in light of their disparate funding sources precluded a cost-effectiveness analysis within the three-month time constraint for this research endeavor.

The Intake Officer Survey has laid the groundwork for future work that could provide additional evidence on how effective diversion programs are at reducing recidivism rates. Specifically, two bodies of work are needed: (1) a quantitative analysis of Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice data, which would compare recidivism rates between juveniles who were diverted before being adjudicated with juveniles who entered the traditional criminal justice system; and (2) an assessment on how cost-effective diversion programs are in comparison to the traditional adjudication process.

1 Introduction

Virginia has a vested interest in promoting state and local policies that prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency. In particular, policies should be aimed at rehabilitating juvenile offenders with the goal of decreasing recidivism rates across the Commonwealth. One possible way to accomplish lower recidivism rates is through the use of diversion programs. Diversion programs offer alternatives to the traditional forms of secure detention, such as treatment programs, restorative justice services, and community service opportunities. These programs can be mandated by a judge, or they can be assigned in lieu of the juvenile undergoing court proceedings. This study will focus on the diversion programs assigned by Intake Officers before the juvenile enters the traditional criminal justice system. Recidivism is also a concept that is essential to the understanding of the scope of this project. While it can refer to the re-arrest, re-conviction, or re-incarceration of a juvenile, recidivism will be defined as re-conviction for the purposes of this study.

The Virginia State Crime Commission has been directed by the General Assembly of Virginia to conduct a comprehensive, two-year study of Virginia's juvenile justice system. One element of this study, mandated in House Joint Resolution 136, calls for an examination of juvenile diversion programs across the state, their impact on rates of recidivism, and their cost-effectiveness. In accordance with this mandate, the Center for Public Policy Research at The College of William & Mary has conducted a survey of juvenile Intake Officers across the Commonwealth (including Parole and Probation Officers who complete intake duties), the purpose of which was to understand how diversion is implemented in each Court Services Unit (CSU), which diversion programs appear to be most effective at reducing recidivism, and why some programs seem to be more effective than others.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Diversion

Diversion takes place when law enforcement and court personnel exercise their discretion to keep individual youth from entering the court's jurisdiction. Diversion programs divert youth from traditional forms of secure detention and confinement into a variety of alternative treatments and modes of supervision.¹ Youth may be required to provide community service, follow educational directives, receive services from youth agencies, undergo mental health treatment, and possibly be subject to probation supervision.² By providing a range of community services, they also are intended to be more responsive to youths' individual, family, and social context.³

2.2 History of Diversion

Diversion programs were formalized in the 1960s as a result of growing juvenile justice populations and criticisms of the system's ineffectiveness in reducing crime and rehabilitating juvenile offenders.⁴ Diversion arose because of several criticisms. First, many criminologists believed the traditional criminal justice system was ineffective in reducing recidivism and rehabilitating juveniles.⁵⁻⁶ Second, civil rights advocates criticized the juvenile justice system for

¹ J. Austin, K.D. Johnson, and R. Weitzer. 2005. "Alternatives to the Secure Detention and Confinement of Juvenile Offenders." U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

² A.E. Cuellar, L.S. McReynolds, and G.A. Wasserman. 2006. "A Cure for Crime: Can Mental Health Treatment Diversion Reduce Crime among Youth?" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 25(1): 197-214.

³ B. Feld. 2000. *Cases and Materials on Juvenile Justice Administration*. New York: West Group.

⁴ M.R. Pogrebin, E.D. Poole, and R.M. Regoli. 1984. "Constructing and Implementing a Model Juvenile Diversion Program." *Youth and Society* 15(3): 305-324.

⁵ J. Austin and B. Krisberg. 1981. "Wider, Stronger, and Different Nets: The Dialectics of Criminal Justice Reforms." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 18: 165-196.

⁶ R. Martinson. 1974. "What Works? Questions and Answers about Prison Reform." *Public Interest* 55: 22-54.

its perceived lack of constitutional protections afforded to youths.⁷ Finally, critics pointed out the inefficiencies and high costs of the traditional juvenile justice system.⁸

These critiques were expressed in the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, which recommended that alternative ways other than the traditional system be pursued to treat troubled youth. Community service programs were considered especially worthy substitutes for formal justice system services for non-violent offenders. In response to the Commission's recommendations, diversion programs expanded considerably during the 1970s. Indeed, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention was awarded a \$10 million grant in 1976 to develop 11 diversion programs throughout the United States. Since that time, diversion programs have continued to grow in number and popularity on the state and local level throughout the country.⁹

2.3 Assessing the Effectiveness of Diversion Programs

Diversion programs are designed to address one of more of the following goals:

- Reduce delinquency and recidivism
- Increase system efficiency
- Reduce the level of involvement in the juvenile justice system
- Reduce costs¹⁰

⁷ S. Cohen. 1979. "The Punitive City: Notes on the Dispersal of Social Control." *Contemporary Crises* 3(4): 339-363.

⁸ B. Bullington, J. Sprowls, D. Katkin, and M. Phillips. 1978. "A Critique of Diversionary Juvenile Justice." *Crime and Delinquency* 24: 59-71.

⁹ President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. 1967. *Task Force Report: Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Crime*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

¹⁰ J.J. Cocozza, B.M. Veysey, D.A. Chapin, R. Dembo, W. Walters, and S. Farina. 2004. "Diversion from the Juvenile Justice System: The Miami-Dade Juvenile Assessment Center Post-Arrest Diversion Program." *Substance Use and Misuse* 40: 935-951.

Since the inception of diversion as an alternative to the traditional criminal justice system, multiple studies have been done to assess the effectiveness of diversion programs – and the results have been mixed. While several studies suggest that diversion does reduce recidivism,^{11,12,13,14,15} there is some evidence that it does not.^{16,17} It does appear, however, that diversion programs with more intensive community services and supports showed reduced recidivism.¹⁸

The second and third goals of diversion – to increase system efficiency and reduce the level of involvement in the juvenile justice system – have often been met by reducing the number of court cases processed and the level of penetration by the juvenile into the traditional justice system.¹⁹ Cost outcomes have shown to vary by the type and intensity of the diversion program, but in general diversion programs cost as much or less than the traditional justice system approach.²⁰ Finally, it appears that the most effective diversion programs for delinquent youth are holistic, intensive, in-home, and family-focused.^{21,22,23,24}

¹¹ L.K. Gensheimer, J.P. Mayer, and R. Davidson. 1984. Diverting Youth from the Juvenile Justice System: A Meta-Analysis of Intervention Efficacy. In *Youth Violence: Programs and Prospects*, by S. Apter and A. Goldstein.

¹² D. Rojek. 1986. “Juvenile Diversion and the Potential of Inappropriate Treatment for Offenders.” *New England Journal of Criminal and Civil Confinement* 12(2): 329-347.

¹³ W. Davidson, R.L. Amdur, C.M. Mitchell, and R. Redner. 1990. *Alternative Treatments for Troubled Youth: The Case of Diversion from the Justice System*. New York: Plenum Press.

¹⁴ M. Lipsey and D. Wilson. 1998. “Effective Intervention for Serious Juvenile Offenders. In *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders*, edited by R. Loeber and D. Farrington. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

¹⁵ J. McCord, C.S. Widom, and N.A. Crowell. 2001. “Race, Crime, and Juvenile Justice: The Issue of Racial Disparity.” In *Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Crime: Panel on Juvenile Crime: Prevention, Treatment and Control*, edited by J. McCord, C.S. Widom, N.A. Crowell. Washington D.C.: National Academy Press.

¹⁶ R. Stanford. 1984. “Implementing the Multi-goal Evaluation Technique in Diversion Programs. In *Juvenile Justice Policy: Analyzing Trends and Outcomes*, edited by S. Decker. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

¹⁷ M. Ezell. 1992. Juvenile Diversion: The Ongoing Search for Alternatives. In *Juvenile Justice and Public Policy*, edited by I. Schwartz. New York: Lexington.

¹⁸ McCord et al., 2001.

¹⁹ Cocozza et. al, 2005

²⁰ J.T. Whitehead, S.P. Lab. 2001. *Juvenile Justice: An Introduction*. Cincinnati, OH: Anders Publication Co.

²¹ S.W. Henggeler, S.K. Schoenwald, S.G. Pickrel, M.J. Brondino, C.M. Borduin, and J.A. Hall. 1994. *Treatment Manual for Family Preservation Using Multi-Systematic Therapy*. Charleston, SC: Medical University of South Carolina.

2.4 Elements Needed for Successful Diversion

The literature has pointed to at least four critical elements needed for diversion programs to be successful:

- Systematic and standardized screening and assessment of youth
- Reduction of the depth of entry into the juvenile justice system
- Utilization of holistic, family-centered diversion programs
- Development and use of a wide network of community-based service providers²⁵

Screenings and assessments ensure that each juvenile is provided with the same opportunities for diversion if they meet certain eligibility requirements. It is also clear that diversion, by nature, must reduce the depth of entry into the traditional criminal justice system by redirecting juveniles to alternative forms of treatment. At-risk youth have proven to be more easily rehabilitated when placed into holistic, family-centered diversion programs that also involve significant input from the community. Finally, juveniles with many different problems – including substance abuse, mental health issues, poor academic performance, difficult family life – require a broad network of diversion program services. Program variety must be encouraged in every community, as well as cooperation among communities to make sure every juvenile is placed in an appropriate program to meet his or her needs.

²² S.W. Henggeler. 1997. *Treating Serious Anti-Social Behavior in Youth: The MST Approach*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

²³ T.L. Sexton and J.F. Alexander. 1999. *Functional Family Therapy: Principles of Clinical Intervention, Assessment, and Implementation*. Henderson, NV: RCH Enterprises.

²⁴ R. Dembo and J. Schmeidler. 2002. *Family Empowerment Intervention: An Innovative Service for High-Risk Youths and their Families*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

²⁵ Cocozza et. al, 2005

3 Methods

This chapter will describe the research design and the methods used to analyze and report the results of the Intake Officer Survey. The first section will explain how we generated (1) a list of diversion programs that are currently implemented across Virginia and (2) a list of Intake Officers in each District. Next, the scope, objectives, and design of the survey will be outlined. Finally, we will discuss the methods used to analyze the survey results and report conclusions.

The scope of this project covered the entire Commonwealth of Virginia, which includes 35 Court Services Units (CSUs). CSUs perform several functions, including intake, investigations, probation, and parole services for juveniles. Each CSU has anywhere between 3 and 24 Intake Officers and as many or more programs offering diversion services for juveniles, and all of these people and programs fall within the scope of the study.

The first major undertaking in this project was to acquire the contact information for the Directors of each CSU in the Commonwealth. This information was acquired from the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) website. From there, an email was composed to each Director requesting the email addresses and other contact information for all of their Intake Officers and all of the diversion programs available within their CSU. This information would be crucial in completing the next step the methodology.

Our biggest undertaking has been the formulation and distribution of a web-based survey of Intake Officers. The survey was made available to access online at SurveyMonkey.com. It was also made anonymous to ensure candid responses, keeping in mind that some respondents may provide answers they believe would endanger their position. The survey was formulated to serve four key purposes. The first is to identify the procedures followed by Intake Officers for deciding which juveniles to divert and to what program he or she should be diverted. The objective here is to discern how much their discretion comes into play when making these

decisions and if they use some kind of assessment tool, such as JDAI. The second purpose the survey is to serve is to ascertain which programs, or which types of programs, Intake Officers feel are most effective. The reasoning behind this is that Intake Officers would have an accurate idea of which programs are effective because they act as the juvenile's first point of contact with the juvenile justice system, so there is a high probability that the Intake Officer would know if a juvenile he or she had diverted was brought back in for a new complaint or for failing to complete the requirements of their diversion program. The third purpose is to determine if Intake Officers have any method for assessing the progress of the juvenile after he or she has begun participating in his or her assigned diversion program. They were also asked, if they do perform some kind of assessment, what kind of assessment they perform, how often they assess, and for how long they assess the juvenile's progress. The fourth purpose of the survey is to identify any impediments to the juvenile's successful completion of the diversion program. One potential impediment could be the juvenile's lack of transportation to the diversion program site. The Intake Officers were also asked if their CSU has any way of overcoming such obstacles, such as a transportation program between the juvenile's home and diversion site.

The final draft of the survey instrument contained twenty questions, which were grouped into categories based upon their objective or theme (e.g., implementation of diversion within a CSU, opinions about the effectiveness of diversion, opinions about the effectiveness of programs within a CSU, etc.). The categories and the questions within each were ordered appropriately to achieve a logical flow throughout the survey, beginning with specific questions about diversion implementation in the CSUs and ending with broader questions about diversion in general. The

questions were then entered and formatted at the survey website, tested by the researchers, and revised as appropriate before the survey was distributed.¹

The survey was initially distributed via email in November 2007 to 177 Intake Officers across the Commonwealth.² The email sent to each Intake Officer contained a link to the web survey and information about the purpose of the study. An endorsement letter signed by James Towey, Director of the Virginia State Crime Commission, was also attached. Ten days after the initial distribution, a second message was sent by email to all of the Intake Officers to remind them to complete the survey. At the close of the survey, which was approximately three weeks after its initial distribution, the results were downloaded from the survey website into an Excel spreadsheet, which facilitated the analysis of responses at both the aggregate and CSU levels. For questions that asked Intake Officers about their CSU's policies, results were reported and analyzed as a percentage of CSUs. For questions that asked Intake Officer for their opinions or discretion, the results were reported and analyzed as the percentage of total respondents.

A total of 51 out of 177 Intake Officers responded to the survey, representing 15 of the 30 CSUs included in the sample. Only 37 of those respondents (74%) actually completed the entire survey, however. The overall response rate of Intake Officers is low (28%), but the 50% representation from the CSUs that were sampled is acceptable and was expected. A mixture of both rural and urban CSUs is represented, and there is a balance among the disparate regions of Virginia.³ However, representation was not achieved for two large urban areas in the

¹ http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=0HDuWv7jhE8IpgZBnvNNqA_3d_3d

² Six of 35 Districts (Norfolk, Hampton, Williamsburg, Chesterfield, Richmond, and Falls Church) did not respond to our request for and are thus omitted from our survey sample; however, one Intake Officer from Hampton did respond to the survey although we did not include this person in our survey distribution.

³ It is important to note that several Districts are represented by multiple responses, while others are represented by only one. This outcome was anticipated because the number of Intake Officers employed within a District varies considerably based upon the nature of the population served. An implication of this, however, is that certain Districts are over-represented and others are under-represented. There are also implications on respondent

Commonwealth, Richmond and Norfolk. These two CSUs are also participants in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The consequent omission of these two areas from our study presents a significant limitation to our conclusions. The perspectives of Intake Officers from these CSUs would have enhanced the understanding of the effectiveness of diversion programs in serving the unique needs of juveniles in two distinct urban locations where JDAI is implemented.

Table 3.1: Responses from CSU Directors and Intake Officers.

		Yes/No	Number		Percent
		Director Response	Intake Officers	Intake Officer Responses	Intake Officer Responses
1	Chesapeake	Y	6	1	16.7%
2	Virginia Beach	Y	7	0	0.0%
2A	Accomac	Y	?	0	0.0%
3	Portsmouth	Y	4	0	0.0%
4	Norfolk	N	x	0	0.0%
5	Suffolk	Y	12	0	0.0%
6	Hopewell	Y	4	0	0.0%
7	Newport News	Y	9	0	0.0%
8	Hampton	N	x	1	x
9	Williamsburg	N	x	0	0.0%
10	Appomattox	Y	3	0	0.0%
11	Petersburg	Y	7	0	0.0%
12	Chesterfield	N	x	0	0.0%
13	Richmond	N	x	0	0.0%
14	Henrico	Y	5	3	60.0%
15	Fredericksburg	Y	4	2	50.0%
16	Charlottesville	Y	4	3	75.0%
17A	Arlington	Y	3	2	66.7%
17F	Falls Church	N	x	0	0.0%
18	Alexandria	Y	4	0	0.0%
19	Fairfax	Y	13	4	30.8%
20W	Warrenton	Y	5	4	80.0%
20L	Loudoun	Y	4	0	0.0%

anonymity for Districts that are represented by only one or two Intake Officers. Accordingly, some conclusions will be limited in the degree of specification to protect the confidentiality of responses.

21	Martinsville	Y	2	2	100.0%
22	Rocky Mount	Y	3	0	0.0%
23	Salem	Y	3	0	0.0%
23A	Roanoke	Y	3	2	66.7%
24	Lynchburg	Y	24	0	0.0%
25	Staunton	Y	6	3	50.0%
26	Winchester	Y	8	3	37.5%
27	Pulaski	Y	4	0	0.0%
28	Abingdon	Y	10	9	90.0%
29	Pearisburg	Y	4	0	0.0%
30	Gate City	Y	9	6	66.7%
31	Manassas	Y	7	6	85.7%
Totals			177	51	28.8%

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William & Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission.

There is an even distribution among new, mid-career, and senior Intake Officers who responded to the survey, indicating that a variety of perspectives are represented. A wide distribution among respondents was observed in terms of the number of juvenile intakes each of them handles in a given year, which also enhances the diversity of perspectives represented in the survey sample. Each Intake Officer was asked to estimate the number of juvenile intakes he or she handled in 2007 (as of October) and in each of the three prior years. The response ranges are presented below:

Table 3.2: Estimates of Total Yearly Juvenile Intakes Per Intake Officer

	Maximum	Minimum
2007 *	700	5
2006	1000	5
2005	1100	5
2004	1100	10

* reported as of October

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William & Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission.

4 Results and Analysis

This chapter will discuss the results and conclusions of the 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey. First, the methods used by Intake Officers will be discussed, including what factors they use to determine whether to divert a juvenile and which program to assign a juvenile. Next, we will evaluate the responses to questions about monitoring and assessing a juvenile's progress in a diversion program, including Intake Officers' opinions about any impediments that exist for juveniles who participate in diversions. Finally, we will discuss perceptions about the effectiveness of diversion programs, including the Intake Officers' opinions about which programs are successful in their CSUs and which are not, whether the programs' effectiveness is ever assessed by the CSU, and which programs might be lacking in the CSU, if any.

4.1 Intake Process and Methods Used for Decisions about Diversion

4.1.1 Another Diversion Opportunity for Juveniles Who Re-Offend?

In order to understand to what extent diversion is available to juveniles who re-offend (i.e., a juvenile is diverted once for a first offense and then is convicted for a subsequent offense), Intake Officers were asked to report (1) their CSU's policy – if one exists – regarding the use of more than one diversion for a juvenile and (2) their opinion of whether juveniles should be allowed more than one diversion opportunity. These questions help enhance the understanding of diversion effectiveness by determining what role is played by the Intake Officer and the discretion that he or she exercises in the intake process for a juvenile. The opinions of Intake Officers regarding the use of more than one diversion for a juvenile are reported below as

a percentage of total respondents. The responses to the question about CSU policy are reported as a percentage of CSUs represented in the sample.

Figure 4.1: Should Juveniles be Allowed to be Diverted More than Once

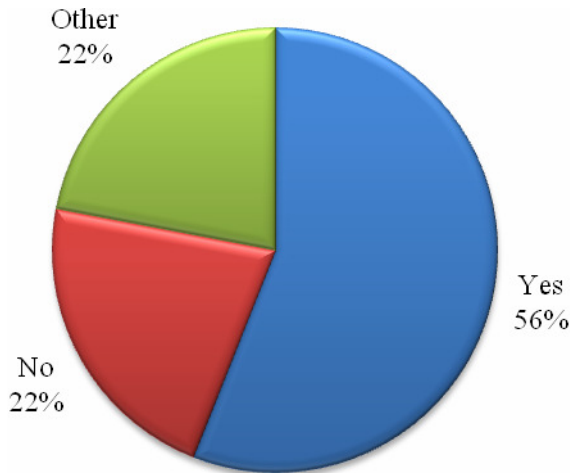
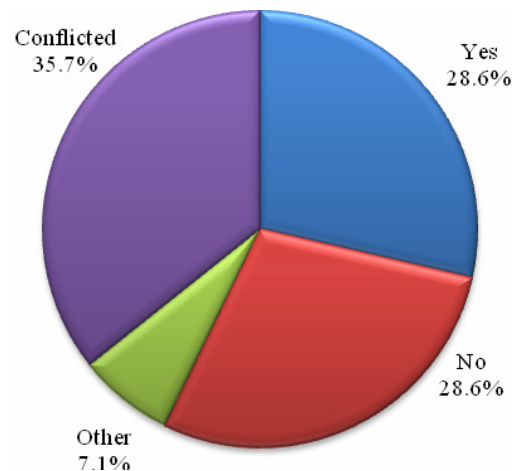


Figure 4.2: Are Diversions Available Only to First-Time Offenders



Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

Of the total respondents, 56% of Intake Officers believe juveniles should be allowed more than one diversion. However, responses conclusively indicate that only 4 of the 14 CSUs (29%) represented for this question have policies that permit this practice. Intake Officers from 4 other CSUs (29%) indicated that juveniles are not allowed more than one diversion, while responses for 5 CSUs presented conflicting interpretations of policy. Several Intake Officers made remarks to supplement their answer to the question about CSU policy. One indicated that “more than one diversion is allowed if there are no prior guilty adjudications.” An Intake Officer representing the CSU for the Arlington District reported that diversions are allowed only for three offenses: possession of tobacco, lack of a bicycle helmet, and petty larceny. Another said

that offenders can participate in diversion again depending on his or her progress, the type of charge, and the time between those charges.

4.1.2 Offenses for Which Diversion Opportunities are Permitted

In order to understand how CSUs vary in deciding whether to divert a juvenile, Intake Officers were asked to indicate all offenses for which they would permit a diversion in lieu of initiating court proceedings.¹ The results are presented as the percentage of total respondents who indicated they would permit a diversion for a certain offense. In some CSUs, it appears that judges limit the Intake Officers' discretion by establishing policy to govern which offenses can result in diversion and which cannot. In other instances, Intake Officers within the same CSU appear to use varying degrees of discretion regarding types of offenses for which diversions are permitted. The most commonly cited offenses that result in diversion are abusive language; disorderly conduct; trespassing; assault; vandalism; contempt of court; status offense; alcohol; family offenses; telephone law; and obscenity.

¹ The list of offenses utilized for this question was derived from the Department of Juvenile Justice's Data Resource Guide.

Table 4.1: Offenses for Which Intake Officers Report Permitting Diversion in Lieu of Court Proceedings

	Response Percent		Response Percent
Abusive Language	95.1%	Weapons	26.8%
Disorderly Conduct	85.4%	Arson	22.0%
Trespass	82.9%	Fraud	22.0%
Assault	78.0%	Narcotics	22.0%
Status Offense	75.6%	Parole Violation	17.1%
Vandalism	75.6%	Contempt of Court	9.8%
Family Offenses	73.2%	Burglary	7.3%
Alcohol	68.3%	Failure to Appear	7.3%
Larceny	65.9%	Sex Offense	7.3%
Telephone Law	63.4%	Extortion	2.4%
Obscenity	48.8%	Robbery	2.4%
Traffic	39.0%	Gangs	0.0%
Probation Violation	36.6%	Kidnapping	0.0%
Obstruction of Justice	34.1%	Murder	0.0%

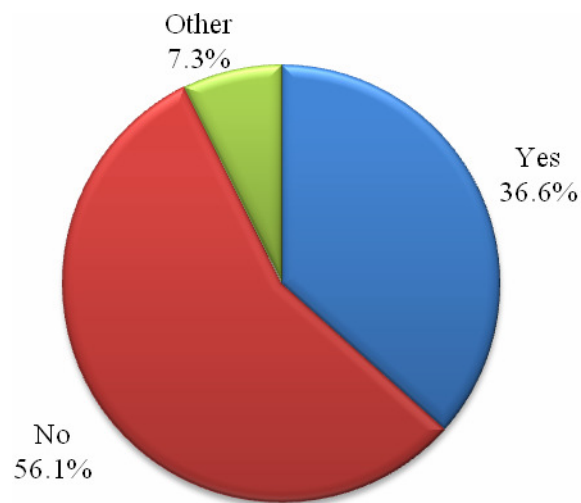
Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William & Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission.

4.1.3 Use of Standardized Screening and Assessments at Intake

Beyond understanding which offenses are commonly diverted, it was important to determine which other factors are involved when Intake Officers decide whether to divert a juvenile. The effectiveness of a diversion program for a particular juvenile could hinge upon whether that juvenile was appropriately diverted to the program best suited for him or her. Accordingly, each Intake Officer was asked whether they conduct a standardized screening and assessment of each juvenile at intake. This question stems from the foregoing literature review, in which four characteristics of successful diversion programs were determined from a study by Cocozza et al. (2005). One of these characteristics is the implementation of systematic and

standardized screening and assessment.² Of the total survey respondents, 37% indicated that they do perform such assessments, while 56% do not. The other Intake Officers reported an “Other” assessment or process; one of them indicated that his or her screening and assessment is not a standardized instrument, another reported using an assessment of his or her own creation, and a third responded, “I evaluate every case individually and apply my knowledge from 15 years of experience, unless a formal risk assessment is required.”

Figure 4.3: Do Intake Officers Perform Standardized Assessment of Youth at Intake



Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

4.1.4 Factors used in deciding whether to divert a juvenile

When asked what factors they take into consideration when deciding whether or not to divert a juvenile rather than initiate court proceedings, Intake Officers provided a fairly wide range of responses. As seen in the table below, the most commonly cited factors Intake Officers consider when making the decision whether or not to divert are the number and type of prior offenses, the age of the juvenile, and the type of offense for which the juvenile was arrested.

² Cocozza et al, p. 938.

Many also consider the recommendation of the police officer filing the complaint or the arresting officer, the type of diversion programs available in the CSU, the juvenile’s family or home situation, and the personality or demeanor of the juvenile. Far fewer take into account the results of a standardized assessment instrument. Other Intake Officers provided answers in the “Other” category; one respondent said that they consider the approval of the victim (if there is one) and the nature of the juvenile’s involvement in the offense, while several others pointed to the fact that they will only divert if the juvenile has admitted guilt.

Table 4.2: Factors Used in Deciding Whether to Divert a Juvenile

	Response Percent
Number and type of prior offenses	97.6%
Age of the juvenile	92.7%
Type of offense	90.2%
Recommendation of the police officer filing the complaint	80.5%
Juvenile's family/home situation	80.5%
Type of diversion programs available in the CSU	80.5%
Personality/demeanor of the juvenile	70.7%
Other factors	24.4%
Results of a standardized assessment instrument	12.2%

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

4.1.5 Factors used in choosing a diversion program

In order to gain an understanding of the decision-making process for diverting a juvenile, Intake Officers were next asked how they choose a diversion program for a particular juvenile. The most commonly used factors were the age of the juvenile and the type of offense for which the juvenile was arrested. The juvenile’s family or home situation, the personality or demeanor of the juvenile, the number and type of prior offenses, the aptitudes of the juvenile (such as

whether the juvenile is artistic, academic, etc.), and the availability of transportation to and from the diversion program site also play a key role in the Intake Officer’s decision. More than half of the Intake Officers who responded also take into account the recommendation of the police officer filing the complaint, with slightly fewer looking at the program capacity and the requirements established by the directors of the program. Those Intake Officers who chose “Other” said they consider whether the offense for which the juvenile was taken into custody was a criminal or a status offense, and how many victims, if any, were involved. From these two questions, it is clear that the most important factors for deciding if and how to divert a juvenile are the juvenile’s previous record, his or her current offense, and the juvenile’s age. It is also very clear that Intake Officers consider many factors when making these decisions and that their discretion plays a major role here.

Table 4.3: Factors Used in Choosing a Diversion Program

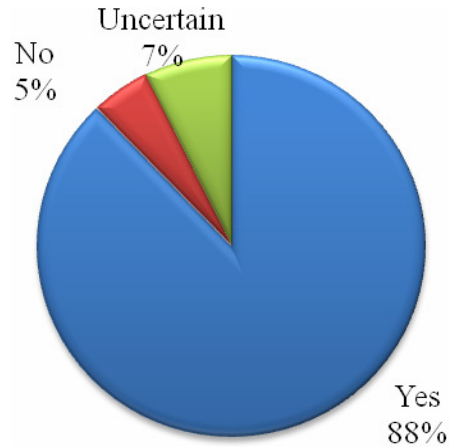
	Response Percent
Type of offense	87.8%
Age of the juvenile	85.4%
Personality/demeanor of the juvenile	73.2%
Juvenile's home/family situation	73.2%
Number and type of prior offenses	68.3%
Aptitudes of the juvenile (i.e. artistic, academic, etc.)	68.3%
Availability of transportation to/from the program	68.3%
Recommendation of the police officer filing the complaint	56.1%
Requirements established by the directors of the programs	51.2%
Program capacity	43.9%
Other factors	4.9%

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

4.1.6 Do CSUs implement a family-centered approach to diversion?

In order to determine to what extent the CSUs involve a juvenile's family in the diversion process, Intake Officers were asked whether they believe their CSU implements a family-centered approach to diversion. This question regarding the CSU's implementation of a family-centered approach ties back to the Coccozza et al. (2005) study cited in the literature review, which determined the four characteristics of a successful diversion program; one of the characteristics is the utilization of a family-centered intervention.³ Of the total respondents, 88% indicated that they do, while only 5% do not and 7% were uncertain. The comments some of the respondents made suggest that parents are strongly encouraged to attend at least part of the diversion program with the juvenile, to support the juvenile in his or her completion of the program, and to remain in contact with the Intake Officer in case any problems or questions arise. One Intake Officer noted that while they already have the opportunity to meet with the juvenile's family, his or her CSU is looking for ways in which parents could become more involved in the process of deciding if and how to divert the juvenile.

³ Coccozza et al., p. 938

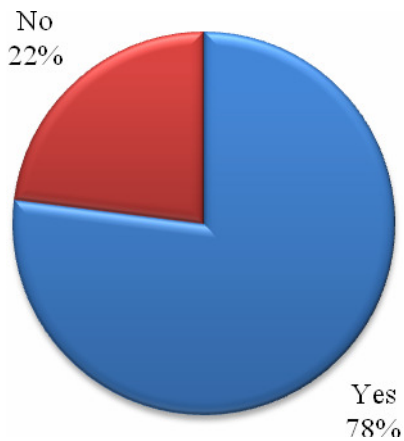
Figure 4.4: CSU Implements Family-Centered Approach

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

4.2 Methods Used to Assess a Juvenile's Progress Once Diverted

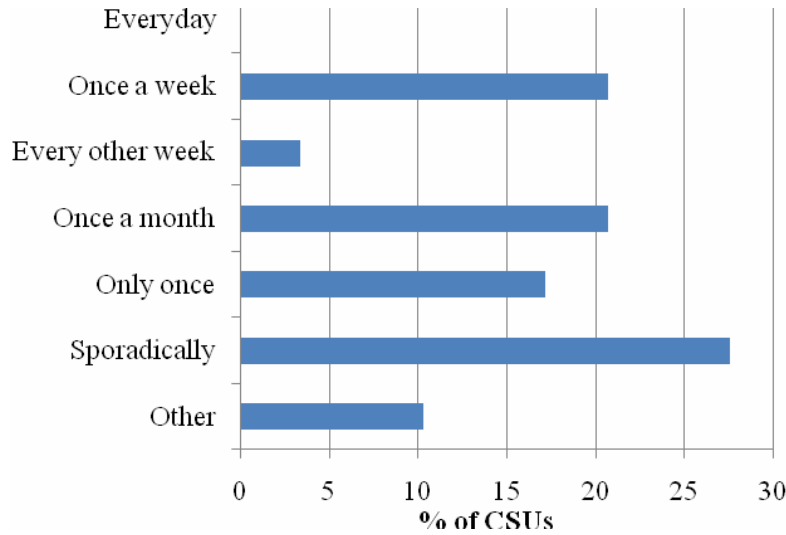
4.2.1 Do CSUs assess a juvenile's progress and, if so, how often and for how long?

In addition to determining how Intake Officers make decisions regarding whether and how to divert a juvenile, it is also important to determine what, if any, methods exist for assessing a juvenile's progress once he or she has entered a diversion program in order to ascertain the effectiveness of a particular diversion or type of diversion. When asked if they assess the progress of the juvenile after he or she begins participating in a diversion program, most respondents, 78%, indicated that they do, while only 22% do not.

Figure 4.5: CSU Assesses Juvenile's Progress in Diversion Program

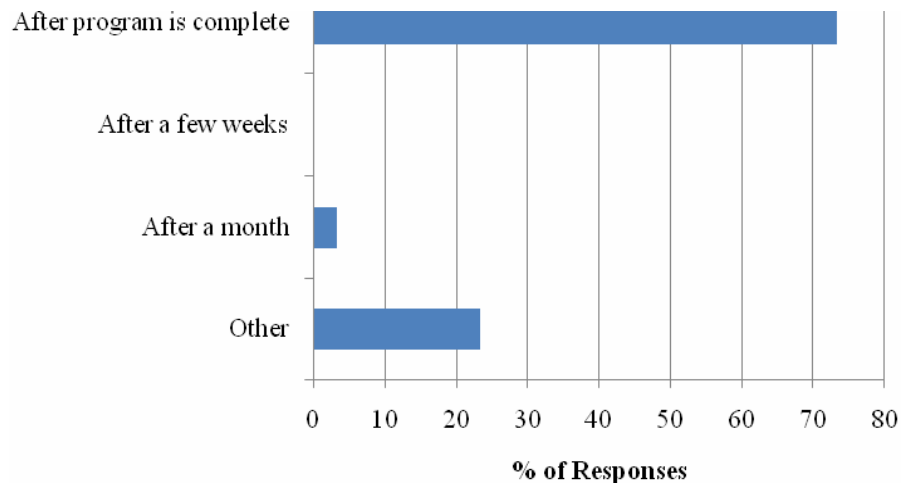
Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

Next, Intake Officers were asked how often they assess a juvenile's progress, and the responses they provided varied widely—28% indicated that they do so sporadically, 21% do so once a week, 17% do so only once before the juvenile's completion of the program, 20% do so once a month, and 3% every other week. No one responded that they assess the juvenile's progress once a day.

Figure 4.6: How Often CSU Assesses Progress in Diversion Program

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

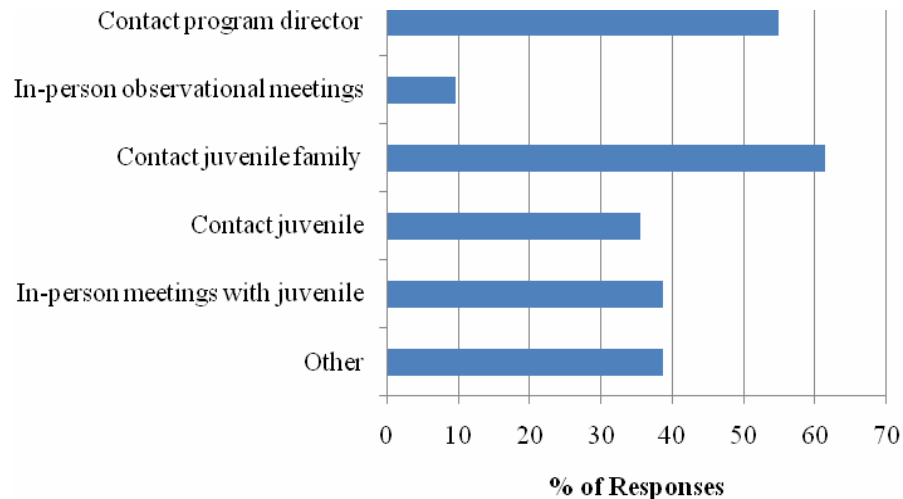
Furthermore, when asked how long they continue to assess the juvenile's progress in a diversion program, most respondents, 73%, answered that they do so until the juvenile has completed the program requirements, while only 3% said they do so until the juvenile has participated in the program for a month. No one responded that they assess the juvenile's progress for only a few weeks. Many respondents opted for the "Other" answer choice and most of those answers indicated that they do so until program completion, which can last anywhere from 60 to 90 days.

Figure 4.7: How Long Juvenile's Progress is Assessed

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

4.2.2 How CSUs Assess a Juvenile's Progress in a Diversion Program

Finally, Intake Officers were asked how they perform the assessment of the juvenile's progress after he or she had begun participating in a diversion program. For this particular Question, Intake Officers were able to select more than one response, and 61% said they contact the juvenile's family, 55% said they contact the program director, 36% said they assess the juvenile's progress by contacting the juvenile directly, 39% say they use in-person meetings with the juvenile, and only 10% say they use in-person visits to observe the juvenile's participation.

Figure 4.8: How Juvenile's Progress is Assessed

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

4.3 Effective Diversion Programs

4.3.1 What diversion programs are effective/ineffective at reducing recidivism?

The Intake Officers were asked to indicate which of the diversion programs offered in their CSU they believed are most effective in reducing recidivism. Community service opportunities, intensive in-home services, anger management programs, and substance abuse treatment programs (each over 13% of responses) appear to be viewed as the most effective diversion programs offered throughout the CSUs. Restorative justice programs (8%), truancy interventions (6.7%), and shoplifting rehabilitation (5.3%) are also viewed rather highly by the Intake Officers.

Table 4.4: Effective Diversion Programs

	Response Percent
Community Service	13.3%
Intensive In-home services	13.3%
Anger Management	13.3%
Substance Abuse	13.3%
Restorative Justice	8.0%
Truancy Intervention	6.7%
Shoplifting	5.3%
Mental Health	4.0%
Counseling	4.0%
Informal Hearing	2.7%
Office on Youth programs	2.7%
Detention Tour	2.7%
Mentoring	2.7%
Insufficient knowledge to answer question	1.3%
90-day Monitored Diversion	1.3%
Individual counseling	1.3%
Tutoring	1.3%
Restitution	1.3%
Fire Setters Program	1.3%

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission.

In addition, Intake Officers were also asked which diversion programs they perceived to be ineffective at reducing recidivism. Most (26.7%) responded that no diversion program is ineffective, with one Intake Officer reporting that he or she only uses diversion programs that work. Another 10% of the responses indicated that the Intake Officers were unsure which programs are ineffective. Others (10%) mentioned specific titles of diversion programs, which we have decided not to list due to the anonymous nature of the survey. However, one who cited

a specific title mentioned that the program suffers from employee turnover and a general lack of staff capabilities. Finally, a substantial percentage (10%) believes that their CSU's counseling programs are insufficient.

Table 4.5: Ineffective Diversion Programs

	Response Percent
None	26.7%
Unsure	10.0%
Counseling	10.0%
Specific Program	10.0%
Substance Abuse Treatment	10.0%
Truancy Intervention	6.7%
Adopt a Highway	3.3%
Anger Management	3.3%
Community Service	3.3%
Lack of detention tour	3.3%
Lack of parental involvement	3.3%
Mentoring	3.3%
Restitution	3.3%
Shoplifting	3.3%

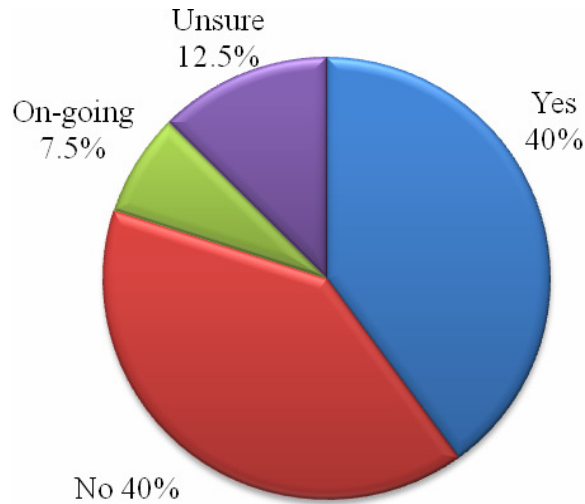
Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission.

4.3.2 Does CSU assess effectiveness of diversion programs?

In order to determine whether CSUs assess the effectiveness of diversion programs, the Intake Officers were asked whether they know if their CSU did just that. At first glance, it appears that the results are split. Forty percent of the Intake Officers reported that their CSU does assess program effectiveness, while another forty percent reported their CSU does not assess effectiveness. Nearly 13% said they were not sure if their CSU assesses effectiveness,

while the remaining 7.5% said their CSU was in the process of assessing diversion programs' effectiveness.

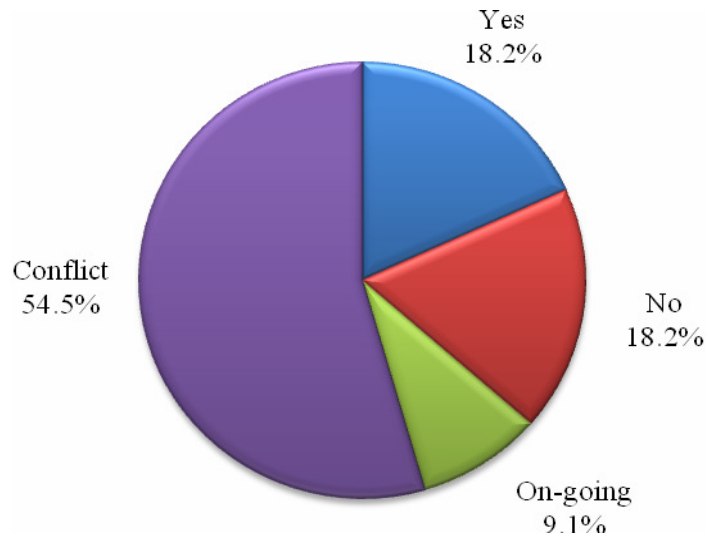
**Figure 4.9: Does CSU Assess Effectiveness of Diversion Programs
(By Intake Officer Responses)**



Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

However, these results are potentially misleading. Further analysis reveals that Intake Officers from the same CSU often differed in their answer of this question. Of the 11 CSUs represented, Intake Officers from 6 of them gave conflicting answers to this question. For example, while 3 Intake Officers responded from a certain CSU, two of them said that their CSU does assess effectiveness, while the other Intake Officer said the CSU does not. It appears that Intake Officers may not be aware of their CSU's policy on assessing effectiveness.

**Figure 4.10: Does CSU Assess Effectiveness of Diversion Programs
(By CSU)**



Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission

4.3.3 Obstacles to successful diversion

The vast majority of Intake Officers' responses indicate that lack of cooperation from the family (73.2%) and from the juvenile (65.9%) stand in the way of successful diversion outcomes. Furthermore, many of the responses cited too little funding provided by the state (48.8%), too few diversion programs offered in the CSU (46.3%), and an insufficient range of diversion program types (41.5%). Finally, a small number (4.9%) said lack of transportation posed an obstacle to successful diversion.

Table 4.6: Obstacles to Complete a Successful Diversion

	Response Percent
Lack of cooperation/support by the juvenile's family	73.2%
Lack of cooperation/commitment by the juvenile	65.9%
Too little funding for the programs in the CSU	48.8%
Too few diversion programs available in the CSU	46.3%
Insufficient range of program types	41.5%
Transportation (i.e. travel distance, lack of public transp.)	4.9%

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission.

4.3.4 Diversion Programs Lacking from CSU

A large number of Intake Officers' responses showed that vital diversion programs are believed to be missing from various CSUs. Mentoring programs (24%), educational services (17%), mental health services (16%), substance abuse services (15%), and shoplifting rehabilitation programs (13%) were several of the diversion opportunities many Intake Officers indicated were missing. One comment potentially reveals some of the frustration felt when effective diversion programs are lacking:

“Although we have excellent programs in the Office on Youth, there are always shortages of mentors, [a lack of] funding for effective mental health programs, a vast need for tutoring grades 0-3rd grade... Also, there are not enough community service sites to serve the numbers of juveniles that are ordered to do community service.”

Another comment also points out the need for more substance abuse services and the desire that judges allow certain cases to be diverted that currently are ineligible for diversion:

“First time alcohol and marijuana diversion program is greatly needed. Our dockets are way too crowded with these types of cases, which also puts a strain on probation supervision and trying to find community service placements. The judges refuse to allow these cases to be diverted.”

Table 4.7: Diversion Programs Lacking from the CSU

	Response Percent
Mentoring Services	24%
Educational Services	17%
Mental Health Services	16%
Substance Abuse Services	15%
Shoplifting	13%
Community Service	8%
Tutoring/Truancy	3%
Mental Health Services	1%
Transportation Services	1%
Intensive In-home Services	1%
Restitution	1%

Source: 2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey conducted by the College of William and Mary for the Virginia State Crime Commission.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

4.4.1 Desired Reforms at the State/Local Level

When asked what type of reforms Intake Officers would like to see at the state or local level to improve diversion programs, a majority of responses (50%) indicated that additional funding was desired for various needs: transportation, truancy interventions, psychological assessments, diversion staff, mental health programs, substance abuse treatment, and anger management programs. Other desired reforms include:

- “A more uniform system for diversion across the state. For example, a first-offender juvenile crime in our CSU is treated differently than in another CSU one mile away.”
- “I would like [the] ability to work longer than 90 days with a client. I think the legislature should be changed to at least 120 days - preferably longer.”
- “We need more options for the very young juveniles that are starting to commit much more serious criminal offenses.”

- “School probation officers operated by the school system who could assign community service or make referrals to local FAPT Teams, local mental health or other service agencies.”
- “All truancy and runaway cases should be required to participate in community programs before ever being seen at intake.”

4.4.2 Final Comments

The following are some of the final comments made by the Intake Officers:

- “My experience is not extensive, but I believe regarding juvenile crime, you pay now or pay later...I believe that it is better for the juvenile, his/her family and the community to pay now- meaning to focus time, money and attention on prevention and diversion so that they, the community and the state don't have to pay later.”
- “Juveniles that come from strong, active parents are not likely to re-offend and the diversion program works well, but some juveniles do not respond to any type of intervention for a variety of factors.”
- “Diversion programs work!! I have seen several juveniles in my 20 years as an Intake Officer and probation officer benefit from a little knowledge and understanding. If you get the parents on board you will have great success. I have worked in three different CSUs and have actually developed and designed diversion programs that made a difference and reduced reoffending. I think the Intake Officers should be deciding what is diverted and what types of programs are needed, not judges or county administrators.”
- “Diversion programs need to start at earlier age and in the schools. A large percentage of juvenile charges come from the schools.”
- “Often other community agencies no longer service cases after the juvenile is placed on probation, which leaves the family without resources after the probation period ends.”
- “The juvenile justice system seems to get a lot of juveniles whose needs are of a mental health nature; I think the juvenile justice system is more able to deal with truly criminal juveniles. The system is frequently called upon to serve a variety of juveniles with complicated needs such as educational and mental health.”

5 Conclusions

5.1 Study Highlights

The following are some key results obtained from the Intake Officer survey:

- More than half of Intake Officers surveyed believe that juveniles should be allowed to be diverted more than once, depending on the circumstances. However, 4 of the 14 CSUs represented (28.6%) have policies that prohibit this, and respondents from 5 other CSUs (35.7%) presented conflicting interpretations of their CSU's policy.
- Only about one third of respondents utilize some type of standard assessment at intake for making decisions about diversion for a juvenile.
- Intake Officer discretion plays a major role in deciding if and how juveniles are diverted.
- A majority of CSUs appear to implement a family-centered approach to diversion.
- Most CSUs perform some kind of assessment of the juvenile's progress after he or she has begun participating in a diversion program, but CSUs vary in how often they perform this assessment.
- Forty percent of Intake Officers reported that their CSU assesses the effectiveness of the diversion programs they utilize, while another 40% said their CSU does not assess diversion program effectiveness. Further analysis reveals that Intake Officers from the same CSU often differed in their answers to this question.
- The vast majority of Intake Officers' responses indicate that lack of cooperation from the family (73.2%) and from the juvenile (65.9%) stands in the way of successful diversion outcomes.
- Intake Officers expressed a desire for increased funding for diversion programs, particularly to increase diversion staff and expand the number and type of diversion programs offered in each CSU.
- Intake Officers also expressed a desire for uniform criteria for diversion eligibility, as current policy differs from CSU to CSU. For example, a juvenile in one CSU may be eligible for a diversion opportunity, while a juvenile with a similar criminal history may be ineligible for a diversion opportunity in another CSU.

5.2 Limitations

Although the results of the Juvenile Intake Officer Survey are valuable and instructive for examining the effectiveness of diversion programs across Virginia, there are some limitations to our conclusions. First, the nature of the survey limits our analysis to the *perceived* effectiveness of diversion according to Intake Officers' perspectives. Intake Officers are certainly a valuable resource for understanding the impact of diversion on juveniles. To the extent that they observe and assess a juvenile's progress before and after participation in a diversion program their perspectives should be incorporated in any comprehensive review of diversion effectiveness.

Initially, however, the Intake Officer Survey was designed as one element of a three-part study that would have also included regression analyses and a survey of diversion program supervisors. Under this scheme, the observations of Intake Officers regarding diversion effectiveness would have been enhanced with perspectives gleaned from the people who run the programs. In turn, these perceptions would have been supplemented with a quantitative analysis of data on juveniles who have been diverted to understand the outcomes (i.e., whether or not they recidivated), and what other factors may be have been involved beyond the programs themselves. The quantitative analysis and the survey of diversion program supervisors would necessitate a longer timeframe than the three month period in which we had to complete our study. Moreover, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) requires a few months notice in order to gather the appropriate data, and we were also unable to determine the format and extent to which this data is available from our conversations with DJJ personnel.

A second limitation of our conclusions from the Intake Officer survey is the lack of representation from all 35 CSUs across the state. Though the 15 CSUs represented by Intake

Officers in the survey sample are a mix of rural and urban CSUs across the disparate regions of Virginia, it is significant that we did not obtain responses from two large urban areas in the Commonwealth that participate in JDAI, Richmond and Norfolk. Representation from these two key areas would be important to achieve in a subsequent study of diversion effectiveness in Virginia.

The definition of recidivism as re-conviction also presents a limitation to a complete understanding of diversion effectiveness for this study and for future research. Re-conviction means that a juvenile has been convicted more than once. However, since the focus of this study is the effectiveness of diversions directed by Intake Officers prior to court proceedings, the vast majority of the juveniles in question have never had a *first* conviction given that diversion is usually limited to first-time, non-violent offenders. Thus, the apparent effectiveness of diversion programs may be over-stated when recidivism is limited to re-conviction rather than re-offense or re-arrest. Even broadening the definition to *subsequent* conviction (following a second arrest/intake) presents a problem if, for example, a juvenile is re-arrested one or more times after completing a diversion program, but is not convicted for whatever reason. Defining recidivism as re-conviction would require that this particular juvenile be classified as someone for whom diversion was effective in spite of being re-arrested.

Finally, an examination of program cost-effectiveness would have been extremely useful for enhancing the understanding of diversion effectiveness. However, data limitations rendered this question outside the scope of a three month study. Funding for diversion programs across the state comes from numerous and varied sources, making uniform data collection very challenging. Many programs are administered by the CSUs, by private and volunteer organizations, and by local government employees such as police and fireman who contribute

their time to working with diverted juveniles. The disparate nature of funding sources makes the cost-effectiveness question difficult to answer. This challenge was expressed by CSU Directors with whom we discussed the question. Other programs receive funding from Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) grants and matching local funds. Cost data is readily available for these programs and DJJ already provides annual reports on the progress of these programs, including their cost-effectiveness, to the General Assembly. These reports group the programs into like categories and provide the percent of juvenile placements within each category with no new criminal offenses, and the percent with no new criminal or status offenses, thus looking at recidivism as new intakes or arrests rather than new convictions.

5.3 Recommendations

After completing this study and reviewing the results, several recommendations for reforming the methods of diversion in Virginia's juvenile justice system became apparent. First, we recommend that the state provide CSUs with resources to collect data on juveniles who have been diverted and the outcomes of the programs to which juveniles are diverted. This will aid in remedying one of the key problems we encountered in completing this study in that it would allow CSUs to determine which programs are effective in keeping juveniles out of the justice system and it would improve the efficiency of program evaluation.

Our second recommendation is that CSUs improve the clarity and uniformity of their diversion policy. It appears from our survey results that two different Intake Officers from the same CSU can have different opinions of what their CSU's policy is regarding diversion. This misunderstanding and miscommunication within CSUs can lead to some juveniles who are eligible for diversion being sent through court proceedings while others are prevented from

having to do so. It also hinders the accuracy of any data collection methods the CSU may have since Intake Officers are not diverting juveniles for the same offenses.

Our third and final recommendation is the implementation of a standardized intake assessment with statewide criteria. It is apparent from the results of the survey that an offense that may be diverted in one CSU may be prohibited by a judge in another, even if the CSUs are mere miles apart. A standardized assessment instrument with statewide criteria would ensure a uniformity of diversion policies that would allow juveniles with similar characteristics to be eligible for diversion, no matter what CSU they live in. However, we also believe that Intake Officers should retain some discretion in deciding which juveniles are eligible for diversion. Finding the right balance between standardization and discretion requires additional input from state officials, CSU directors, and Intake Officers.

5.4 Future Work

The Intake Officer Survey has laid the groundwork for future work that could provide additional evidence on how effective (or ineffective) diversion programs are at reducing recidivism rates. Specifically, two bodies of work are needed: (1) a quantitative analysis of data maintained by DJJ, which would compare recidivism rates between juveniles who were diverted before being adjudicated with juveniles who entered the traditional criminal justice system; and (2) an assessment of how cost-effective diversion programs are in comparison to the traditional adjudication process. What follows are brief recommendations for how to proceed with each of these endeavors.

5.4.1 Data Analysis

The Intake Officer Survey provided a glimpse of how effective diversion programs are perceived to be by some of the people who are most familiar with them. While helpful, even more can be done to assess just how effective diversion programs are in reducing recidivism rates. Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) maintains data on juveniles who are arrested and diverted or adjudicated throughout the Commonwealth. This data would allow researchers to perform a quasi-experiment to determine whether diversion programs reduce recidivism rates.

In essence, the DJJ data provides a control group and a treatment group. The control group contains juveniles who were arrested and were processed through the traditional criminal justice system, while the treatment group would be juveniles arrested and diverted by the Intake Officer to an alternative program. Some type of recidivism measure would also be necessary to complete this analysis. Specifically, DJJ would have to provide information on whether or not the juvenile was re-arrested or re-convicted after being adjudicated or diverted for an offense. And, if possible, additional variables should be collected from the DJJ to control for juvenile-specific characteristics (i.e. crime committed, criminal history, race, gender, socio-economic status, etc.). A regression model could then be set up including all of the information listed above, with the final results indicating whether or not diversion is more effective in reducing recidivism than the traditional adjudication process.

Admittedly, the quasi-experimental design described above is not without its limitations. Most importantly, the juveniles are not randomly assigned to either the "control" or "treatment" groups. Researchers would not be setting up a true field experiment in that the data being observed has been collected in the past. While this could bias the results, the advantages of a

quasi-experiment include being less expensive, more time sensitive, and virtually immune to any ethical questions. While not perfect, the quasi-experiment described above could go a long way in assessing just how effective diversion programs are at reducing recidivism rates.

5.4.2 Cost Effectiveness

Another obvious concern of policymakers is how cost-effective diversion programs are in comparison to the traditional adjudication process. CSU Directors, Intake Officers, and DJJ representatives have all expressed that measuring the average costs of diversion and adjudication is very difficult. Indeed, none of the offices contacted could provide average costs per juvenile for either diversion programs or traditional adjudication. This presents problems for those who want to know whether the benefits of diversion (i.e. presumably lower recidivism rates) can be achieved more cost effectively through diverting youth to alternative programs.

According to CSU Directors, one of the obstacles to obtaining average costs is that funding comes from so many different sources – both public and private. Researchers need to take a comprehensive look at where money for diversion programs comes from. One way to accomplish this would be to survey diversion program directors across the Commonwealth to determine where they receive their funding and how they spend the funds they receive. Some of this information could be verified by state or local officials who divert public funds to CSUs. CSU directors should be able to provide information on how much they spend on diversion programs. From this information, researchers could calculate figures that closely approximate the dollar amount spent per diverted juvenile in each CSU, as well as a state-wide or regional average per juvenile. These numbers would then be compared to traditional adjudication costs, which could be retrieved from state and local budget, law enforcement, and court officials.

These two bodies of work – the recidivism data analysis and the cost comparisons – should take place in successive order. It is imperative to understand how effective diversion programs are in reducing recidivism. If it can be determined that diversion does reduce recidivism, the next step would be to determine how much more or less it costs to implement diversion programs in Virginia as compared to the traditional adjudication process. Given the recidivism impact and cost results, policy makers would then be left to decide whether to invest additional resources for diversion programs.

Appendix B
2007 Virginia Juvenile Intake Officer Survey Questions and Responses

1. Which Court Services Unit District are you employed with as an Intake Officer? Please check the appropriate District number.	Response Percent	Response Count
1	2.0%	1
2	0.0%	0
2A	0.0%	0
3	0.0%	0
4	0.0%	0
5	0.0%	0
6	0.0%	0
7	0.0%	0
8	2.0%	1
9	0.0%	0
10	0.0%	0
11	0.0%	0
12	0.0%	0
13	0.0%	0
14	5.9%	3
15	3.9%	2
16	5.9%	3
17A	3.9%	2
17F	0.0%	0
18	0.0%	0
19	7.8%	4
20W	7.8%	4
20L	0.0%	0
21	3.9%	2

22	0.0%	0
23	0.0%	0
24	0.0%	0
25	5.9%	3
26	5.9%	3
27	0.0%	0
28	17.6%	9
29	0.0%	0
30	11.8%	6
31	11.8%	6

Answered Question
Skipped Question

51
0

2. How long have you been employed as an Intake Officer (or performed Intake Officer duties) with this particular District?

	Response Total	Response Count
Years	572	51

Answered Question
Skipped Question

51
0

3. Please estimate the number of juvenile cases you were assigned in the following years.

	Response Percent	Response Count
2007 (as of October 31st)	100.0%	32
2006	93.8%	30
2005	78.1%	25

2007 (as of October 31st)
2006
2005

2004

78.1% 25

Answered Question
Skipped Question

32
19

4. Are diversion opportunities (bypassing court proceedings) available only to first-time offenders in your District?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	37.5%	15
No	47.5%	19
Other (please specify)	15.0%	6

Answered Question
Skipped Question

40
11

5. In your opinion, should juveniles be allowed to be diverted more than once?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	56.1%	23
No	22.0%	9
Other (please specify)	22.0%	9

Answered Question
Skipped Question

41
10

6. Please indicate all offense types for which you may permit a diversion opportunity in lieu of initiating court proceedings for a juvenile. Check all that apply. (This list of offense categories is derived from the Department of Juvenile Justice Data Resource Guide.)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Abusive Language	95.1%	39
Alcohol	68.3%	28
Arson	22.0%	9
Assault	78.0%	32
Burglary	7.3%	3
Contempt of Court	9.8%	4
Disorderly Conduct	85.4%	35
Extortion	2.4%	1
Failure to Appear	7.3%	3
Family Offenses	73.2%	30
Fraud	22.0%	9
Gangs	0.0%	0
Kidnapping	0.0%	0
Larceny	65.9%	27
Murder	0.0%	0
Narcotics	22.0%	9
Obcenity	48.8%	20
Obstruction of Justice	34.1%	14
Parole Violation	17.1%	7
Probation Violation	36.6%	15
Robbery	2.4%	1
Sex Offense	7.3%	3
Status Offense	75.6%	31
Telephone Law	63.4%	26
Traffic	39.0%	16
Trespass	82.9%	34

Vandalism	75.6%	31
Weapons	26.8%	11
Other (please specify)	4.9%	200.0%
Answered Question		41
Skipped Question		10

7. Do you conduct a standardized screening and assessment of each juvenile at intake?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	36.6%	15
No	561.0%	23
Other (please specify)	7.3%	3
Answered Question		41
Skipped Question		10

8. What factors do you consider in deciding whether to divert a juvenile rather than initiate court proceedings? Please check all applicable factors and list any others in the comment box.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Type of offense	90.2%	37
Number and type of prior offenses	97.6%	40
Recommendation of the police officer filing the complaint	80.5%	33
Age of the juvenile	92.7%	38
Personality/demeanor of the juvenile	70.7%	29
Type of diversion programs available in the CSU	80.5%	33
Juvenile's family/home situation	80.5%	33
Results of a standardized assessment instrument	12.2%	5

Other factors	24.4%	10
Total number of responses		258
Answered Question		41
Skipped Question		10

9. How do you choose a diversion program for a particular juvenile? Please check all applicable factors and list any others in the comment box.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Type of offense	87.8%	36
Number and type of prior offenses	68.3%	28
Recommendation of the police officer filing the complaint	56.1%	23
Age of the juvenile	85.4%	35
Personality/demeanor of the juvenile	73.2%	30
Aptitudes of the juvenile (i.e. artistic, academic, etc.)	68.3%	28
Availability of transportation to/from the program	68.3%	28
Program capacity	43.9%	18
Requirements established by the directors of the programs	51.2%	21
Juvenile's home/family situation	73.2%	30
Other factors	4.9%	2
Total number of responses		279
Answered Question		41
Skipped Question		10

10. In general, would you say that your District implements a family-centered approach to intake and diversion for juveniles (i.e. incorporating and encouraging family support and participation)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	87.8%	36
No	4.9%	2
Uncertain	7.3%	3
Total number of responses		
Answered Question		41
Skipped Question		41
		10

11. In general, do you assess a juvenile's progress after he or she begins participating in a diversion program that you assigned to him or her (in lieu of initiating court proceedings)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	78.0%	32
No	22.0%	9
Total number of responses		
Answered Questions		41
Skipped Questions		41
		10

12. If you answered "no" to Question 11, please skip ahead to Question 15. If you answered "yes", please indicate how often you assess a juvenile's progress in a diversion program.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Everyday	0.0%	0
Once a week	20.7%	6
Every other week	3.4%	1
Once a month	20.7%	6
Only once before program completion	17.2%	5
Sporadically	27.6%	8
Other	10.3%	3
Total number of responses		29
Answered Questions		29
Skipped Questions		22

13. For how long do you continue to assess a juvenile's progress in a diversion program?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Until the juvenile has completed the program requirements	73.3%	22
Until the juvenile has participated for a few weeks	0.0%	0
Until the juvenile has participated for a month	3.3%	1
Other	23.3%	7
Total number of responses		30
Answered Questions		30
Skipped Questions		21

14. How do you assess a juvenile's progress in a diversion program? Please check all that apply.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Contacting the program director	54.8%	17
In-person visits to observe the juvenile's participation	9.7%	3
Contacting the juvenile's family	61.3%	19
Contacting the juvenile	35.5%	11
In-person meetings with the juvenile	38.7%	12
Other	38.7%	12
Total number of responses		74
Answered Questions		31
Skipped Questions		20

15. In general, what do you perceive as the BIGGEST OBSTACLE(S) to a successful outcome for a juvenile who completed a diversion program? By "successful outcome," we mean NO SUBSEQUENT CONVICTION of that juvenile after completion of a diversion program. Please check all that apply.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of cooperation/support by the juvenile's family	73.2%	30
Lack of cooperation/commitment by the juvenile	65.9%	27
Too little funding for the programs in the District	48.8%	20
Too few diversion programs available in the District	46.3%	19
Insufficient range of program types	41.5%	17
Transportation (travel distance, lack of public transp.)	4.9%	2
Total number of responses		115

Answered Question	41
Skipped Question	9

16. In your opinion, what diversion programs within your District are effective in reducing recidivism? Please describe.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Community Service	13.3%	10
Intensive In-home services	13.3%	10
Anger Management	13.3%	10
Substance Abuse	13.3%	10
Restorative Justice	8.0%	6
Truancy Intervention	6.7%	5
Shoplifting	5.3%	4
Mental Health	4.0%	3
Counseling	4.0%	3
Informal Hearing	2.7%	2
Office on Youth programs	2.7%	2
Detention Tour	2.7%	2
Mentoring	2.7%	2
Insufficient knowledge to answer question	1.3%	1
90-day Monitored Diversion	1.3%	1
Individual counseling	1.3%	1
Tutoring	1.3%	1
Restitution	1.3%	1
Fire Setters Program	1.3%	1
Total Responses		75
Answered Question		33
Skipped Question		17

17. In your opinion, what diversion programs within your District are NOT effective in reducing recidivism? Please describe.

	Response Percent	Response Count
None	26.7%	8
Counseling	10.0%	3
Specific Title	10.0%	3
Substance Abuse	10.0%	3
Unsure	10.0%	3
Truancy	6.7%	2
Adopt a Highway	3.3%	1
Anger Management	3.3%	1
Community Service	3.3%	1
Lack of detention tour - deterrence	3.3%	1
Lack of parental involvement	3.3%	1
Mentoring	3.3%	1
Restitution	3.3%	1
Shoplifting	3.3%	1
Total Responses		30
Answered Question		25
Skipped Question		

18. Is the effectiveness of diversion programs within your District ever assessed by your CSU? For the purposes of this study, "effectiveness" is defined as the ability to decrease recidivism rates.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		16
No	0	16
In the Process	0	3
Unsure	0	5
Answered Question		40
Skipped Question		10

19. Are there any types of diversion programs that you feel are lacking from your District? Please check all that apply.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring (Ex. - Although we have excellent programs in the Office on Youth, there are always shortages of mentors, funding for effective mental health programs, a vast need for tutoring grades 0-3rd grade and for those that are "long term suspended from school" and have no educational alternative. Also, there are not enough community service sites to serve the numbers of juveniles that are ordered to do community service.)	24.0%	24
Educational Services	17.0%	17
Mental Health Services	16.0%	16
Substance Abuse Services (Ex. - First time alcohol and marijuana diversion program is greatly needed. Our dockets are way to crowded with these types of cases, which also puts a strain on probation supervision and trying to find community service placements. The judges refuse to allow these cases to be diverted.)	15.0%	15
Shoplifting	13.0%	13
Community Service	8.0%	8
Tutoring/Truancy	3.0%	3

Mental Health Services	1.0%	1
Transportation Services	1.0%	1
Intensive In-home Services	1.0%	1
Restitution	1.0%	1
Total Responses		100
Answered Question		35
Skipped Question		15

Questions 20 and 21 contained information that may jeopardize the anonymous nature of our survey. For this reason, the answers were not reported but are accurately summarized in the text of the final report.

Appendix B

Juvenile Diversion Programs across Virginia

Table A1: Juvenile Diversion Programs Across Virginia, 2007

<p>1 Chesapeake</p> <p>Juvenile Conference Committee Program (first time offenders) - 20 years old Shoplifting Group Work Alternative Program (community service) Fire Setter's Group (run by Chesapeake Fire Dept) Substance Abuse Services (through Community Services Board) Other services provided by local vendors or agencies</p>
<p>2 Virginia Beach</p> <p>Shoplifting Diversion Groups Status Offender Seminar Family Crisis Team Community Service Essays Letters of Apology Restitution Payments between parties (no collection or disbursement of money by CSU) Referrals to other agencies</p>
<p>2A Accomac</p> <p>"We have one Diversion program. Our approach is that this is the juvenile's one opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and redeem themselves. We usually try to mirror what the Judge would order if the case went to court but each PO that handles the diversion has the room to work with the juveniles as they seem fit."</p>
<p>3 Portsmouth</p> <p>Juvenile Conference Committee</p>
<p>4 Norfolk</p> <p><i>No response received from this CSU</i></p>
<p>5 Suffolk</p> <p>Juvenile Conference Committee</p>
<p>6 Hopewell</p> <p>Family Youth Intervention (FYI) Program Youth Offender Program (YOP) Anger Management Group (AMG)</p>

7 Newport News

Anti Consumer Theft (ACT)
Targeted Outreach Program
Alpha Counselors Service, Inc.
CHINS Direct Referral
Family Redirections
Pastoral Counseling
Tidewater Mental Health
C. Waldo Scott for H.O.P.E.
Community Solutions
Community Services Board (CSB)
Family Preservation Services
Institute for Family Centered Services

8 Hampton

No response received from this CSU

9 Williamsburg

No response received from this CSU

10 Appomatox

Individual counseling sessions with juvenile (no formal diversion programs)

11 Petersburg

Petersburg Juvenile Community Crime Control Program
Petersburg Surveillance Program
Amelia VJCCCA
Nottoway VJCCA
Powhatan VJCCCA
Dinwiddie VJCCCA

12 Chesterfield

No response received from this CSU

13 Richmond

No response received from this CSU

14 Henrico

CAP
CAP S/A
Community Service
Shoplifters' Program

Fire Setters' Program
Anger Management
Fresh Start
Parenting Group

15 Fredericksburg

15th CSU Intake Diversion Program
15th CSU Restitution Diversion Program
Detention Tour
Tough Love
Community Service Program
Court Ordered Opportunities Program
Anger Management Classes
Substance Abuse Education Awareness
Restorative Justice Victim Impact Groups
Children In Need of Supervision Program
Smoking Cessation Classes
Truancy Monitoring Program
Positive Alternatives To School Suspension

16 Charlottesville

Shoplifters Education Program (program delivered by CSU)
Community Attention (anger management, after school program, Community Supervision/mentor)
Community Services Boards (substance abuse or mental health treatment)
Restorative Justice
Community Service
Family Preservation Services

17A Arlington

Intensive supervision in lieu of detention
Truancy Program
Bike Helmet Program
Tobacco Program

17F Falls Church

No response received from this CSU

18 Alexandria

Shoplifters' Program
Restitution
Family/Individual Counseling
Informal Supervision
Community Service

TAG Substance Abuse Program
Day Reporting Program
Fire Setters' Program

19 Fairfax

Family Counseling ("Your Family System")
Changing Lives through Literatures
Informal Hearing
90-Day Monitoring

20W Warrenton

National Counseling Group, Inc (evaluations, in-home mentoring, and in-home counseling)
Family Focus
Piedmont Dispute Resolution Center (accountability conferencing)

20L Loudoun

Restorative Justice
Shoplifting Class
Law Related Education (LRE)

21 Martinsville

Drug Screening
Anger Management Programs for Males and Females (MADs and FADs)
Drug Education and Treatment
Community Service Workforce
Mentoring
Individual and Family Counseling
Family Support Services
Anchor Residential Group Home
Video Education Program
Shoplifting Diversion Program

22 Rocky Mount

Street Law
Community Work Service
First Offenders' Larceny/Shoplifting Program
Various Referral Agencies such as family counseling at Piedmont Mental Health
Law and Community Awareness Program
Education and Aggression Replacement Training (anger management)
Substance Abuse Education and Substance Abuse Therapy

23 Salem

Write an apology letter
Write an essay
Pay restitution to the victim
Interview a business person or a local government official
Perform volunteer work (community service)
Participate in substance abuse assessment and counseling
Participate in anger management classes
Participate in family and/or individual therapy sessions

23A Roanoke

Individual case management and counseling
Behavioral contracting
YSS (Volunteer group which provides individual counseling, anger management group, and shoplifters group)
Public and private mental health services
CSU Substance Abuse Counselor
Individually arranged community service
AA & NA
Urine screenings
Group counseling
Community-based programs (recreation, clubs, etc)
Boys and Girls Club

24 Lynchburg

Youth Educational Shoplifting Program
Community Court

25 Staunton

Project Intercept
Central Shenandoah Valley office on Youth

26 Winchester

Community Service hours ordered through Intake at various non-profit organizations in the community.
Northwestern Mental Health (Public Mental Health agency) for Counseling
Local private psychiatrists and psychologists for counseling
Department of Social Services- Frederick County, and Winchester for in-home services
Winchester Addiction Services (Drug and Alcohol Treatment)
Timber Ridge School (Special Placement Services)
Winchester Parks & Recreation (Structured Activities)
Frederick County Parks and Recreation (Structured Activities)
Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center (Jail Tour)

Clean Inc. (Parenting Classes)
"Stop Thief!" (first time shoplifters/larceny)
Letter of Apology
Restorative Justice
Mediation
"Second Chance" Substance Abuse Education Group
"Life Recovery" Substance Abuse Treatment Group
Individual Counseling
Family Counseling
In Home Counseling
Hunter Safety Course
Driver Improvement Class
"Fire setter Program" (Educational Class provided by local Fire Department)
Boys and Girls Club-Various Programs Available
Restitution
"Choices" - Anger Management/Problem Solving Group
"Six Week Alternative Program" Life Skills/Education Group
Have juvenile and parent attend an intake diversion meeting.
Refer the family to Northwestern Community Services

27 Pulaski

Anger Management (VJCCCA)
Substance Abuse Education (VJCCCA)
Tobacco Education (VJCCCA)
Shoplifting/Larceny Program (VJCCCA)

28 Abingdon

Family Preservation Services
Highlands Community Services Board
Mt. Rogers Community Services Board

29 Pearisburg

Tazewell Shoplifting Program
First-Time Drug Education
Truancy Intervention Committee Program
Anger Management Group Program
Functional Family Counseling
NA or AA Community Referral
Mentoring or In-Home Services
Custody Mediation
Family Counseling
Restitution to Victim
Community Service Program

Essay/Restitution/Community Service
Letter of Apology

30 Gate City

Wise County Behavioral Health Services
Solutions Counseling
Town of Coeburn Restorative Justice Program
Family Preservation Services
Scott County Mental Health Center

31 Manassas

Shoplifter's Group (Stop Thief Curriculum)
Drug Awareness Education
Law Related Education
Restorative Justice
Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (S.T.E.P.)
Assignment to intake officer for counseling and monitoring for 90 days

Appendix C
Survey Endorsement Letter from VSCC Director



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia State Crime Commission

Delegate David B. Albo, *Chairman*
Senator Kenneth W. Stolle, *Vice Chairman*

Executive Director
James O. Towey

Director of Legal Affairs
G. Stewart Petoe

General Assembly Building, Suite 915
910 Capitol Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

804-225-4534
Fax: 804-786-7872

November 5, 2007

Dear Intake Officer or Parole/Probation Officer:

The Virginia State Crime Commission has been directed by the General Assembly of Virginia to conduct a comprehensive, two-year study of Virginia's juvenile justice system. In collaboration with the Crime Commission, the Center for Public Policy Research at the College of William & Mary is conducting a survey of juvenile intake officers across the Commonwealth (including parole and probation officers who complete intake duties).

The survey will be distributed to all intake officers for the purpose of examining juvenile diversion programs across the state and their impact on recidivism rates. The information obtained will provide specific data regarding the availability of diversion opportunities and the standards by which diversion is assessed and implemented.

Your responses are very important to us. Thank you for your cooperation with this important study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James Towey'. The signature is stylized and written over the printed name 'James Towey'.