

Washtenaw County Trial Court - Juvenile Division

2007 Juvenile Probation Department Report Card

May 20, 2008



*Washtenaw County Trial Court - Juvenile Division
2270 Platt Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734/222-6900
WashtenawTrialCourt.org*

Washtenaw County Trial Court - Juvenile Division
Staff Listing

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The Honorable Donald E. Shelton, Presiding Judge

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Introduction

The Washtenaw County Trial Court – Juvenile Division is pleased to present to the citizens of Washtenaw County our 2007 Report Card. Our juvenile justice system strives to: protect children, promote community safety, hold individuals accountable, restore victims, and increase the competencies of court involved youth and families in partnership with the community.



Knowing the type and frequency of offenses, the demographics of youth who are charged, and the legal resolution of cases is helpful in assessing frequency of youth behavior, community safety, and the workload of the Juvenile Court. However, these measures do not indicate the outcome of our efforts: Did the youth make efforts to repair the harm he/she had done? Did the youth improve social and life skills? Does the youth have more options for pro-social behavior than before? Is the community safer now than before the Court's involvement?

This Report Card is an expression of the hard work by our staff to guide, monitor, and hold youth accountable and the achievements of youth in making reparations for the harm they caused. It is intended to provide citizens with information about the Washtenaw County Trial Court juvenile probation department and the services we provide, including:

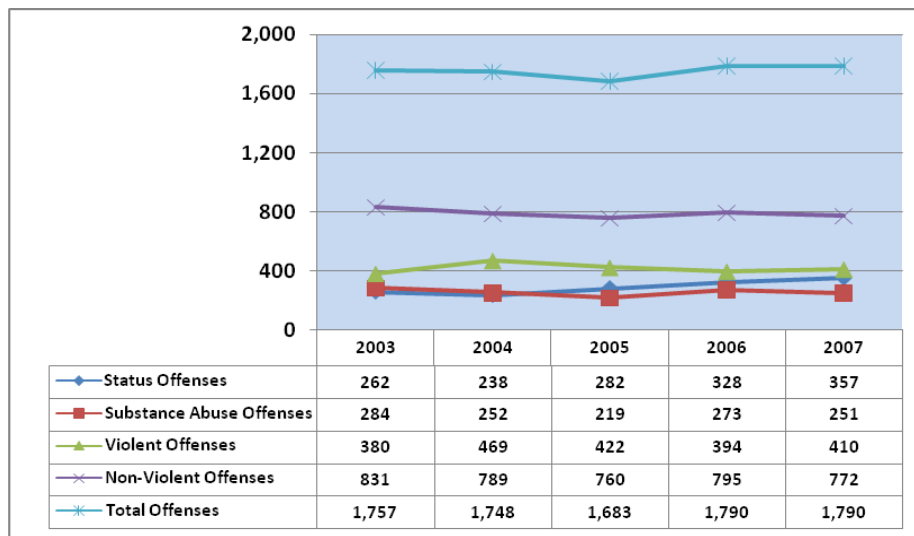
- Prevention efforts;
- The nature and extent of juvenile delinquency in our community and the demographics of the offenders;
- Outcomes of juvenile probation at the point that cases are closed in the areas of accountability, community safety, and skill-building;
- Strengths and challenges in our juvenile justice system, including activities planned to address opportunities.

Attention to these issues is critical if we are to improve outcomes for delinquent youth, their victims, and our community in the years to come.

Judicial Caseload

The Washtenaw County Trial Court - Juvenile Division has jurisdiction over all Washtenaw County youth under the age of 17 charged with violating criminal law (those acts, if committed by an adult, would be considered a misdemeanor, felony, or motor vehicle offense) and those charged with committing status offenses (illegal only because of the youth's age, such as school truancy, curfew violations, or running away from home). In 2007, 1,264 cases were filed in the Juvenile Court, encompassing 1,790 individual delinquent acts. Though the number of offenses has remained relatively stable over the past five years, the steady increase in status offenses is a notable trend (262/15% in 2003 to 357/20% in 2007). After two years of decline, violent offenses rose slightly during 2007.

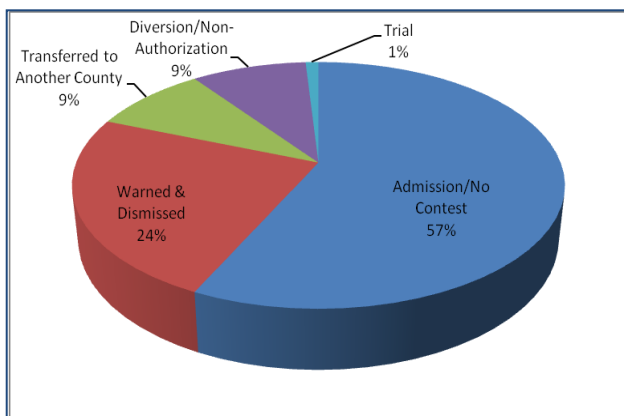
JUVENILE PETITIONS BY CHARGE TYPE: 2003 – 2007



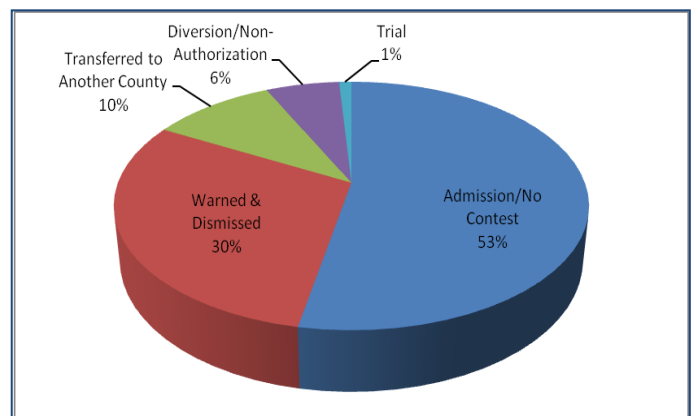
Like 2006, the three most frequent offenses in 2007 were Retail Fraud (198), Minor in Possession of Alcohol (152), and Assault & Battery/Aggravated Assault (144).

In response to a delinquency petition, youth in Michigan have the right to admit the offense; plead no contest; or deny the charge, choosing either a Bench or Jury Trial. In 2007, the majority of cases were resolved by pleas of admission (667/53%), followed by warning and dismissal (387/30%), transfer to another county (122/10%), diversion/non-authorization (81/6%), and Trials (9/1%).

2006



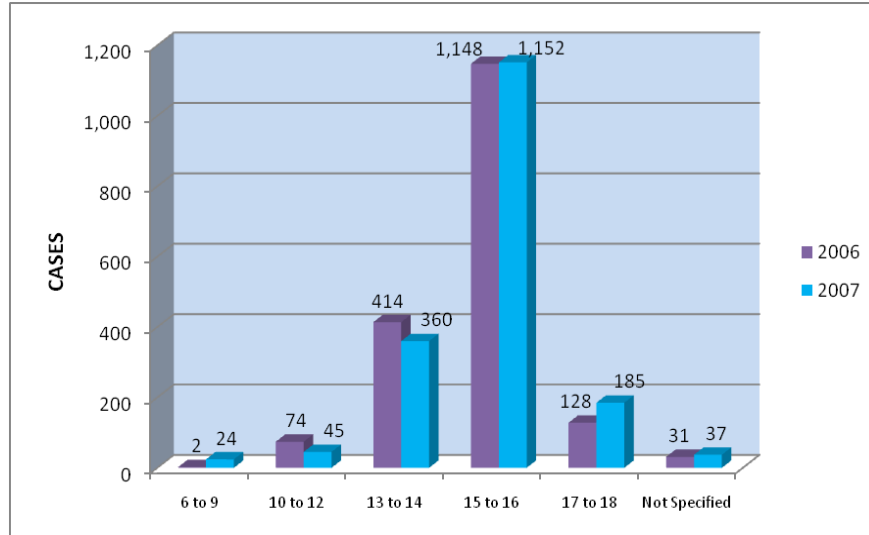
2007



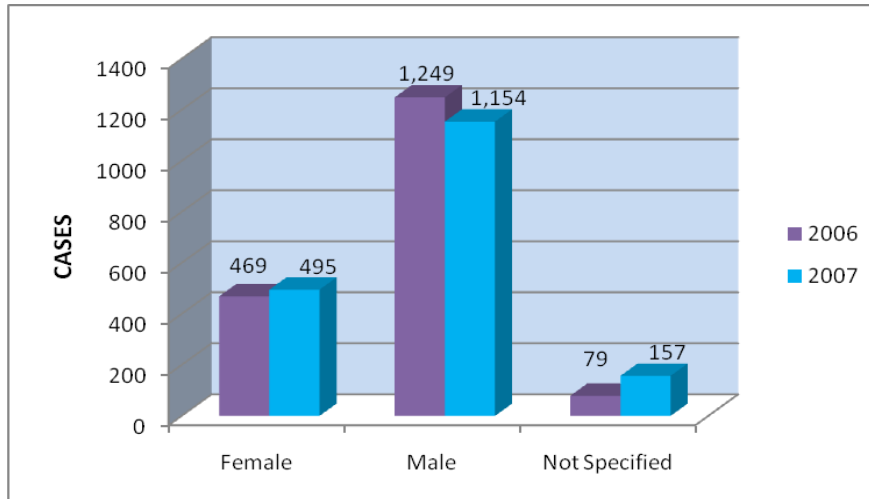
Demographics of Youth Petitioned to the Juvenile Court in 2007:

Youth petitioned to the Juvenile Court in 2007 tended to be 15 or older (74%) and male (64%). While there was a significant decrease in the number of African-American youth petitioned between 2006 and 2007 (814 v. 680), African-American youth continue to be petitioned at two and a half times their rate in the population.

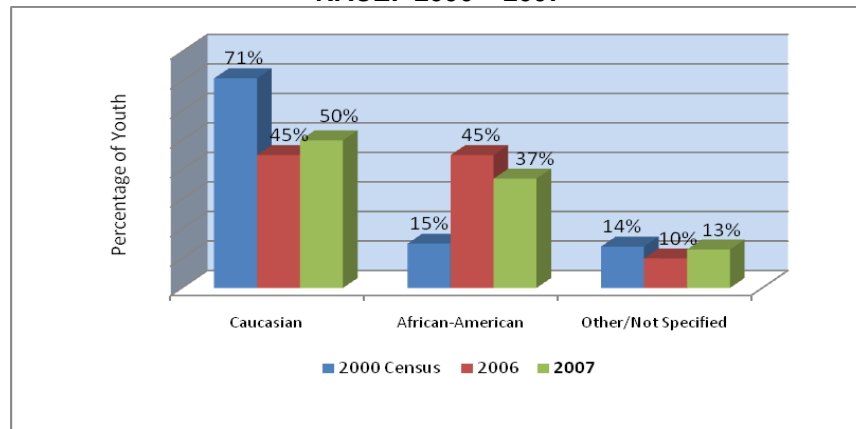
AGE AT CASE FILING: 2006 – 2007



GENDER: 2006 – 2007



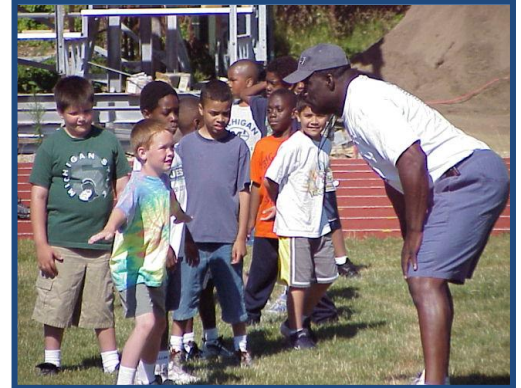
RACE: 2006 – 2007



Prevention

Summer Sports Camps

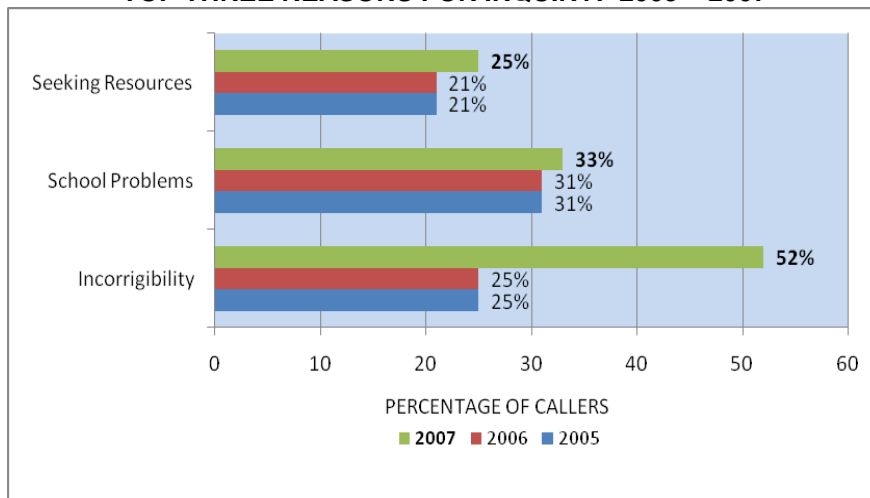
Since 1990, the Juvenile Court has organized free summer sports camps for Washtenaw County children. In partnership with local businesses, universities, public school districts, and law enforcement, these camps enhance adult/youth relationships, provide substance abuse prevention information and instill positive values, including sportsman-ship, cooperation, and a sense of achievement. In 2007, 240 community volunteers joined juvenile court staff to provide seven, four-day camps in football, wrestling, basketball, tennis, cheerleading, golf, and track to over 1,000 Washtenaw County children.



Public Information and Referral

During 2007, diversion caseworkers responded to 203 "inquiries" from the public seeking information and/or services for non-court involved youth who exhibit delinquent or incorrigible behavior. The majority of contacts were made by parents/guardians (80%), followed by other relatives (11%), neighbors (2%), or the child called themselves (1%). Callers may list multiple concerns and may receive multiple suggestions/referrals to address issues. Most often, callers were referred to specific community programs/services (53%); offered the opportunity to meet with a caseworker (26%); provided access for court services such as truancy, incorrigibility, and/or guardianship (11%); and/or referred to local law enforcement (10%).

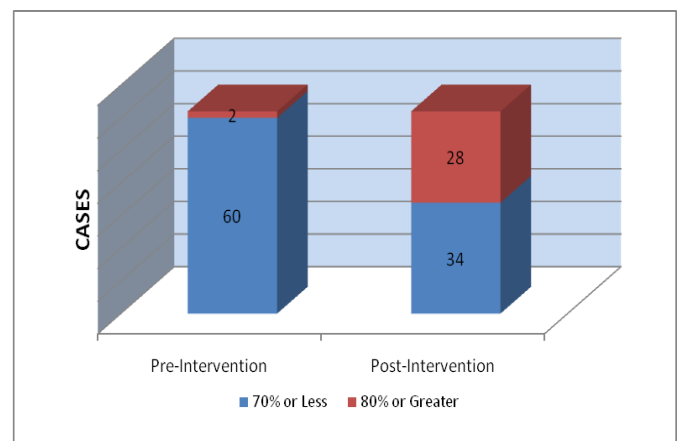
TOP THREE REASONS FOR INQUIRY: 2005 – 2007



Status Offense Diversion:

Lack of school engagement is strongly related to risk for substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and delinquent behavior. The court employs two diversion caseworkers to work with truant youth to resolve presenting problems and prevent delinquent behavior, without the stigma of formal court intervention. In 2007, 97% of youth referred had attended 70% or fewer possible school days. At the time of case closure, 69% (43 youth) had increased their school attendance; 45% (28 youth) to the point of attending 80% or more possible school days.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: 2007 DIVERSION



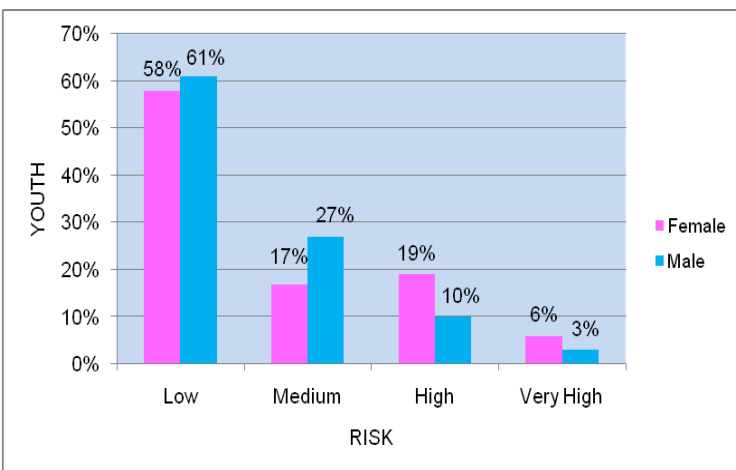
Probation Caseload

The Washtenaw County Juvenile Probation Department encompasses six units: Status Offense Diversion; Regular Probation; Intensive Probation; Juvenile Drug Court; Sex Offender Management; and Night Surveillance. Through comprehensive assessment; active supervision; incentives and sanctions; use of court-sponsored and community-based services; and tangible, measurable outcomes, the Juvenile Probation Department seeks to limit youths' potential wrongdoing and create opportunities for pro-social growth and positive community engagement, including accountability and reparation to victims and the community.

At the closing of a case, the probation officer completes a "Case Closing Summary." This form captures, in one location, all of the basic information needed to answer the question "Were the court's objectives achieved in this case?"

Youth are assigned to different levels of supervision based on their offense, their need for specialized treatment, and/or their risk of future offending. Some risk factors are static (do not change) and some are dynamic (can change with treatment).

Risk of Re-Offending At Case Initiation by Gender: 2007

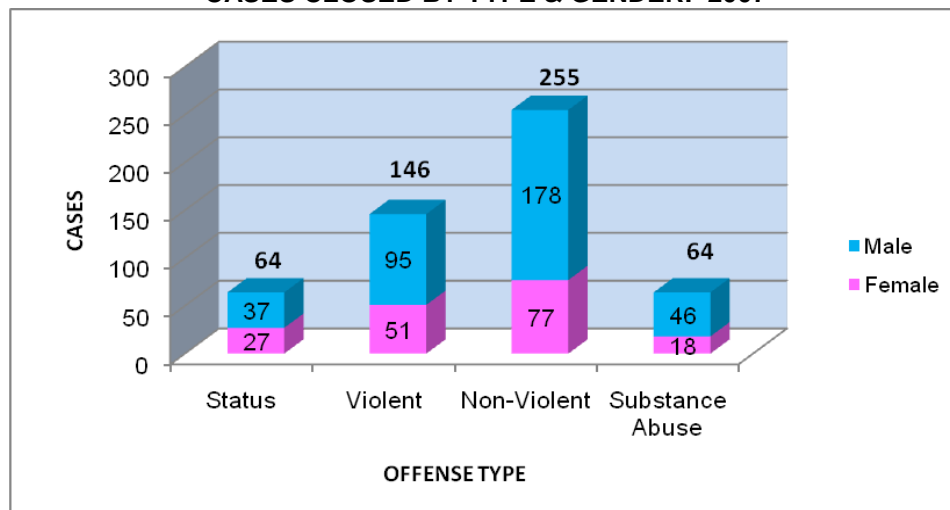


Youth with higher risk scores at intake will be assigned to the more intensive supervision programs. Of note in 2007, the proportion of girls scoring high risk of committing future offenses was almost double the proportion of boys scoring high risk (25% vs. 13%); and significantly higher than youth in 2006 (15% of females and 9% of males).

During 2007, 468 unduplicated youth (accounting for 529 separate cases) were supervised and closed by the Juvenile Probation Department. The highest proportion of youth supervised and closed during 2007 had

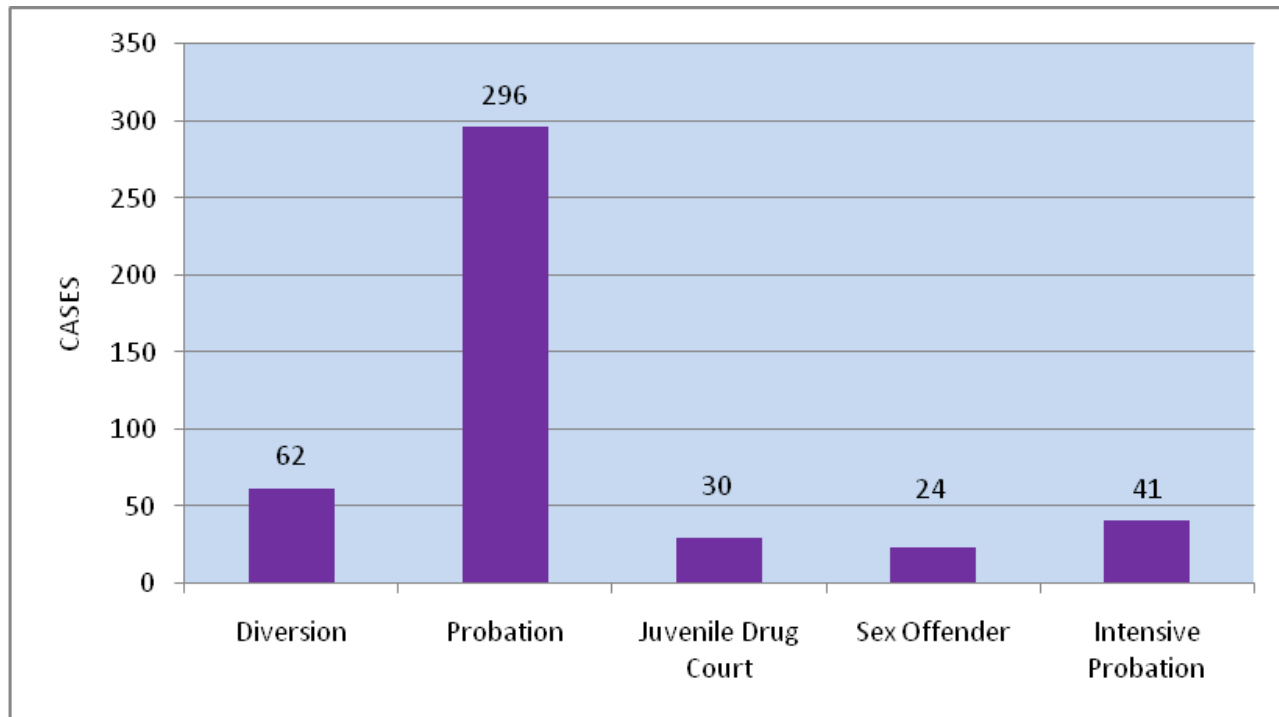
committed Non-Violent Offenses (48%); more than one-quarter of the youth had committed Violent Offenses (28%); and the remaining youth had committed Status Offenses (12%) and Substance Abuse Offenses (12%). Consistent with national data, two-thirds of the youth supervised were male (67%) and one-third were female (33%).

CASES CLOSED BY TYPE & GENDER: 2007



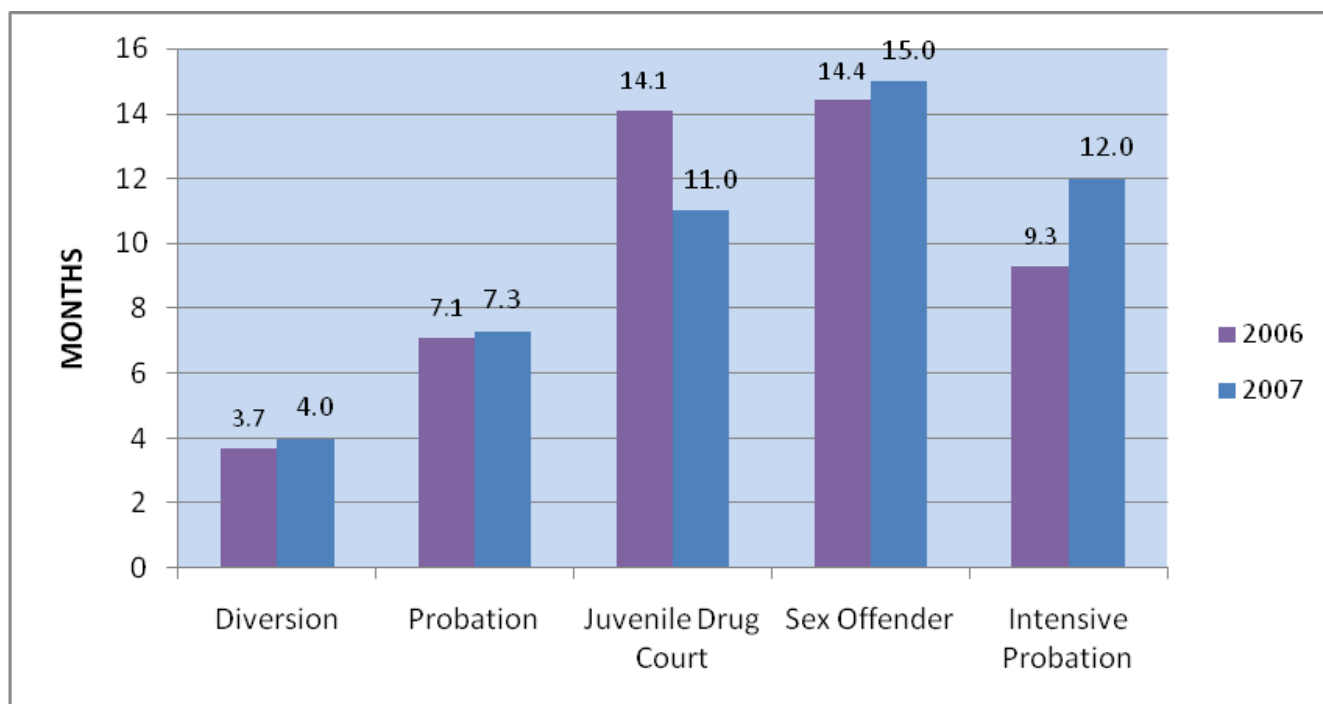
The majority of youth supervised and closed in 2007 received probation level of supervision.

LEVEL OF SUPERVISION: 2007 YOUTH CLOSED FROM SUPERVISION



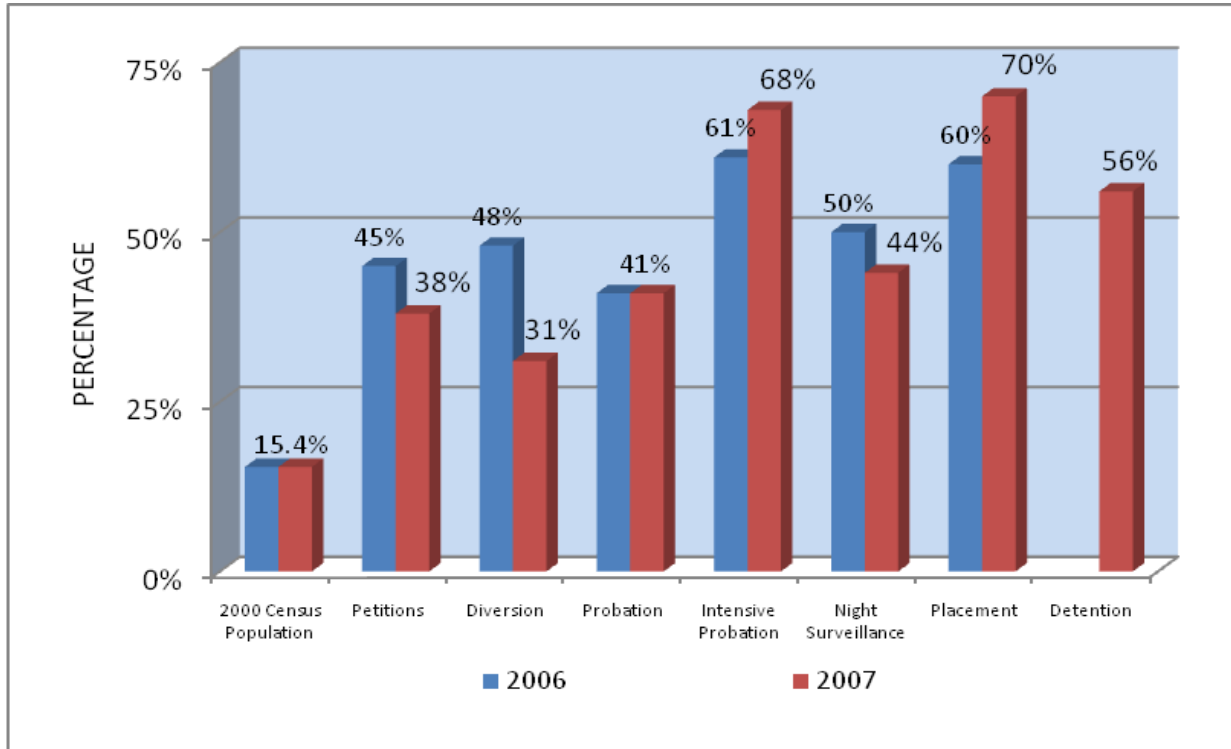
The average length of supervision varied greatly by program. Youth in the specialized treatment programs and intensive probation averaged over 11 months of supervision and youth on diversion averaged four months (the length of one school semester). With the exception of the Juvenile Drug Court, the average length of supervision increased between 2006 and 2007.

LENGTH OF SUPERVISION BY PROGRAM TYPE: 2006 – 2007



Disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile and criminal justice system is a national concern. Decisions to petition youth to the juvenile court are made by the police and the prosecutors and are not within the power of the court. In 2007, those authorities petitioned African-American youth at a rate almost three times the population of African-Americans in our local population. The disposition of those petitions, however, is within the discretion of the court and those dispositions also indicate a disproportionate impact on African American youth.

Disproportionate African-American Contact by Level of Supervision (Unduplicated Youth): 2006 – 2007



Consistent with national findings, African-American youth in Washtenaw County are more likely than Caucasian youth to be ordered into more restrictive community-based supervision (i.e. Intensive



Probation) and out-of-home placement. Though the actual numbers of youth remained small, the proportion of African-American youth in both restrictive programs demonstrates the disparity widened between 2006 and 2007. These raw statistics, however, need to be further evaluated, controlling for such other important factors as the severity of the offenses and the prior records of the involved youth. The court is proposing grant-funded research to more accurately gauge the extent and causes of these disparities.



	African-American		Caucasian		Other	
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Petitions	814	680	800	897	183	229
Diversion	39	19	39	32	3	11
Probation	136	127	156	152	42	32
Intensive Probation	25	28	8	8	8	5
Placement	24	21	16	9	0	0
Detention	-	119	-	77	-	18

Accountability

Accountability for juvenile offenders means accepting responsibility for the harm they have done coupled with action to repair the harm. We measure our impact on accountability and victim restoration by assessing: collection of restitution, community service work, and court costs; apologies to victims; and completion of Impact Awareness classes.

Restitution is the act of compensating victims for their financial loss; collection is a strong focus of the Juvenile Probation Department. In 2007, restitution was ordered in 109 or 23% of the cases. In 71% of those cases, youth paid the victim in full. Over the past three years, youth have paid a total of \$178,166 in restitution.

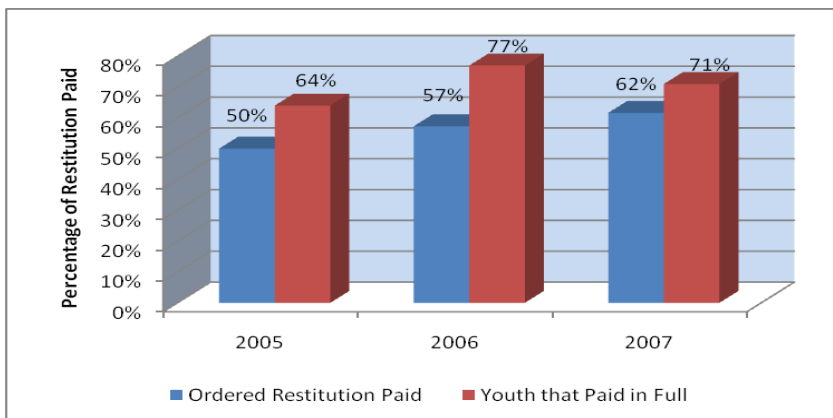
Community Service Work: Youth are often required to perform community service work to repay the community for the loss of peace and security suffered



by the community through the youth's delinquent actions. In 2007, community service was ordered in 337 (64%) cases and Washtenaw County received the equivalent of \$76,741 (10,733 hours X \$7.15 per hour) in public service work from juvenile offenders.

Victim Impact Awareness: In many cases, youth do not see the harm they have caused others by their delinquent actions. Through a four-hour class, youth become more aware of the impact of their offenses, build empathy, explore opportunities to repair the harm, and enhance accountability. In 2007: 80 youth were ordered to attend the Victim Impact Awareness Class; 53 (66%) successfully completed the class, and 62 youth were ordered to write letters of apology to their victims; 56 youth (90%) completed letters.

RESTITUTION: 2005 – 2007



2007	
Restitution to Victims	
Ordered:	\$87,785
Paid:	\$54,112
1 or More Payment:	83%
Paid in Full:	71%
Community Service Work	
Ordered:	13,791 Hours
Worked:	10,733 Hours
Completed in Full:	73%
Value:	\$76,741
Court Costs & Fees	
Ordered:	\$33,630
Paid:	\$25,328
Paid in Full:	75%

Community Safety

Helping to keep the community safe is one of the primary goals of the Juvenile Probation Department. Two measures of the probation department's impact on community safety are: 1) the number of new offenses committed by youth while under supervision, and 2) the number of violations of probation that result in extension or escalation of supervision. In 2007:



- 77% of youth did not receive new petitions while under supervision of the probation department
- 75% of youth followed the terms of their probation and did not receive violations of probation that extended or escalated supervision.

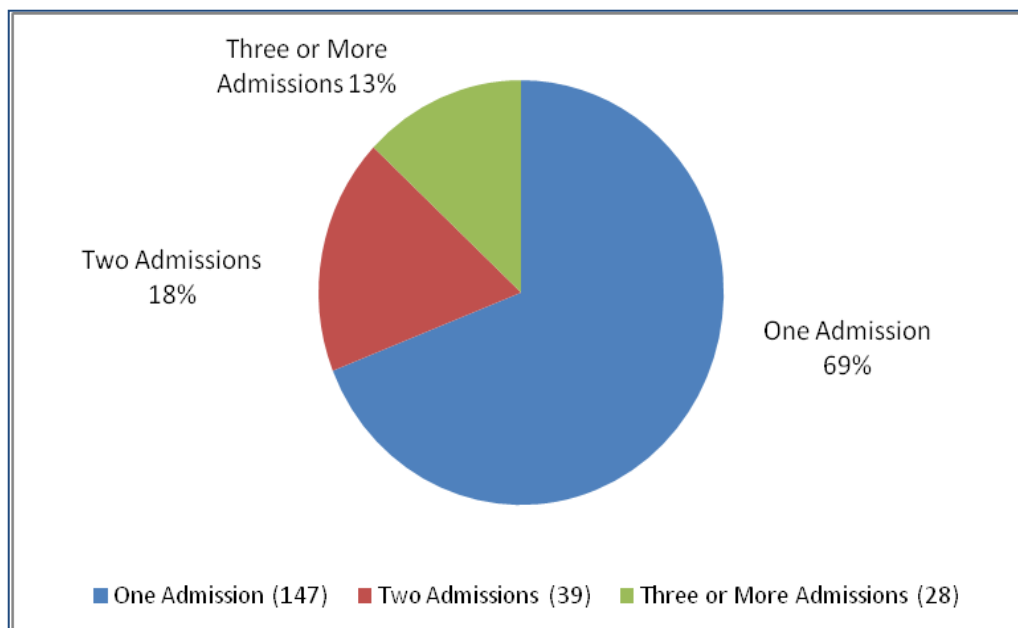
To enhance community safety, youth deemed to be at high risk of re-offending are placed on intensive supervision programs, which often include Night Surveillance and electronic monitoring (tether).

Night Surveillance: Using curfews, house arrest, conflict management, frequent home visits and telephone contacts, the Night Surveillance Unit closely monitors youth in the community during evening hours, seven days per week. During 2007, Night Surveillance staff drove 85,431 miles and conducted over 12,797 home visits to 191 youth.

Tether: Night Surveillance is sometimes augmented by the use of electronic monitoring. During 2007, 56 youth were placed on tether for a total of 2,498 days (averaging 45 days per youth). During their time on tether, these youth achieved 2,060 (82%) successful days (no violations of tether rules).

When close monitoring and community supervision are not sufficient to ensure public safety, detention may be used. In 2007, 214 youth were admitted to detention a total of 322 times. Youth in detention tended to be 15 years or older (76%), male (72%), and African-American (56%). The average stay was 20 days and detention was most often used in response to violations of probation (61%) as opposed to new charges (39%).

FREQUENCY OF DETENTION ADMISSIONS: 2007



Competency Development

Competency is the capacity to do something well that others value. Like other young people, juvenile offenders need to become competent, caring individuals who live crime-free and productive lives. A strong element of probation is helping youth enhance or develop pro-social skills. We measure our impact on competency development by assessing: school participation; resistance to drugs and alcohol; connection to and successful completion of counseling services and life skills training.

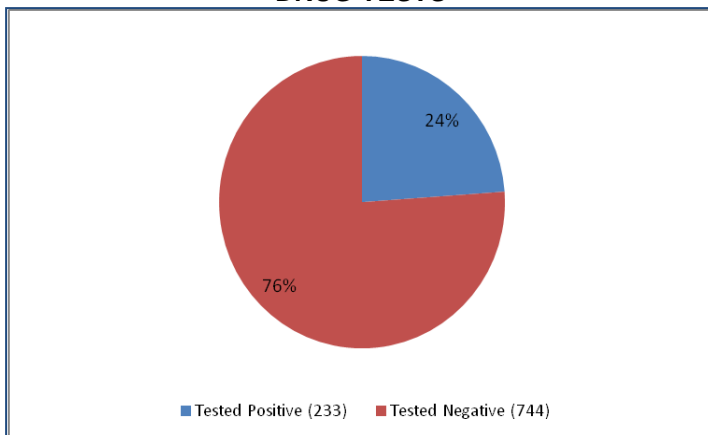
School/Work Participation

Whether or not a youth finishes high school is a key indicator of their successful transition into adulthood and long term economic security. Lack of school engagement is strongly correlated with the risk of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and delinquent behavior. At the time of case closure 83% of the youth on probation were actively engaged in school, pursuing a GED, or employed. School attendance at the time of case closure, compared to pre-supervision, increased or stayed the same in 89% of the probation cases. At the time of case closure, 71% of those youth were attending 80% or more of possible school days.

Resistance to Drugs and Alcohol

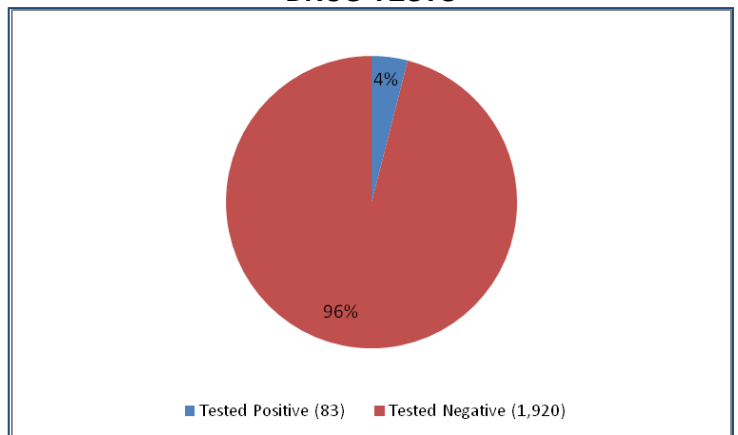
Substance abuse is a significant issue for youth in the juvenile justice system. During 2007, 38% of youth referred to the Probation Department screened as likely abusing (27%) or dependent (11%) on drugs or alcohol. This number, 38%, far exceeds the national average of 8% of youth age 12 to 17 that have substance abuse or dependency disorders (SAMHSA, 2005 National Survey on Drug Use & Health). In addition to referrals for substance abuse counseling, probation officers seek to deter the use of drugs through frequent drug testing.

**CLOSED PROBATION CASES:
DRUG TESTS**



A total of 977 screens were completed on non-Drug Court youth closed in 2007. Of those, 76% of the tests were negative for drug use.

**CLOSED JUVENILE DRUG COURT CASES:
DRUG TESTS**

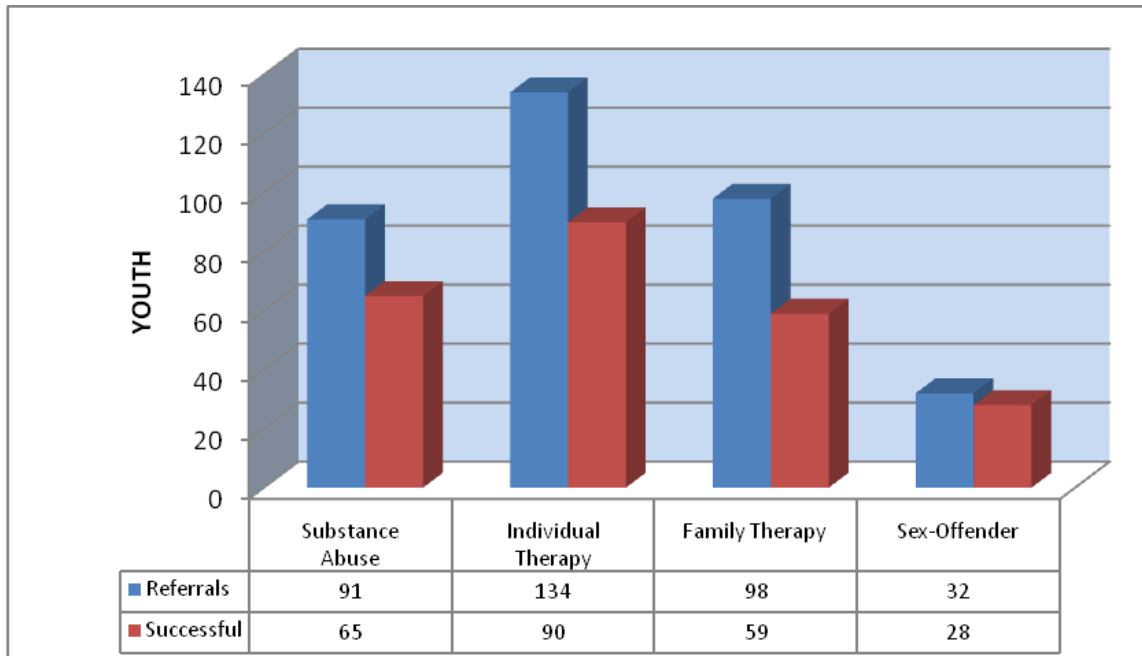


Youth in the Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) are screened much more frequently than Probation, sometimes three times per week. The 30 youth closed from the JDC in 2007 were screened 2,003 times. Of those, 96% of the tests were negative for drug use.

Counseling

Of the 468 youth discharged from supervision during 2007, 355 (76%) were referred for one or more forms of counseling or mental health treatment; 242 (68%) successfully completed treatment by the time of discharge from probation. Comparing the type and frequency of referrals to 2006 finds that far fewer youth were referred for substance abuse treatment in 2007 and far more were referred for individual and family therapy.

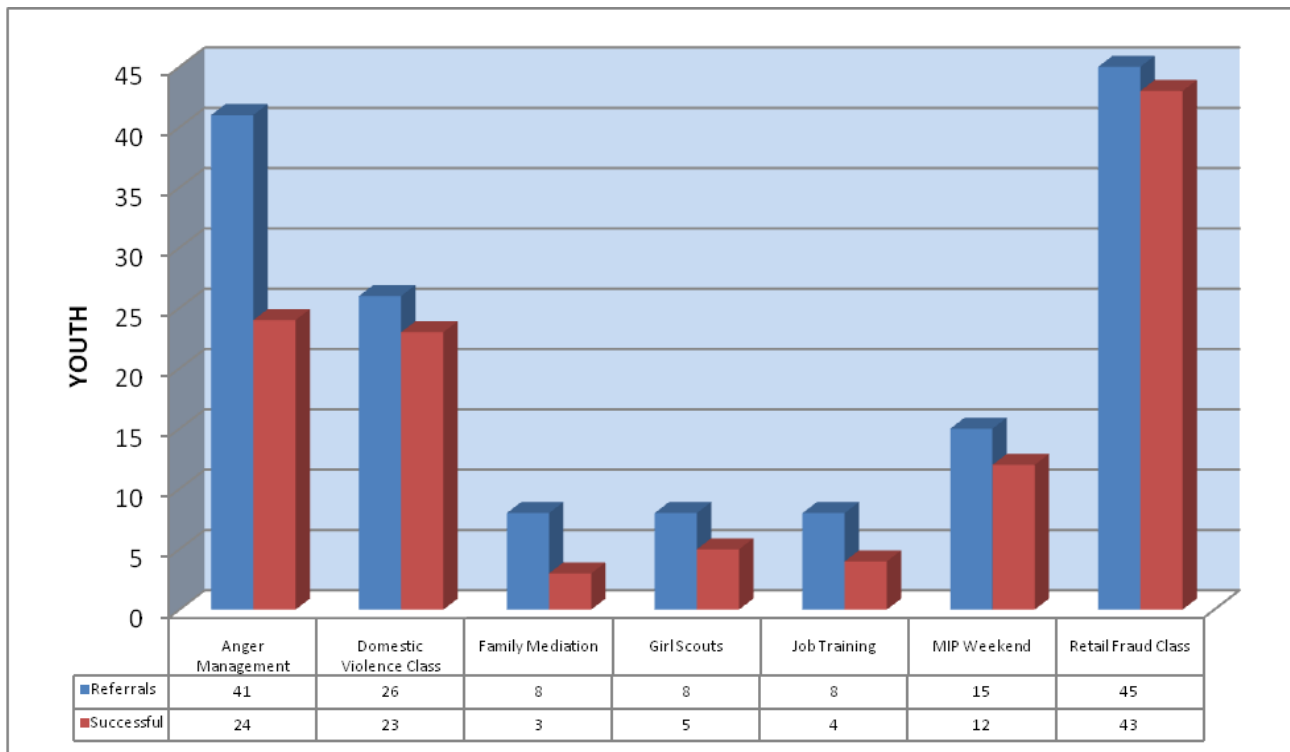
COUNSELING PROGRAM REFERRALS: 2007 CLOSED CASES



Life Skills

In addition to counseling and educational resources, the probation department utilizes a number of community-based or court-sponsored skill-building programs. In 2007, youth successfully completed skill-building programs 74% of the time, slightly lower than the 81% completion rate in 2006. Of the 468 youth discharged from supervision in 2007:

SKILL BUILDING PROGRAM REFERRALS: 2007 CLOSED CASES

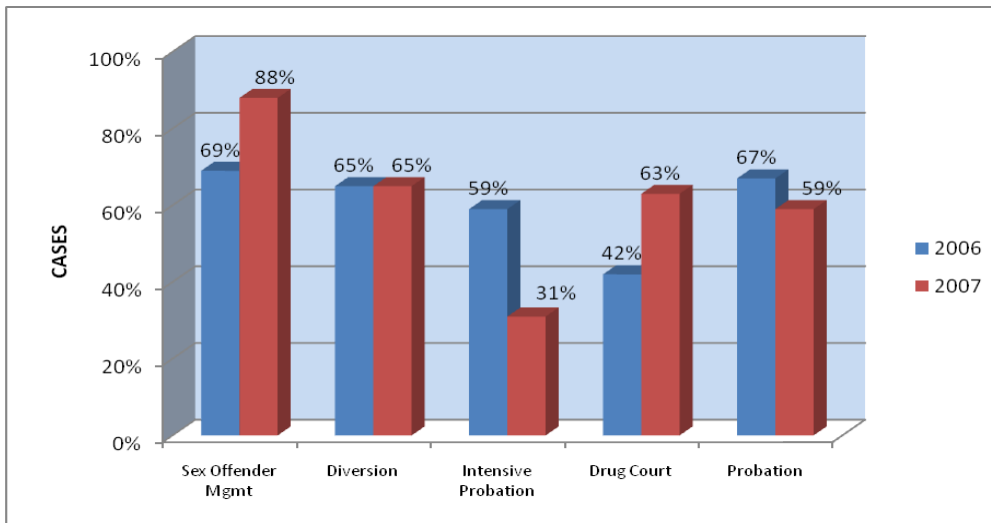


Outcomes

“Successful completion” of juvenile probation is determined by the youth’s achievement of goals in the areas of Accountability, Community Protection, and Competency Development. **Successful Completion:** 85% or greater completion of all goals, no new offenses, and one or fewer violations of probation resulting in a change of disposition. **Moderately Successful Completion:** 70% or greater completion of all goals, no new criminal law violations, and one or fewer violations of probation resulting in a change of disposition.

The proportion of youth who successfully or moderately successfully completed probation in 2007 is significantly lower than in 2006 (48% vs. 66%). Throughout this report many positive gains by youth have been noted: increased school attendance; completion of restitution and community service work; completion of counseling and skill-building programs. However, you will also note the high proportion of positive drug tests and the proportion of youth who committed new crimes or had multiple violations of probation.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION BY PROGRAM TYPE: 2006 – 2007



The data suggests that success rates for our youth vary based on program, race, and to a lesser extent, gender. Success rates for Biracial, Caucasian, and Hispanic females increased slightly from 2006 to 2007 and for males of the same groups decreased slightly. The most visible disparity, however, is the success rate of African-American youth which dropped further in 2007. Only 38% of African-American males and 59% of African-American females met our definition of successful completion of supervision.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION BY GENDER & RACE: 2007

RACE	FEMALES				MALES			
	Successful		Unsuccessful		Successful		Unsuccessful	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
African-American	33	59%	23	41%	61	38%	101	62%
Asian	0	-	0	-	1	33%	2	67%
Biracial	13	54%	11	46%	9	60%	6	40%
Caucasian	70	78%	20	22%	115	71%	47	29%
Hispanic	4	80%	1	20%	5	71%	2	29%
Other	0	-	1	100%	4	100%	0	-

One area of positive movement is the success rate of youth in our newest program, the Juvenile Drug Court. Significant changes were made to the program mid-2007, and based on this data (reducing length of program from 14 to 11 months and increasing successful completion from 42% to 63%); it appears that the changes are impacting outcomes positively for some youth.

Conclusions/Next Steps

Overall, youth closed from juvenile probation during 2007 were successful in some areas and struggled in others. Positive outcomes include:

- **Accountability:** Juvenile offenders paid \$54,112 in monetary restitution to victims and the value of \$76,741 in volunteer work for the community;
- **Community Protection:** 77% of youth remained crime-free while under supervision;
- **Competency Development:** 68% of youth successfully completed counseling programs and 74% successfully completed skill-building program. 89% of youth (probation and diversion) were regularly attending school at the time of case closure.

The overrepresentation of African-American youth in our juvenile justice system – in petitioning, placement in the most restrictive programs, and in under-performing with supervision requirements - is of great concern. Though this issue is not unique to Washtenaw County (it has been identified as a priority by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention), we have the responsibility and need to improve outcomes for African-American youth in Washtenaw County.

In the coming year, we will initiate a project to reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in the Washtenaw County Juvenile Justice system. A steering committee comprised of juvenile justice system representatives (law enforcement, prosecutor, public defender, and juvenile court) and community members will convene to conduct more detailed analysis of the nature and extent of DMC; assess the contributing factors to DMC; and design and implement an intervention plan to reduce DMC.

For the past six years, our diversion program has focused exclusively on status offenses. In June, 2008, in response to the elimination of the Prosecutor's Diversion Program, we will expand our diversion program to include first time misdemeanor and low-level felony offenders. Expanding diversion is considered one of the promising approaches in reducing DMC, as it offers interventions and services to youth without bringing them fully into the system. Though response to DMC was not the initial reason for expanding diversion, it is anticipated that it will contribute positively to the DMC reduction effort.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Jack and Jill of America, Inc., Ann Arbor Chapter, for providing youth models for pictures in this report.

Thank you to every member of our probation department – all of whom would much rather work with youth and families than fill out closing summaries!

Special thanks to Susan Synowiec for her diligent data management effort; beautiful, readable graphic design; desire to highlight every positive; and embracing every “negative” as an opportunity for improvement.

For more information or to obtain a copy of this report, contact Linda Edwards-Brown at 734/222-6940 or edwardsbl@ewashtenaw.org or Deborah Shaw at 734/222-6923 or shawd@ewashtenaw.org.

Except as otherwise noted, the data presented in this report was gathered from three sources: Washtenaw County Children’s Services Department; Washtenaw County Trial Court Enact Data Management System; Washtenaw County Trial Court Juvenile Probation Closing Summary Database.