



Georgia Juvenile Justice Reinvestment and Incentive Grants

Year One Evaluation Report
2013–2014



Governor's Office for
Children and Families

CARL
VINSON INSTITUTE
OF GOVERNMENT
The University of Georgia

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2013-2014

Submitted to

The Georgia Juvenile Justice Reform Implementation Committee
The Juvenile Justice Reform Funding Committee

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INTRODUCTION

The state of Georgia's Juvenile Justice Reinvestment and Incentive (JJRI) grant program is designed to reduce both juvenile felony commitments to the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and short-term program sentences through the use of two types of evidence-based programs: (1) diversion and (2) aftercare/re-entry. Services are designed to promote a positive relationship among the youth, their family, and their community as well as to reduce recidivism. The grant program has two primary goals:

1. To increase public safety through an effective juvenile justice system, and
2. To demonstrate potential cost-savings for taxpayers through the use of evidence-based options.

In 2013, DJJ, in cooperation with the Juvenile Justice Reform Funding Committee, contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to assist the committee with implementing the grant evaluation plan and serve as evaluator for the JJRI grant program. To carry out its responsibilities to the committee, the Institute has coordinated its work with the Governor's Office for Children and Families (GOCF), the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), and DJJ. Faculty and staff in the Institute of Government's Survey Research and Evaluation Unit use a mixed-methods approach to the project, collecting quantitative and qualitative data to better understand program outputs, grantee processes, and local and state outcome data. In addition, the Institute of Government developed standardized protocols to collect consistent data about targeted state- and county-level outcomes, including commitment and recidivism information across grantees.

The Institute of Government is using systematic data collection and monitoring to assess the success of grant objectives and also to create a sustainable framework for data-driven decision making at the state and local levels during and after the grant period. To promote sustainability, the Institute is leveraging existing data systems, like Georgia's Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse (juveniledata.georgia.gov) and DJJ's

Juvenile Tracking System (JTS) to inform its research and evaluation. Establishing data collection protocols and processes from the first year of the grant allows for continued collection of grantee data across grant years, encourages information-sharing between local and state entities, and facilitates data-driven decision making. The overall evaluation design includes three key features: (1) descriptive data to examine structural and programmatic variations among funded Georgia counties, (2) broad-spectrum site-level monitoring to review adherence to an evidence-based program model, and (3) outcome comparisons among funded Georgia counties to assess the impact of the grant program on targeted outcome statistics and commitment and/or recidivism rates across the state. The first year of evaluation activities took place from October 2013 to June 2014. During this time, the Institute of Government undertook evaluation research activities, including the production and delivery of data collection training webinars to grantees, site visits to conduct semi-structured interviews on program planning and implementation of evidence-based model(s), the production and presentation of the data collection tools and protocols, and the production and distribution of the end-of-year program report. Additionally, the Institute of Government provided quarterly evaluation presentations, which included key target data and programmatic information.

This report reviews the findings from the first year of grant evaluation activities. The next section provides an overview of the project, followed by a discussion of evidence-based practices and programs.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

Historically, juvenile justice programs are based on a rehabilitative versus a punitive model; however, in the past 20 years there was a national shift to a punitive approach that often used incarceration. By 2011, approximately 95% of youth in Georgia's secure juvenile facilities were in long-term placements, with an average length of incarceration in excess of 650 days (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2013). In 2012, Governor Deal's Criminal Justice Reform Council partnered with the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and other experts to evaluate the state's use of juvenile justice dollars. On the eve of the 2013 General Assembly, the council issued its conclusions:

Nearly two-thirds of [the budget for the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice] is used to operate out-of-home facilities, which can cost more than \$90,000 per bed per year. Despite these expenditures, more than half of the youth in the juvenile justice system are re-adjudicated delinquent or convicted of a criminal offense within three years of release, a rate that has held steady since 2003. (Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform, 2012)

Responding to both high expenses and high recidivism rates, the council recommended reinvesting juvenile justice dollars to divert youth from incarceration toward evidence-based, community programs proven to both protect the community and reduce recidivism (Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform, 2012). The council's recommendations and prior years of deliberations about changes to the juvenile code led to significant legislative reform and passage of HB 242 during the 2013 legislative session. In concert with the legislative changes Governor Nathan Deal recommended, the Georgia General Assembly funded \$5 million for Georgia's Juvenile Justice Reinvestment and Incentive (JJRI) grant program in the fiscal year 2014 budget. An additional \$1 million in federal funds for

juvenile programs was redirected toward GOCF, and together, the state created a \$6 million annual grant program to establish more community-based diversion programs.

The new juvenile code enacted by HB 242 took effect January 1, 2014, beginning the implementation of the recommended changes that would reduce the use of juvenile incarceration. Prior to detaining or incarcerating a youth, juvenile courts are now required to use standardized risk and needs assessments that help determine the youth's risk of reoffending and types of services needed (O.C.G.A. §§15-11-410, 15-11-505; O.C.G.A. §49-4A-1 (6)). Youth with status offenses, such as truancy, may not be detained in secure facilities in most cases and must be treated in the community (O.C.G.A. §15-11-410). Secure placement of juvenile offenders is limited to those who have committed a felony and repeat offenders (O.C.G.A. §15-11-601). Sentences are generally reduced for the most serious juvenile offenders, known as designated felons (O.C.G.A. §15-11-602).

In 2013, the first year of the JJRI grant program, 29 juvenile courts received grants to implement evidence-based programs (EBPs) as a way to avoid incarceration of adjudicated youth. In FY2014, 21 awardees received state funding through CJCC and eight awardees received federal funding through GOCF, for a total of \$5.6 million in funding. The 29 grantees span 49 counties, which in 2011 were home to approximately 70% of Georgia's total at-risk population, defined as juveniles between the ages of 0 and 16 (Puzzanchera, Sladky, & Kang, 2010; Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse, 2014; Governor's Council on Criminal Justice, 2014).

The JJRI grants were designed to reduce the number of designated felony commitments to DJJ and short-term program (STP) admissions through the use of EBPs. The overarching goals of the JJRI grant program are sixfold:

1. Reduce felony commitments to DJJ and STP sentences in each target jurisdiction.

2. Increase the use of evidence-based practices and programs in Georgia’s juvenile justice system.
3. Reduce the recidivism rate of youth involved with Georgia’s juvenile justice system.
4. Reduce the annual secure detention rate of each target county.
5. Reduce the annual secure confinement rate of each target county.
6. Demonstrate a cost-savings to citizens of Georgia through the provision of research-informed services to youth in the juvenile justice system.

The evaluation process is intended to help grantees identify areas of success and areas in need of improvements in their community programs and approach. The Juvenile Justice Reform Funding Committee, CJCC, and DJJ will use the data from the evaluation to identify areas for grantee training or intervention as well as to make modifications to future grant program design and requirements.

As the state evaluator, the Institute of Government is responsible for primary and secondary data collection, analysis, and reporting. Institute staff attend local, state, and national meetings; collect, analyze, and report data on the programs operating in grantee sites; conduct site visits; and provide evaluation technical assistance to grantee sites across the state. The overarching goal of this ongoing research is to evaluate grant recipients against the goals of the grant program.

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the first year of the JJRI grant program. The next section discusses the use of evidence-based programs and practices.

USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

Working with community-based providers and other local agencies, grantee courts utilize evidence-based programs deemed “effective” or “promising” for reducing criminogenic behaviors in juveniles by crimesolutions.gov, an evidence-based program registry sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Grantees use 10 key EBPs that are categorized by two distinct delivery

mechanisms: individual- or family-based therapy, and group-based therapy. Individual- or family-based therapies are delivered by a model-trained therapist, usually in the youth’s home, and address issues one-on-one that are specific to the individual youth and family. Group-based therapies are provided by trained facilitators to a number of youth at the same time, allowing for interactions and feedback from a group of peers with similar delinquency issues. EBP duration varies from several weeks to several months and is contingent on EBP model guidelines and clinical oversight. The therapy programs include the following:

1. Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a family therapy intervention targeting youth at risk for or presenting with delinquency, violent behavior, substance use, and/or disruptive behavior disorder(s). It is designed to systematically reduce risk factors and increase protective factors.
2. Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is an intensive family- and community-based therapy intervention that addresses the environmental factors that affect chronic and/or violent youth offenders.
3. Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) is a comprehensive, family-based intervention system for youth with substance abuse, delinquency, and behavior/emotional problems. It is designed to help a youth achieve positive attachments to family, school, community, and other pro-social supports.
4. Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is a family-based therapy in which youth and parents learn new skills to help process thoughts and feelings related to traumatic life events; manage and resolve distressing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to traumatic life events; and enhance safety, growth, parenting skills, and family communication.
5. Connections Wraparound is a family-based wraparound model of services targeting youth who have emotional or behavioral problems. It utilizes youth and family teams to coordinate services.

6. Thinking for a Change (T4C) is a group-based cognitive-behavioral therapy program intended to change the criminogenic thinking of offenders by developing a youth's problem-solving and social skills.
7. Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a group-based cognitive-behavioral intervention program designed to reduce aggression and violence and to improve a youth's moral reasoning and social skill competency.
8. Botvin LifeSkills Training (Botvin) is a group and classroom-based substance abuse prevention program that targets the major social and psychological factors that contribute to substance use, delinquency, and violence in youth.
9. Strengthening Families (SF) is a group-based therapy that focuses on reducing adolescent substance use and behavior problems by improving the interpersonal skills of both youth

and parents. It includes 14 hours of programming over seven weeks, with weekly separate group therapy for the adolescents and parents in addition to supervised family activities.

10. Seven Challenges (7C) is a group-based therapy primarily designed to address drug and mental health problems through a series of seven challenges. Facilitators teach decision-making skills, tailoring the process to the individual youth's needs.

In addition to providing EBPs, grantee courts committed to utilizing evidence-based practices, such as the Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI) and the Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA), which are two validated assessment instruments developed by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) in conjunction with DJJ and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

RESULTS

GOAL

Georgia's goal was to reduce the number of out-of-home placements in the 29 grantee courts during the grant term. Out-of-home placement numbers include unique instances of STP admissions and felony commitments as reported by DJJ. These numbers may not reflect unduplicated individual youth committed to, or served by, these placements. As a note, STP admissions and felony commitments are counted as distinct instances, and a youth may have more than one out-of-home placement during a given timeframe. In FY2012, there were 2,603 out-of-home placements (STP admissions and felony commitments to DJJ). Using FY2012 as a baseline, grantee courts pledged to decrease out-of-home placements in their jurisdictions by 15%, which is a reduction of 390 STP admissions and felony commitments. In addition, grantee courts were required to use evidence-based programs and practices in their jurisdictions. While most grantee courts represent one county, there are five courts representing more than one county. Enotah Circuit, Pataula Circuit, Ocmulgee Circuit, Lookout Mountain Circuit, and a portion of the Chattahoochee Circuit are represented in this report by Lumpkin County, Clay County, Baldwin County, Walker County, and Muscogee County, respectively.

RESULTS

Results reported below come from two sources of data: 1) monthly data on out-of-home placements (STP admissions and felony commitments) received from DJJ, and 2) monthly programmatic reports collected directly from grantee courts by the Institute of Government. Broadly, monthly programmatic data reports include aggregate data on youth participant demographics, EBP participation, and program exit information. For this first year analysis, aggregate level data can provide totals and general trends in the population under study. This type of analysis provides foundational data to guide subsequent evaluation years. While this analysis can provide aggregate data on single variables, such as gender, it cannot link multiple variables, such as a youth's gender and race/ethnicity.

Within nine months of program implementation, from October 2013 through June 2014, grantee courts well exceeded the 15% grant goal, reducing the number of out-of-home placements by 1,614 (from 2,603 to 989), a 62% reduction in STPs and felony commitments.

Grantees reported the number of newly enrolled participants monthly, with a total participation of 1,122 youth served in one or more EBP(s) during the nine months of the grant period. The final quarter (April–June 2014) provides the most accurate reflection of program capacity, with an average of 567 youth served monthly. Please note that EBP duration varies from several weeks to several months and is contingent on EBP model guidelines and clinical oversight. Lower average rates of participation during the first two quarters are due to the staggered implementation of EBPs across grantee courts.

Fifty-seven percent of youth participated primarily in individual- or family-based therapy, and 43% participated primarily in group-based therapy. Overall, the top three programs utilized by grantees were (1) Functional Family Therapy (FFT), serving 44% of the youth; (2) Thinking for a Change (T4C), serving 17% of the youth; and (3) Aggression Replacement Training (ART), serving 16% of the youth.

The following sections provide an overview of the progress made by grantees during the initial implementation year of Georgia's JJRI grant program. The next section presents grantee data on the reduction in out-of-home placements.

TARGETS

Grantees committed to reducing the FY2012 baseline out-of-home placements by 15% between October 2013 and June 2014. For the discussion that follows, the reporting period used for the year one analysis is October 2013 through June 2014, unless otherwise noted. For the grant reduction targets, "out-of-home placements" were defined as the total number of STP admissions combined with the total number of felony commitments to DJJ. Figure 1 shows percentage reductions from the 2012 baseline placements to total grant period placements by grantee. Figures 2 and 3 present these data separately, showing STP admissions and felony commitments, respectively. ■

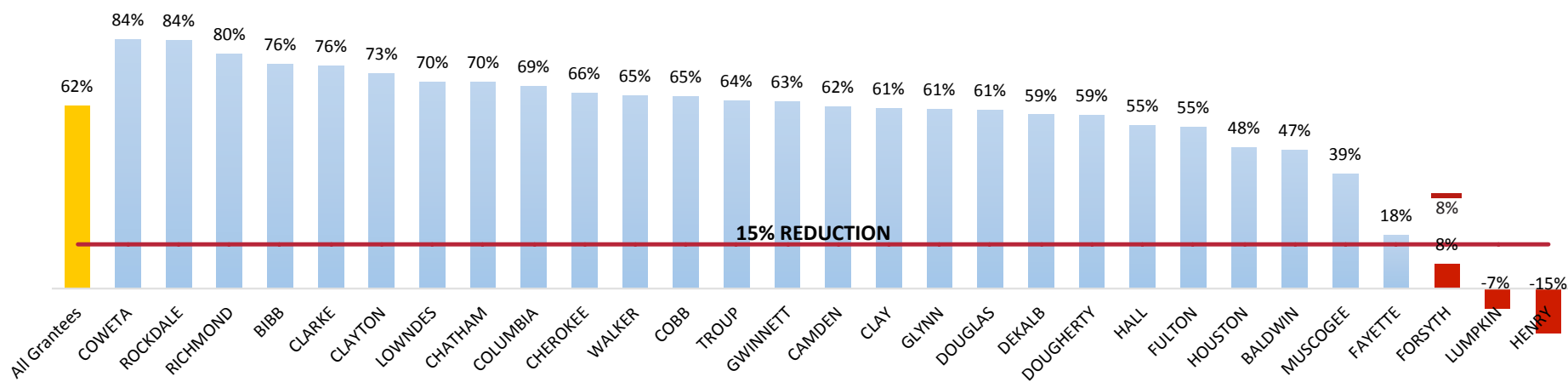


Figure 1. Out-of-Home Placement Reduction Percentages, October 2013–June 2014.

As shown in Figure 1, the majority of the grantees well exceeded the 15% target. The grant cohort saw a 62% reduction in out-of-home placements from the 2012 baseline amount. Percentage reductions ranged from a high of 84% in Coweta and Rockdale counties, to a low of -15% in Henry County. While 26 of the 29 grantees achieved or exceeded the 15% reduction target, Forsyth, Henry, and Lumpkin failed to meet this target. Two of these three grantees, Lumpkin County and Forsyth County, are from geographic locations with small 2012 baseline numbers; thus, percentage reductions are strongly affected by one or two individual placements. Henry County saw a slower program startup and did not begin programming in the first quarter of the funding cycle. Without a community-based alternative program, this county’s out-of-home placements for Quarter 1 were disproportionately high compared to the rest of the reporting period, when an alternative was present. See Appendix A for actual 2012 baseline, target, and out-of-home placement numbers for each grantee and for each month of the reporting period.

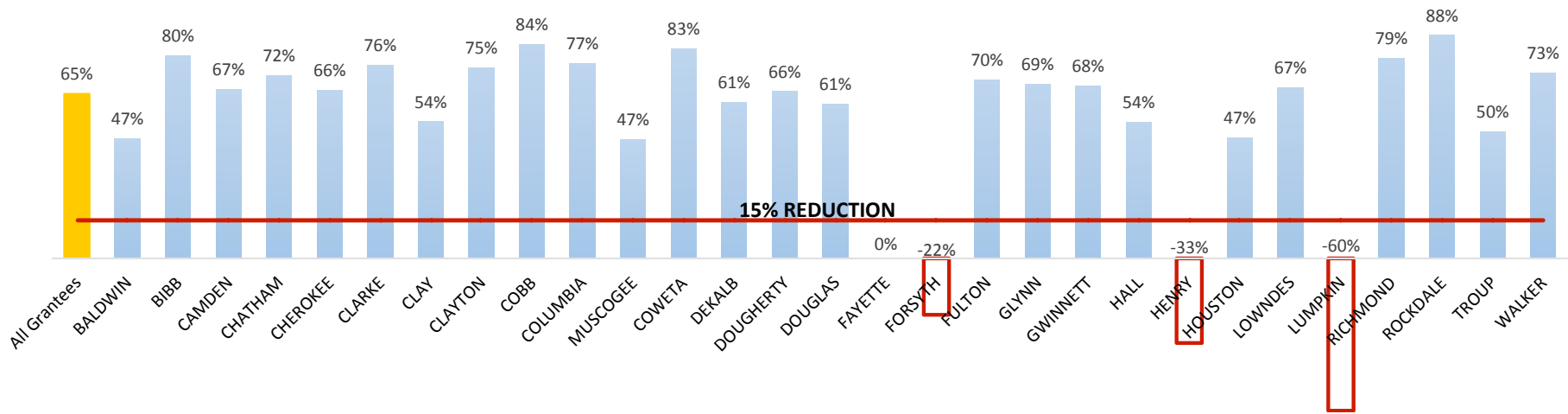


Figure 2. STP Admission Reduction Percentages, October 2013–June 2014.

Out-of-home reductions are broken down into two categories, STP admissions and felony commitments to DJJ. Figure 2 shows the STP reduction percentages for each grantee. From the 2012 baseline, grantees on the whole reduced STP admissions by 65%. Rockdale County showed the highest reduction in STP admissions percentage (88%), going from 33 STP admissions in 2012 to 4 during the reporting period. Lumpkin County had the lowest reduction percentage (-60%) and actually increased STP admissions from the 2012 baseline, going from 10 STP admissions to 16 during the reporting period.

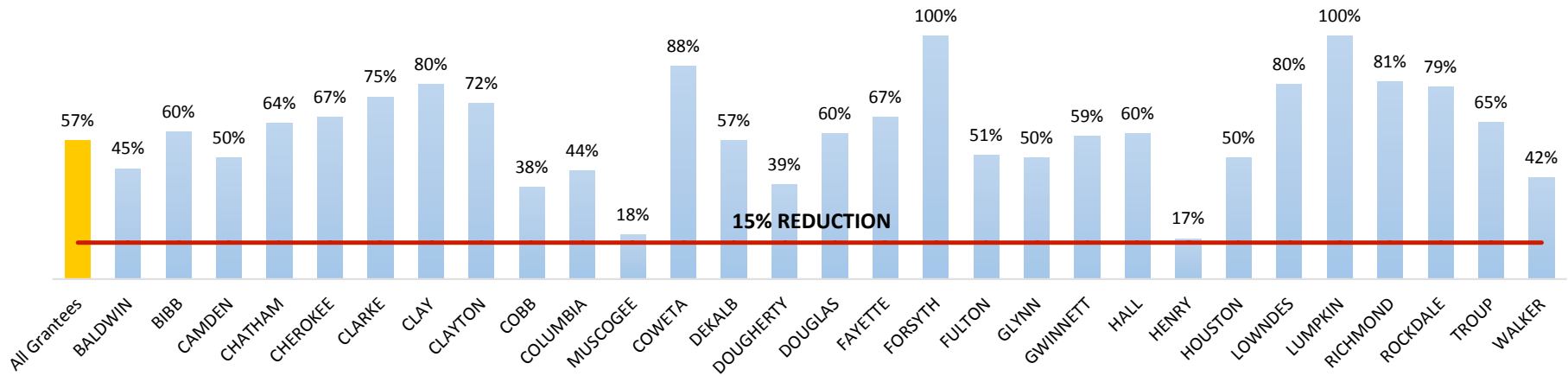


Figure 3. Felony Commitment Reduction Percentages, October 2013–June 2014.

Figure 3 shows the felony commitment reduction percentages for each grantee. From the 2012 baseline, grantees on the whole reduced felony commitments to DJJ by 57%. For felony commitments, two counties showed a 100% reduction. Forsyth County decreased felony commitments from three in 2012 to zero during the reporting period. Lumpkin County dropped from five in 2012 to zero during the reporting period. Henry County had the lowest percentage reduction (17%) but still met the 15% reduction target, going from 12 felony commitments in 2012 to 10 during the reporting period.

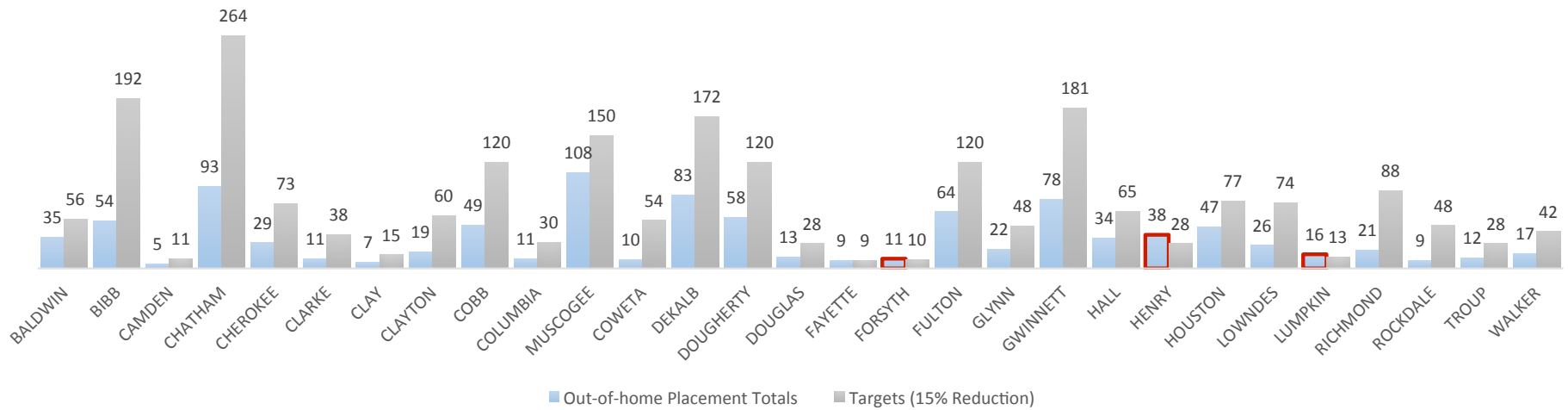


Figure 4. Out-of-Home Placements (STP + Felony Commitments) Compared to Target Reduction, October 2013–June 2014.

Figure 4 compares total out-of-home placements (STP admissions and felony commitments) made during the reporting period to the 15% reduction goal for each grantee. This figure shows the maximum allowable number of out-of-home placements for each grantee to achieve a 15% reduction alongside the actual number of out-of-home placements made during the grant term.

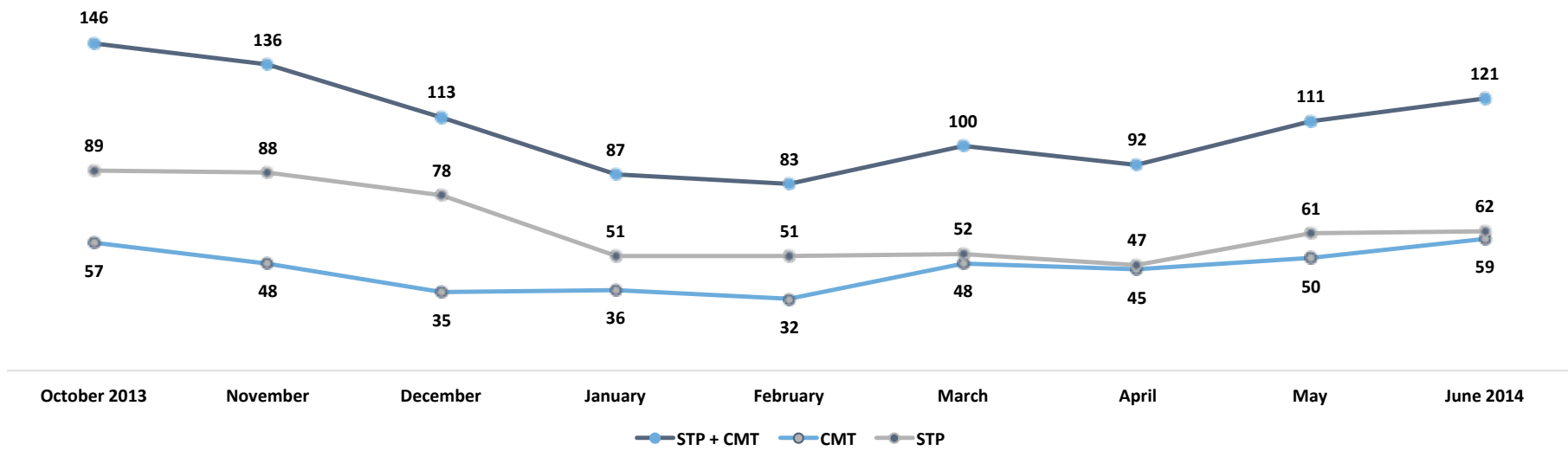


Figure 5. STP Admissions, Felony Commitments, and Total Out-of-Home Placements across all Grantees by Month, October 2013–June 2014.

The graph in Figure 5 provides a look at STP admissions, felony commitments to DJJ, and total out-of-home placements across the reporting period and allows for an examination of the ebb and flow of placements during this time. Out-of-home placements decrease substantially from a peak of 146 in October to a low of 83 in February, the month after the juvenile code changes went into effect in January. From February through June 2014, total out-of-home placements rise gradually but remain lower than those of October 2013. The data suggest a downward trend for STP admissions; however, felony commitments remained relatively stable. Factors to consider when viewing these data include shifts in judicial policy and practices, and an initial implementation grant period. Data in future years will better illustrate trends in these types of out-of-home placements.

NUMBER SERVED

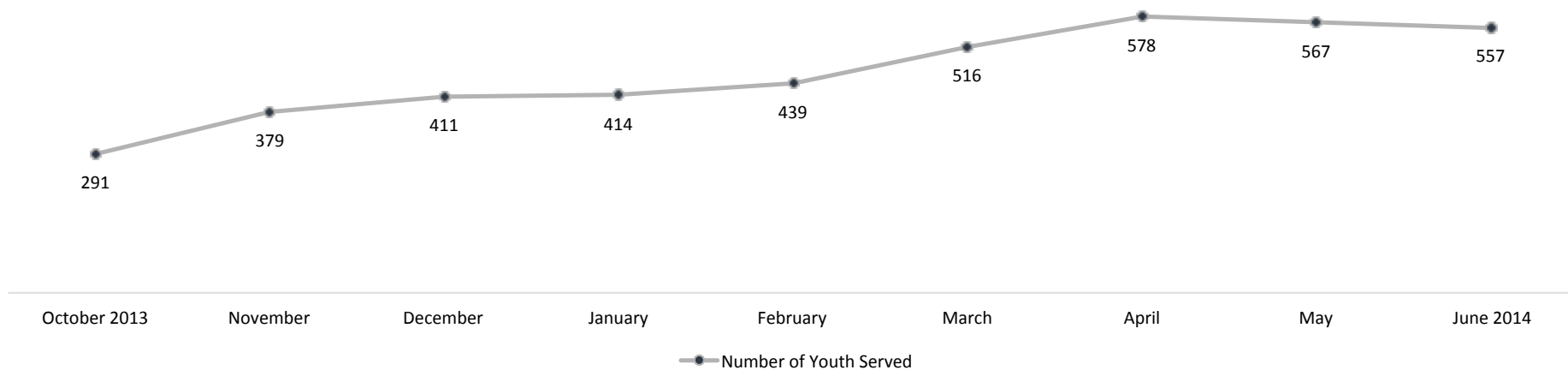


Figure 6. Number of Youth Served in EBPs during Each Grant Month, October 2013–June 2014.

Grantees served 1,122 youth during the reporting period. Figure 6 illustrates the number of youth served in EBPs each month during the reporting period. On average, 461 youth were served each month, with a high in April 2014, when 578 youth participated in grant-funded EBPs, and a low in October 2013, when 291 youth participated in grant-funded EBPs. From April through June 2014, all 29 grantees had fully operational EBPs and served an average of 567 youth each month during that period. The monthly counts do not represent unduplicated data, as the majority of participants carry over from month to month due to EBP model duration.

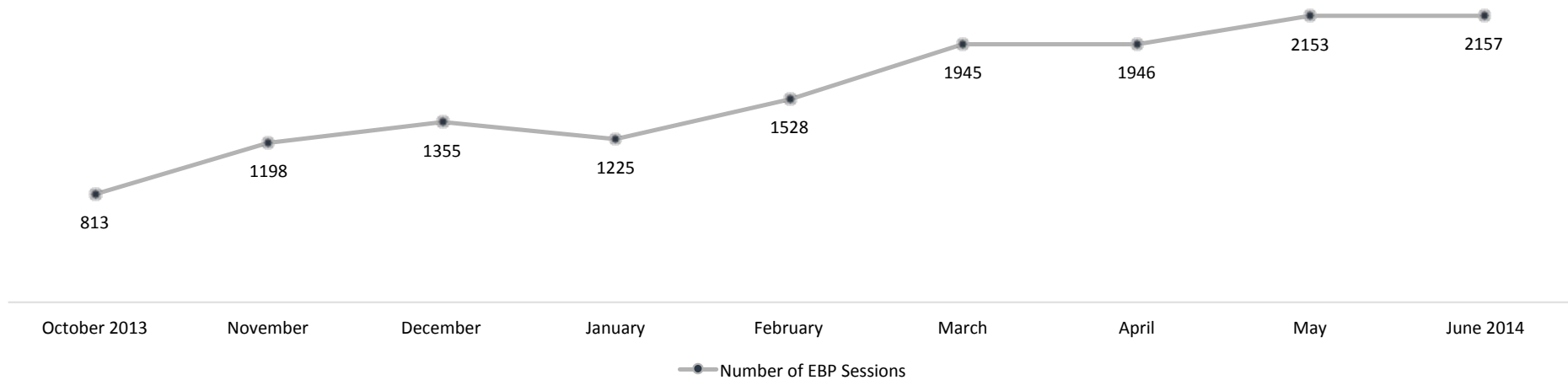


Figure 7. Number of EBP Sessions during each Grant Month, October 2013–June 2014.

The total number of EBP sessions delivered across all grantee programs during the reporting period was 14,320, potentially providing each participant an average of 12.8 sessions of therapeutic programming. Figure 7 shows the total number of EBP sessions provided each month by the 29 grantee courts.

TARGETS AND TOTALS

Figures 8a and 8b show total out-of-home placements (STP admissions and felony commitments to DJJ) for the 2012 baseline year and the reporting period, alongside the total number of participants served during the reporting period. Grantees are sorted and presented by their contribution to Georgia’s overall at-risk population (ages 0–16) in 2011. Figure 8a includes the top 14 courts in the grantee cohort, while the remaining 15 are presented in Figure 8b.

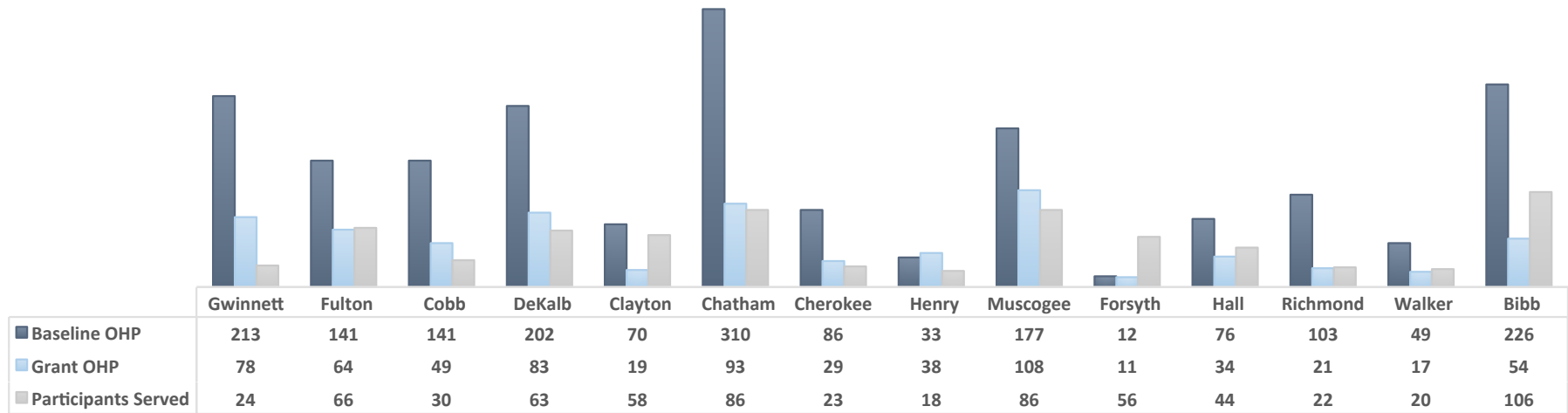


Figure 8a. Comparison of 2012 Out-of-Home Placements (Baseline), Grant Totals for Out-of-Home Placements (October 2013–June 2014), and Total Number of Participants Served (October 2013–June 2014).

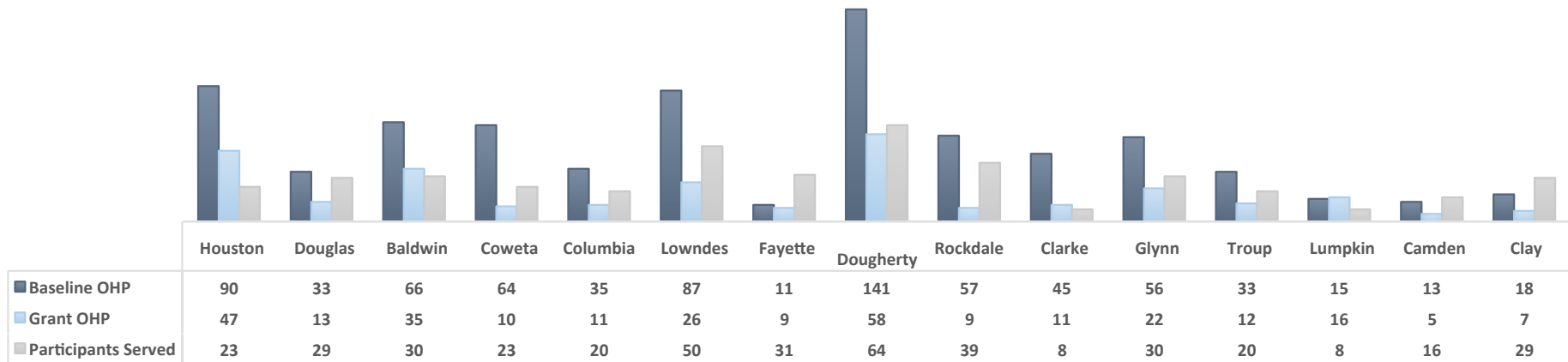


Figure 8b. Comparison of 2012 Out-of-Home Placements (Baseline), Grant Totals for Out-of-Home Placements (October 2013–June 2014), and Total Number of Participants Served (October 2013–June 2014), continued.

PRE-DISPOSITION RISK ASSESSMENT

Grantees utilized the Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA), which is an evidence-based criminogenic risk assessment tool developed by NCCD in collaboration with DJJ and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The PDRA measures the likelihood that a youth will reoffend and provides courts with a standardized measure to determine appropriateness for alternative programs. JJRI grant funding came with two conditions: (1) grantees used the PDRA for all grant-funded youth, and (2) grantees serve medium- and high-risk youth. Data collection of PDRA scores began in February 2014. Using set cutoff points, youth are identified as low-, medium-, or high-risk. Figure 9 shows the average monthly percentage of medium- and high-risk youth compared to the average monthly percentage of low-risk youth receiving PDRA assessments and EBP programming from February to June 2014. Average monthly percentages are calculated from the proportion of low, medium, and high PDRA scores reported each month, not unduplicated individual participants. For grantee courts with smaller overall youth screenings, monthly proportions are highly sensitive to fluctuation; thus, the monthly minimum and maximum number of medium- and high-risk youth are also presented in Figure 9. Note that Fulton and DeKalb counties did not implement the PDRA during the reporting period and are, therefore, not represented in this graph. In Figure 9, grantee court groupings represent staggered PDRA implementation.

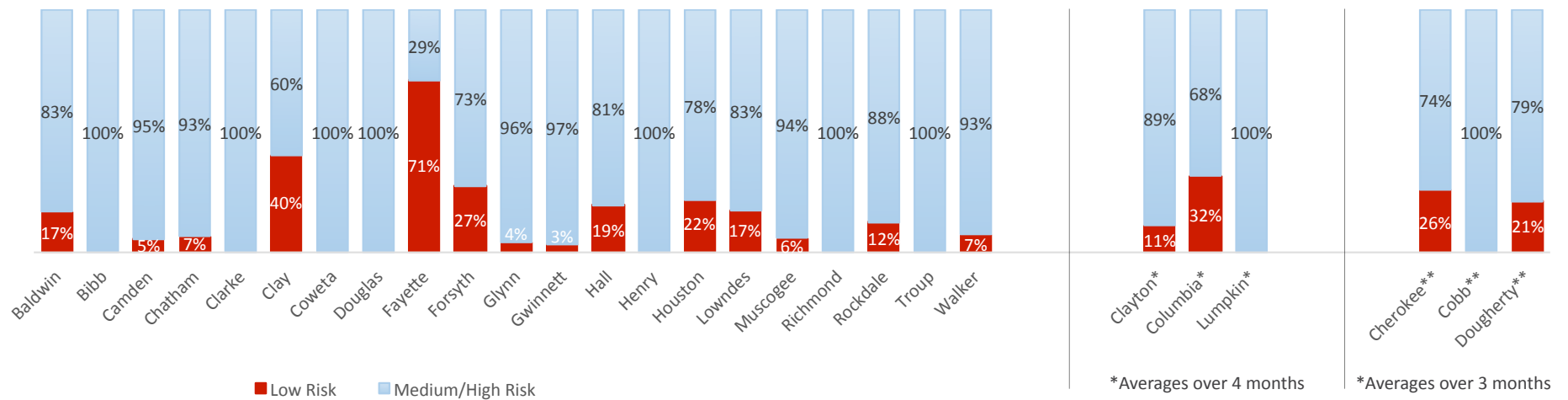


Figure 9. Average Monthly Percentage of Medium- and High-Risk PDRA Scores Versus Low-Risk PDRA Scores by Grantee, February–June 2014.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Each month grantees reported aggregate demographic data for youth in their grant-funded EBPs. Because the data reflect aggregate totals, monthly averages and frequencies for each demographic category are presented below. Average monthly percentages are calculated from the proportions of not unduplicated participant demographics reported each month by the grantees. These averages are across all grantee court sites and all EBPs. Where possible, average monthly participant demographics for youth served in grant-funded EBPs are compared with the participant demographics on gender and race/ethnicity available from STP admissions and felony commitments to DJJ for the reporting period. As a note, these types of out-of-home placements are counted as distinct instances, and a youth may have more than one out-of-home placement during a given timeframe.

Gender. As the grant is intended to serve youth at risk for STP admissions and felony commitments to DJJ, these averages are compared to existing data on STP admissions and felony commitments to DJJ for the reporting period. This demonstrates that the grant program is serving youth consistent with those served in these types of out-of-home placements. On average, males comprised 79% of youth served each month in grant-funded EBPs, and females comprised 21% of youth served. In comparison, males comprised 87% of total out-of-home placements statewide (84% STP admissions, 93% felony commitments), and females comprised 13% of total out-of-home placements statewide (16% STP admissions, 7% felony commitments). While the data suggest the grant program is serving a similar demographic, there is a somewhat higher percentage of females being served in the grant program than those in out-of-home placements.

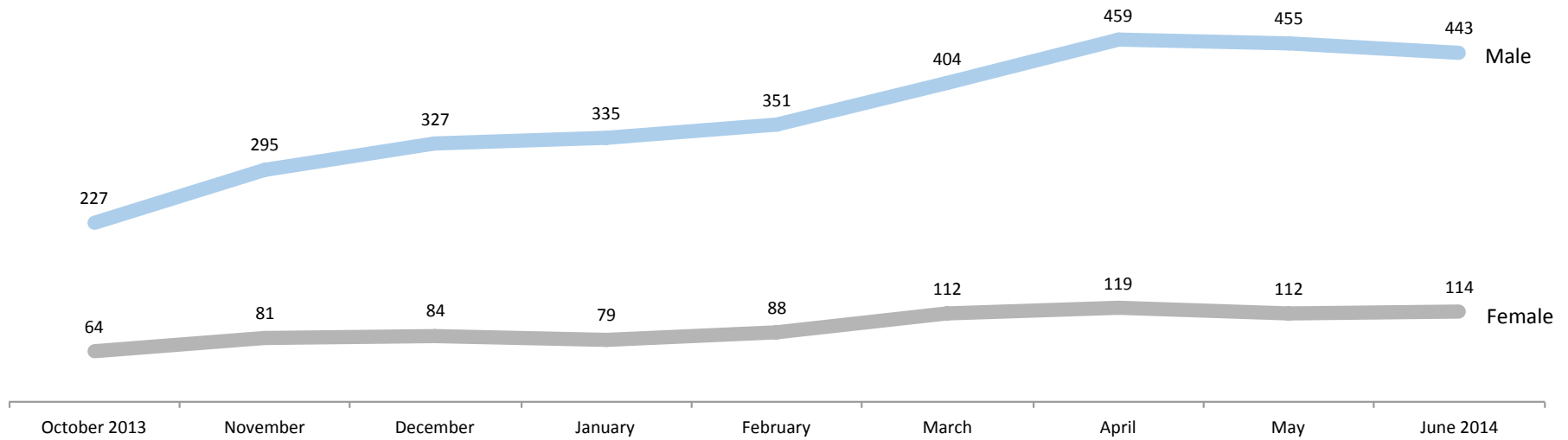


Figure 10. Number of Youth Served Each Month by Gender, October 2013– June 2014.

Figure 10 outlines the number of males and females served each month during the reporting period. In October 2013, 64 females and 227 males were served. In the final month of the reporting period, the number of females served monthly increased to 114, and the number of males increased to 443. The proportion of males to females remained fairly stable from month to month, with an approximate ratio of 8 males to 2 females.

Race/ethnicity. To simplify data collection for grantee sites and for consistency with DJJ reporting, racial/ethnic groups were amended in January 2014; therefore, the data presented below represents not unduplicated program participants from January to June 2014. On average, the largest racial/ethnic group served were black (72%), followed by white (19%), Hispanic (7%), other (1%), and two or more races (1%). As in the section above regarding gender, averages are compared to existing data on STP admissions and felony commitments to DJJ for the reporting period. In the comparison table below, the racial composition of statewide out-of-home placements resembles that of participants in grant-funded EBPs. Note that two or more races is not a racial characteristic reported by DJJ; therefore, those data are not represented in Table 11.

Table 11. Race/Ethnicity Composition for Youth Served by DJJ in Out-of-Home Placements, January 2014–June 2014.

	Black	White	Hispanic	Other
Yearly % STP admissions statewide	61% (N=418)	29% (N=196)	7% (N=45)	3% (N=22)
Yearly % felony commitments to DJJ statewide	72% (N=274)	17% (N=63)	8% (N=32)	3% (N=11)
Yearly % all out-of-home placements (STP+felony commitments) statewide	65% (N=692)	25% (N=259)	7% (N=77)	3% (N=33)

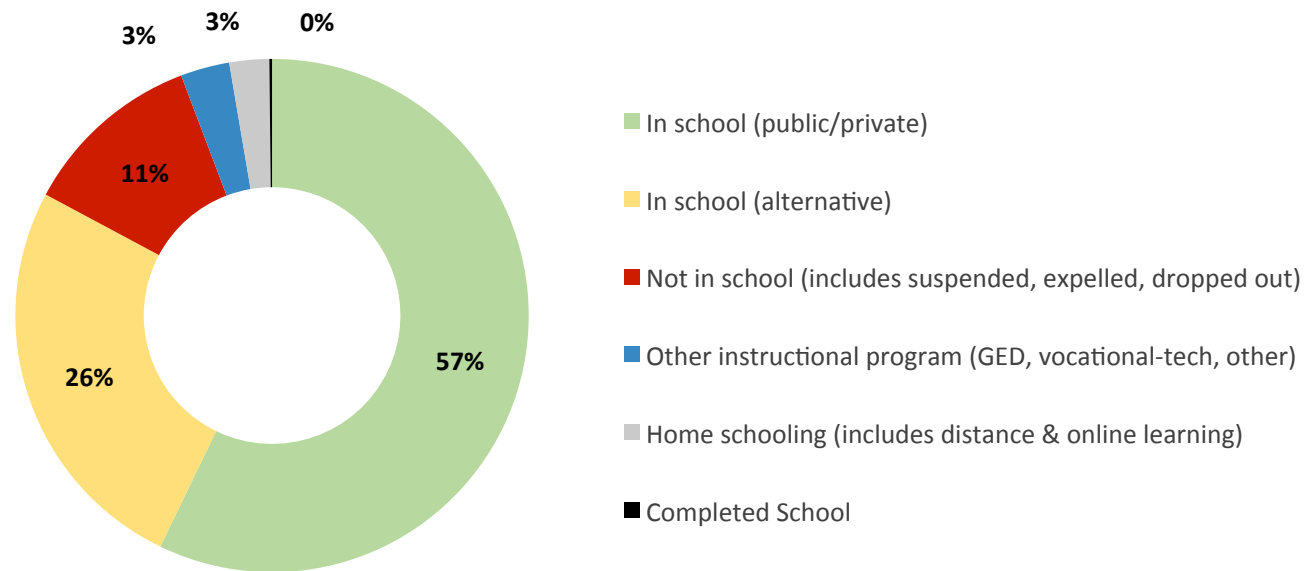


Figure 12. Average Monthly Educational Status of Youth Served by Grant-funded EBPs, October 2013–June 2014.

Education. Figure 12 presents the average monthly educational status of youth served in the grant-funded EBPs. Because the literature on juvenile delinquency shows a relationship between juvenile delinquency and school failure and/or dropping out, grantees were asked to track the educational status of youth in EBPs each month (Hawkins and Weiss, 1980; Brownfield, 1990; Arum and Beattie, 1999). On average each month, the majority of youth in the grant-funded EBPs received some type of educational programming, either by attending school in a traditional setting (57% in public or private school) or an alternative school setting (26%), or by receiving homeschooling (3%) or some other educational programming, such as GED, vocational-tech (3%). On average, 11% of youth served each month were not in school because they were suspended, expelled, dropped out/quit, or did not attend for some other reason. Less than 1% each month had completed school.

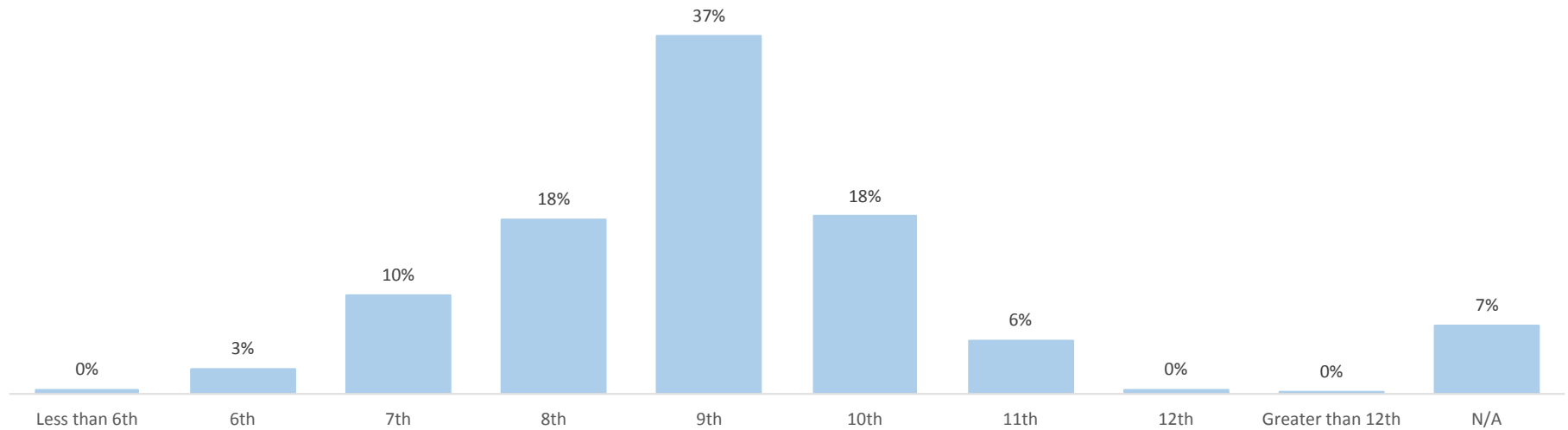


Figure 13. Average Monthly Grade Level of Youth Served by Grant-funded EBPs, October 2013–June 2014.

Figure 13 shows the average monthly percentage of youth served in grant-funded EBPs by grade level. The largest average monthly percentage of youth served (37%) were in the ninth grade. DJJ reports that youth in out-of-home placements tend to be one to three years behind in school. In the second year of the evaluation, the Institute of Government will collect data on the number of youth on grade level for their age and the number of youth older than their appropriate age-based grade. Analysis of educational assistance, tutoring, and other court programs aimed at increasing education attainment will be considered in the evaluation plan for the second year of the grant.

Employment status. Monthly, between 95% to 98% of youth were unemployed. As the majority of youth were enrolled in school or job-training programs, and as the largest average monthly percentage of youth were in the ninth grade, it is unlikely that these youth were actively seeking employment. Several studies find promising outcomes associated with employment for high-risk and court-involved youth as well as for youth provided with workforce education and training opportunities (The Task Force on Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth, 2000; O’Sullivan et al., 2001). In future years, the identification of courts providing workforce readiness training and assistance to youth offenders will allow for further understanding of employment as a protective factor in Georgia’s juvenile justice-involved populations.

Electronic ankle monitoring. To support grantees, DJJ provided optional electronic ankle monitoring services for program youth. Of the 29 grantee courts, 23 reported using electronic ankle monitoring during at least one month and for at least one youth in a grant-funded program. As seen in Figure 14, between 35 and 49 youth (7% to 13%) were monitored via electronic ankle monitoring each month.

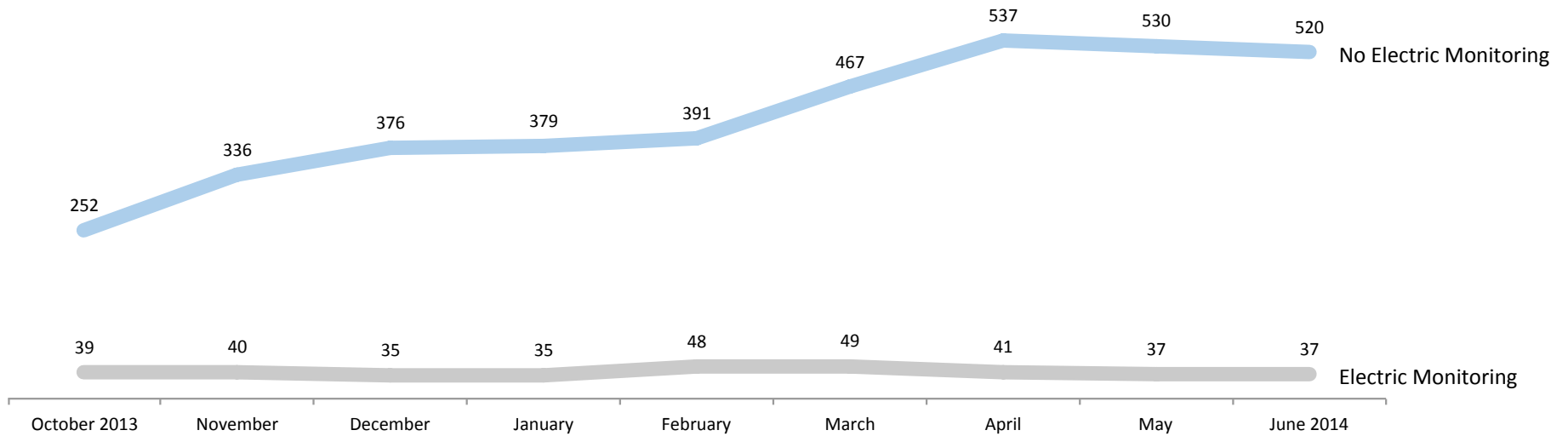


Figure 14. Number of Youth each Month on Electronic Ankle Monitoring, October 2013–June 2014.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING

Grantee courts worked with community-based providers and other local agencies to implement EBP models deemed “effective” or “promising” for reducing juvenile delinquency per crimesolutions.gov, the evidence-based program registry sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. While youth might receive more than one service concurrently, grantees reported the EBP program identified as primary. Figures 15 and 16 show the footprint of programs.

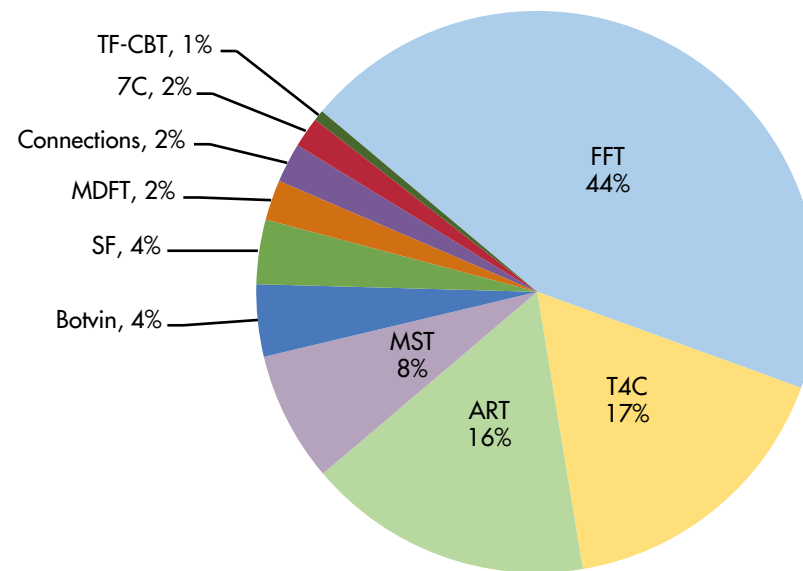


Figure 15. Average Percentage of Youth Served Each Month by Primary EBP.

Figure 15 shows the average monthly percentage of youth served by primary EBP program. The top three programs are 1) Functional Family Therapy (FFT, 44%), 2) Thinking for a Change (T4C, 17%), and 3) Aggression Replacement Training (ART, 16%). These three EBPs were most commonly selected among grantees, with 11 grantee courts using FFT, 8 using T4C, and 10 using ART. In addition, the five grantee courts serving the highest number of youth (Bibb, Chatham, Muscogee, Fulton, and Dougherty) used FFT and ART (see Appendices B and C for full lists of EBPs by grantee court and geographic location).

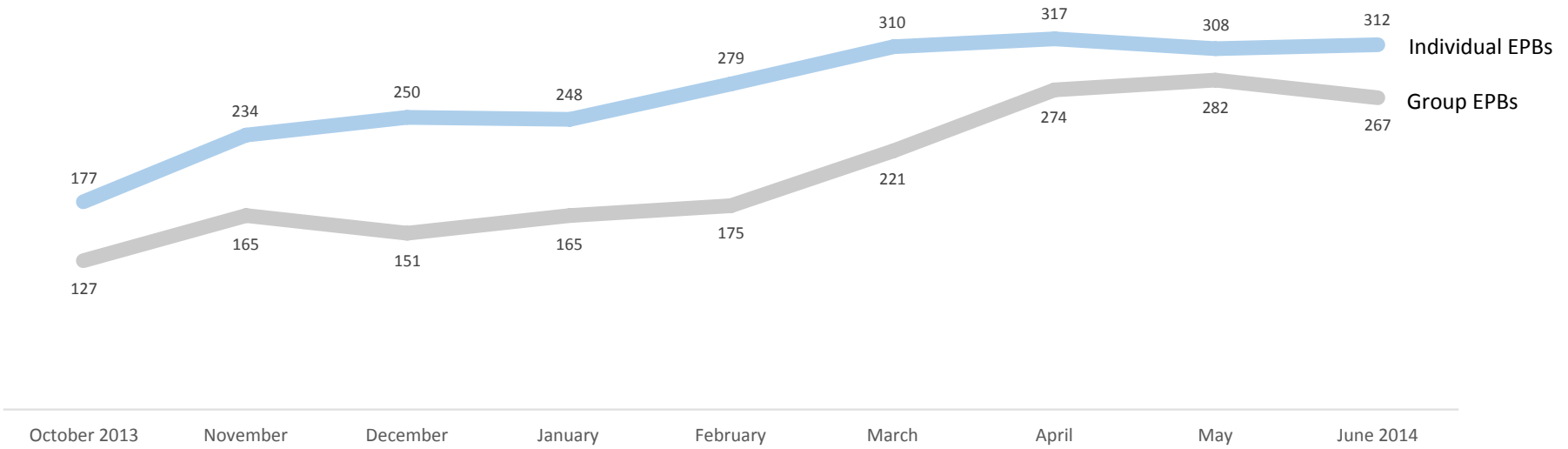


Figure 16. Monthly Totals of Youth Served by EBP Type (Individual or Group)

Figure 16 shows the total number of youth served monthly by EBP delivery type (individual- or group-based). Youth may be served by more than one EBP per month; therefore, the totals in Figure 16 will not match the numbers of youth served. Each month a greater number of youth were served in individual-based EBPs rather than group-based EBPs. Between 177 and 312 youth were served in individual-based EBPs, and between 127 and 282 youth were served in group-based EBPs monthly. For additional information regarding the number of youth served monthly by individual EBPs or group EBPs, please see Appendices D and E.

CONCLUSIONS

Twenty-nine grantees representing 49 counties successfully implemented evidence-based programs (EBPs) during the first year of the JJRI grant program. During the grant-reporting period, grantees used one or more of the 10 key EBPs to serve 1,122 youth in 49 counties across Georgia. These programs provided grantees alternatives to out-of-home placements and assisted in reducing the number of short-term program admissions and felony commitments to DJJ by approximately 62% across this geographic area. These 49 counties were home to almost 70% of Georgia's at-risk population (ages 0–16) during 2011; therefore, targeting services in these local courts had a statewide impact (Puzzanchera, Sladky, & Kang, 2010; Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse, 2014; Governor's Council on Criminal Justice, 2014). Courts and their providers used a combination of individual- and family-centered EBPs and group-based programs, with the majority (77%) of youth served by three programs: 1) Functional Family Therapy (FFT), 2) Thinking for a Change (T4C), and 3) Aggression Replacement Training (ART).

In addition to data pertaining to the evaluation research, EBP service providers supplied informal stories of successful implementation with the youth. One service provider described the accomplishments of a youth whose family completed a 14-class group-based program. The provider stated that the youth and the family, who were Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS)-involved, successfully completed parenting classes. By the end of the program, the family had regained custody of the youth, who also demonstrated improved grades and interpersonal skills. Another service provider described the accomplishments of a youth and her family who completed family therapy. By the end of the family therapy sessions, the youth had completed all justice-related community service hours and was exhibiting greater communication and interpersonal skills with family and friends in the community. Finally, another service provider described the accomplishments of a youth served through a wraparound model, which included the youth's family, care coordinator, family specialist, and probation officer. At the conclusion of the youth's

wraparound services, he was employed, had completed his General Educational Development (GED) degree, and remained clear of justice-related offenses.

During the initial year of utilizing community-based EBPs as alternatives to out-of-home placements, grantees and the state of Georgia saw a number of programmatic successes. As with any implementation year, there were also a number of lessons learned. The following paragraphs offer considerations to benefit future years of program implementation.

Individual-level data collection on youth in EBPs. The programmatic data presented in this report represent aggregate totals submitted monthly by grantees during the first year of implementation. These data are limited in that they cannot be analyzed for cross-categorical relationships. For example, youth with high PDRA scores in the program cannot be cross-tabulated with other demographic or programmatic factors. The modification of the evaluation plan to include the collection of individual-level data for program youth will provide a more robust analysis in future years.

Fidelity. Program fidelity is an important component of success. EBPs are effective in reducing recidivism in juvenile populations when the programs are delivered as intended by the developers of the models. Evaluators can examine individual program fidelity measures and fidelity challenges experienced by grantees in three primary ways: (1) by asking questions about current grantee EBP trainings, boosters, and certifications; (2) by examining provider adherence to the EBP curricula; and (3) by providing checks and monitoring of program fidelity at each grantee site. As the initiative moves forward, key stakeholders should work together to develop a plan for assessing the fidelity with which EBPs are being implemented.

Limit the number of EBPs for state funding. Grantees could choose from a range of EBPs in the first year, as long as they are designated as "effective" or "promising" on the evidence-based program registry housed on the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs website. Narrowing down the list for future years to include only the

most promising, widely utilized programs will promote a sustainable and measureable system in which training and technical assistance can be delivered effectively and with the greatest cost-effectiveness.

Geographic expansion. Grantees implementing services in the first year of the JJRI grant program were home to the majority of the 2011 at-risk population (ages 0–16) in the state. However, a number of geographic areas across the state did not have access to EBPs as an alternative to out-

of-home placements. For example, the majority of the southeast portion of the state is served by dependent courts. In those areas, DJJ has an opportunity to provide standard EBP services through providers in these districts. Expanding the JJRI grant program in future years to include these rural areas may benefit the youth in these courts, their families, and the community mental health infrastructure of the region. ■



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APPENDIX A

Target Numbers, October 2013-June 2014

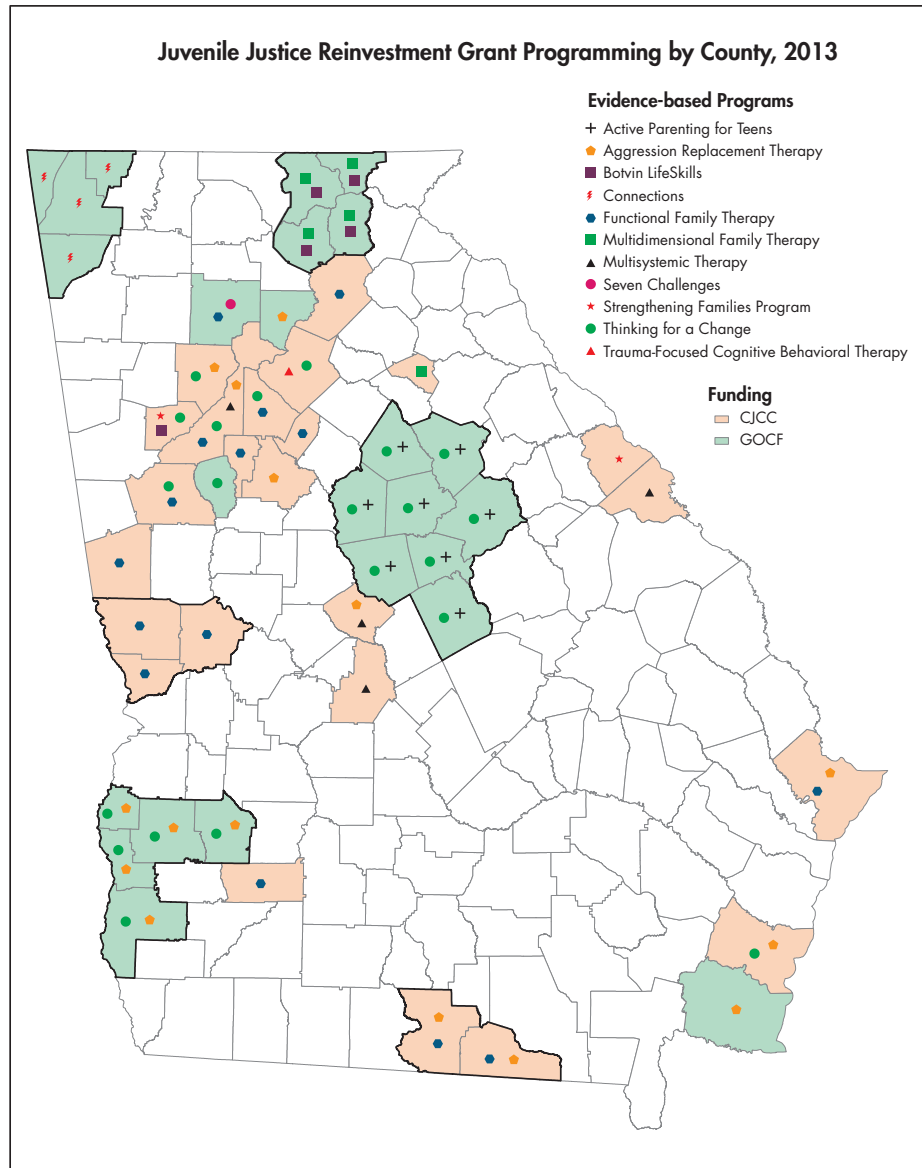
Grantees	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Totals	Targets	Baseline	Reduction #	Reduction %
BALDWIN	6	6	2	4	2	1	5	5	4	35	56	66	31	47%
BIBB	9	4	5	5	4	4	6	5	12	54	192	226	172	76%
CAMDEN	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	5	11	13	8	62%
CHATHAM	12	13	15	10	7	6	8	14	8	93	264	310	217	70%
CHEROKEE	0	5	1	2	3	4	6	5	3	29	73	86	57	66%
CLARKE	4	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	11	38	45	34	76%
CLAY	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	7	15	18	11	61%
CLAYTON	2	3	1	3	3	0	3	3	1	19	60	70	51	73%
COBB	9	6	2	3	5	9	5	4	6	49	120	141	92	65%
COLUMBIA	3	4	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	11	30	35	24	69%
COWETA	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	10	54	64	54	84%
DEKALB	10	2	13	6	9	9	7	8	19	83	172	202	119	59%
DOUGHERTY	10	11	3	6	3	10	7	5	3	58	120	141	83	59%
DOUGLAS	0	3	0	0	3	5	0	1	1	13	28	33	20	61%
FAYETTE	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	3	9	9	11	2	18%
FORSYTH	5	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	11	10	12	1	8%
FULTON	20	7	7	3	7	2	5	3	10	64	120	141	77	55%
GLYNN	2	0	3	2	0	2	0	10	3	22	48	56	34	61%
GWINNETT	9	16	12	12	3	7	8	6	5	78	181	213	135	63%
HALL	2	3	5	5	2	6	2	2	7	34	65	76	42	55%
HENRY	13	2	4	0	2	4	2	2	9	38	28	33	-5	-15%
HOUSTON	8	10	5	2	2	5	6	7	2	47	77	90	43	48%
LOWNDES	3	5	2	1	4	2	2	2	5	26	74	87	61	70%
LUMPKIN	2	2	5	0	1	2	2	1	1	16	13	15	-1	-7%
MUSCOGEE	8	16	14	14	13	13	8	11	11	108	150	177	69	39%
RICHMOND	2	5	5	1	2	2	0	2	2	21	88	103	82	80%
ROCKDALE	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	9	48	57	48	84%
TROUP	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	3	1	12	28	33	21	64%
WALKER	2	1	3	1	0	2	5	2	1	17	42	49	32	65%
GA	146	136	113	87	83	100	92	111	121	989	2214	2603		62%

APPENDIX B

EBP by County Court

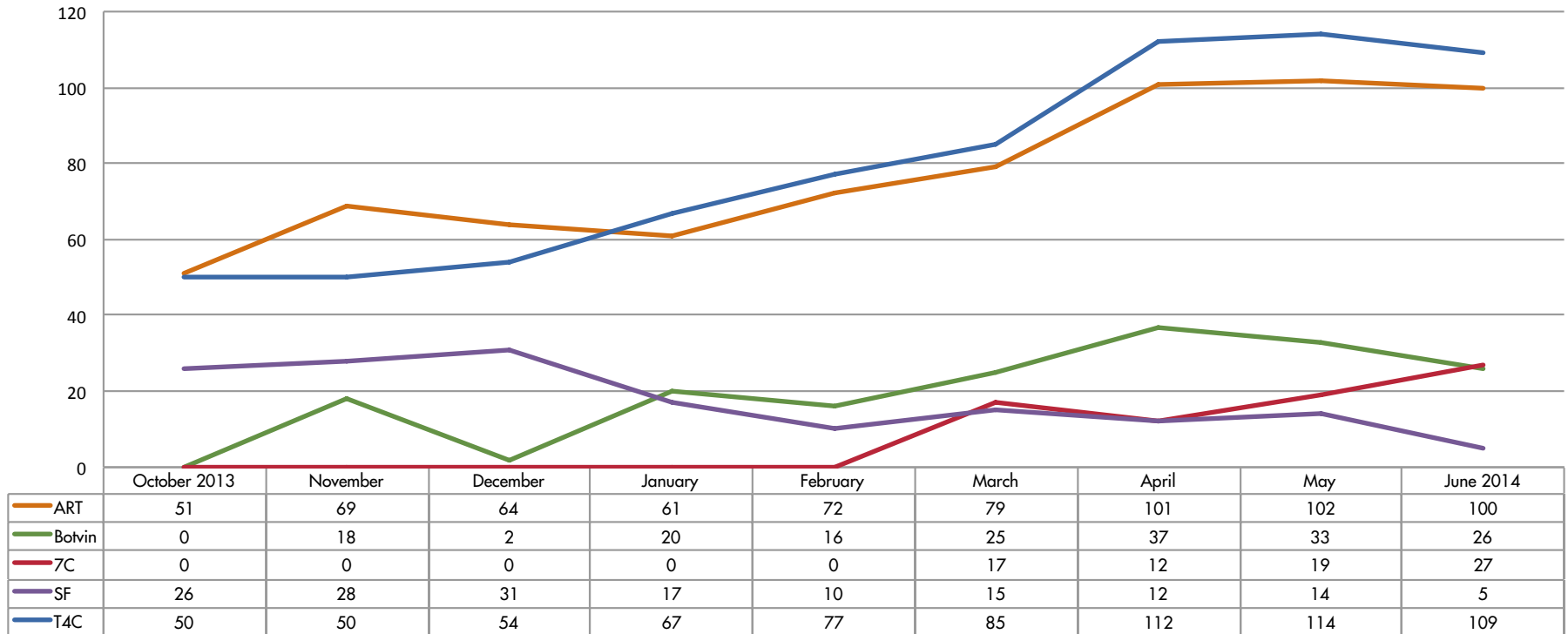
EBP	Total Grantees	Grantees	
Functional Family Therapy (FFT)	11	Chatham	Dougherty
		Cherokee	Hall
		Clayton	Lowndes
		Coweta	Muscogee
		DeKalb	Rockdale
			Troup
Thinking for a Change (T4C)	8	Baldwin	Fayette
		Cobb	Fulton
		DeKalb	Glynn
		Douglas	Gwinnett
Aggression Replacement Training (ART)	10	Bibb	Fulton
		Camden	Glynn
		Clay	Henry
		Cobb	Lowndes
		Forsyth	Chatham*
Multisystemic Therapy (MST)	4	Richmond	Fulton
		Bibb	Houston
Botvin LifeSkills Training (Botvin)	2	Bibb	Douglas
Strengthening Families (SF)	2	Columbia	Douglas
Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy (MDFT)	2	Clarke	Lumpkin
Connections Wraparound	1	Walker	
Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)	1	Gwinnett	
Seven Challenges (7C)	2	Cherokee	Gwinnett
Active Parenting of Teens	1	Baldwin	

APPENDIX C



APPENDIX D

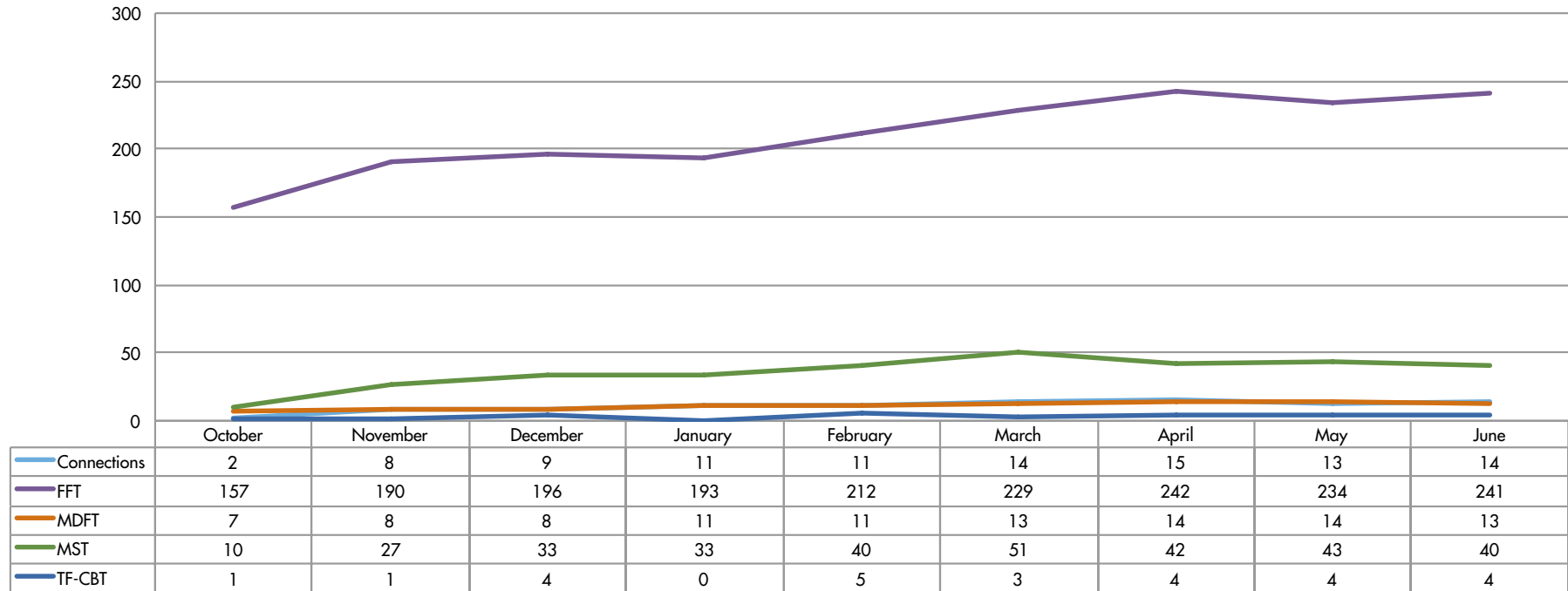
Monthly Totals for Youth Served in Group Therapies



Data source: Monthly Grantee Reporting
 *Please note: May not sum to number of youth served monthly.

APPENDIX E

Monthly Totals of Youth Served in Individual/Family Therapies



Data source: Monthly Grantee Reporting
 *Please note: May not sum to number of youth served monthly.



Since 1927, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government has been an integral part of The University of Georgia. A public service and outreach unit of the university, the Institute of Government is the largest and most comprehensive university-based organization serving governments in the United States. Through research services, customized assistance, training and development, and the application of technology, we have the expertise to meet the needs of government at all levels throughout Georgia. The Institute of Government's survey research and evaluation specialists support policy research and technical assistance activities for state and local governments as well as for other university programs. Evaluation experts at the Institute of Government are skilled at assessing the effectiveness of different endeavors, from individual programs to interdepartmental or even system-wide efforts.

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