SANDAG

CJ**EVALUATION**

San Diego County District Attorney Juvenile Diversion Initiative

Annual Report 2023

March 2024

Highlights

- Of the 1,093 referrals to the JDI program during the study period, a total of 816 (75%) youth agreed to participate. At the time of reporting, 679 unique participants had exited the program.

- Of the 679 that exited the program, 555 (82%) successfully completed JDI services while 124 (18%) did not successfully complete the program.

- Analyses revealed that pre-program risk level was associated with successful program completion.

- Risk assessments of participants indicated the program contributed to increased resiliency among them.

- Youth that completed the program during year 2 of services had slightly lower recidivism outcomes compared to year 1, with eight (5%) receiving a new referral within six months of program exit compared to 18 (9%) for year 1.

- Recidivism outcomes for youth that did not successfully complete the program during the second year were higher than those in the previous year, with 14 (42%) with a new referral within six months of exit compared to 13 (25%) in year 1.

- An analysis between current JDI participants and a retrospective matched comparison group of non-participants revealed no statistically significant differences on their recidivism outcomes.

Executive Summary

In 2021, the San Diego Association of Governments' (SANDAG) Criminal Justice Research Division was contracted by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office (SDCDA) to conduct a program evaluation of the SDCDA's Juvenile Diversion Initiative (JDI). Starting in July 2021 and implemented in partnership with the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), JDI is a countywide pre-filing diversion program intended to reduce the number of youths involved in the criminal justice system while addressing the needs that led to their behavior and repairing the harm done to the community. In addition to connecting youths with needed services to address the causes of their initial contact with the justice system, JDI youth can also gain a sense of accountability for their actions by participating in Restorative Community Conferences (RCCs) with the persons harmed.

This report analyzes program data from July 2021 through October 2023 and provides information about the characteristics of youth referred to the program, completion rates, program satisfaction, and recidivism outcomes for participants. In the first 27 months of the initiative, there were 1,093 referrals to the JDI program. Of these referrals, 816 (75%) youth signed a consent form and agreed to participate in the program. Of those that agreed to participate, there were 130 (16%) active participants and 686 (84%) participants with closed referrals at the time of reporting (i.e., October 31, 2023).

Analyses revealed that pre-assessment risk level was related to successful program completion. Pre- and post-program assessments showed improved scores for 74% of those who successfully completed JDI services, indicating that the program also increases resiliency for youth. Additionally, those participants who completed programming reported positive changes.

Using a propensity score matching technique to compare JDI youth and youth that could have been eligible for JDI before it started in 2019, findings showed no significant differences in recidivism outcomes between JDI youth and the comparison group. At this point, following the results of the first two years of the program, it cannot be concluded that JDI participation directly influenced recidivism outcomes up to 12 months post program participation.

Background

In July 2021, the San Diego County District Attorney's Office (SDCDA) started a countywide pre-filing diversion program, the Juvenile Diversion Initiative (JDI), for youths referred with misdemeanor- or felony-level offenses that occurred in the County before the youth's 18th birthday. Youth between the ages of 12 and 18 are thus eligible for JDI services.[1] In addition to demonstrating accountability to the crime, victims, and community, the goals of JDI are to reduce the number of youths who enter the juvenile justice system, engage the community and stakeholders in youths' rehabilitation, and address the causes of the delinquent behavior.

To connect youth with services in the community, the SDCDA has contracted with the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) to implement and administer JDI services. NCRC is taking a restorative justice approach to implement the program that includes therapeutic services, pro-social skill-building opportunities, educational support, and restorative justice conferencing to ensure the participants are supported and the needs of the victims are addressed.

The program is voluntary, and all provable misdemeanor and felony referrals submitted to SDCDA by law enforcement are screened for JDI eligibility. It is important to acknowledge that longstanding systemic disparities exist that could lead to disproportionate referrals of Black and Hispanic youth. Certain serious and/or violent felonies, including Welfare & Institution code section 707(b) offenses, felony sex offenses, human trafficking offenses, and other felony offenses that pose a serious public safety risk, are excluded from program eligibility. Once a youth is deemed eligible for JDI, the SDCDA will refer the youth and provide NCRC with youth and caregiver contact information, and a summary of the offense.[2] In addition, if the offense involved a victim/person harmed, then the person's or entity's contact information will be included as well.

NCRC will then reach out to the youth and caregiver to explain the program and ask if they would consent to participate. If the youth is a dependent of the San Diego County Juvenile Court, NCRC will reach out to the youth's dependency attorney, as well as the parent/guardian(s)'s dependency attorney to explain the program and ask if they would consent to participate. If they agree, NCRC administers the San Diego Risk and Resiliency Checkup-II (SDRRC-II) assessment to identify the youth's highest needs and risk factors.[3] Case managers use the results of the assessment to determine which services will be most beneficial for the youth to address their needs and risks. The case manager then meets with the youth and parent/guardian to explain logistics of programming. The youth, with parent/guardian input, then decides if they would like to move forward with JDI services, after which they will agree to an individualized plan. JDI is considered not accepted if the youth or caregiver declines to participate, or for other reasons such as NCRC being unable to locate/contact the youth or caregiver. If the youth declines to participate, NCRC returns the

---

[1] Individuals that turn 18 after their referral are still eligible to receive JDI services.
[2] Using the JDI eligibility criteria as a guide, a deputy district attorney will determine the eligibility of the youth. If the youth is deemed not eligible, the youth will go through the traditional justice process.
[3] The SDRRC-II is a validated youth risk assessment that is utilized by the San Diego County Probation Department, as well as community-based organizations (CBOs) to assist in developing appropriate case plans for treatment and rehabilitation for youth and families.

referral to the SDCDA for filing. Thus, the youth will go through the traditional justice process. Accordingly, returned youth cannot have a successful or unsuccessful exit status as they are not enrolled in the program.

The individualized JDI plan includes three goal categories: Wellness, Pro-Social, and Educational Advocacy. The Wellness component refers to services addressing individual needs (e.g., personal choices, substance abuse); the Pro-Social component refers to services addressing relational needs (e.g., social connection, negative peers); and the Educational Advocacy component refers to services addressing educational needs. Each participant must complete a Wellness service and at least two or more Pro-Social services. If school support is identified as a need and if the parent/guardian consents to the service, then JDI families are referred to an educational advocate and a formal support is then added to their case plan. Each item in the plan, referred to as a "sub-goal," addresses the needs identified in the SDRRC-II assessment and is relevant to the offense committed. The youth is connected with community partners (i.e., subcontractors or linked organizations) for services to work on the completion of these sub-goals.[4]

Aside from connections to specific services, NCRC facilitates a restorative community conference between the youth, the person(s) harmed (if the persons harmed agree to participate), and several supporting community members (e.g., coaches, teachers). These sessions, typically held towards the end of a youth's JDI plan, allow the person(s) harmed to share their thoughts, the youth to reflect on the harm done, and then reach an agreement to address the harm. If the person(s) harmed does not agree to participate, the case manager will proceed with a JDI plan update meeting, where the youth, parent/guardian, and case manager discuss the incident, the harm done, giving the youth an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned throughout the JDI process.

The maximum amount of time a youth can stay in the program is six months, but participation is often shorter, with duration largely dependent on what is in the youth's JDI plan and how proactive they are in completing services. Although there is a maximum length, if a youth is having difficulty completing their plan, NCRC can request an extension to give them additional time to complete it.

Following the six-month time frame or extension date, NCRC determines if the youth successfully completed his/her/their JDI plan and will inform the SDCDA. A youth is considered successful when he/she/they substantially complied with their individualized JDI plan, including their restorative meeting or JDI plan update meeting. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will not have their arrest/referral filed and their records will be sealed. NCRC considers a youth unsuccessful if there is a new filed petition/complaint, the youth failed to attend scheduled services/programming, the youth or parent/guardian withdrew consent, contact with the youth or parent/guardian was lost, or the youth's needs exceeded the capabilities of JDI programming. After having discussions with the youth and/or caregiver, NCRC staff can determine that the youth's needs exceed the capabilities of the JDI program for several reasons, such as: the youth would benefit, or is

---

[4] Subcontractors have a formal contractual agreement with NCRC to serve JDI youth, specifying services to be provided and fees to be paid. Linked organizations have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NCRC, because the organization does not charge NCRC fees. Linked organizations derive their funding from other sources, such as Medi-Cal.

currently receiving, long-term inpatient treatment for addiction or mental illness; the youth does not have the capacity to meaningfully participate; the youth is currently involved in Child Welfare Services (CWS) and is currently receiving extensive services.[5] If the youth is terminated from JDI, the youth's referral(s) is/are returned to the SDCDA for filing.

Below we examine the youth that were referred to JDI services between July 2021 and October 2023.[6] It should be noted that the program was considered to be in a startup period for the first three months, as it was only serving portions of the central and northern parts of the region, and it was not until November 2021 that the program expanded countywide.

Program Statistics

In the first 27 months of the initiative, the SDCDA referred 1,093 youth to the JDI program. Out of the 1,093 referred youth, 816 (75%) youth signed a consent form and agreed to participate in the program. Of those 816 youth that agreed to participate, 130 (16%) were still active participants and 686 (85%) "closed" participants had already exited the program at the time of reporting (i.e., October 31st, 2023) (Figure 1).

Of the 1,093 referred youth, 248 (23%) declined JDI, meaning their referral was returned to the SDCDA, and 29 (3%) still had a pending intake status. Pending is the stage where NCRC has received the referral, and the case manager is working on scheduling an intake so the youth/caregiver(s) can accept or decline participation.

Figure 1: JDI Referral Overview
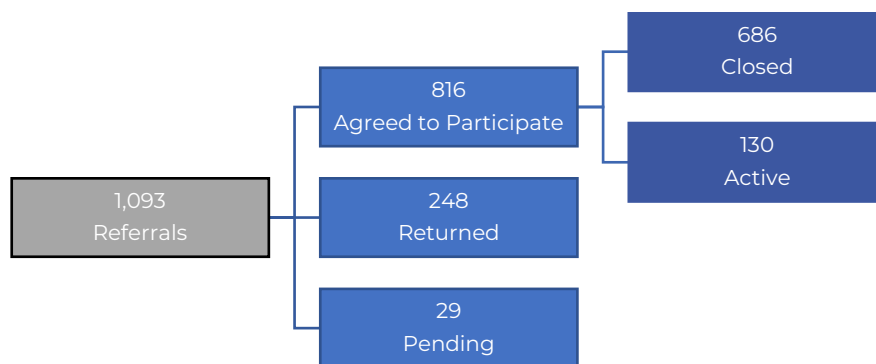
Note: Youth could be referred multiple times.
Sources: SANDAG; National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC)

As seen in Figure 2, the number of referrals by month have generally increased since November 2021. Most of the referrals come from the San Diego Sheriff's Department and the San Diego Police Department as these are the largest agencies in the county (not shown). The high number of referrals in February 2022 was largely due to a delay of referrals from law enforcement stemming from January. Additionally, more resources at

---

[5] Because process and procedures needed to be developed and agreed to by dependency stakeholder, CWS were being returned to the SDCDA early in the program. Starting in December 2022, SDCDA has been referring San Diego County dependent youth to JDI.
[6] Youth that did not consent to share their information with SANDAG are not included in this report.

the SDCDA were allocated in the form of a second deputy district attorney to help process the backlog of law enforcement referrals.

Figure 2: JDI Referrals by Month
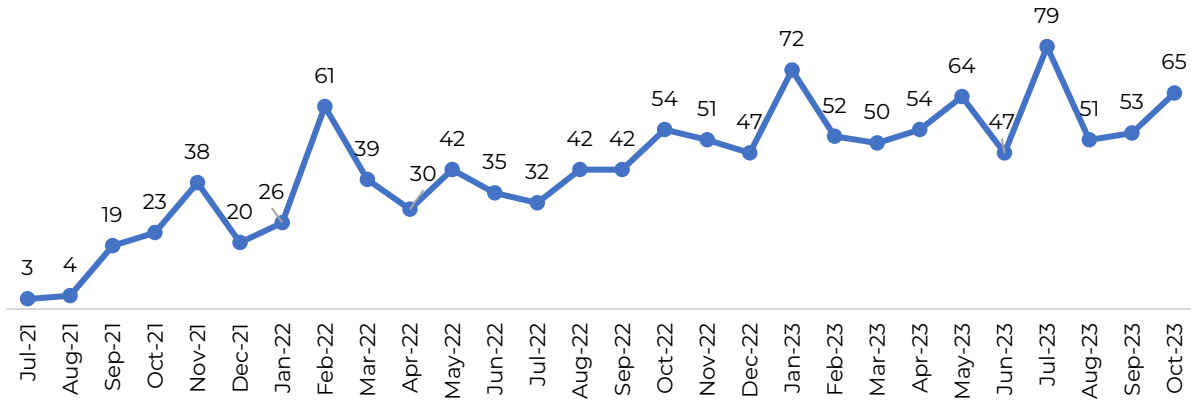
Sources: SANDAG; SDCDA

The 686 closed referrals noted in Figure 1 represent 679 unique youth, as youth may have entered JDI more than once. Of the 679 unique youth, 555 (82%) successfully completed JDI services. These youth were in the program for a mean of 117.7 days (*SD* = 47.3) (not shown). However, there were 124 (18%) youth that did not successfully complete the program. These youth were in the program for a mean of 76.5 days (*SD* = 55.8) before disengaging (not shown).
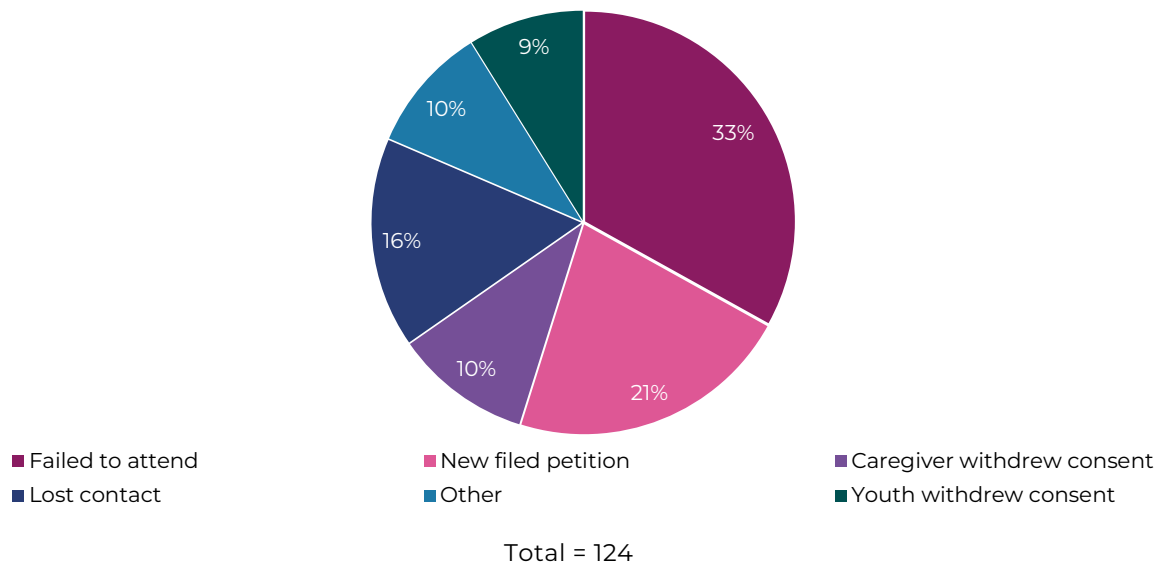
JDI Program outcomes

82% Successful completion

18% Unsuccessful completion

There were several reasons why a youth may not have successfully completed JDI services (Figure 3). The two most frequent reasons included the youth failing to attend sessions (33%) or having a newly filed petition (21%). There was lost contact with 20 youth (16%). Thirteen youth (10%) had their caregiver withdraw consent when in JDI. When asked why the caregiver withdrew consent, several reasons were given, including: believing they would be successful in court; believing there would not be a charge filed because of information provided from the youth's school; the caregiver believing the youth does not have the capacity to meaningfully participate; and having the preference for the youth to receive more supervision or punishment. There were 12 (10%) youth who did not successfully complete the program for other reasons, including youth that would benefit or were receiving long term inpatient treatment for addiction or mental illness, youth that did not have the capacity to meaningfully participate, and youth that were at the time involved in Child Welfare Services (CWS) and were receiving extensive services. Eleven youth (9%) withdrew their consent while enrolled in JDI. When asked why the youth withdrew their consent, several reasons were given, including: not taking it seriously; moving far away; or lacking interest or commitment.[7] The reasons why a youth

---

[7] Moving far away does not make a youth ineligible for JDI. NCRC will accommodate as much as possible when the youth and family are willing to engage. Out of county, or even out of state residents, are still eligible for JDI because NCRC does subcontract with organizations that provide online self-study curriculum.

did not successfully complete the program were broken down by race/ethnicity (Appendix Table 1). The reasons were generally consistent across the different groups, although, Black youth were more than twice as likely to have their caregiver withdraw consent (19%) than Whites (7%) or Hispanics (9%).

Figure 3: Reasons for Unsuccessful JDI Completion

- Failed to attend
- Lost contact
- New filed petition
- Other
- Caregiver withdrew consent
- Youth withdrew consent

Total = 124

Note: Percentages do not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Because JDI is a voluntary program, youth that were offered JDI services could have declined to participate. When a youth or caregiver does not accept JDI services, the referral is returned to the SDCDA for filing. Of the 1,093 referrals, there were 248 (23%) youth that were offered JDI but did not accept, with the most common reason being that the youth's caregiver declined (Figure 4). When asked why the caregiver declined services, the same reasons were given for why caregivers withdrew program consent (i.e., believing they would be successful in court, believing the charge would not be filed, the youth not having the capacity to meaningfully participate, and having the preference for the youth to receive more supervision or punishment). In addition to those reasons, some caregivers expressed interest in considering program enrollment, but then stopped communicating with program partners. Reasons were generally categorized as "Other" in Figure 4 when program providers were unable to locate/contact the youth or caregiver, they lost contact with the youth or caregiver, the youth had needs that exceeded the capabilities of JDI, or the SDCDA retracted their referral because the youths have a new referral that the SDCDA is filing, thus making the youth ineligible for JDI on the prior referral. In instances where JDI was not accepted, youth declined 34 times (14%). When asked why the youth declined services, several reasons were given, including: not taking it seriously; moving far away; or expressing interest and then stopping communication.

Figure 4: Reasons for Declining JDI

Total = 247
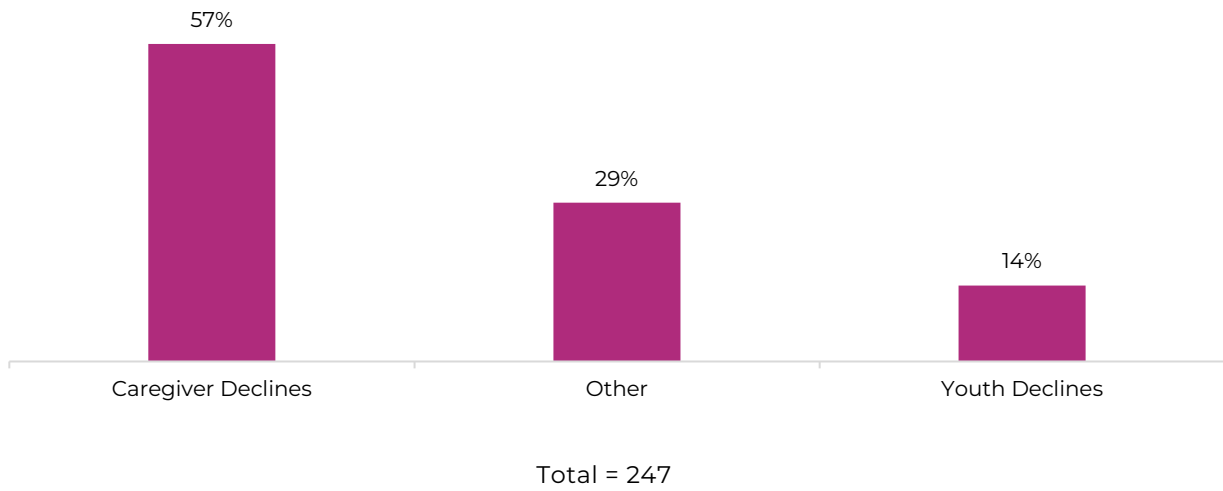
Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Youth Characteristics

To better understand the profile and characteristics of the youth who were offered and engaged in JDI services, analyses regarding demographics, criminal type for what got them referred to JDI, and need and recidivism risk level, according to the SDRRC-II assessment, were conducted.

Youth Demographics

Table 1 presents the demographics of all referred youth that agreed to participate with a closed status (n=686) as well as youth with a returned status (n=248). Among White youth, 71% were successful, 7% unsuccessful, and 22% had a returned status. Among Hispanic youth, 59% were successful, 15% were unsuccessful, and 25% had a returned status. Among Black youth, 44% were successful, 19% were unsuccessful, and 37% had a returned status. Further breakdown by year revealed a consistent proportion of youth across the different racial and ethnic groups in both year 1 and year 2 of the program (Appendix Table 2). However, there were notable higher proportions of successful White, Hispanic, and Black youth in year 2 relative to year 1.

The majority of youth were males (N=650) and the median age for all three groups was between 15 and 16 years old. Of the youth that accepted JDI services, exited the program, and had school enrollment information (N=614), 527 (86%) were enrolled in school, 63 (10%) were not enrolled, 7 (1%) graduated or received their GED, and 17 (3%) had a status of unsure enrollment status (not shown). Of those confirmed to be enrolled in school and with school grade information, most were in high school (Table 1). Chi-square tests of

these demographic factors revealed a significant association between race and exit status (i.e., successful/unsuccessful), however, it is important to note that SDRRC-II risk pre-assessment scores were also significantly associated with exit status (Appendix Table 3). When examining exit status and controlling for race/ethnicity and pre-assessment risk score, the association for race/ethnicity loses its significance and pre-assessment maintains its significance ($p<0.000$) (not shown). More discussion about this relationship and practical implications is discussed further in the report.

Table 1: JDI and Returned Youth Demographics

	Participant Total	Successful	Unsuccessful	Returned
Race/Ethnicity*				
White	213	71%	7%	22%
Hispanic	522	59%	15%	25%
Black	140	44%	19%	37%
Asian/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	17	87%	0%	12%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	6	83%	0%	17%
Middle Eastern	8	75%	13%	13%
Mixed Ethnicity	2	100%	0%	0%
Gender				
Male	650	60%	14%	26%
Female	261	60%	11%	30%
Transgender	3	67%	33%	0%
Non-Binary	3	67%	33%	0%
Gender Neutral	1	0%	100%	0%
Age (Median)	918	15.4	15.2	15.3
Grade				
7th	25	84%	16%	-
8th	55	82%	18%	-
9th	99	75%	25%	-
10th	99	88%	12%	-
11th	90	83%	17%	-
12th	95	87%	13%	-

***Significant at p<0.000
Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding. Grade information not available for returned youth.
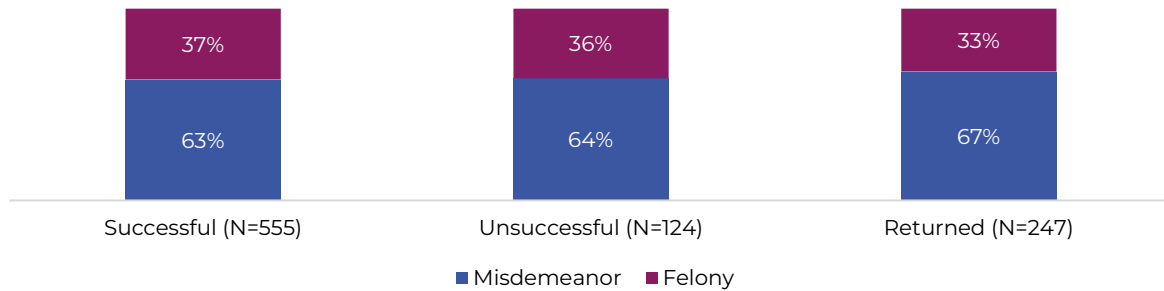*Sources: SANDAG; NCRC*

Offense Level and Type

Of the youth who were successful in JDI services (N=555), 350 (63%) were referred for a misdemeanor-level offense and 205 (37%) were referred for a felony-level offense. The
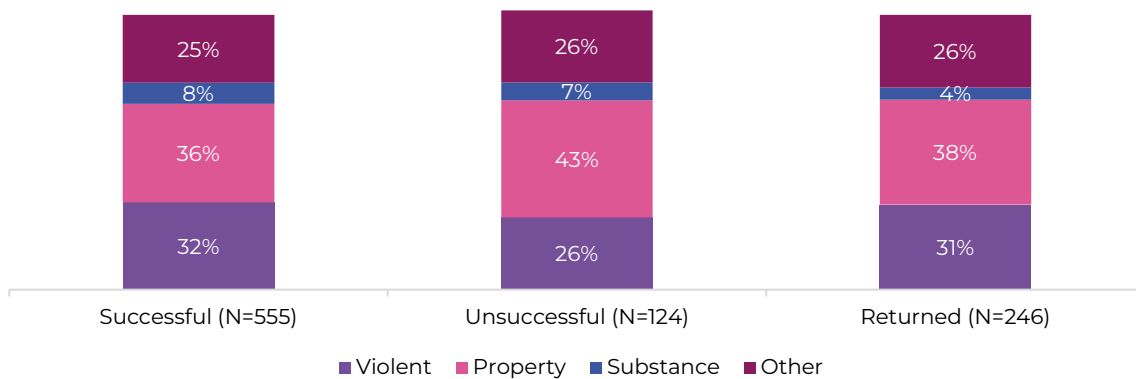
most common primary offenses were property (36%), followed closely by violent (32%), "other" (25%), and substance offenses (8%) (Figure 5 and 6). The offense level and primary offense for successful youth were compared with those youth who were unsuccessful (N=124), and those NCRC returned to the SDCDA due to initial JDI nonacceptance (N=247). While youth where JDI was not accepted and unsuccessful youth were similarly referred for felony and misdemeanor level offenses (like the successful youth), they more commonly had a property offense (38% and 43%, respectively) (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Offense Level for JDI and Returned Youth

	Misdemeanor	Felony
Successful (N=555)	63%	37%
Unsuccessful (N=124)	64%	36%
Returned (N=247)	67%	33%

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Figure 6: Primary Offenses for JDI and Returned Youth

	Violent	Property	Substance	Other
Successful (N=555)	32%	36%	8%	25%
Unsuccessful (N=124)	26%	43%	7%	26%
Returned (N=246)	31%	38%	4%	26%

Note: Youth may be referred to the program multiple times. A primary offense could be a felony or a misdemeanor. Cases with missing information not included. Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

The top three primary offenses for youth who were successful in the JDI program included battery (23%), weapons (14%), and vandalism (13%), the same for unsuccessful youth (battery 19%, vandalism 15%, and weapons 11%), and for the JDI not accepted youth

(battery 24%, vandalism 12%, and weapons 12%) (Table 2).[8] Battery was consistently the highest offense followed by either vandalism or weapons offenses, indicating a pattern in the types of crimes individuals are referred to JDI for.

Table 2: JDI and Returned Youth Crime Category Breakdown

	Successful (N=552)	Unsuccessful (N=122)	Returned (N= 243)
Violent			
Assault	5%	5%	3%
Battery	23%	19%	24%
Robbery	2%	2%	2%
Sexual Battery	1%	0%	2%
Property			
Burglary	5%	2%	4%
Larceny	2%	5%	2%
Shoplifting	3%	3%	5%
Theft	9%	7%	10%
Vandalism	13%	15%	12%
Vehicle Theft	3%	8%	4%
Substance			
Drunk in Public	<1%	2%	1%
DUI	6%	2%	2%
Possession of a Controlled Substance	1%	2%	1%
Selling Drugs	<1%	0%	0%
Other			
Animal Abuse	<1%	0%	0%
Arson	<1%	0%	<1%
Brandishing a BB Gun	<1%	0%	0%
Child Abuse	<1%	0%	0%
Criminal Threat	1%	1%	1%
Distribution of Child Porn	<1%	0%	0%
Domestic Abuse	<1%	0%	0%
Elder Abuse	0%	0%	<1%
Evading	1%	2%	1%
Extortion	0%	0%	<1%
False Info to Peace Officer	0%	0%	2%
False Imprisonment	<1%	0%	0%
False Police Report	<1%	0%	0%
Harassment	<1%	0%	<1%
Hit & Run	2%	2%	2%
Invading Privacy with a Camera	<1%	0%	0%

---

[8] Weapons offenses included offenses such as carrying a concealed dirk or dagger, carrying a switchblade knife on person, or being in possession of weapons on school grounds. This category excludes guns and other firearm related offenses because they are not eligible for the JDI program.

Lewd Act in Public	<1%	0%	0%
Possession of Fireworks	<1%	0%	<1%
Possession of Fraudulent Check	0%	1%	0%
Possession of Tear Gas	0%	0%	1%
Reckless Driving	1%	0%	<1%
Resisting Arrest	4%	11%	8%
Trespass	0%	1%	0%
Weapons	14%	11%	12%

Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
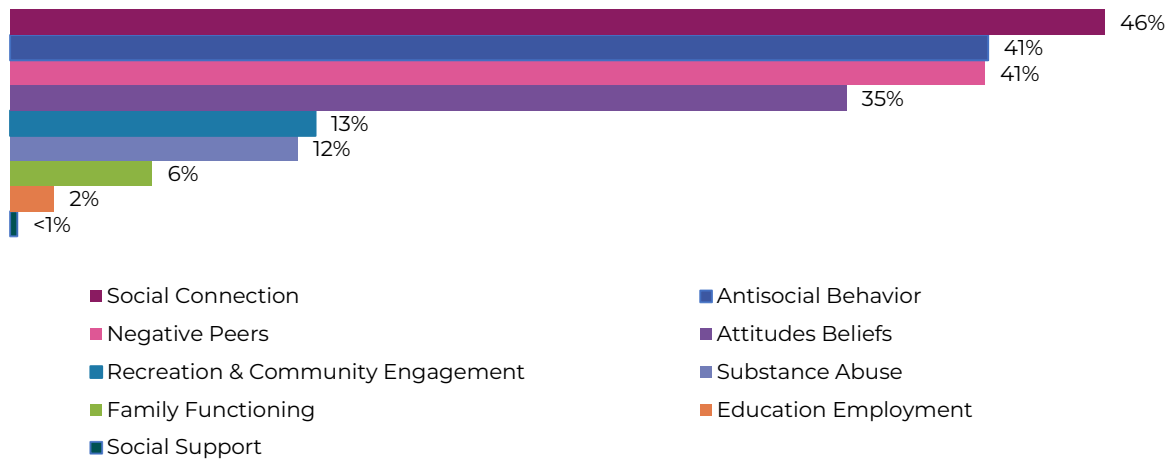*Sources: SANDAG; NCRC*

Youth Assessment Need

Once NCRC receives the referred youth's information and processes it, a case manager is assigned. As previously mentioned, case managers use the San Diego Risk and Resiliency Checkup-II (SDRRC-II) juvenile assessment tool to evaluate the youth's risk to recidivate in addition to their resiliency factors. The pre-assessment, referral offense, and information shared during intake help identify support needs for the youth, which subsequently help create sub-goals (also known as items), within their JDI plan.

Looking at the top assessment needs for youth that accepted JDI services and had "closed" status because they exited the JDI program, the most significant needs included social connection (46%), a history of antisocial behavior (41%), negative peers (41%), and attitudes and beliefs (35%) (Figure 7).[9]

---

[9] The unsuccessful youth were not included in this analysis since most exited the program before they had an assessment. For this analysis, social connection generally means the youth may have difficulty connecting or caring about other people, trusting others, and/or difficulty communicating well. History of antisocial behavior generally means the youth may have an established pattern of getting into trouble.

Figure 7: Top Assessment Needs of JDI Youth that Exited the Program

Social Connection 46%
Antisocial Behavior 41%
Negative Peers 41%
Attitudes Beliefs 35%
Recreation & Community Engagement 13%
Substance Abuse 12%
Family Functioning 6%
Education Employment 2%
Social Support <1%

- ■ Social Connection
- ■ Antisocial Behavior
- ■ Negative Peers
- ■ Attitudes Beliefs
- ■ Recreation & Community Engagement
- ■ Substance Abuse
- ■ Family Functioning
- ■ Education Employment
- ■ Social Support

Total = 656

Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages do not equal to 100% as youth can have multiple needs.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

The SDRRC-II scores revealed that most of the youth who were successful were identified as having a low risk of recidivism (70%). The unsuccessful youth had a greater proportion that identified as having medium (30%) or high risk (21%) relative to their successful peers (Figure 8). Further breakdown of the pre-assessment scores by year indicates that this proportion is generally consistent across both program years. Significance tests revealed a significant association between recidivism risk level and exit status (i.e., successful/unsuccessful), indicating that risk level is an important factor to consider when attempting to improve successful completion rates. As mentioned earlier, race/ethnicity and pre-assessment risk score were significantly associated with program exit status. A breakdown of race/ethnicity and pre-assessment risk score revealed that these two were significantly associated with each other ($p<0.000$) (Appendix Table 4). There were a higher proportion of Hispanic and Black youth in the medium and high-risk category. When examining exit status and controlling for race/ethnicity and pre-assessment risk score, the association for race/ethnicity loses its significance and pre-assessment maintains its significance ($p<0.000$) (not shown). Although a significant association exists between race/ethnicity and program exit, that relationship likely exists due to a higher proportion of minority youth being in the medium and high-risk category. These results confirm the needs that medium and high-risk youth have, and highlight the importance of additional efforts to constantly update and improve practices in serving them.

Figure 8: SDRRC-II Risk Pre-Assessment for JDI Youth that Exited the Program
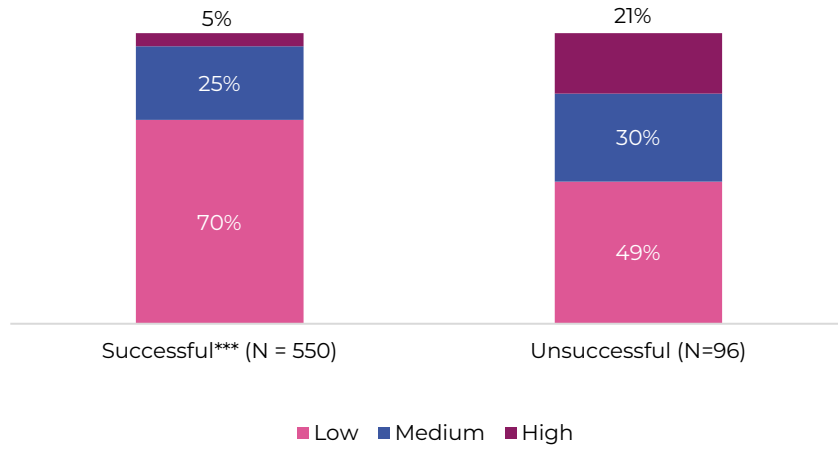
***Significant at p<0.000

Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Program Treatment & Outcomes

Since a central goal of the JDI program is to address the needs that underlie the behavior that led to the youth's referral offense(s), individualized JDI plans with detailed sub-goals are created to ensure the youths are receiving beneficial services and programs. Once a youth's JDI plan is developed with their case manager, the youth is sent to organizations within the community (either subcontractors or linked organizations with NCRC) to receive services and fulfill their JDI plan objectives and sub-goals.[10]

As previously mentioned, JDI plans include and focus on three sub-goal categories: Wellness, Pro-Social, and Educational Advocacy. To fulfill the Wellness sub-goal(s), each youth has to complete at least one of the Wellness related services/programs. The services/programs that fulfill this requirement are listed and further described below.

- Decision-making courses. This includes either two online or six in-person courses with a problem-specific, goal-oriented approach using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, designed to help youth find new ways to behave by focusing on their present-day challenges, thoughts, and behaviors.

- Individual- or family-based therapy. Individual-based therapy also includes group counseling and crisis intervention tactics that incorporate trauma-informed care and applicable knowledge related to adolescent brain development. Family-based therapy utilizes counseling programs such as Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy.

- Substance abuse treatment. This typically consists of outpatient treatment classes or group sessions for youth that range from an 8-hour self-paced course or in-person weekly group sessions that are 6-12 weeks long. However, the format can depend on what health insurance the youth have, as some treatments are based on Medi-Cal qualifications.

To fulfill the Pro-Social sub-goals, each youth had to complete at least two related services/programs. The services/programs that fulfilled this requirement are listed and further described below.

- Mentoring programs between the youth and a culturally appropriate caring adult(s), who serve as positive and supportive role model(s) for the participant.

- Skill-building programs that focus on topics such as pro-social positive youth development, anger management, parenting, financial literacy/self-sufficiency,

---

[10] Subcontractors have a formal contractual agreement with NCRC to serve JDI youth, specifying services to be provided and fees to be paid. Linked organizations have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NCRC, because the organization does not charge NCRC fees. Linked organizations derive their funding from other sources, such as Medi-Cal.

healthy relationships, job readiness and internships/apprenticeships/ employment training, truancy interventions, and other life skills training.

- Restorative Justice programming which focuses on victim-participant mediation, family group conferences, and reintegration, including one of two types (i.e., a Restorative Community Conference [RCC] or a JDI plan update) of restorative meetings. The RCC is a meeting that is held with the youth, their caregivers, case manager, the person harmed, and any other supportive parties (for either the responsible youth or the person harmed) to discuss the incident and the harm caused. The RCC is a critical component of the restorative process as it provides everyone involved an opportunity to address the harm done and allow for the youth to proceed toward accountability. While the RCC fulfills JDI's overarching goal of repairing the harm done to the community, RCC's are not always the restorative meeting type that youth use to fulfill their restorative meeting sub-goal. The type of restorative meeting that is selected is largely contingent on the participation of the person harmed. If the person harmed is not listed on the referral or he/she/they did not want to participate, then the case manager proceeds with a JDI plan update meeting. If the person harmed is included in the JDI process and elects to participate in an RCC, then the case manager will lead the RCC. Most restorative meetings occur towards the end of the JDI plan when most of the sub-goals have already been completed.

Not every JDI youth requires educational support. As a result, case managers address any school engagement or attendance issues or barriers with the youth and family to determine if a referral to an educational advocate is necessary to address such school barriers or issues.

Of the 804 unique youth that agreed to participate, 664 (83%) youth developed a JDI plan at the time of reporting (i.e., October 31st, 2023) (not shown). Youth could have multiple goals, but on average, participants had completed two sub-goals.[11] Unsuccessful youth could have exited the program prior to completing any goals.

Regarding the types of services JDI youth participated in, as seen in Figure 9, all successful JDI youth participated in a Pro-Social service, 491 (88%) participated in a Wellness service, and 44 (8%) participated in the Educational service. While technically all successful youth were required to have at least one Wellness goal, the proportion of youth that completed a Wellness service may slightly vary from 100% due to some youth having the goal requirement waived based on past participation in an activity that satisfied the requirement(s). For unsuccessful JDI youth, 60 (46%) participated in a Pro-Social service, 59 (45%) participated in a Wellness service, and nine (7%) participated in the Educational service (Figure 9). Multiple unsuccessful youth exited the program before participating in any services.

---

[11] Requirements for completing sub-goals vary, but attending a programmatic session may be satisfactory for the completion of a sub-goal.

Figure 9: Summary of Service Types JDI Youth Participated In
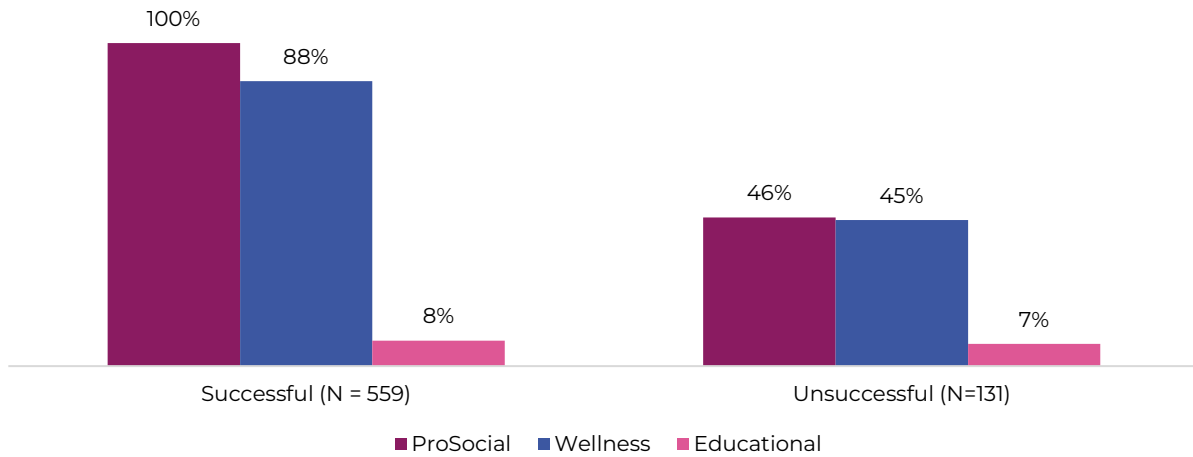
Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages based on multiple responses. Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Looking at service type and the demographics of youth (both successful and unsuccessful) that participated in them, there is a consistent race/ethnicity distribution across service category. Additionally, significance tests revealed there were no disproportionate representation in any of the service types by gender or age (Table 3). However, it should be noted that, proportionally, more males participated in educational services relative to other service types.

Table 3: Youth Demographics by Service Type Participated In

	Pro-Social (N = 614)	Wellness (N = 549)	Educational (N = 53)
Race/Ethnicity			
White	26%	25%	28%
Hispanic	57%	58%	58%
Black	13%	13%	13%
Asian/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	2%	0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	1%	0%
Middle Eastern	1%	1%	0%
Mixed Ethnicity	0%	0%	0%
Gender			
Male	71%	72%	83%
Female	28%	27%	15%
Transgender	<1%	<1%	0%
Non-Binary	<1%	<1%	2%
Gender Neutral	<1%	<1%	0%
Age (Median)	16	16	15

Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Pro-Social

Following program protocol, if a JDI youth's referral did not involve a person harmed or the person harmed did not want to participate, youth went through a JDI plan update rather than a RCC meeting. Figure 10 below shows that more successful youth participated in a JDI plan update (66%) than a RCC meeting (33%). Additionally, about one-fifth (19%) of successful youth had an assigned mentor. For both the successful and unsuccessful groups, Skill-building was the Pro-social service most engaged in (92% and 74% respectively).

Figure 10: Pro-Social Services JDI Youth Participated In

Bar chart showing pro-social services by group:

Successful (N=557)
- Skill Building: 92%
- Restorative Meeting - JDI Plan Update: 66%
- Restorative Meeting - RCC: 33%
- Mentor: 19%

Unsuccessful (N=70)
- Skill Building: 74%
- Restorative Meeting - JDI Plan Update: 19%
- Restorative Meeting - RCC: 34%
- Mentor: 23%

Legend: ■ Skill Building ■ Restorative Meeting - JDI Plan Update ■ Restorative Meeting - RCC ■ Mentor

Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages based on multiple responses.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Person Harmed Participation

A key component of the RCC is the participation of the person harmed. This helps the youth take responsibility for their actions as well as acknowledge and repair the harm done. The person harmed also has an opportunity to voice how the incident impacted them. Of those youth that accepted JDI services and exited the program, 554 (81%) of JDI referrals involved a person harmed (not shown). For successful JDI youth with referrals that involved a person harmed, 271 (56%) persons harmed declined to participate (Figure 11). When asked why they did not want to participate, a large proportion were simply not interested in participating (42%) or had negative feelings about participating (14%) (Figure 12). Low person harmed participation rates continue to be of concern. Compared to last year, there is a slightly larger share declining to participate, with rates growing from 51% to 56% (not shown). Accordingly, the proportion of full participation decreased from 22% to 19%.[12]

---

[12] According to NCRC, one of the main reasons why many are declining to participate in this exercise could be the lack of familiarity with the JDI program. To address this issue there are plans to increase the JDI presentations to the broader community and not just to subcontractors. Moreover, there are plans for more case manager trainings to better explain the JDI program when they contact the person harmed. Additionally, NCRC created a new position starting in November 2022 specifically focused on person harmed engagement. These measures seek to increase the participation of persons harmed over time.

Figure 11: Person Harmed Participation Level for Successful JDI Youth

PH Declined 56%
Full Participation 19%
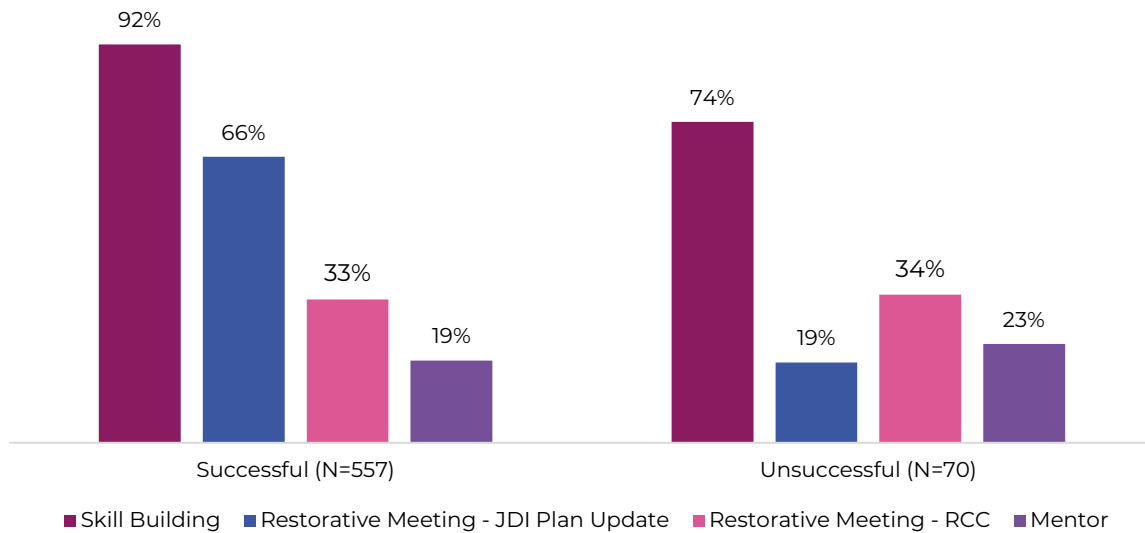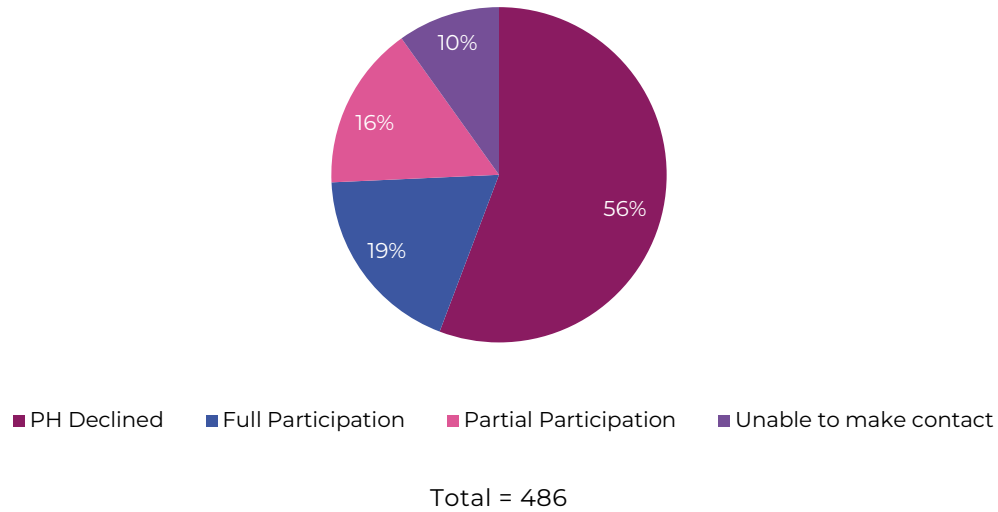Partial Participation 16%
Unable to make contact 10%

Total = 486

Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages do not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Figure 12: Reason for Person Harmed Not Participating for Successful JDI Youth
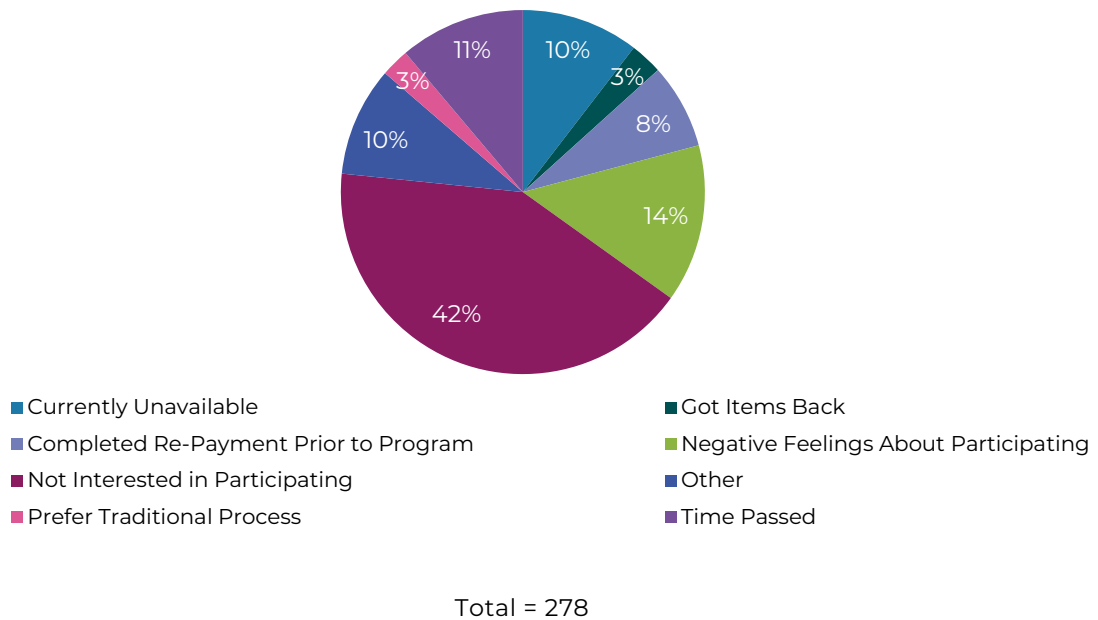
Currently Unavailable 10%
Got Items Back 3%
Completed Re-Payment Prior to Program 8%
Negative Feelings About Participating 14%
Not Interested in Participating 42%
Other 10%
Prefer Traditional Process 3%
Time Passed 11%

Total = 278
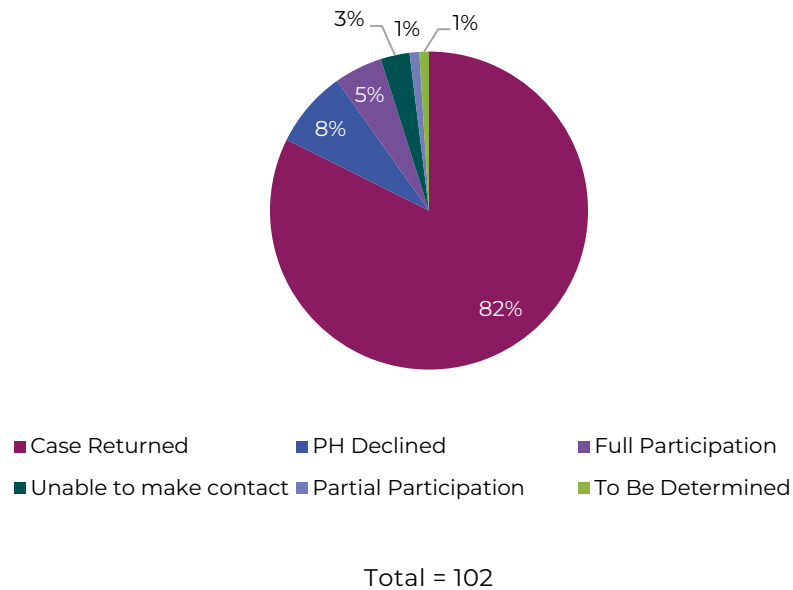
Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages do not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

For unsuccessful JDI youth with referrals that involved a person harmed, 11 (11%) persons harmed either declined to participate or were unable to be contacted. However, it should be noted that most of the referrals (82%) were returned before participation of the

persons harmed could be determined (Figure 13). When asked why they did not want to participate, four (40%) responded that they were not interested in participating, three (30%) were unavailable, two (20%) got their items back or were repaid before the program started, and one (10%) noted that too much time had passed (not shown).

Figure 13: Person Harmed Participation Level for Unsuccessful JDI Youth

Total = 102

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Restoration Fund

The Restoration Fund was launched by NCRC in January 2023 as a feature of the JDI program. Both the SDCDA and NCRC recognized that in some cases, the victim (i.e., persons harmed), would experience a loss due to the offense of the JDI youth participant. Traditional court-ordered restitution would not be available because the Juvenile Court is not involved since JDI is a pre-file diversion program. As such, the Restoration Fund aids in the restorative function of the program. NCRC works with public and private agencies, organizations—including philanthropic organizations—and other stakeholders to gather resources needed to support the financial sustainability of the fund.

Persons harmed participating in JDI are eligible to apply for relief though the fund. The persons harmed must be identified by the referring law enforcement agency as a victim experiencing damage or loss as a result of the offense for which the JDI youth was referred. Applicants are required to show that the loss was caused by the offense, prove the amount of the loss, affirm they have no alternate insurance or similar resource, and demonstrate need. At the end of October 31, 2023, there were two applications and two total awards given.

Aside from the Restoration Fund, there were additional ways the JDI team explored to engage persons harmed. Persons harmed are eligible to engage in skill building and mentorship services by the same subcontractors that provide JDI services. The JDI team found that many persons harmed were experiencing several of the same challenges that JDI youth were facing and believed that persons harmed could also benefit from these services.

Wellness

To fulfill their Wellness sub-goals, most of the successful youth participated in a decision-making course, either online (61%) or in-person (13%) and in individualized-based therapy (15%). Other services less commonly utilized by the successful JDI youth were substance abuse treatment (2%) and family-based therapy (<1%) (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Wellness Services JDI Youth Participated In
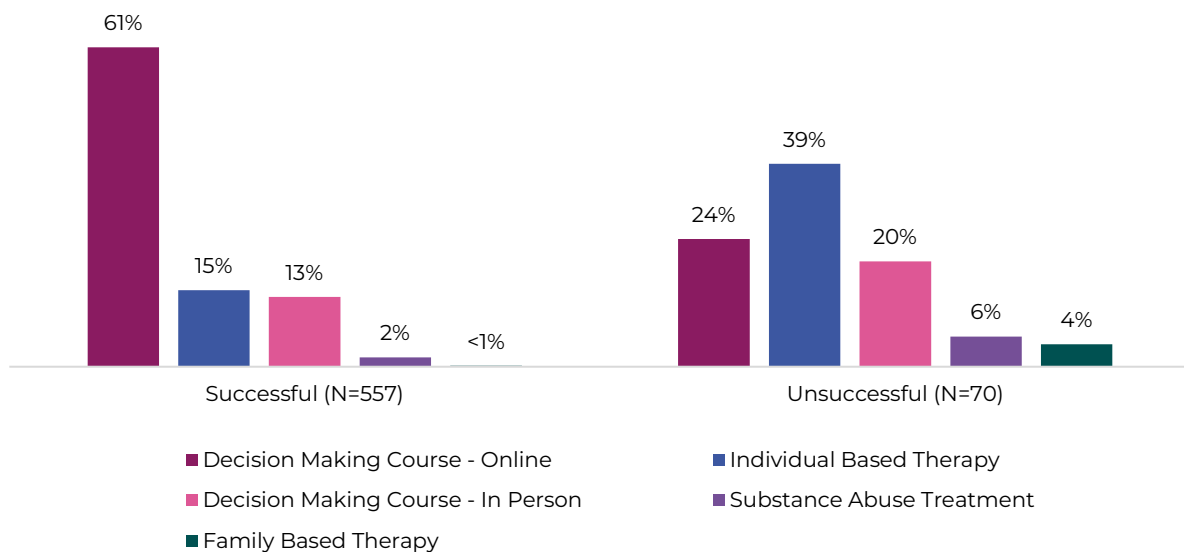
Successful (N=557)   Unsuccessful (N=70)

- Decision Making Course - Online
- Individual Based Therapy
- Decision Making Course - In Person
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Family Based Therapy

Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages based on multiple responses. Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Pre- and Post-Risk Assessments

Youth take the SDRRC-II assessment before and after their program participation to determine if there were changes in their risk for recidivism. Results are calculated by finding the difference in the Pre/Post Dynamic Risk Scores. When the difference is positive, there are fewer risk factors present at program completion. If the difference is negative, there are more risk factors present at post assessment. As such, an increase in score acts as an indicator of increased resiliency for those that participated in and successfully completed JDI services.

Of the 558 successful youth that took a pre- and post-SDRRC-II assessment across both exit years, 408 (74%) experienced an improvement in their post-assessment scores (Figure 15 below). Thirty-nine (7%) youth scores stayed the same, and 111 (20%) youth experienced a decrease. However, it should be noted that only successful JDI youth take the post-assessment, so it is not possible to determine if there were changes in risk scores for those that unsuccessfully exited the program.

Figure 15: Pre and Post Dynamic Risk Score for Successful JDI Youth

Total = 558
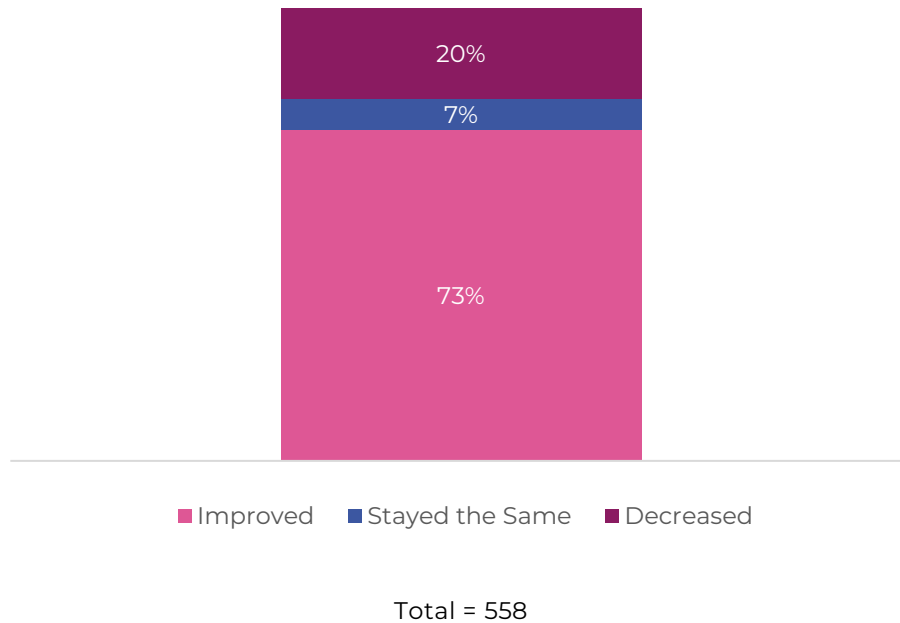
Note: Cases with missing information not included. Youth could have entered and exited the program multiple times.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Several youths did not receive a post-assessment score. According to NCRC, one of the main reasons for this is the lack of training for case managers on how to complete the assessments. Additionally, NCRC found patterns of miscommunication over if and when the youth should complete a post-assessment. After this challenge was identified at the beginning of the program, the completion rates of these assessments have improved, increasing from year 1 to year 2 by 19% (68% to 87%) (not shown).

Post Program Contact

Currently, successful youth can stay connected longer to their assigned case managers for future resources. A Lived Experience Advisory Group was developed in 2023.[13] This group will serve to inform the JDI team and offer recommendations from a "lived

---

[13] This group is voluntary and has a cap of 10 members and can include both youth and caregivers. Members must also serve a minimum of 6 months. Participants are to receive a stipend for participating and payment will be distributed on a payment schedule or at the end of the six-month participation timeframe based on the level of participation.

experience" perspective. The group elevates the voices of JDI graduates and their families so they can share their perspective with prospective JDI youth and families. Additionally, group members serve as lived experience experts on JDI panels/trainings to the community.

NCRC has also developed a formal program, the THRIVE Program, to stay connected with successful JDI youth. The THRIVE program keeps successful JDI youth connected to community services so they can continue their personal growth. The THRIVE program also plans for JDI graduates to serve as peer mentors to current JDI youth. They are also able to participate in events, activities, and RCCs (with compensation), while developing their existing relationships with their own mentors and case managers. Voluntary participation in this program is offered to all successful JDI youth. Additionally, an NCRC staff member is assigned to manage the program and ensure program participation and success. Anecdotal information suggests that the aforementioned groups and programs have been effective to maintain engagement with successful JDI graduates.

Recidivism Outcomes

One of the most important outcomes of the JDI program is whether or not participation in it can reduce further contact with the criminal justice system. To this extent, criminal justice involvement during and after JDI participation was explored to provide an overview of recidivism for the youth that received JDI services. Recidivism outcomes for this analysis included: new charges filed, bookings, sustained petitions, and institutional commitments. These outcomes were examined during program participation, 6 months after program completion, and 12 months after program completion to provide a broader picture of system involvement.

These recidivism outcomes were then replicated for several comparison groups to better determine if program participation resulted in reduced recidivism. Outcomes were compared for successful exits from year 1 and year 2 to determine if there were any changes. Likewise, the analysis incorporated recidivism outcomes for youth that were enrolled in JDI but were later terminated as unsuccessful.[14] Although this group offers a comparison, there may be several unmeasurable differences, like personal challenges, lack of resources, or lack of motivation. Finally, a retrospective matched comparison group was also included to gauge if there are statistical differences between youth who have received JDI services and those who never did.

Looking at recidivism outcomes for successful JDI youth during programming, in year 2, 13 (4%) successful youth received a new probation referral. The proportion of successful youth that received a new referral during programming remained consistent with year 1 (Figure 16).

In year 2, 25 (34%) unsuccessful youth received a new probation referral during programming which is a noticeable difference compared to year 1 (seven, 13%) (Appendix Table 5).

---

[14] This analysis has excluded "returned" youth as the aim of the recidivism analysis is to evaluate the effectiveness of JDI services on participants, and because there may be unobserved differences between participants and those that did not receive services.

Figure 16: Recidivism Outcomes for Successful JDI Youth During Programming
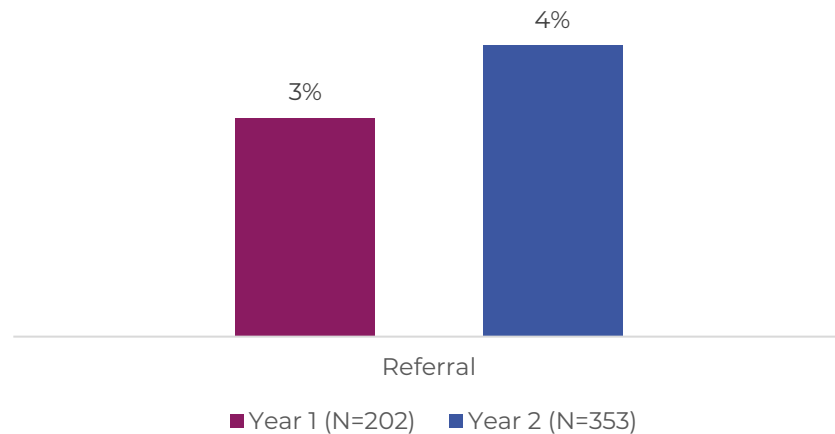
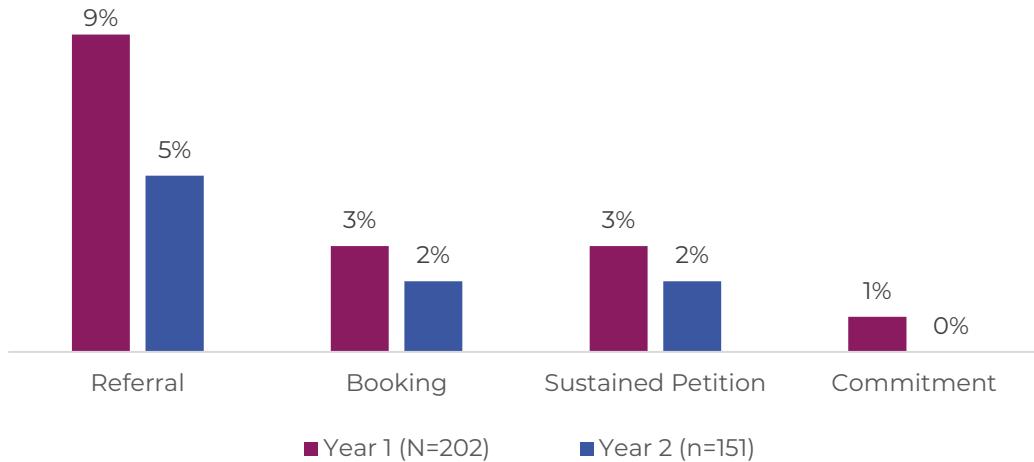
Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department.

Some of the differences between the two groups may be explained by the differences in pre-assessment risk scores. A greater proportion of successful youth (70%) had low risk for recidivism while only 49% of unsuccessful youth had low risk for recidivism (Figure 8). Five (1%) successful youth received a felony-level referral during programming in year 2 which is consistent with year 1 (Appendix Table 5). However, similar to last reporting year, no successful JDI youth received a booking, sustained petition, or commitment during programming. On the other hand in year 2, 22 (30%) unsuccessful youth received a felony-level referral and 15 (20%) received a booking during programming. No unsuccessful JDI youth received a sustained petition or commitment during programming (Appendix Table 5).

For year 2 recidivism outcomes 6 months after exiting, eight (5%) successful youth received a new referral six months post-program exit, four (3%) received a felony-level referral, three (2%) received a booking and a sustained petition.[15] No successful youth received an institutional commitment six months post program exit (Figure 17; Appendix Table 6). On the other hand, fourteen (42%) unsuccessful youth received a new referral 6 months post-program exit, 12 (36%) received a felony-level referral, nine (27%) received a booking, 10 (30%) received a sustained petition, and seven (21%) received an institutional commitment (Appendix Table 6).

---

[15] Due to the nature of the court order for this project, SANDAG did not receive adult recidivism data from Probation. However, the District Attorney's Office provided new filed charges statistics for youth that turned into an adult after program exit. Accordingly, of the 154 successful participants that were 18 or older within 6 months of program exit, seven (5%) received new adult filed charges within 6 months of their exit. Six received a felony charge (one individual received two felony charges and one received a misdemeanor charge in addition to their felony charge). Two individuals received misdemeanor charges (one individual was mentioned prior as also receiving a felony charge).

Figure 17: Recidivism Outcomes for Successful JDI Youth 6 Months Post Exit

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department.

Considering the goal of reducing recidivism outcomes for youth that participate in JDI, particularly those that successfully complete the program, it is important to look deeper into some of the background characteristics of these youth. For year 1 exits, of the 18 (9%) successful youth that had a new referral six-months post program exit, there were 17 (94%) males and one (6%) female. This distribution is skewed more towards males when compared to the successful JDI youth that did not recidivate (64%) (not shown). Nine (64%) of the youth were Hispanic, three (21%) were Black, and two were White (14%). This distribution is skewed more towards Hispanic youth when compared to the successful JDI youth that did not recidivate (51%) (not shown). Additionally, for their SDRRC-II pre-assessment scores, seven (44%) youth had a low risk of recidivating and nine (56%) youth had medium risk of recidivating. Of the nine youth with a SDRRC-II post-assessment score, five (56%) had low risk of recidivating and 4 (44%) had medium risk of recidivating.[16] However, of the successful youth that did not recidivate, only 19% had a pre- or post-score designating them as medium risk (not shown), This gives further indication that risk assessment score is valuable in determining the likelihood of recidivism.

Similar trends could be found for the year 2 exits. For the eight (5%) successful youth that had a new referral six-months post program exit, most were male (63%) and Hispanic (63%). Most (66%) had a low risk post-assessment, but one had a medium risk score (17%) and one had a high risk score (17%). Accordingly, it will be important to take further inventory into the current follow-up services for successful JDI youth and consider ways to adapt the services to meet the needs of the demographic of youth that are recidivating.

---

[16] As previously mentioned, not all youth have a post-assessment score due to case managers not being familiar with if and when to do the SDRRC-II post assessment. This issue was primarily concentrated in the early months of the program and completion rates have improved since the problem has been identified and addressed.

Of the successful youth, recidivism outcomes up to 12 months after exiting JDI show that 29 (14%) received a new referral 12 months post-program exit, 19 (9%) received a felony-level referral, 13 (6%) received a booking, and nine (4%) received a felony-level sustained petition and institutional commitment (Figure 18; Appendix Table 7).[17]

Of the unsuccessful youth, 22 (42%) received a new referral 12 months post-program exit, 15 (28%) received a felony-level referral, 11 (21%) received a booking, 12 (23%) received a felony-level sustained petition, and eight (15%) received an institutional commitment (Appendix Table 7).

Figure 18: Recidivism Outcomes for Successful JDI Youth 12 Months Post Exit
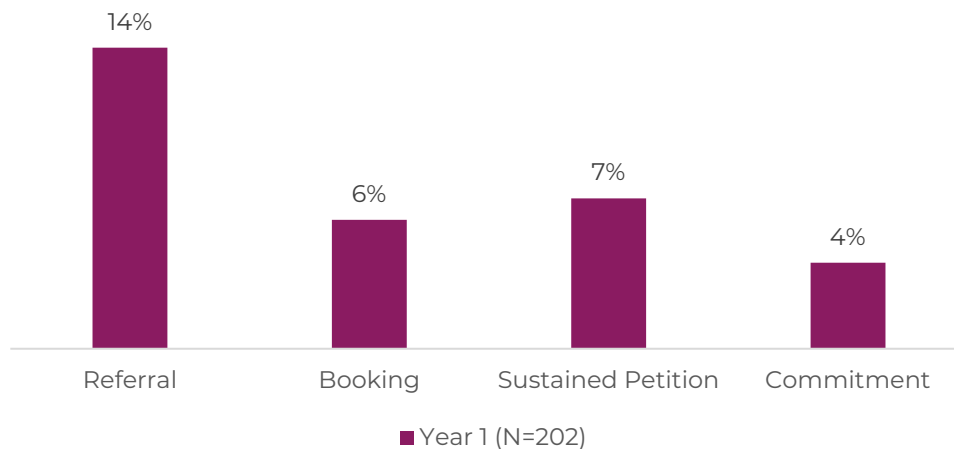
Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department.

More examination was conducted into the year 1 successful youth that recidivated 12 months post program exit. This additional analysis is included because no youth were eligible for a 12-month check in the first year of reporting. Of those receiving a referral 12 months after program exit, most were male (86%) and Hispanic (67%). These proportions are higher compared to the successful youth that did not recidivate (males, 64%; Hispanic, 50%). Of the 18 with a SDRRC-II post assessment score, 11 (61%) had a low-risk score, six (33%) had a medium risk score, and one (6%) had a high-risk score. When compared to the successful youth that did not recidivate, 80% had a low-risk score and 19% had a medium-risk score (not shown). Considering many of the same youth that recidivated from the six-month check are included in the 12-month check, many of the trends discussed above remained.

---

[17] Of the 205 successful participants that were 18 or older within 12 months of program exit, 13 participants (6%) received new filed charges. In addition to the seven individuals identified in the six-month check (only one had an additional misdemeanor charge 7-12 months post completion, there were six additional individuals that received new filed charges. Three received adult felony charges (two of which received two separate felony charges). Three received an adult misdemeanor charge.

Matched Comparison Group

The study included an analysis to further explore the impact of JDI programming, and to determine whether there are significant differences on recidivism outcomes between youth who receive JDI services and those who do not. Since a randomized controlled trial (RCT) was not possible for this study, the analysis applied a matched comparison group with propensity score matching using an additional retrospective comparison group of youth who would have been offered JDI services if the program was active when they were involved in the criminal justice system.[18] This group was compiled from a list provided by the SDCDA of 2019 youth who, following the current JDI eligibility criteria, would have been eligible for services.

This year's report enhances the matched comparison group methodology by examining both successful and unsuccessful JDI youth. By including both successful and unsuccessful youth, the analysis provides a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of JDI participation on recidivism outcomes, rather than just successful JDI participation.[19] Including all participants also minimizes bias and ensures the findings are more representative of all JDI participants. Thus, propensity score matching was used to pair the retrospective youth with all JDI youth who had at least 6 months of post program eligibility for year 1 (n=237) and year 2 (n=175), and who had at least 12 months of post program eligibility for year 1 (n=237). This statistical tool allowed us to determine the average "treatment" effect on the population of interest (i.e., JDI youth eligible for the six- and 12-month post-exit check). The covariates used in the matching process included age, gender, race/ethnicity, primary offense, and charge level. The matching process used a "nearest neighbor" matching algorithm that identifies the closest match in terms of propensity scores between the treated (i.e., JDI youth) and control subjects (i.e., comparison group), minimizing the distance between calculated propensity scores of the "treatment" and matched comparison entries. Due to the larger sample size of the treatment group, the "matching with replacement" tool was used to improve the quality of the matches, leading to a better balance between the two groups.

Additionally, to examine the recidivism outcomes within the comparison group, since there was not a program-exit day, the mean number of days of JDI programming was used as a benchmark for the 6- and 12-month check.

The recidivism outcomes for year 1 exits were comparable with the comparison group six months post program exit across referrals (12% and 11%, respectively), bookings (both 5%), sustained petitions (6% and 5%, respectively), and commitments (4% and 3%, respectively

---

[18] A randomized controlled trial (RCT) is ideal to evaluate the effect of program participation because it can establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the program and its outcomes. Randomly allocating the "treatment" minimizes bias, making it more likely that any observed differences are because of the treatment itself and not another factor.
[19] Additional analyses were conducted that examined the outcomes of successful youth to their matches in the retrospective group. However, no significant findings were revealed in the additional analyses.

(Figure 19). However, chi-square tests did not reveal any significant differences in the recidivism categories between groups.

Figure 19: Year 1 Recidivism Outcomes for JDI and Matched Comparison Youth 6 Months Post-Exit
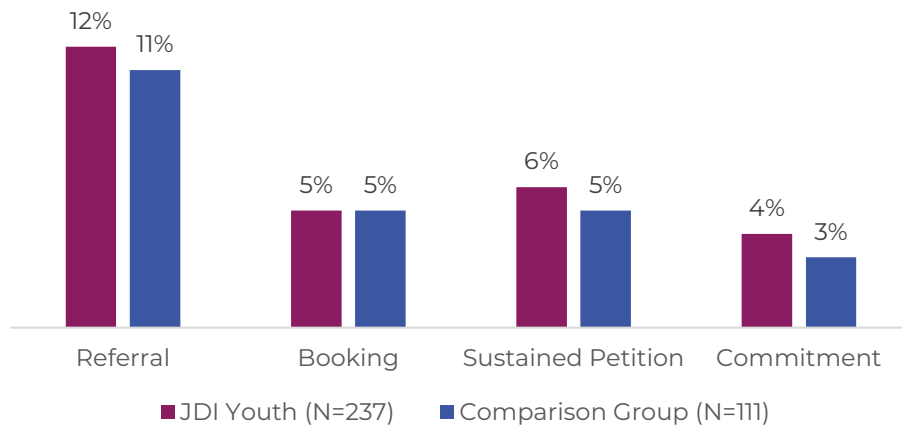
Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department.

For the year 2 exits, similar to year 1, the recidivism outcomes 6 months post exit were comparable to the comparison group across referrals, bookings, sustained petitions, and commitments (Figure 20). Chi-square tests did not reveal a significant association between the groups.

Figure 20: Year 2 Recidivism Outcomes for JDI and Matched Comparison Youth 6 Months Post-Exit
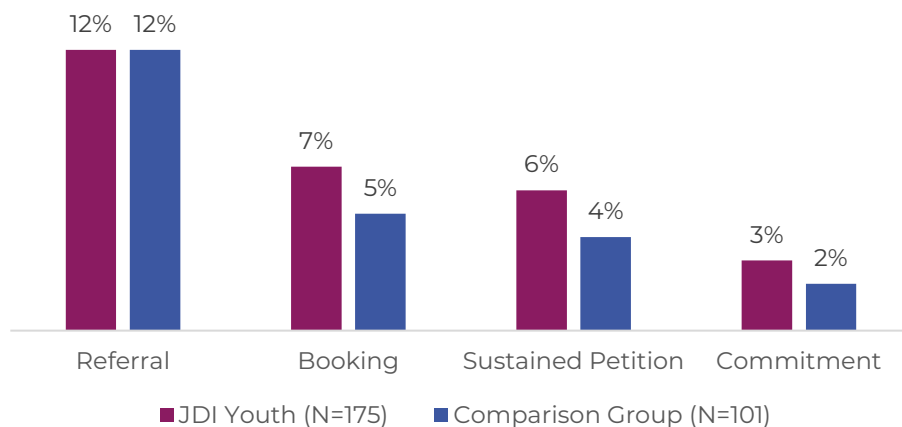
Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department.

This year's report is the first in which recidivism outcomes could be examined 12 months post program exit. Results showed that, for the year 1 exits, the recidivism outcomes were slightly higher for JDI youth across all the categories compared to the matched group (Figure 21). JDI youth were higher in referrals (20% and 13%, respectively), bookings (9% and 6% respectively), sustained petitions (10% and 6%, respectively), and commitments (6% and 3%, respectively) (Figure 21). Chi-square tests did not reveal a significant association between the two groups. As such, any differences are due to chance and not related to program participation.

Figure 21: Year 1 Recidivism Outcomes for JDI and Matched Comparison Youth 12 Months Post-Exit
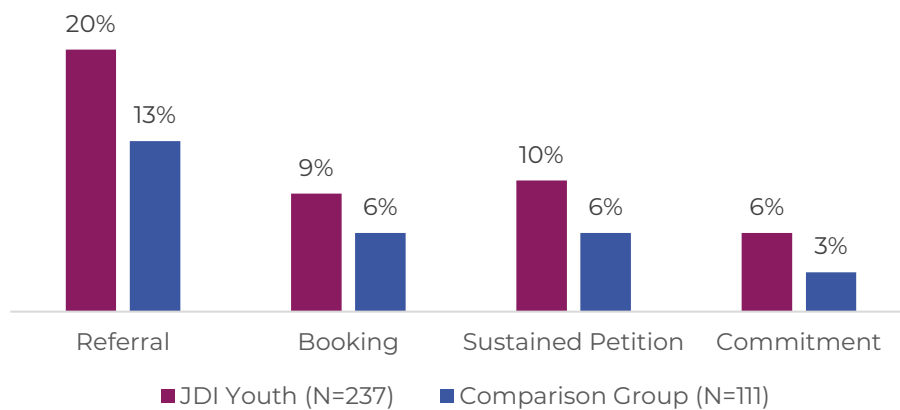
Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department.

As mentioned previously, a subsequent analysis was applied only for successful JDI youth compared to the matched comparison group to determine if successful completion of the program could be determinant for recidivism outcomes. The results of this analysis were consistent with the results of all JDI youth combined and no statistical differences were observed either.

Thus, following the results of the first two years of the program, at this point it cannot be concluded that JDI participation directly influenced recidivism outcomes up to 12 months post program participation.

Although using propensity score matching to create a matched comparison group is considered a rigorous design, it cannot provide full evidence of causation or account for all confounding variables that could affect outcomes in the same manner as a

randomized controlled trial with random assignment.[20] In addition, the propensity score matching for this study was limited to variables available in the local criminal justice data base systems and did not have more detailed information to account for all observational variables (i.e., socioeconomics, family relationships, etc.) and non-observational variables (e.g., internal motivations). Further, because the comparison group was retrospective in nature, it is difficult to control for factors that may have been relevant in 2019, but not in current day. For example, there may be historical differences in how the justice system responded to juveniles in 2019 and later in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the current period. For example, courts and schools were shut down for several months. The shutdown of schools is particularly relevant because many JDI youth are referred from offenses that occurred during school, so the matched youth did not share the same rates of school offenses during the shutdown period. It is also possible that youth from the 2019 matched comparison group may have been impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown, as such, the examination of different comparison groups may be needed to determine if the 2019 youth were indeed impacted. Finally, it was unknown if the comparison group participated in other juvenile intervention programs, which also could have influenced the outcomes.

---

[20] Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (2014). Which study design are capable of producing valid evidence about a program's effectiveness? A Brief Overview. *Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy*. Retrieved from http://coalition4evidence.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Which-Study-Designs-are-Capable-of-Producing-Valid-Evidence-of-Effectiveness.pdf; Michalopoulos, C., Bloom, H. S., & Hill, C. J. (2004). Can propensity-score methods match the findings from a random assignment evaluation of mandatory welfare-to-work programs?. Review of Economics and Statistics, 86(1), 156-179.

Program Satisfaction

Following the successful completion of a youth's predetermined JDI plan requirements (i.e., fulfillment of individual goals and programs), surveys are administered to determine the level of satisfaction that the participant, parent/guardian, person harmed, and supporting community members (from the RCC) had with the JDI program. Although the surveys are not required to be completed, program staff highly encourage youth and other involved parties to take part. It is important to note that due to limited resources and staffing during the program startup period, NCRC faced challenges with survey administration and completion. This logistical limitation may explain why there is a wide range in the number of survey responses.

Survey Group
Youth Participant
Parent/Guardian
Person Harmed
Community Member
JDI Linked Organizations
Stakeholder

To further understand the impact and effectiveness of the JDI program, all individuals involved in a youth's JDI experience completed a satisfaction survey that was independent from that of the youth. Although the surveys aim to capture general satisfaction with the JDI program, the information captured in the surveys differ slightly from one another as they focused on either general or more specific aspects of the JDI program. Two surveys related to general program satisfaction were administered; one of the surveys gauging general program satisfaction was completed by the youth participant and a second was completed by the youth's parent/guardian. Two additional surveys were administered to gauge the impact and effectiveness of the RCC. The satisfaction surveys that focus on evaluating the restorative conference were completed by the person harmed (i.e., victim of the youth's offense that led to their JDI referral) and any additional community member(s) who were included as supportive figures for the youth (e.g., sports coaches, teachers, etc.). Therefore, a youth may have had four or more surveys associated with their involvement in the JDI program. Additionally, feedback was sought from JDI-linked organizations on their regularly scheduled meetings and program feedback and suggestions from stakeholders (i.e., NCRC and NCRC subcontractors). The results of each survey are described in more detail below.

Youth Participant Program Satisfaction

As previously mentioned, youth participants were asked several questions regarding their satisfaction with JDI services. In one subset of questions, the youth were asked to indicate how helpful they believed various aspects of the JDI program were to them and their goals. Responses were collected on a four-point scale with options ranging from very

helpful to not at all helpful. In the instance that the youth did not participate in certain activities or program aspects, they were able to select that the question was not applicable to their experience, however some individuals responded "Not Helpful" to items they did not participate in. As such, several (1% to 3%) of these "Not Helpful" responses might not be accurate depictions of the service itself.

Overall, all listed activities were viewed as helpful toward achieving the youth's goals, with the top three most helpful being case management (75%), educational support (64%), and mental health services (63%). Activities and programs rated as "unhelpful" shared a much lower proportion, ranging from 1% to 3% (Table 4).

Table 4: Youth Participant Satisfaction
Helpfulness of JDI Program

	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	Not Very Helpful
Case Management	75%	23%	1%	<1%
Educational Support	64%	35%	2%	0%
Mental Health Services (individual, group, family counseling)	63%	35%	2%	1%
Restorative Justice	63%	35%	3%	0%
Pro-social Activities	60%	39%	1%	<1%
Skill Building	60%	39%	<1%	<1%
Substance Use Treatment	60%	37%	3%	0%
Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)	59%	39%	1%	1%
Mentoring	59%	40%	1%	<1%
Total	**238-460**			

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Next, youth participants were asked about their experiences in the JDI program more broadly. The general satisfaction survey focused on youth's feelings about programmatic staff, the program's impact, and the knowledge gained from the program. These questions were asked on a four-point scale with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In line with the previous subset of questions, this survey block also recognized the individualization of the program and allowed youth to select an option that indicated that the question was not applicable to their personal experience with the program. Those that selected "Not Applicable" are not included in this analysis, however, in some instances, participants may have selected "Not Helpful" when "Not Applicable" should have been selected.

Overall, youth reported having a positive experience with services, with one of the highlights being the program staff. Participants felt the program staff respected their cultural/ethnic background (68%), felt that they understood their needs (63%), and felt there was someone to talk to when they needed (62%). Additionally, the majority of

participants would recommend JDI to a friend in a similar situation (68%), and said they knew where services are if needed in the future (59%) (Table 5).

Table 5: Youth Participant Satisfaction Experiences with JDI Program

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Program staff respected my cultural/ethnic background	68%	32%	<1%	0%
I would recommend JDI to a friend who was in a similar situation	68%	32%	<1%	<1%
I felt that the program staff understood my needs	63%	37%	<1%	0%
There was someone I could talk to when I needed to	62%	37%	1%	<1%
I know where to go in my community if I need services in the future	59%	40%	1%	<1%
The services were at a time that made it easy for me to attend	57%	41%	2%	<1%
I felt more connected to services in my community after participating in JDI	56%	40%	3%	2%
The location(s) of the services were convenient	50%	43%	5%	2%
I helped create my own action plan	49%	49%	1%	<1%
Total		**399-476**		

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Finally, youth were asked whether various aspects of their lives had been impacted in a positive or negative way after participating in the JDI program. The youth were surveyed about the following aspects of their lives: conflict resolution skills and self-respect, relationship with their family and peers at school, and school performance. Youth reported a positive impact in all areas, but most felt that participating in JDI helped them deal with conflicts (86%) and with their self-respect (82%) the most. Although nearly two-thirds felt that participating in JDI helped with both their school performance and relationships in school (both 61%), the remaining third felt it had no impact. Although it was a rather small proportion of participants, it is important to note that 1%-2% felt that JDI services had a negative impact on aspects of their lives (Table 6). It may be important to consider the unintended consequences JDI services may have on a small proportion of JDI participants.

Table 6: Youth Participant Satisfaction
Impact of JDI program

	Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact
My ability to deal with conflicts	86%	14%	1%
My self-respect	82%	18%	<1%
My relationship with my family	76%	23%	1%
My performance in school	61%	38%	1%
My relationships in school	61%	38%	2%
Total	**492-494**		

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Parent/Guardian Program Satisfaction

Parents and guardians were also asked a series of questions regarding satisfaction towards their youth's participation in JDI services. Parents/guardians felt that case management (84%), mentoring (79%), and pro-social activities/substance use treatment (74%) were the most helpful services. Almost none of the parents/guardians had negative opinions about the services. (Table 7).

Table 7: Parent/Guardian Satisfaction
Helpfulness of JDI Program

	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	Not Very Helpful
Case Management	84%	16%	0%	0%
Mentoring	79%	21%	0%	0%
Pro-social Activities	74%	26%	0%	0%
Substance Use Treatment	74%	25%	1%	0%
Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)	73%	27%	<1%	0%
Mental Health Services (individual, group, family counseling)	72%	28%	<1%	0%
Restorative Justice	72%	27%	1%	0%
Educational Support	71%	29%	<1%	0%
Skill Building	68%	32%	<1%	0%
Total	**179-420**			

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding. Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

In addition to asking parents/guardians about their general satisfaction towards JDI services, parents/guardians were also asked if their children improved in several relational and educational areas. These questions were asked on a four-point scale with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. At least 96% or more of parents/guardians either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more connected to and

knowledgeable about services, that their child had better familial and social relationships, and better coping skills—both in daily life and in more challenging situations. Nearly 9 in 10 (87%) parents/guardians agreed that their youth's school attendance improved. Finally, two thirds (66%) of parents/guardians felt additional services would have been beneficial to their child.

Table 8: Parent/Guardian Satisfaction
Results of family and/or child's participation in the JDI program

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I know where to go in my community if my child or family need(s) services in the future	57%	43%	<1%	<1%
I felt more connected to services available in my community	56%	42%	1%	1%
My child is doing better in their schoolwork	51%	40%	7%	2%
My child gets along better with family members	50%	47%	2%	1%
My child has missed less classes at school	49%	38%	10%	3%
My child gets along better with friends and other people	47%	51%	2%	1%
My child is better at handling daily activities of life	47%	51%	2%	1%
My child is better at coping in situations when things go wrong	45%	51%	3%	1%
I would have liked my child to have had other services	36%	30%	25%	10%
Total		**276-415**		

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding. Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Persons Harmed Program Satisfaction

As previously mentioned, the restorative component of the JDI program included a Restorative Community Conference (RCC) in which the JDI youth had a meeting with the person they harmed (also known as the victim of their referral offense). To get a better picture of how the person harmed was impacted by JDI services, they were asked to complete a satisfaction survey after their participation in the conference. Of the 90 persons harmed that fully participated, 65 (72%) submitted a satisfaction survey. For persons harmed, the most important aspects of JDI included being able to tell the offender (responsible youth) how they were affected by their actions (83%), seeing the responsible youth receive counseling (73%), and receiving answers to their own questions (69%). Nearly half of the persons harmed (40%) reported it was not important to have the responsible youth punished (Table 9).

Table 9: Persons Harmed Satisfaction
RCC opinions about JDI youth

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Telling the responsible youth how I was affected	83%	15%	2%
To see the responsible youth receive counseling	73%	25%	2%
To receive answers to my questions	69%	23%	8%
Establishing restitution (re-payment plan)	56%	20%	23%
To receive an apology	56%	31%	13%
To have the responsible youth punished	34%	26%	40%
Total		**61-65**	

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Following the RCC, the person harmed was asked whether various (i.e., nine) aspects of their lives were positively or negatively impacted after participating. The persons harmed were also given the option to select that the conference had no impact. Most frequently, persons harmed reported the conference had a positive impact on various aspects of their life, with the top three categories being communication with others (78%), respect for others (72%), and conflict management (70%) (Table 10).

Although in seven of the nine categories, a majority (over 50%) of persons harmed indicated seeing positive effects of the conference, it is important to note the variation in responses, as noticeable portions of persons harmed viewed the conference as having no impact or even a negative impact on various aspects of their lives. Across the different categories, 21% to 54% of persons harmed indicated the RCC had no impact. Respondents saw no impact in their performance and relationships in school (53% and 54%, respectively). Although the percentage of persons harmed who reported the RCC having a negative impact was much smaller, there was a considerable range across the various categories, from 2% to 10%. The categories in which the highest proportion of persons harmed reported the RCC had a negative impact was on their relationship with their community (10%), how they coped with emotions (9%), and their relationships and performance in school (7%, respectively) (Table 10). While the responses in the person harmed survey varied an extreme amount, it is important to further consider the implications that this data may have on future program revisions.

Table 10: Persons Harmed Satisfaction
Impact of RCC

	Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact
Communication with others	78%	21%	2%
Respect for others	72%	26%	2%
Dealing with conflict	70%	28%	2%
Self-respect	60%	33%	7%
Relationship with family	56%	37%	7%
Coping with emotions	52%	40%	9%
Relationship with community	51%	39%	10%
Relationships in school	40%	53%	7%
Performance in school	39%	54%	7%
Total		**57-59**	

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

In the survey following the RCC, the person harmed was also asked what they felt the most important steps of the conference were for establishing justice. Over nine in ten persons harmed reported the youth accepting responsibility (94%), having a voice in the process (92%), and the youth acknowledging harm (90%) were very important for establishing justice. Interestingly, considering the core mission of the JDI program is to divert youth from having justice system involvement and instead rehabilitate youth with more prosocial activities, one in 10 (10%) persons harmed reported that it was not important to their view of justice that the youth avoided the judicial process (Table 11).

Table 11: Persons Harmed Satisfaction
Importance of steps in RCC

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Youth accepting responsibility	94%	2%	4%
Having a voice	92%	6%	2%
Acknowledgement of harm	90%	8%	2%
Receiving support	76%	16%	8%
Youth avoiding judicial process	76%	14%	10%
Developing the action plan	72%	21%	6%
Total		**47-52**	

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Finally, persons harmed were asked about their experiences in the JDI program. Persons harmed had an overall positive experience with services, with a unanimous response that the JDI program allowed them to tell their story (100%). Also, over nine in ten agreed that hearing stories about other persons harmed was impactful (98%), that it was important

for them to have a voice in the development of the JDI plan outcome (97%), and that it was positive to successfully have avoided court or the formal judicial process (94%). While still relatively small in comparison to the agreement rate, persons harmed did not feel the youth should have participated in additional services (18%) and they did not communicate better as a result of their participation (16%) (Table 12).

Table 12: Persons Harmed Satisfaction
Overall result of participation in the JDI program

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Having a voice in the development of the youth JDI plan outcome	76%	21%	3%	0%
Avoiding court or the formal judicial process	75%	19%	6%	0%
Hearing stories about how other persons were harmed	72%	26%	3%	0%
I deal with conflict better after participation in JDI	72%	21%	7%	0%
Telling my story as a person harmed	71%	29%	0%	0%
I have a better understanding of youth offenders	64%	27%	6%	3%
I communicate better after participation in JDI	63%	20%	13%	3%
I felt more connected to the community after participation in JDI	61%	30%	9%	0%
I would have liked the youth to have participation in additional services	61%	21%	12%	6%
Total		**29-42**		

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

The persons harmed that participated in the RCC were generally not looking for the youth to be punished, but rather to be given an opportunity to voice how they were affected by the youth's actions. Additionally, they were receptive to the restorative concepts enveloped in the RCC process. Taken altogether, the RCC process and its restorative concepts were well received by participants. However, there is still the limiting factor of low participation rates of persons harmed. It will be determined, as JDI continues to develop, if more focus and resources allocated to this aspect favor more engagement moving forward.

Community Member Program Satisfaction

As previously mentioned, community members were involved in a youth's JDI programming if they were included as support persons in their RCC. After their participation in the RCC, community members were also asked their level of satisfaction in the process and towards the JDI plan. The 149 respondents unanimously agreed that

the process was fair, meaningful, addressed the impacts of the offense, and the JDI plan was fair (not shown).

Community members were also asked their level of satisfaction with participating in the RCC and the JDI process. Community members were satisfied with the staff because they felt prepared for the RCC, answered their questions, and addressed their concerns. When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with programming staff, community members unanimously agreed that they were satisfied. However, one participant noted they did not feel satisfied in terms of being prepared by the staff for the RCC (not shown).

JDI-Linked Organization Feedback

In addition to gauging satisfaction of youth, parents/guardians, the person harmed, and community members, NCRC also sought out input from JDI-linked organizations participating in the regional Restorative Collaborative meetings.[21] Responses for these surveys have been collected at these various meetings since the program started. Most respondents from these organizations felt they were satisfied with the meeting (98%), learned something (95%), and were able to contribute to the conversation (91%) (Table 13). Asked in a yes/no format, most respondents (89%) were also able to build more connections with other community organizations (not shown).

Respondents were also given an opportunity to provide open-ended feedback for further input or comments. Several responses included positive responses about how inclusive the meeting was, how in depth the discussions were, and expressing gratitude about giving a voice and listening to participants (not shown).

Table 13: Restorative Collaborative Meeting Feedback

For the following questions, please state how much you agree with each statement.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was able to contribute my input during the conversations of the meetings	78%	13%	6%	2%	1%
Overall was satisfied with the Restorative Collaborative Meeting	70%	28%	2%	0%	1%
I learned something from the Restorative Collaborative	61%	34%	4%	0%	1%
Total			**187**		

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

---

[21] NCRC's Community Outreach and Engagement hosts these regional Restorative Collaborative meetings of JDI-linked organizations to discuss opportunities for JDI enrichment and program opportunities.

Stakeholder Feedback

In order to better understand sentiment towards the JDI program, a survey with primarily open-ended questions was developed by SANDAG and administered by NCRC to stakeholders where participants could provide commentary to improve the JDI program to better meet the needs of the youth served. A total of 38 responses were collected and thematically coded. Of the respondents that voluntarily disclosed their role in the JDI program, 9 (36%) were NCRC employees and 16 (64%) were NCRC subcontractors. Seventeen (45%) respondents have been involved with the JDI program for 13-24 months, and others (each 18%) for 0-6 months, 7-12 months, and 25 or more months (not shown).

When asked for suggestions on how to make improvements to the program to better meet the needs of the youth and families, several themes emerged. Six (27%) respondents expressed that there should be more service variety and/or they had programmatic improvement suggestions (e.g., a comprehensive transition plan for long term care for higher needs youth). Four (18%) respondents also had recommendations that were logistical in nature and not programmatic (e.g., transportation assistance, like public transportation passes, so burden does not fall on NCRC staff). Other respondents identified the need for better communication with the youth/families about the program (23%), more communication with service providers as a method of quality assurance (14%), and more information about the youth/family to better tailor services (9%) (Table 14).

Table 14: Stakeholder Feedback
Improvements to be made to meet the needs of youth and families

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
More service variety/Programmatic improvement suggestions	27%
Better communication with youth/families about the program	23%
Logistical/practical needs to serve the youth/families (not programmatic)	18%
More communication with providers for quality assurance	14%
More information about youth/family to tailor services	9%
Collaborations with other community-based organizations	9%
Total = 22	

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Educating the community about JDI was another topic of interest among stakeholders. When asked about this, eight (35%) respondents recommended that information be provided at community events as a method to increase awareness (e.g., sharing on the Live Well San Diego calendar of events). Several other respondents recommended communication with schools (26%), family and parent/guardian groups (13%), and with police/school resource officers (9%) (Table 15).[22]

Table 15: Stakeholder Feedback
Ways to educate the community on JDI before their child is involved in a criminal matter

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Provide information at community events	35%
School communication/assemblies/newsletters	26%
Communicate with family and parent/guardian groups	13%
Communicate with police/school resource officers	9%
News/press releases	9%
Early intervention programs in schools	4%
Communicate with community-based organizations	4%
Total = 23	

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

One of the goals of JDI is to increase the role the community plays in the restorative components of the program. When asked how the community could play a larger role in JDI, stakeholders recommended that JDI services and partner organizations should be promoted at community events to increase awareness (28%). Additionally, respondents also recommended increasing the modes of participation (22%) (e.g., sponsoring a youth or volunteering in the Restorative Conferences). Other respondents recommended that the youth should be involved (22%), to increase the number of relations with organizations (17%) and invest in the infrastructure to ensure sustainability of the program for future involvement (6%) (Table 16).

---

[22] It should be noted that there are ongoing efforts with the San Diego County Board of Education to promote the awareness of the JDI program.

Table 16: Stakeholder Feedback
How the community can play a larger role in JDI

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Increase awareness of services and partner organizations	28%
Increase modes of participation	22%
Involve youth	22%
Increase number of relations with organizations	17%
Ensure sustainability for future involvement	6%
Maintain relations with community-based organizations	6%
Total = 18	

Note: Percentages do not equal to 100% due to rounding. Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

To understand the value of being involved in the JDI program, stakeholders were asked about the fulfilling and rewarding aspects of their involvement to identify what motivates them and ensure such themes remain at the forefront of their role. The majority of participants responded that contributing to the positive change in youths' lives (55%) or just interacting with them in general (20%) were the most fulfilling aspects of their role. Other respondents liked participating in the Restorative Conferences (15%) or working with the communities (10%) (Table 17).

Table 17: Stakeholder Feedback
Most fulfilling and rewarding aspects of your role in JDI

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Contributing to positive change in youths' lives/See them succeed	55%
Interacting with youth	20%
Restorative Conferences/Improving relations with those involved	15%
Working with communities	10%
Total = 20	

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

In an effort to improve the program, respondents were asked to identify obstacles or challenges they faced during their time with the program. It is notable that four (20%) stakeholders replied that they did not have any obstacles during their time with the program. However, some respondents (20%) did identify administrative/software difficulties (e.g., difficulty using the software, need for better way of tracking outcomes and case noting, and that the current system is not adequately built for that purpose). There were several identified challenges that could not be controlled by providers, such as the youth or parent/guardian not wanting to participate (15%) or the youths' exposure to their home life/neighbors/friends (10%) (Table 18).

Table 18: Stakeholder Feedback
Obstacles or challenges faced during the program

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Administrative/software difficulties	20%
None	20%
Youth or parent/guardian not wanting to participate	15%
Youth exposure to home life/neighbors/friends	10%
Additional services/funding/trainings	10%
Communication issues among staff/subcontractors	10%
Not having full context/background of participant	5%
Transportation	5%
Workload	5%
Total = 20	

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Respondents were also asked specifically to identify weaknesses of JDI and possible suggestions to address those weaknesses. There were several different themes that emerged, such as a lack of post program support, lack of collaboration time/communication, and lack of awareness of other programs/perspectives (each 15%). Respondents also suggested ways to provide youth with communities of support once they turned 18 and recommended that all should be able to participate and have access regardless of their insurance.

Table 19: Stakeholder Feedback
Identified weaknesses of JDI and how to address them

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Post program support	15%
Lack of collaboration time/communication	15%
Lack of awareness of other programs/perspectives	15%
None	15%
Meeting the needs of higher needs youth	10%
Referral standards/criteria	10%
Staffing/high caseloads for case facilitators	10%
Persons harmed/family resources	5%
Access	5%
Total = 20	

Note: Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Respondents were asked to identify what should change about the JDI program. Four respondents (22%) believed nothing should change. However, five noted that there should be some service-related changes (28%) (e.g., increased content diversity, such as nutrition or arts subjects included in the programming; and requirements for the parents/guardians). Staffing-related (17%) responses generally expressed either lowering the caseload or increasing the staff (Table 20).

Table 20: Stakeholder Feedback
What should change about JDI

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Service-related	28%
Coordination/communication	28%
None	22%
Staffing-related	17%
Modernization of software	6%
Total = 18	

Note: Percentages do not equal to 100% due to rounding. Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

When asked if respondents had any additional comments or feedback, many (33%) were complimentary of the NCRC staff and the JDI program as a whole. Individual respondents either expressed concerns about widening the net and expanding the program, or asked about how to grow it (Table 21).

Table 21: Stakeholder Feedback
Additional comments of feedback

Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Compliments	33%
Concerns of net widening	17%
Increase age of eligible participants	17%
Increase partnership strength	17%
Program growth	17%
Total = 6	

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding. Cases with missing information not included.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Lessons Learned

Although much can be said about the successes of the JDI program in terms of program outcomes and client satisfaction, there are a few lessons that were learned in the second year of implementation.

➤ Building capacity

The general trend of increasing monthly referrals along with the increased number of exits from the program are indicative that the program has been building capacity from year 1 and year 2. However, there is a service component involved along with the goal of juvenile diversion. Therefore, it is important to consider if this level of growth is sustainable for those that are providing services, especially when stakeholder feedback revealed issues with high caseloads and not having enough staff members to address the increasing workload.

➤ Considering factors that are related to successful program completion

Analyses revealed pre-assessment risk level was associated with successful program completion. More specifically, youth with a high-risk pre-assessment score disproportionately exited the program unsuccessfully. This highlights the need for targeted strategies to support youth with high-risk needs in the program.

➤ Engaging stakeholders

When asked about challenges, weaknesses, and recommendations to improve the program, stakeholders identified several themes, such as improving communication or logistical recommendations to improve the quality of life for service providers. Particularly, they resoundingly agreed that the community and community-based organizations are essential to the success of this program and more efforts should be made to incorporate the community, whether it be through more community presentations or partnering with more organizations.

➤ Restoring the person harmed

In 2023, the JDI team recognized that some persons harmed had needs that went beyond the Restorative Conferences. The Victim Restoration Fund was launched to help persons harmed with financial need. Additionally, persons harmed were also eligible for skill building and mentorship services. This further step seems to be in the right direction towards restoring the person harmed and contributing to the overall wellbeing and safety of the community. Person harmed participation remains to be a challenge, but services like these can do well to build good rapport with the community which may manifest in future increases in participation rates.

➢ Post program contact with successful JDI youth

In line with last report's recommendation of maintaining contact with successful JDI graduates, the newly implemented THRIVE program and Lived Experience Advisory Group have served as a vehicle for that purpose. It is possible that, if sustained, programs like this could have an effect on recidivism outcomes by keeping JDI graduates engaged and aligned to their goals. Additionally, successful graduates and caregivers could be helpful in promoting the benefits of the JDI program to other prospective participants.

➢ Recidivism outcomes of unsuccessful youth

Although recidivism outcomes of the successful JDI graduates remained low after they left the program, the high recidivism rate of the unsuccessful youth should not be overlooked. This brings to question if anything can or should be done to help those that unsuccessfully exited the program in the current JDI service model. While it may not be a prudent use of limited resources to invest in individuals or parents/guardians who declined participation, it is obvious that their recidivism also has a financial impact. Thus, it is important to identify possible ways to serve those at risk of unsuccessfully exiting the program (e.g., early intervention system) or those that already unsuccessfully exited (e.g., follow up). A good strategy would be to solicit feedback from stakeholders or successful JDI graduates (i.e., Lived Experience Advisory Council), on ways to reach and serve this population. Considering pre-assessment risk score is associated with exit status, this provides another means of identifying those who may be at risk of exiting unsuccessfully—those with medium- or high-risk scores.

Appendix

Appendix Table 1: Unsuccessful Completion Reason by Race/Ethnicity

	Total	Failed to Attend Scheduled Diversion Appointments	New Filed Petition/ Complaint	Lost Contact	Caregiver Withdrew Consent	Other	Youth Withdrew Consent
Race							
White	15	20%	27%	27%	7%	20%	0%
Hispanic	80	36%	21%	15%	9%	9%	10%
Black	26	31%	15%	15%	19%	8%	12%
Other	1	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Appendix Table 2: Race/Ethnicity Breakdown by Completion Status by Year

	Year 1*				Year 2***			
	Y1 Total	Successful	Unsuccessful	Returned	Y2 Total	Successful	Unsuccessful	Returned
Race								
White	99	61%	8%	31%	114	81%	6%	13%
Hispanic	199	55%	17%	29%	323	62%	15%	24%
Black	55	36%	22%	42%	85	49%	17%	34%
Other	19	74%	0%	26%	26	62%	4%	35%

*Significant at p<0.05, ***Significant at p<0.000
Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Appendix Table 3: SDRRC-II Risk Assessment Score by Year and Completion Status

	Year 1***		Year 2***	
	Successful (N=199)	Unsuccessful (N=40)	Successful (N=346)	Unsuccessful (N=54)
Score Category				
Low	75%	30%	68%	31%
Medium	22%	43%	27%	52%
High	3%	28%	5%	17%

***Significant at p<0.000
Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Appendix Table 4: SDRRC-II Risk Pre-Assessment Score by Race/Ethnicity

	White (N=161)	Hispanic (N=368)	Black (N=81)	Other (N=29)
Score Category***				
Low	78%	60%	56%	76%
Medium	19%	31%	38%	24%
High	3%	9%	6%	0%

***Significant at p<0.000
Note: Cases with missing information not included. Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding.
Sources: SANDAG; NCRC

Appendix Table 5: Recidivism Outcomes for JDI Youth During Programming

Recidivism Outcomes	Year 1		Year 2	
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Successful	Unsuccessful
Probation Referral	3%	13%	4%	34%
Felony-Level Referral	1%	11%	1%	30%
Referral Type				
No Referral	97%	87%	96%	66%
Violent	2%	9%	1%	23%
Property	0%	4%	1%	4%
Drug	1%	0%	<1%	1%
Other	0%	4%	1%	1%
Status	0%	0%	<1%	1%
Municipal Code/Infraction	1%	0%	<1%	0%
Booking	0%	6%	0%	20%
Total for Recidivism Outcomes	**202**	**53**	**353**	**74**

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding. Totals include youth who have entered and exited the program multiple times.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department

Appendix Table 6: Recidivism Outcomes for JDI Youth 6 Months Post Exit

Recidivism Outcomes	Year 1		Year 2	
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Successful	Unsuccessful
Probation Referral	9%	25%	5%	42%
Felony-Level Referral	6%	17%	3%	36%
Referral Type				
No Referral	91%	75%	95%	58%
Violent	6%	15%	3%	24%
Property	2%	6%	1%	12%
Drug	<1%	2%	0%	6%
Other	1%	0%	2%	3%
Status	0%	0%	0%	3%
Municipal Code/ Infraction	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Booking	3%	17%	2%	27%
Sustained Petition	3%	24%	2%	30%
Felony-Level Sustained Petition	2%	22%	1%	30%
Sustained Petition Type				
No sustained petition	97%	76%	98%	66%
Violent	2%	13%	1%	24%
Property	0%	9%	1%	3%
Drug	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	3%
Status	0%	0%	0%	0%
Municipal Code/ Infraction	0%	0%	0%	0%
Institutional Commitment	1%	13%	0%	21%
Total for Recidivism Outcomes	**202**	**53**	**151**	**33**

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding. Totals include youth who have entered and exited the program multiple times.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department

Appendix Table 7: Recidivism Outcomes for JDI Youth 12 Months Post Exit

Recidivism Outcomes	Year 1	
	Successful	Unsuccessful
Probation Referral	14%	42%
Felony-Level Referral	9%	28%
Referral Type		
No Referral	86%	58%
Violent	9%	26%
Property	4%	11%
Drug	2%	4%
Other	1%	2%
Status	0%	2%
Municipal Code/Infraction	<1%	0%
Booking	6%	21%
Sustained Petition	7%	26%
Felony-Level Sustained Petition	4%	23%
Sustained Petition Type		
No sustained petition	93%	74%
Violent	4%	17%
Property	0%	11%
Drug	<1%	0%
Other	<1%	0%
Status	0%	0%
Municipal Code/Infraction	0%	0%
Institutional Commitment	4%	15%
Total for Recidivism Outcomes	**202**	**53**

Note: Percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding. Totals include youth who have entered and exited the program multiple times. Recidivism outcomes listed in this table are not mutually exclusive of recidivism events occurring in the six months recidivism check. If a youth recidivated in the six-month check, that recidivism event will also appear in this table. No youth from year 2 were eligible for the 12 month check.
Sources: SANDAG; Probation Department