



**Eckerd Youth Alternatives
Annual Legislative Report
March 2012**

**Special Provision: S.L. 2011-145
Section 17.2**

Submitted by:
Department of Public Safety
Division of Juvenile Justice

Preface

During the fiscal year (FY) of 2010-2011, The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention entered into its last year of contracted services with Eckerd Youth Alternatives to provide a residential camp placement for youth who have become involved with juvenile court.

With the impending expiration of the contract, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention initiated an extensive process for identifying the most effective programming for these targeted youth which would ensure greater public safety. As part of this process, the Department reviewed the research and examined data on the effectiveness of the wilderness camping experiences and assembled a statewide advisory board of juvenile justice professionals, judges, legislators, and other stakeholders. The result was a determination that there are more efficient and effective ways to serve high-risk adjudicated juveniles with designated dollars. Although wilderness experiences have been deemed somewhat effective in changing some juvenile behaviors, the research has identified services that are far more effective at targeting and changing criminogenic behaviors or those behaviors that cause a juvenile to recidivate.

Utilizing data gleaned from the aforementioned process, the Department then developed a very deliberate approach for securing the dispositional alternatives most likely to achieve better outcomes: a combination of both residential and non-residential services; evidence-based programming found to be most effective in addressing the needs of Level II juveniles; services that fill gaps in the Department's comprehensive strategy of graduated sanctions for targeted juveniles; services that are delivered statewide, regionally, and locally; reentry services; and programs that address the specific risks and needs of these high-risk juveniles within local communities.

To meet the needs of Level II adjudicated youth, the Department issued five (5) Requests for Proposals which included the following: three RFPs for statewide residential services, one RFP for regional community-based alternatives, and one RFP for Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)-endorsed Level II dispositional alternatives.

Executive Summary

In FY 2010-2011, the Department contracted with EYA to provide 230 beds at 4 wilderness camps, in which 498 youth (including youth in camp on 7/01/10) were able to be served. Findings from this year's report include:

- Of the 526 youth exiting the program in FY 2010-2011, 320 or 61% completed the program successfully.
- The post-completion adjudication rate for successful completers in FY 2009-2010 was 30% at 12 months. This compares to the recidivism rate the NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission reported in their Juvenile Recidivism Study: FY 2006/07 which stated, “ Of those juveniles under juvenile jurisdiction during follow-up (n=18,818), 21.4% had a subsequent adjudication.”¹
- Using the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement at entry and exit, successful completers were able to show an average increase of 1.1 grade levels in reading and 1.8 grade levels in math within an average of 9 months length of stay.
- Eighty-five (85%) of youth completing the program in FY 2009-2010 were either working, attending school, or both at 12 months post completion.

¹ Flincham, Tamara and Hevener, Ginny. Juvenile Recidivism Study: FY 2006/07. NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission. May 1, 2011.
<http://www.nccourts.org/Courts/CRS/Councils/spac/Publication/Recidivism/JuvenileRec.asp>

Introduction

In response to North Carolina *Session Law 2011-145, Section 17.2, Annual Evaluation of Community Programs*, the Department of Public Safety/Division of Juvenile Justice submits its annual evaluation of the Eckerd Wilderness Program for FY 2010-2011. This report will be the final evaluation on the Eckerd Wilderness Program(s) as the contract between the Department and Eckerd ended June 30, 2011. The Department's evaluation will measure subsequent court involvement by youth completing the Eckerd Wilderness Program and whether the Eckerd Wilderness Program is achieving the goals and objectives of the *Juvenile Justice Reform Act, S. L. 1998-202*.

For FY 2010-2011, the Department contracted with EYA to provide 230 beds for boys and girls between the ages of 10 through 17 who have been involved with juvenile court. These services were provided at the following five camps:

- 1) Camp E-Mun-Talee located in Surry County (males) (closed September 2010)
- 2) Camp E-Ma-Etu located in Wilkes County (males and females)
- 3) Camp E-Ku-Sumee located in Montgomery County (males and females)
- 4) Camp E-Ten-Etu located in Vance County (males)
- 5) Camp E-Tik-Etu located in Bladen County (males)

Program Cost

For FY 2010-2011, the state contract amount for Eckerd Youth Alternatives was \$11,328,213 and was determined by the following formula: \$134.94 (daily rate) multiplied by 230 (number of beds contracted for) x 365 days. Additional funding included federal education dollars for Title I, Neglected and Delinquent P. L. 107-110 services (\$194,949.12) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act P. L. 101-476 services (\$89,700).

The EYA state appropriation for FY2010-2011 was reduced by \$2,231,002 from the FY 2009-2010 appropriation of \$13,559,215. This reduction resulted in a loss of 45 beds and led to the closure of Camp E-Mun-Talee in Surry County in September 2010.

Demographic Profile

For FY 2010-2011, there were a total of 220 new admissions possessing the following characteristics at intake:

- Twenty percent (20%) of the new admissions were female.
- Forty-seven percent (47%) of new admissions were white, 39% were African-American, and 14% were Latino/Multi-Racial/Asian/American Indian.
- The average age at admission was 14.5, and 79% of youth admitted were 14 years old or older at time of admission.
- The average IQ score of new admissions was 86, and the average grade level for new admissions was 8.2
- Forty-one percent (46%) of youth admitted were from single parent homes, with only 37% coming from a two parent home.
- Wake County had the highest number of admissions with 29 youth and accounted for 13% of all new admissions.
- Eighty percent (80%) of all new admissions were referred by Department sources, 12% by NC Department of Public Instruction, 5% from Mental Health, and 3% from other sources including private agencies.

Referral Sources for Admissions FY2010-2011

Referral Source	Percent of Overall Admissions
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	80.0%
Department of Public Instruction	12.0%
Mental Health	5.0%
Other (Private Agencies)	3.0%

Admission by Gender FY 2010-2011

Fiscal Year	Percent Male Admissions	Percent Female Admissions
E-Ma-Etu/Wilkes County	76.0%	24.0%
E-Ku-Sumee/Montgomery County	60.0%	40.0%
E-Mun-Talee/Surry County	No admissions	No admissions
E-Tik-Etu	100%	0.0%
E-Ten-Etu	100%	0.0%
Average for all Admissions	80.0%	20.0%

The data over the last several years indicate that EYA continues to admit significantly more males than females; however, the percentages are somewhat

proportionate to the number of males and females coming into contact with the juvenile court system. In FY 2009-2010, 74% of all juvenile complaints received were male, indicating a greater need for more male beds.²

Admission of Minority Population(s) FY 2010-2011

Camp	Percent of Minority Admissions
E-Mun-Talee/Surry County	N/A
E-Ma-Etu/Wilkes County	30%
E-Ku-Sumee/Montgomery County	61%
E-Ten-Etu/Vance County	70%
E-Tik-Etu/Bladen County	48%
Average for all (4) Camps	53%
Minority Populations include all non-white admissions	

For FY 2010-2011, 53% of admissions into camp were minority or non-white. Camps in the eastern and central areas of the state had higher percentages of minority admissions, while camps in the west admitted mostly white youth. Data from the NC DJJDP 2010 Annual Report indicate 85% of all commitments to a youth development center and 70% of all detention admissions were of minority descent.³ To be more reflective of the Department's needs, EYA needs to continue increasing minority admissions.

Delinquency Involvement for Youth Admitted FY 2010-2011

- One-hundred percent (100%) of the 220 new admissions had either a criminal or status compliant filed against them prior to entering camp.
- Property Offenses (34%) and Person Offenses (29%) were the most common offense types admitted into camp.

Offenses at Intake

Offense	Percent of Overall Admission FY2008-2009
Property Offense	34.0%
Person Offense	29.0%
Undisciplined	21.0%
Victimless Offense	13.0%
Other	3.0%

² The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 2010 Annual Report, p.20.

³ The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 2010 Annual Report, p.28,29.

Exit Cohort for Youth Leaving Camp FY 2010-2011

In FY 2010-2011, there were a total of 526 exits from the program with 320 or 61% of youth successfully completing the program. Sixteen percent (16%) of youth were terminated from the program, and 10% withdrew prior to completing. Eleven percent (11%) were discharged due to all the programs being eliminated. The average length of stay for successful completers was 9 months and 4.2 months for youth who were unsuccessful or withdrew.

Reasons for Exiting Program

Reason	Percentage of Campers
Completion	61.0%
Program Termination	16.0%
Withdrawal	10.0%
Program Eliminated	11%
Other	2.0%

Academic Growth for Youth Exiting Camp FY 2010-2011

The majority of youth served by Eckerd in FY 2010-2011 achieved academic progress through experiential learning at camp. Eckerd administers the Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement as a way to measure academic progress in reading and math while youth are at camp. Campers are given a pre-test upon their arrival and post-test at their completion. For youth successfully completing the program in FY 2010-2011, results show an average increase in reading scores of 1.1 grade levels and an average increase in math scores of 1.8 grade levels.

Woodcock-Johnson III Average Test Score Growth

Subject	Intake Score	Exit Score	Grade Level Improvement
Reading	7.2	8.3	1.1
Mathematics	6.9	8.7	1.8

Outcomes

The Department is charged with determining subsequent court involvement of youth completing the EYA Program as referenced in *Session Law 2011-145, Section 17.2, Annual Evaluation of Community Programs*. In FY 2009-2010, there were 266 successful completions from the wilderness camps. The subsequent juvenile court involvement was determined by comparing the names of the successful completers through the Department's North Carolina Juvenile On-Line Information Network (NC JOIN) to determine if there was subsequent court involvement after completion.

This analysis focuses on the 157 youth completing the program under the age of 16. Only 70 youth completing the program in FY 2009-2010 were able to be examined at 12 months post-completion for new adjudications. Eighty-seven (87) youth were able to be examined for new adjudications occurring less than 12 months post-completion, as they turned 16 at some point during those 12 months. There were 109 youth who were 16 at time of completion from the program and were not included in this analysis, as 16 year old youth would be charged as adults, and adult convictions are not recorded in NC-JOIN.

Subsequent Juvenile Justice Involvement Youth Completing in FY2009-2010

	At 12 months post-completion	Less than 12 months	16 at Completion
New Adjudication	21	10	
No New Adjudications	49	77	
16 at End of Camp	0	0	109
Total	70	87	109
Post-Completion Adjudication Rate	30.0%	11.0%	

Note: This compares to the recidivism rate the NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission reported in their Juvenile Recidivism Study: FY 2006/07 which stated, “ Of those juveniles under juvenile jurisdiction during follow-up (n=18,818), 21.4% had a subsequent adjudication.”⁴

Eighty-five (85%) of the youth completing the program in FY 2009-2010 were attending school, working, or both at 12 months post-completion. The data indicate that the EYA Wilderness Program is successful in helping youth continue their educational pursuits and develop necessary vocational skills.

Educational and Vocational Status Youth Completing in FY2009-2010 at 12 Months Post-Completion

Status at 12 Months Post-Completion	Percent
Youth in school and not working	63.0%
Youth not in school and not working	14.0%
Youth working and in school	20.0%
Youth working and not in school	2.0%

⁴ Flincham, Tamara and Hevener, Ginny. Juvenile Recidivism Study: FY 2006/07. NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission. May 1, 2011.
<http://www.nccourts.org/Courts/CRS/Councils/spac/Publication/Recidivism/JuvenileRec.asp>

Wilderness Commitment Program (WCP)

In 2003 the Department and EYA began a pilot program to admit youth who were in commitment status as an alternative to a youth development center. A motion in court must be filed stating reasons why a youth is a good candidate for a community commitment. The committing judge must approve the motion before the placement in camp can occur. WCP youth participate in the same model of care as regular campers. If it is determined by the treatment team that a youth is non-compliant with the WCP Program, the decision can be made to return the youth to their assigned Youth Development Center.

Demographics of WCP Youth Admitted in FY 2010-2011

In FY 2010-2011, EYA admitted 2 youth under the Wilderness Commitment Program. Outcomes for FY 2010-2011 include 7 youth who completed the program and 2 were terminated and returned to a Youth Development Center. A WCP youth in FY 2010-2011 had a 77% probability of graduating from camp.

Conclusion

The Eckerd Wilderness program has well served the State of North Carolina for the last 30+ years. However, with recent budget cuts, the Department has had to focus these services towards youth who are chronic offenders rather than youth who are at-risk of becoming court involved. This transition has led to a demographical shift in the types of youth Eckerd is serving. These changes have included serving youth who display greater needs and have more severe risk factors. The old wilderness camping model has not demonstrated the same level of effectiveness dealing with these higher risk youth as it did with the previous populations. These decreases can be seen in the lower completion rate and in the increasing recidivism rate. For this reason the Department made the decision upon the contract ending, to bid these dollars out for evidence-based residential and community-based services proven to be effective with this new population.