

Data Driven Decisions

RAPID REFERRAL PROGRAM SPECTRUM YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES: OUTCOME EVALUATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RAPID REFERRAL PROGRAM

The Rapid Referral Program is a partnership between Spectrum Youth & Family Services of Burlington, Vermont and the Chittenden County District Court. The purpose of this partnership is to increase access to mental health and substance abuse assessment services for individuals involved in the criminal justice system whose charge(s) are related to substance use. The main objective of the Program is to provide judges with a mechanism at arraignment to rapidly refer defendants to Spectrum Youth Services for substance abuse screening and treatment rather than delaying services until the case is disposed by the court.

METHODOLOGY

An outcome evaluation attempts to determine the effects that a program has on its participants. In the case of the Rapid Referral Program (hereafter “the Program”), the objective of this outcome evaluation was to determine the extent to which the Program impacts recidivism among Program participants.

An indicator of post-Program criminal behavior that is commonly used in outcome evaluations of criminal justice programs is the number of participants who recidivate -- that is, are convicted of a crime after they complete the Program. For this study an analysis of the criminal history records of the 171 subjects who were referred and accepted into the Program from November, 2008 to September, 2011 was conducted using the Vermont criminal history record of participants as provided by the Vermont Criminal Information Center at the Department of Public Safety. The Vermont criminal history record on which the recidivism analysis was based included all charges and convictions prosecuted in a Vermont District Court that were available as of December 5, 2011. The criminal records on which the study was based do not contain Federal prosecutions, out-of-state prosecutions, or traffic tickets.

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

1. The Rapid Referral Program serves its designated target population.
2. The Rapid Referral Program serves defendants who possess a variety of risk factors generally considered to be related to recidivism.

3. The Rapid Referral Program appears to be a promising approach for positively impacting recidivism among Program participants.
4. The vast majority of Rapid Referral Program participants that recidivate are convicted of new crimes within one year of Program completion. Estimates suggest that the percentage of participants who recidivate is not likely to increase as post-Program elapsed time continues to increase for participants.
5. Generally, post-Program reconvictions for Rapid Referral Program participants involved minor types of crime.
6. The Rapid Referral Program seems to be relatively successful in reducing the number of reconvictions for alcohol and drug crimes among participants after Program completion.
7. The Rapid Referral Program recidivists tended to commit post-Program crime in Chittenden County.

INTRODUCTION

This outcome evaluation of the Rapid Referral Program (hereafter, “the Program”) was designed to answer four questions associated with the post-Program behavior of participants in the Program from November, 2008 through September, 2011.

1. Which subjects were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program?
2. For those subjects who were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program, when were they convicted?
3. For those subjects who were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program, which crimes did they commit?
4. For those subjects who were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program, in which counties were the subjects convicted?

This outcome evaluation was supported through funds provided by Spectrum Youth & Family Services of Burlington, Vermont. However, the findings and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Spectrum Youth & Family Services.

OVERVIEW OF THE RAPID REFERRAL PROGRAM¹

The Rapid Referral Program is a partnership between Spectrum Youth & Family Services and the Chittenden County District Court. The purpose of this partnership is to increase access to mental health and substance abuse assessment services for individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

Upon case review at arraignment, if the judge determines that an individual’s charge is related to an issue with substance use, the judge has the discretion to set a condition of release for the individual to attend a substance abuse assessment.² Arraignment judges make these determinations based on a set of identified criteria that are matched against the details of an individual’s case. For example, in DUI cases a referral for an assessment is made when blood

¹ The *Overview* description of the Rapid Referral Program is based on documentation provided by Justin Tauscher, Counseling Program Supervisor, Spectrum Youth and Family Services.

² Title 13 Vermont Statutes Annotated Sections 7554(a)(1)(C) and 7554(a)(2)(C).

alcohol content (BAC) is above 0.15 or, if below 0.15, an individual's driving was grossly negligent (i.e. driving on the wrong side of the road).

Spectrum Youth & Family Services has provided the District Court with pre-determined "open intake" appointment times that are held specifically for District Court personnel to utilize for scheduling District Court defendants. These intake slots are provided on multiple days per week so as to facilitate the court having access to a slot the instant they have deemed an individual appropriate to order the assessment as a condition of release. With these provisions, judges are able to ensure that individuals will be seen for an assessment within a week or less of the initial arraignment.

Individuals who are assigned the assessment as a condition of release are provided an appointment time (usually within 0-3 days of the arraignment) and directions (including a map) to the assessment location at Spectrum Youth & Family Services. The court clerk faxes a copy of the court order for the assessment and a blank recommendation report to Spectrum. Upon receiving the court paperwork, Spectrum schedules the defendant into the specially held appointment slot. Rapid referral slots are scheduled to be longer than usual appointments for the purpose of allowing a counselor to complete intake and assessment materials all in one sitting.

When meeting with a client the Spectrum counselor proctors an Addiction Severity Index and has the client complete a urine screen. Following the assessment, the counselor completes the blank recommendation report form and faxes it back to the court clerk's office.

Recommendations sent to court are of a limited nature and purposefully do not include clinical information. Information detailed in the recommendation report includes if a client attended, if they completed an assessment, if they are recommended to continue with counseling, which programs may be available to provide counseling services, and a date when a client may attend their next counseling session. During a subsequent assessment feedback session the client has the option to continue following through with any counseling recommendations or wait for the judge to decide about enforcing recommendations as a condition of the court.

The judge makes a decision based on the recommendation whether to assign counseling as a condition of the court proceedings or not. If a client did not attend their mandated initial assessment, the judge will issue a summons for the client to appear in court and make a decision about which steps will be taken next by the Judiciary with regard to the client's ability to comply with conditions of release.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

An outcome evaluation attempts to determine the effects that a program has on participants. In the case of the Rapid Referral Program the objective of this outcome evaluation was to

determine the extent to which participation in the Program impacts recidivism among Program participants.

An indicator of post-program criminal behavior that is commonly used in outcome evaluations of criminal justice programs is the number of participants who recidivate -- that is, are convicted of a crime after they complete the program. For this study an analysis of the criminal history records of the 171 subjects who were referred and accepted into the Program from November, 2008 to September, 2011 was conducted using the Vermont criminal history record of participants as provided by the Vermont Criminal Information Center at the Department of Public Safety. The Vermont criminal history record on which the recidivism analysis was based included all charges and convictions prosecuted in a Vermont District Court that were available as of December 5, 2011. The criminal records on which the study was based do not contain Federal prosecutions, out-of-state prosecutions, or traffic tickets.

Recidivism Timeline

Typically outcome evaluations investigate the criminal behavior of Program participants for a period of three years after program completion. Since the Program has only been in place since 2008, the three-year review period of post-Program behavior was not the protocol for this evaluation. The study was conducted based on the request of the Program administrators to provide valuable interim outcome findings for their continuing assessments of the effectiveness of the Program.

RECIDIVISM

Since recidivism is usually the primary measure of interest when evaluating the effectiveness of programs such as the Rapid Referral Program, it is important to consider the manner in which recidivism is defined, and how the definition affects the interpretation of study results. The Vermont Legislature in “The War on Recidivism” Act of 2011, ordered the Department of Corrections to calculate recidivism as:

[T]he rate of recidivism based upon offenders who are sentenced to more than one year of incarceration, who, after release from incarceration, return to prison within three years for a conviction for a new offense or a violation of supervision resulting, and the new incarceration sentence is at least 90 days.³

Analysis using Vermont’s statutorily defined definition of recidivism for the Program indicates that no participants could be characterized as recidivists. This results in a recidivism percentage of 0% for Program participants.

³ <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2012/Acts/ACT041.pdf> , Section 5, Subsection b(1).

Dismissing the zero recidivism percentage for Program participants derived from Vermont’s official definition of recidivism, Program administrators requested that a more rigorous definition for recidivism be used for this analysis. It was determined that a “zero tolerance” standard for recidivism would be adopted such that upon completion of the Program any participant who was convicted of any crime prosecuted in a Vermont District Court, including violations of probation and motor vehicle offenses, would be considered a recidivist.

Table 1 provides data regarding the percentage of Program participants who were reconvicted after completing the Program. For this measure, recidivism was defined as a post-Program new conviction occurring during the study period for any crime prosecuted in District Court including violations of probation and motor vehicle offenses. An analysis of the Vermont criminal records for the 171 Program participants shows that only 32 of the 171 subjects (18.7%) who completed the Program were reconvicted of some type of crime.

Table 1
Subjects Reconvicted for Any Offense

	Spectrum Program Participants	%
Recidivist	32	18.7%
Non-recidivist	139	81.3%
Total	171	100.0%

WHEN WERE SUBJECTS CONVICTED?

In addition to recidivism measures, program effectiveness can also be measured in terms of how long a participant remains conviction free in the community. Even if a participant is convicted of another offense after program completion, the longer the subject remains conviction free is important in evaluating the crime prevention potential for a program. For this study the *recidivism clock* was determined from the participant’s base docket which was provided by the Program administrators. The base docket refers to the case that resulted in the subject’s referral to the Program. The recidivism clock was started on the “Disposition Date” of the base docket as determined from the VCIC criminal history records. The elapsed time was then measured between the start of the participant’s recidivism clock and when the participant was convicted of another offense.

For 12 of the 171 participants in the Program, base docket numbers as provided by the Program administrators were missing from the VCIC criminal records. For those subjects the recidivism start clock was set at the first day of the month and year indicated by the base docket number provided by Program administrators.

Table 2 summarizes the analysis of elapsed recidivism time for subjects who were convicted of any new crime during the study period. For the recidivists who participated in the Program, 81.3% (26 of 32) of reconvictions for any new crime occurred in less than one year after Program completion, and 18.7% (6 of 32) occurred during “Year 1” after Program completion.

Table 2
Time to Recidivism

When First Recidivated	Count	%
Less than 1 year	26	81.3%
During Year 1	6	18.7%
After Year 1	0	0.0%
Total	32	100.0%

To provide a more detailed analysis of when recidivism occurs, Table 3 presents recidivism data in yearly increments – focusing on the number of participants who were eligible to recidivate during a time period and the number of participants who were reconvicted during that time period. Looking at the first column – the time period up to one year after Program completion – all 171 participants appear in this increment because at the time of the study every participant had been away from the Program for at least one year. During that time period, 26 of the 171 participants (15.2%) were reconvicted. Looking at the 2nd column – the first full year after Program completion – 102 of the participants had reached that point of elapsed time since Program completion. During “Year 1” only six participants were reconvicted (5.9%). After “Year 1”, no additional participants were reconvicted.

Of interest in Table 3 is the fact that though recidivism was highest within one year of Program completion (15.2%), the recidivism percentage declines sharply during “Year 1” after Program completion (5.9%) and continues to drop to zero (0.0%) during “Year 2” and “Year 3” of post-Program elapsed time. This data suggests that though the vast majority of recidivism occurs within the first year, it is unlikely that recidivism will increase substantially as participants increase their post-Program elapsed time to three or more years. Therefore, though few participants had reached the three-year elapsed time period typically used to assess program effectiveness, the data from the study period suggests that recidivism is likely to remain very low as post-Program elapsed time continues to increase for participants.

Table 3
Time to Recidivate by Years of Eligibility to Re-offend

	Post-Program Elapsed Time			
	< 1 Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Time Period in Which Participant Recidivated	26	6	0	0
Total # of Participants who were eligible to recidivate during the time period*	171	102	51	3
% Recidivated	15.2%	5.9%	0%	0%

*The data in this row represents all participants who had completed the Program for certain time periods. Participants may appear in more than one column based on the longevity of their post-Program elapsed time. For example each of the 51 participants who appear in the “Year 2” column also appear in the “< 1 Year” and “Year 1” columns because, having completed two years of post-Program elapsed time, they necessarily have also completed less than one year and one year of elapsed time.

CRIMES FOR WHICH PARTICIPANTS WERE CONVICTED

When considering the effect that the Program had on participants it is important to differentiate between the number of *participants* who recidivated and the number of *crimes* for which participants were convicted during the study period. For example, if a participant’s case were disposed in 2009 and s/he was convicted of two crimes in 2010 and then three crimes in 2011, the participant would be counted as a recidivist only once. However, in order to understand the full offense pattern of participants, and to assess the full impact of the Program on the criminal behavior of participants, it is important to also note that the defendant was convicted of those five additional crimes during the study period. While the first section of this evaluation focused on whether or not a *participant* was reconvicted during the study period, this section of the analysis focuses on the *number of crimes* for which participants were reconvicted.

Participant Offense Patterns

Table 4 indicates that the combined recidivists from the Program were convicted of a total of 104 crimes during the follow-up period. The average number of reconvictions per recidivist was 3.3 crimes. The median number of reconvictions per recidivist was 2.0. The number of reconvictions per offender ranged from 1 to 17.

Table 4
All Crimes For Which Subjects Were Reconvicted

	Number of Convictions	%
Violation of Probation	17	16.3%
Motor Vehicle Violations (DMV)	14	13.5%
Unlawful Mischief	10	9.6%
DUI-1st Offense	9	8.7%
DUI-2nd Offense	2	1.9%
DUI-3rd & Subsequent	1	1.0%
Theft	8	7.7%
Failure to Appear	8	7.7%
Drug Offense	5	4.8%
Simple Assault	5	4.8%
Disorderly Conduct	5	4.8%
Unlawful Trespass	5	4.8%
Prohibited Acts / Prostitution	4	3.8%
Temporary Restraining Order Violation	2	1.9%
Alcohol Violation	2	1.0%
Burglary	1	1.9%
Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor	1	1.0%
Possession/Sale Stolen Property	1	1.0%
Crimes vs. Justice: Contempt, False Alarms, Resist Arrest, etc.	4	3.8%
Total	104	100.0%
Number of Recidivists	32	
Average Convictions per Recidivist	3.3	
Median # of Convictions per Recidivist	2.0	
Maximum # of Convictions per Recidivist	17	
Minimum # of Convictions per Recidivist	1	

Over half of reconvictions for Program recidivists included (listed in order of frequency) violation of probation, motor vehicle charges, unlawful mischief, and DUI. Approximately 5% of the reconvictions were for a violent crime (five simple assaults). Approximately 96% of reconvictions (100) were for misdemeanors and 4% of reconvictions (4) were for felonies.

Given the Program’s emphasis on substance abuse it is important to note that only 13.5% of the reconvictions (14 out of 104) were for alcohol related charges and 5% of the reconvictions (5 out of 104) were for drug related crimes.

IN WHICH COUNTIES WERE SUBJECTS RECONVICTED?

Table 5 provides the distribution of reconvictions for Program participants by the county in which the case was prosecuted which, more than likely, is also the county where the crime was

committed. Approximately 80% (83 of 104) of the reconvictions occurred in Chittenden County. The remaining 20% (21 out of 104) of the reconvictions occurred in (listed in order of frequency) Addison, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Washington Counties.

Table 5
County of Prosecution for New Convictions

	Addison		Chittenden		Franklin		Grand Isle		Lamoille		Washington	
	# of Convictions	%										
Violation of Probation	0	.0%	15	18.1%	2	28.6%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Unlawful Mischief	0	.0%	10	12.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
DMV	4	44.4%	9	10.8%	0	.0%	1	50.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
DWI	3	33.3%	8	9.6%	0	.0%	1	50.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Theft	0	.0%	8	9.6%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Simple Assault	0	.0%	5	6.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Failure to Appear	2	22.2%	5	6.0%	1	14.3%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Unlawful Trespass	0	.0%	5	6.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Acts Prohibited/Prostitution	0	.0%	4	4.8%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Disorderly Conduct	0	.0%	3	3.6%	1	14.3%	0	.0%	1	50.0%	0	.0%
Vs Justice:Contempt, False Alarms, Resist Arrest, etc	0	.0%	3	3.6%	1	14.3%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Alcohol Violation	0	.0%	2	2.4%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Drug Crime	0	.0%	2	2.4%	1	14.3%	0	.0%	1	50.0%	1	100.0%
Temporary Restraining Order Violation	0	.0%	2	2.4%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Contrib to the Delinquency of a Minor	0	.0%	1	1.2%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Stolen Property	0	.0%	1	1.2%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Burglary	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	14.3%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
Total	9	100.0%	83	100.0%	7	100.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%	1	100.0%

PARTICIPANT PROFILE COMPARISONS

No data was available regarding the characteristics of Program participants other than that which could be gleaned from participants' criminal records. The following profiles and variables were examined and cross tabulated with the recidivists / non-recidivists segments to determine if significant differences in profiles existed between the two groups.

- Demographic Profile: Gender, age at disposition of base docket, race, and state of birth.
- Criminal History Profile: Age at first conviction and prior criminal record.
- Case Profile: Base docket offense, base docket offense level, and case disposition & sentence type.

Demographic Profile

Gender

Table 6 presents the gender composition of the study group. The total Program study group consisted of approximately 30% females and 70% males. The recidivist group had a significantly greater proportion of males than did the non-recidivist group (87.5% vs. 65.5%). The recidivist group also had a lower proportion of females (12.5% vs. 34.5%) than the non-recidivist group.

**Table 6
Gender by Recidivist/Non-recidivist**

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Female	4	12.5%	48	34.5%	52	30.4%
Male	28	87.5%	91	65.5%	119	69.6%
Total	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions.

Age

Table 7 displays the age distribution of Program participants at the time their base docket (cases) were disposed, tabulated against the Recidivists/Non-recidivists segments. The case that resulted in their referral to the Program is referred to as the “Base Docket” since it serves as the basis for all recidivism calculations. Approximately 43% of the Program participants were under 21 at the time of their base docket; slightly more than 90% of the participants were between the ages of 19 and 24. The median age was approximately 21 years of age. Table 7 indicates that the recidivist group had a significantly higher proportion of subjects in the 19 to 20 year old category compared to the non-recidivist group. The mean age of recidivists was only slightly lower but still significantly lower than the mean age of non-recidivists.

Table 7
Age at Disposition of Base Docket by
Recidivists / Non-recidivists

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
17 to 18	0	0.0%	4	2.9%	4	2.3%
19 to 20	20	62.5%	50	36.0%	70	40.9%
21 to 24	12	37.5%	75	54.0%	87	50.9%
25 and over	0	0.0%	10	7.2%	10	5.8%
Total	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%
Mean	20.9		21.9		21.7	
Median	20.7		21.6		21.5	

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column means.

Table 8 provides a more detailed summary of the distribution of ages at disposition between recidivists and non-recidivists by gender. The data shows that the distribution of ages among the female participants is fairly even. More notable is that the women make up only about 12% of the recidivists. Males on the other hand make up approximately 87% of recidivists and tend to be more concentrated in the 19 -21 year old age categories.

Table 8
Age at Disposition of Base Docket by
Recidivists / Non-recidivists by Gender

	Recidivist				Non-recidivist			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
17 yrs old	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.1%	3	3.3%
18 yrs old	0	0.0%	3	10.7%	5	10.4%	4	4.4%
19 yrs old	2	50.0%	5	17.9%	4	8.3%	18	19.8%
20 yrs old	1	25.0%	9	32.1%	5	10.4%	14	15.4%
21 yrs old	0	0.0%	5	17.9%	7	14.6%	15	16.5%
22 yrs old	0	0.0%	3	10.7%	6	12.5%	12	13.2%
23 yrs old	1	25.0%	3	10.7%	8	16.7%	11	12.1%
24 yrs old	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	12.5%	10	11.0%
25+ yrs old	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	12.5%	4	4.4%
Total	4	100.0%	28	100.0%	48	100.0%	91	100.0%

Race

Table 9 presents the racial characteristics of the Program participants. Not surprisingly, over 90% of all subjects were white. The study group included only five African Americans (3%) and three Asians (2%). There were no significant differences between the recidivists and non-recidivists segments in regards to race.

**Table 9
Race of Participants
By Recidivists/Non-recidivists**

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
African American	1	3.1%	4	2.9%	5	2.9%
Asian	1	3.1%	2	1.4%	3	1.8%
Caucasian	28	87.5%	130	93.5%	158	92.4%
Unknown	2	6.3%	3	2.2%	5	2.9%
Total	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%

State of Birth

Table 10 summarizes information regarding the states where Program participants were born. Approximately 60% of the subjects were born in Vermont. Significantly more recidivists were born in Vermont compared to the non-recidivists (78.1% vs. 56.8%, respectively). After Vermont, 15 other states were represented with New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts the most common birth states.

Table 10
State of Birth

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
VT	25	78.1%	79	56.8%	104	60.8%
NY	2	6.3%	10	7.2%	12	7.0%
NH	0	0.0%	10	7.2%	10	5.8%
MA	0	0.0%	8	5.8%	8	4.7%
GA	1	3.1%	4	2.9%	5	2.9%
CT	0	0.0%	3	2.2%	3	1.8%
FL	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
NJ	1	3.1%	1	.7%	2	1.2%
OH	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
PA	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
VA	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
AL	0	0.0%	1	.7%	1	.6%
AZ	0	0.0%	1	.7%	1	.6%
CA	0	0.0%	1	.7%	1	.6%
CO	0	0.0%	1	.7%	1	.6%
ID	0	0.0%	1	.7%	1	.6%
Missing	1	3.1%	13	9.4%	14	8.2%
Total	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions.

CRIMINAL HISTORY PROFILE

Age at First Conviction

Table 11 summarizes data regarding the age of participants at their first criminal conviction. About 36% of all Program participants had a prior conviction. Of those participants with prior convictions, 84% (51 out of 61) were under 21 at the time of their first conviction. The median age of first conviction was 19 years of age. The data shows more recidivists were in the 16 to 20 year old categories at first conviction, compared to the percentage of non-recidivist in those age categories (43.7% vs. 26.6%, respectively). This difference, however, was not statistically significant.

Table 11
Age at First Conviction

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
16 to 17	5	15.6%	9	6.5%	14	8.2%
18 to 20	9	28.1%	28	20.1%	37	21.6%
21 to 24	1	3.1%	8	5.8%	9	5.3%
25 and over	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.6%
No Convictions	17	53.1%	93	66.9%	110	64.3%
Total	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%
Mean	18.9		19.7		19.5	
Median	18.5		19.5		19.3	

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column means and proportions.

Prior Convictions

The criminal records of participants were examined to determine the number of times they had been convicted of criminal offenses *prior* to their involvement with the Program. Table 12 presents data on the prior convictions of the study subjects, cross tabulated against the recidivists / non-recidivists segments. Program participants collectively had 200 prior convictions from 25 different types of crime patterns. Over 50% of prior convictions for all of the Program participants included (listed in order of frequency) DUI charges, motor vehicle charges, theft, alcohol violations, and violations of probation. Twenty-four percent of prior convictions (48 out of 200) were alcohol related and 5% (10 out of 200) were for drug crimes.

The average number of convictions per subject for the recidivists was higher as compared to the non-recidivists – 2.0 compared to 1.0, respectively – however this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 12
Prior Convictions

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Number of Convictions	%	Number of Convictions	%	Number of Convictions	%
DUI-1st Offense	5	7.9%	20	14.6%	25	12.5%
DUI-2nd Offense	2	3.2%	2	1.5%	4	2.0%
Motor Vehicle Violation	8	12.7%	16	11.7%	24	12.0%
Theft	10	15.9%	10	7.3%	20	10.0%
Alcohol Violation	3	4.8%	16	11.7%	19	9.5%
Violation of Probation	7	11.1%	12	8.8%	19	9.5%
Disorderly Conduct	5	7.9%	11	8.0%	16	8.0%
Failure to Appear	4	6.3%	10	7.3%	14	7.0%
Drug Offense	2	3.2%	8	5.8%	10	5.0%
Unlawful Mischief	3	4.8%	6	4.4%	9	4.5%
Unlawful Trespass	6	9.5%	2	1.5%	8	4.0%
Simple Assault	0	0.0%	7	5.1%	7	3.5%
Crimes vs. Justice: Contempt, False Alarms, Resist Arrest, etc.	3	4.8%	3	2.2%	6	3.0%
Domestic Assault	1	1.6%	3	2.2%	4	2.0%
Possession/Sale Stolen Property	2	3.2%	2	1.5%	4	2.0%
Reckless Endangerment	0	0.0%	2	1.5%	2	1.0%
Commerce	1	1.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Disturbing the Peace	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.5%
Embezzlement	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.5%
Forgery/Counterfeiting	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.5%
Fraud	1	1.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Kidnapping	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.5%
Prohibited Acts / Prostitution	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.5%
Stalking	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.5%
Temporary Restraining Order Violation	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.5%
Total	63	100.0%	137	100.0%	200	100.0%

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions.

CASE PROFILE

Base Docket Offense

Table 13 presents data regarding the most serious charge from the base docket. The base docket is the case that resulted in the referral of study participants to the Program. Given the Program’s focus it is not surprising that slightly more than 50% of participants (86) were referred to the Program for DUI. Alcohol violations along with motor vehicle charges were the second most frequently occurring offenses (each at 8%) which generated referrals to the Program. Six percent of referrals were based on a drug charge. Nearly 65% of referrals involved cases where the most serious charge was substance abuse related. As mentioned earlier in the report, it should be noted that 12 of the 171 base docket records were missing from the criminal history data. The offense level of these dockets was recorded as “Unknown.”

Table 13 shows that the recidivist group had a significantly lower proportion of subjects from the DUI offense category than non-recidivists (21.9% vs. 56.8%). On the other hand recidivists had a significantly higher proportion of subjects from the Alcohol Violation category than did non-recidivists (18.8% vs. 5.8%).

Table 13
Most Serious Base Docket Charges

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Number of Convictions	%	Number of Convictions	%	Number of Convictions	%
DUI-1st Offense	4	12.5%	68	48.9%	72	42.1%
DUI-2nd Offense	3	9.4%	10	7.2%	13	7.6%
DUI-3rd & Subsequent	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.6%
Alcohol Violation	6	18.8%	8	5.8%	14	8.2%
Motor Vehicle Violation	3	9.4%	10	7.2%	13	7.6%
Drug Offense	4	12.5%	7	5.0%	11	6.4%
Simple Assault	0	0.0%	4	2.9%	4	2.3%
Failure to Appear	3	9.4%	1	0.7%	4	2.3%
Unlawful Trespass	1	3.1%	3	2.2%	4	2.3%
Assault Law Enforcement	1	3.1%	2	1.4%	3	1.8%
Burglary	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
Unlawful Mischief	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
Disorderly Conduct	1	3.1%	1	0.7%	2	1.2%
Domestic Assault	1	3.1%	1	0.7%	2	1.2%
Fraud	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
Prohibited Acts / Prostitution	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
Theft	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.6%
Shoplifting	1	3.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.6%
Aggravated Assault	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.6%
Conspiracy	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.6%
Cruelty to Children	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.6%
Municipal Ordinance	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	1	0.6%
Temporary Restraining Order Violation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Crimes vs. Justice: Contempt, False Alarms, Resist Arrest, etc.	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.2%
Unknown	4	12.5%	8	5.8%	12	7.0%
Total	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions.

Seventeen recidivists had base dockets where the most serious charges involved DUI, alcohol crimes, or drug crimes. Nearly 60% (10 out of 17) of those “alcohol/drug recidivists” were also *reconvicted* for those same crimes. Five of the six recidivists convicted of alcohol crimes on their base docket, were reconvicted of alcohol (1), drug (1) and DUI #1 (3) crimes. Two of the four recidivists with base docket drug convictions were also reconvicted of a drug crime. Three of the seven with DUI base docket convictions were also re-convicted on DUI charges. Table 14

provides detailed information on the reconvictions for “alcohol/drug recidivists” who had base dockets where the most serious crime involved alcohol or drugs.

Table 14
Base Docket Convictions by Reconvictions for
“Alcohol/Drug Recidivists” Who Were Reconvicted of Alcohol or Drug Crimes

Base Docket Convictions	Reconvictions					Total
	Alcohol Violation	Drug Offense	DUI-1st Offense	DUI-2nd Offense	DUI-3rd+ Offense	
Alcohol Violation	1	1	3	0	0	5
Drug Offense	0	2	0	0	0	2
DUI-1st Offense	0	0	0	1	0	1
DUI-2nd Offense	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total	1	3	3	2	1	10

Base Docket Offense Level

Table 15 presents data regarding the most serious offense level for charges from the base docket that resulted in the referral of study participants to the Program. Overall, almost 90% of the base docket convictions were misdemeanors. The non-recidivists showed only a few felony convictions, whereas the recidivists had no felony base docket convictions. As mentioned earlier in the report, it should be noted that 12 of the 171 base docket records were missing from the criminal history data. The offense level of these dockets was recorded as “Unknown”. There were no statistically significant differences regarding base docket offense level between the recidivist and non-recidivist group.

Table 15
Base Docket Offense Level

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Felony	0	.0%	8	5.8%	8	4.7%
Misdemeanor	28	87.5%	123	88.5%	151	88.3%
Unknown	4	12.5%	8	5.8%	12	7.0%
Total	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%

Base Docket Case Dispositions and Sentences

Table 16 displays information regarding the most serious type of sentence received by participants for their base docket convictions. For the 117 base dockets for which a sentence

was imposed, 22% (26 out of 117) received an incarcerative sentence while 78% (91 out of 117) received a community-based sentence.

Case dispositions and sentences were similar for both groups except for the percentage of participants who were sentenced to straight incarceration. The data in Table 16 shows that significantly more recidivists (15.6%) were sentenced to straight incarceration, as compared to the number of non-recidivists (2.9%) sentenced to straight incarceration. Also, significantly more non-recidivists received probation sentences than did the recidivist segment (36.0% vs. 15.6%, respectively).

Table 16
Base Docket Case Dispositions & Type of Sentence

	Recidivist		Non-recidivist		Total	
	# of Convictions	%	# of Convictions	%	# of Convictions	%
Incarceration	5	15.6%	4	2.9%	9	5.3%
Split Sentence	3	9.4%	14	10.1%	17	9.9%
Probation	5	15.6%	50	36.0%	55	32.2%
Fine	3	9.4%	33	23.7%	36	21.1%
Sentence Deferred	3	9.4%	6	4.3%	9	5.3%
Diversion Completed	1	3.1%	2	1.4%	3	1.8%
Not Disposed by Court	6	18.8%	19	13.7%	25	14.6%
Missing / Unknown	6	18.8%	11	7.9%	17	9.9%
Total Convictions	32	100.0%	139	100.0%	171	100.0%

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions.

FINDINGS

RESEARCH QUESTION #1

Which subjects were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program?

- 1.1 An analysis of the Vermont criminal records for the 171 subjects who participated in the Rapid Referral Program shows that only 32 of the 171 subjects (18.7%) who completed the Program were reconvicted of some type of crime during the study period.

RESEARCH QUESTION #2

For those subjects who were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program, when were they convicted?

- 2.1 For the recidivists who participated in the Program, 81.3% (26 of 32) of reconvictions for any new crime occurred in less than one year after Program completion, and 18.7% (6 of 32) occurred during the first year after Program completion.
- 2.2 Though recidivism was highest within one year of Program completion, the recidivism percentage declines sharply during “Year 1” after Program completion and continues to drop to zero during “Year 2” and “Year 3” of post-Program elapsed time. This data suggests that though the vast majority of recidivism occurs within the first year, it is unlikely that recidivism will increase substantially as participants increase their post-Program elapsed time to three or more years.

RESEARCH QUESTION #3

For those subjects who were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program, which crimes did they commit?

- 3.1 Over half of reconvictions for Program recidivists included (listed in order of frequency) violation of probation, motor vehicle charges, DUI, and unlawful mischief. Approximately 96% of reconvictions were for misdemeanors and 4% of reconvictions were for felonies. Only 5% of the reconvictions were for a violent crime.

- 3.2 Only 13.5% of the reconvictions (14 out of 104) were for alcohol related charges and 5% of the reconvictions (5 out of 104) were for drug related crimes.
- 3.3 Recidivists from the Program were convicted of a total of 104 crimes during the follow-up period. The average number of reconvictions per recidivist was 3.3 crimes. The median number of reconvictions per recidivist was 2.0. The number of reconvictions per offender ranged from 1 to 17.

RESEARCH QUESTION #4

For those subjects who were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in the Program, in which counties were the subjects convicted?

- 4.1 Approximately 80% (83 of 104) of the reconvictions occurred in Chittenden County. The remaining 20% (21 out of 104) of the reconvictions occurred in (listed in order of frequency) Addison, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Washington Counties. Approximately 96% of reconvictions (100) were for misdemeanors and 4% of reconvictions (4) were for felonies.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Rapid Referral Program serves its designated target population.

Slightly more than 90% of the participants were between the ages of 19 and 24. The median age was approximately 21 years of age. Nearly 65% of referrals involved cases where the most serious charge was a substance abuse related charge.

2. The Rapid Referral Program serves defendants who possess a variety of risk factors generally considered to be related to recidivism.

Nearly all Program participants in the study were under 24 years of age, 33% of participants are males under the age of 21, 36% of all Program participants had a prior conviction, nearly 30% of participants were under 21 at the time of their first conviction, nearly 30% of participants had a prior conviction for an alcohol related crime or a drug crime, and nearly 65% of participants had been referred to the Program for alcohol or drug crimes.

3. The Rapid Referral Program appears to be a promising approach for positively impacting recidivism among Program participants.

Only 32 of the 171 subjects (18.7%) who completed the program were reconvicted of some type of crime during the study period.

4. The vast majority of Rapid Referral Program participants that recidivated are convicted of new crimes within one year of Program completion.

Approximately 80% of reconvictions for any new crime occurred in less than one year. The remainder of reconvictions occurred during the first year after Program completion. Estimates suggest that the percentage of participants who recidivate is not likely to increase as post-Program elapsed time continues to increase for participants.

5. Generally, post-Program reconvictions for Rapid Referral Program participants involved minor types of crime.

Approximately 96% of reconvictions were for misdemeanors. The most common reconvictions for Program recidivists included violation of probation, motor vehicle charges, DUI, and unlawful mischief.

6. The Rapid Referral Program seems to be relatively successful in reducing the number of convictions for alcohol and drug crimes among participants after Program completion.

Only 13.5% of the post-Program convictions for Program participants were for alcohol related charges and 5% of the convictions were for drug related crimes.

7. The Rapid Referral Program recidivists tended to commit post-Program crime in Chittenden County.

80% of the convictions for Program participants occurred in Chittenden County. The remaining 20% of the convictions occurred in Addison, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Washington Counties.